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VIEŠOJO SAUGUMO AKADEMIJA



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LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES, AS REPORTED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION

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Abstract. *This study investigates the role of teaching strategies in motivating students within second language (L2) classrooms by examining the perceptions of both teachers and students. Grounded in the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) framework, it focuses on the L2 Learning Experience, a pivotal but underexplored component of motivation in language acquisition. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire administered to 130 university students and 28 teachers in Lithuania. Key findings reveal significant alignment in how teachers and students perceive motivational teaching strategies but also highlight notable differences. While teachers emphasise communicative strategies and group work, students express a preference for individual tasks and vocabulary acquisition. The study further identifies discrepancies regarding the use of native language, supplemental materials, and reading and writing assignments. These findings suggest that teachers need to strike a balance between structured and communicative approaches to address diverse learner needs. Practical implications include fostering a collaborative learning environment and integrating more contextualised vocabulary activities to enhance motivation. The study highlights gaps in current practices and offers recommendations for aligning teaching methods with students' motivational drivers. Limitations of the study include its focus on intermediate and advanced learners, leaving room for further research on beginner levels.*

Keywords: *L2 Motivational Self-System, motivation, student-teacher perceptions, teaching strategies*

Introduction

This study examines motivation in second language (L2) learning, focusing on the L2 Learning Experience, a critical yet under-researched component of the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS), as developed by Dörnyei (see Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2003). The L2 Learning Experience encompasses elements such as classroom environment, teaching methods, and student-teacher interaction, all of which are pivotal in shaping students' motivation.

Despite its recognised importance, the L2 Learning Experience has not been extensively studied in the context of how teachers' and students' perceptions align regarding motivational teaching strategies. There is a notable gap in understanding how specific strategies impact students' motivation and whether they foster mutual understanding between teachers and learners. Addressing this gap is essential to optimising language teaching practices.

The purpose of this study is to analyse how language teaching strategies, as perceived by teachers and students, influence students' motivation in L2 acquisition. Specifically, it aims to identify similarities and differences in these perceptions and propose ways to align teaching practices with students' motivational needs. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the development of more effective and engaging language teaching methods.

This study aims to address these gaps by analysing teachers' and students' perceptions of motivational strategies to determine their alignment and effectiveness. The research focuses on three key questions: 1) How do L2 teachers and students perceive different teaching strategies? 2) What are the relationships between their perceptions? 3) How can these findings inform L2 instruction?

The L2 Learning Experience involves practical aspects of language acquisition, including the classroom environment, teaching equipment, teaching materials and methods, and interactions between teachers and students. These practical components significantly affect students' engagement and motivation to acquire an L2. Therefore, research in this field is both practically relevant and justified.

Teaching methods and strategies, as central elements of the L2 Learning Experience, are vital for creating a motivational learning environment. Effective and accurate use of these methods allows teachers to enhance students' motivation by tailoring the learning environment to reflect the learners' expectations and needs while fostering progress, skill development, and achievement. However, teachers often face challenges in understanding how students perceive these methods and strategies, particularly regarding their motivational impact and their ability to foster mutual understanding between teachers and learners. As discussed later in the literature review, these aspects have not been thoroughly analysed. Consequently, this article fills a critical gap in the current knowledge and is academically relevant.

The research employed a Likert-scale questionnaire to gather quantitative data, providing insights into whether teachers' perceptions of motivational teaching strategies correspond to those of language students. The chosen methodology is valid for capturing quantitative data about perceptions and opinions which are difficult to express in other forms.

This study answers three key research questions: 1) How do L2 teachers and students perceive different teaching strategies? 2) What are the relationships between students' and teachers' perceptions? 3) How can these findings inform L2 instruction to further motivate students?

The paper is structured as follows: first, a literature review builds the theoretical framework for the research objectives, questions, and methodology. This is followed by an overview of the research results and a detailed discussion to provide answers to the research questions. The final section identifies limitations, gives recommendations and provides overall conclusions.

Theoretical approach

Motivation in second language learning

The question of what role motivation plays in second language (L2) learning has been systematically considered since the 1950s and has resulted in several perspectives (Gardner,

2010). Overall, this field has become a meeting point for sciences such as psychology, pedagogy, human physiology, information technologies, and others. The term “motivation” itself has been defined in many ways, ranging from comprehensive (e.g., Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) to very concise definitions (e.g., Gardner, 1985, p. 10). If an attempt to summarise them is made, motivation in the L2 learning can be described as dealing with why people engage in learning L2, what sustains their interest and will, and how can the motivated learning process be maintained to reach desired goals. In other words, “motivation provides the primary impetus to embark upon learning, and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process” (Ryan, 2013).

The early research on the L2 learning motivation discovered that studying L2 is significantly different from studying other subjects because language, by its nature, contains a variety of social, cultural, and psychological aspects that require additional pedagogical attention. This approach resulted in the further development of Gardner’s (1985) theory of L2 motivation, which considers attitudes towards learning L2, desire to learn and stimuli that can affect the intensity of motivation. Consequently, it allowed the research to branch out into a more specific analysis of the learning environment, teaching methods, social surroundings, and so on and to gain insights into, on the one hand, how L2 learners are motivated by the desire to be part of cultural/social community of L2 speakers (integrative orientation) and, on the other hand, how L2 learners are encouraged by specific personal benefits that L2 proficiency can give, such as the advancement in a professional career (instrumental orientation).

In recent decades, one of the most dominant branches of the L2 learning motivation research has been inspired by searching for a meeting point between social and psychological factors. This shifted the focus from integrative and instrumental orientation concepts to the motivational self-system in the L2 acquisition (L2MSS). The main contributor to these advancements has been the tripartite theory developed by Dörnyei in 2005 (Dörnyei, 2005). At the center of it is an attempt to explain the differences when it comes to L2 learning and motivation to learn it. The assumption underpinning Dörnyei’s theory is that when the learner recognises an inconsistency between their current self and their future self, i.e., their desired future self-states, this inconsistency may become a motivating factor to traverse “the perceived gap and reach the desired end-state” (Al-Hoorie, 2018) in the L2MSS. Exceptionally, the testing of this model and its confirmation germinated in the language motivation field. Within just ten years, the L2MSS generated “an exceptional wave of interest with literally hundreds of studies appearing worldwide” (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015), such as Martinović & Burić (2021), Arslan & Çiftçi (2021) and Yang (2023) to name only a few. Due to its versatility and ability to integrate a variety of perspectives from different theoretical orientations, the L2MSS has become a dominant theoretical framework in the field of L2 learning motivation.

Second language motivational self- system

Throughout his career, Dörnyei attempted to explain the differences in foreign language learning and the motivation to learn it (see Dörnyei, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2005). An assumption underpinning Dörnyei’s theory in the second language acquisition (SLA) is that the learner recognises an inconsistency between their current self and their future self, i.e., their desired future self-states, and this inconsistency may become a motivating factor to bridge the gap and achieve their learning goals in the second language motivational self- system (L2MSS) (Al-Hoorie, 2018, p. 722). The L2MSS both locates motivation within the self and directs efforts towards L2 learning achievement, ideally oriented towards the L2 future. Therefore, the ideal self is a gradual driver to progress from the present to a more desirable state. One’s willingness to reach the imagined/visualised level of the self-drives to a higher state of self. This possible

future self becomes a motive for future actions and can increase the person's willingness to communicate (WTC).

Dörnyei has identified three constituents in this motivation construct, namely, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2009). The ideal L2 self represents one's hopes and wishes, i.e., refers to the state one would ideally like to reach, e.g., to become the person who travels a lot and does business worldwide. Therefore, the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator when learning a language. On the contrary, the ought-to L2 self is concerned with the states that others would wish one to acquire and reach. Whereas individuals are willing to avoid possible negative outcomes, e.g., at work, learn the language to represent the expectations of others. However, it has little to do with personal desires or dreams. Finally, the third constituent – the L2 learning experience – involves an individual experience in the immediate learning environment where such aspects as the teacher, peers, and the curriculum are included. Dörnyei describes the L2 learning experience as the situated executive motive (Dörnyei, 2009) as well as the causal dimension (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106) of the model.

Thus, in the L2 Motivational Self System, Dörnyei identifies three sources of the motivation to learn an L2: “(a) the learners’ internal desire to become an effective L2 user, (b) social pressures coming from the learner’s environment to master the L2, and (c) the actual experience of being engaged in the L2 learning process” (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Several studies have been carried out to find the associations between student motivation and other student-related variables, e.g., Gardner (1985), Crookes and Schmidt (1991), Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1994), Schumann (1994), Tremblay and Gardner (1995), Schmidt, Boraie and Kassabgy (1996), Williams and Burden (1997), Dörnyei and Ottó (1998). In his study, Dörnyei (1998) presented a synthesis of different constructs and identified seven dimensions of motivation: (1) affective/integrative dimension, (2) instrumental/pragmatic dimension, (3) macro-context-related dimension, (4) self-concept-related dimension, (5) goal-related dimension, (6) educational context-related dimension, and (7) significant others-related dimension. Moreover, Dörnyei (1994) suggested that language learning can be organised systematically, i.e., moving from intrinsic to extrinsic factors, where extrinsic ones influence motivation and anxiety. Thus, the foreign language teacher (as an external variable) impacts the learner’s progression through the learning stages. As a result, there is a great link between the students’ motivation to learn the languages and the teachers’ teaching style (Dörnyei, 1994), which is also reflected in the L2 learning experience component of the L2MSS.

The L2 learning experience – one of the three constituents of the L2MSS

According to Dörnyei (2019), the L2 Learning Experience was “not featured more prominently in either the theoretical or the research developments of the past decade”. As a result, there is a lack of research focused on the L2 Learning Experience and a lack of general conceptualisation of what components the L2 Learning Experience is comprised of, but it does not mean that attempts were not made. For example, You & Dörnyei (2016) state that the L2 Learning Experience is “related to the immediate learning environment/experience such as the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, or the experience of success.” Tan et al. (2017) confirm that the key elements in L2 Learning Experience are “the curriculum, the L2 teacher, the peer group, and the teaching materials”. Hiver et al. (2020) argue that “L2 learning experience has been reported as an important predictor of learners’ involvement and [...] that it captures key details about the quality of students’ present engagement in the learning process”. In other words, the L2 Learning Experience is very practical because it deals with seemingly mundane things like the classroom, its equipment, textbooks, teaching methods, the size of the student group and so on.. At the same time, these practical aspects are powerful enough to have an effect on the learning process, students’ engagement, and motivation to acquire L2. Despite

such promising importance, Csizér (2017) states that “there are hardly any studies on [the effect of curriculum and teaching methods on learner motivation], and therefore they should be considered issues for future research”, while Li (2023) calls the L2 learning experience “the underappreciated element of the L2 motivational self-system”.

Consequently, teaching methods and strategies can be considered key elements of the L2 Learning Experience. They allow teachers to increase students’ motivation by creating a learning environment that better reflects the expectations and needs of the learners, as well as reveals their progress, skill development, and achievements. For example, an assignment to make a hotel reservation by phone using L2 can be a teaching method that not only encourages the building of necessary vocabulary and use of specific grammar constructions but also shows how the L2 knowledge can be applied in practice, increasing students’ esteem that they can use L2 to make an achievement and bring a sense of adventure to the classroom which allows them to escape their usual learning routine. Of course, teaching methods and their contents must be tailored to each group of students, but if selected wisely, there is an expectation that their use can result in increased learners’ motivation.

Research objectives and questions

The study analyses the role that teaching strategies play in motivation in a university L2 classroom setting. More specifically, the study aims to understand whether the teachers’ perceptions about the motivating teaching strategies correspond to those of the language students. The study is carried out based on the following objectives: a) to compile and compare a list of teaching strategies that are seen as motivational from L2 teacher’s and L2 students’ perspectives, b) to compare the lists and determine the relationships between student’s and teacher’s perceptions, and c) to propose how to reconcile the differences and how these findings may further inform L2 instruction that is motivational to students.

Based on the motivational strategies discovered through literature review and analysis of the practical implications of previous studies, the tool to measure motivational teaching strategies has been designed for this study. A 33-item questionnaire for teachers and a 36-item questionnaire for students using the Likert scale have been devised.

Based on these objectives, the Likert-scale questionnaire, the following research questions have been formulated: 1. How do L2 teachers and students perceive different teaching strategies? 2. What are the relationships between student’s and teacher’s perceptions? 3. How can the observed differences be reconciled, and how may these findings further inform the L2 instruction so that it motivates students?

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the alignment between teachers’ and students’ perceptions of motivational teaching strategies and their effects on students’ motivation. The Mini-Attitude Motivation Test Battery (Mini-AMTB) developed by Bernaus & Gardner (2008) was adapted and used for this study. The Mini-AMTB is a condensed and validated version of the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), specifically designed to measure motivation in L2 learning. It provides a reliable means of assessing key motivational factors such as integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, instrumental orientation, and language anxiety.

The questionnaire included 12 questions measured on a 7-point Likert scale, focusing on various motivational attributes. Data were collected from 130 university students and 28

teachers engaged in L2 learning and teaching at a university in Lithuania. The quantitative design enabled a systematic comparison of perceptions between the two groups.

The study's respondents included:

- **Students:** 57% (73) were first-year students, 35% (45) were second-year students, 4% (5) were third-year students, 2% (2) were fourth-year students, and 3% (4) were fifth-year students. Of the students, 49% were at the B2 proficiency level and 51% at the C1 level, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- **Teachers:** The 28 participating teachers taught at varying proficiency levels: 6% at A1, 24% at A2, 29% at B1, 59% at B2, 41% at C1, and 6% at C2. Regarding teaching experience, 82% (14) had more than ten years of experience, 6% had less than ten years, and 12% had less than five years.

The questionnaire included variables such as integrativeness, attitude toward the learning situation, motivation for the target language, language anxiety, instrumental orientation, and parental encouragement (Gardner, 2010). The Mini-AMTB's readability coefficient is 0.743 (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008), ensuring the instrument's validity for this research.

The quantitative survey was conducted during the spring semester of 2022. Gender distribution among the respondents was as follows: 78% (101) of students were female and 22% (29) were male, while all 28 teachers were female.

The data collected were analysed statistically to identify significant similarities and differences in perceptions between teachers and students, providing insights into how motivational strategies are perceived and their potential impact on students' motivation.

Results and discussion

The first part of the study aimed to evaluate the difference between L2 teachers' and L2 student's attitudes towards learning/teaching English and other languages. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Students' and teachers' motivation to learn and teach languages
(average mean score on the scale of 1-7)**

Aspect	Students	Teachers
Motivation to learn English for communication with English-speaking people	5.91	6.29
Motivation to learn English for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job)	5.98	6.0
Attitude toward English as lingua franca	5.93	5.44
Interest in studying other languages than English	5.21	5.13

Source: created by the authors.

The finding shows that the respondents highly value the role of English learning but are also favourable towards learning other languages. To support the conclusion, the students were asked to evaluate their attitude towards English language courses. With an average mean score of 5.51, students valued their courses positively. This score is contrasted with the teachers' attitude towards teaching English courses, which is 5.72. It could be stated that these findings prove students' and teachers' rather favourable motivation to learn and teach English from work and career perspectives.

The teaching and learning strategies have been analysed among teachers and students. One set of questions addressed the teachers' and students' attitudes towards how

communication is performed in the class: individual, peer, or group work, along with how the questions are posed in the classroom: to the whole group or individual students.

Table 2. Teachers’ and students’ attitude towards class communication (average mean scores on the scale from 1-7)

Type of classwork	Students	Teachers
Peer work	4.89	5.47
Small group work	5.0	6.0
Individual work	5.89	5.47
Questions to the whole class	5.84	6.0
Questions to individual students	5.28	5.14

Source: created by the authors.

The results show that, on average, students and teachers are positive about all the types of work in the class. The least popular work among teachers is peer work, while the students dislike small group work the most. Looking at the average numbers, the evaluations of class discussions seem to be similar between teachers and students. Teachers value questions asked to the whole class at 6 and questions to individual students at 5.14. Respectively, students value them at 5.84 and 5.28. Another set of questions refers to developing reading, writing, grammar, or vocabulary skills. Table 3 represents the results below.

Table 3. Students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards performing language skills in class (average mean score on the scale of 1-7)

Language skills	Students	Teachers
Grammar and vocabulary exercises	5.93	5.29
Reading in class	5.36	4.12
Writing in class	5.26	3.88
Long vocabulary lists	3.64	3

Source: created by the authors.

Overall, both students and teachers have a favourable attitude towards grammar and vocabulary exercises, reading, and writing tasks. What is evident from the results is that students value all these tasks more than the teachers. Another group of questions addresses homework, project work, and library work. These results are shown in table 4 below.

Table 4. Students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards class tasks (average mean score on the scale of 1-7)

Class tasks	Students	Teachers
Homework	5.92	5.94
Project work	6.06	6.5
Library projects	4.09	4.88

Source: created by the authors.

The results show that students and teachers view homework similarly. Regarding project work, both teachers and students show high preference. Library research is less valued among these tasks, yet the teacher average (4.88) is very similar to the student average (4.09). Neither teachers nor students consider library research to be important. It is a highly surprising result

among students, considering that the majority of the respondents study English at B2 or C1 level, and the higher competency in English would require the projects to be more scientific and research-based. For this reason, further research is needed to understand if the students and/or teachers consider Google search to be adequate for project work in B1 – C1 levels or if there are other reasons why library research is so undervalued. Moreover, both students and teachers expressed a strong preference (above 5) for homework assignments (5.92 and 5.94, respectively) and project assignments (6.06 and 6.5).

The study revealed there was considerable overlap in students' and teachers' views. At the same time, certain discrepancies emerged as well. Teachers tended to place more emphasis on communicative strategies and group work, whereas students favoured structured activities like vocabulary memorisation and individual work. These findings align with Dörnyei's (2009) tripartite model of motivation, particularly in the emphasis on the L2 learning experience as a key motivator. The differences observed may be due to the varying expectations and experiences of students and teachers.

Research question 1: Based on the Likert-scale questionnaire, compile and compare a list of teaching strategies that are seen as motivational from L2 teacher's and L2 students' perspectives

Teacher responses unveiled a wider variation in responses from 1.6 (strongly disagree) to 6.5 (strongly agree) on the 7-point scale, whereas student responses displayed a slighter variation from 3.4 to 6.4, making them less negative about the use of teaching strategies. Among the raw scores, a difference of 0.6 or higher on the seven-point scale was considered significant as it represents a notable difference in opinion. The teacher and student overall means are displayed in Table 5. Out of the 24 questions, 10 questions displayed a significant raw mean difference higher than 0.6, and 13 questions showed almost no difference in opinion with a mean difference of 0.4 or less.

Table 5. Difference in student and teacher average mean score on the scale of 1-7

No	Questions	Mean difference (Ss-Ts)	Teachers' means (n=28)	Students' means (n=130)
Q21	I worry about speaking in my English class	2.0	1.6	3.6
Q2	Students are allowed to speak their native language for clarification	1.4	4.3	5.6
Q7	Students are given written tasks in class	1.4	3.9	5.3
Q6	Students are given time to read in class	1.2	4.1	5.4
Q20	Students' textbook is supplemented with other materials	-0.9	6.5	5.6
Q10	Students are required to do library research	-0.8	4.9	4.1
Q17	Students work in small groups in class	-0.8	6.0	5.2
Q9	Students are provided class participation rules	-0.7	6.1	5.4
Q13	Students do peer work in class	-0.6	5.5	4.9
Q18	Students are assigned to memorise long vocabulary lists at home	0.6	3.0	3.6
Q12	Students do individual work in class	0.4	5.5	5.9
Q14	Students do project assignments	-0.4	6.5	6.1
Q19	Students' linguistic achievements are evaluated using tests	0.4	5.1	5.6
Q1	More emphasis is put on communicative competence than on grammar accuracy	-0.3	5.5	5.3

Q16	Students translate texts into their native languages	-0.3	3.8	3.5
Q22	My desire to learn English is	-0.3	5.9	5.7
Q3	Students are asked questions to the whole class	-0.2	6.0	5.8
Q4	Students are called on in class individually	0.1	5.1	5.3
Q15	Students follow tasks in the paper textbooks in class	0.1	4.2	4.3
Q23	My interest in foreign languages is:	0.1	5.1	5.2
Q5	Students are given opportunities to speak English in class	0.0	6.4	6.4
Q8	Students are given homework	0.0	5.9	5.9
Q24	My motivation to learn English for practical purposes (e.g., to get a good job) is:	0.0	6.0	6.0

Source: created by the authors.

The table displays the difference between the students' and teachers' mean responses (Ss-Ts = Mean difference) in descending order, followed by teachers' and students' overall mean. Additionally, the minus sign has been preserved to show the direction of difference: negative values represent greater teacher agreement than student agreement with the item. Questions 21, 2, 7, 6 and 18 represent higher teacher preference and value for the tasks in those items. On the contrary, questions 20, 10, 17, 9, and 13 show student preferences.

Research question 2: to compare the lists and determine the relationships between student's and teacher's perceptions

The results represented in Table 6 display the percentages of low scores (1 and 2) and high scores (6 and 7) among teachers and students, looking only at the questions that had a high mean difference in Table 1. The highlighted items represent the means with a negative value to retain the direction of agreement, whereas negative values represent more significant teacher agreement than student agreement with the item. Obviously, neutral scores (3, 4, 5) were not considered in the analysis as they represent a neutral position – the golden middle – where neither teachers nor students represent a strong position.

Table 6. Statistically significant teachers' and students' average mean scores with representation of low and high scores (negative values represent greater teacher agreement than student agreement with the item)

No	Questions	Mean difference (Ss-Ts)	Teachers' responses		Students' responses	
			Low scores (6-7)	High scores (1-2)	Low scores (6-7)	High scores (1-2)
Q21	I worry about speaking in my English class	2.0	71	6	30	34
Q2	Students are allowed to speak their native language for clarification	1.4	25	32	6	61
Q7	Students are given written tasks in class	1.4	24	24	5	48
Q6	Students are given time to read in class	1.2	24	18	4	49
Q18	Students are assigned to memorise long vocabulary lists at home	0.6	34	17	33	24
Q20	Students' textbook is supplemented with other materials	-0.9	0	83	2	57
Q10	Students are required to do library research	-0.8	6	32	18	28
Q17	Students work in small groups in class	-0.8	6	69	5	48

Q9	Students are provided class participation rules	-0.6	0	80	7	56
Q13	Students do peer work in class	-0.6	6	64	5	45

Source: created by the authors.

The highest mean difference (2.0) between students' and teachers' responses was the comfort level of English language use in the classroom. The result did not reveal much of a surprise as English teachers should feel confident using English, and it is expected that learners should feel nervous when practising a foreign language. However, a deeper look revealed that 71% of teachers did not display any worry at all, while 6% of teachers felt worried about using English in the classroom. 30 % of the students were worried about speaking English in class, and 34% felt comfort in class.

Another significant mean score difference (1.4) concerned native language use for clarification in the classroom. Teachers' responses were significant on both spectrums, with 25% disapproving of native language use and 32% supportive of the role of the native language for clarifications. On the contrary, students found this issue less controversial as 6% disapproved of the native language use, and 61% supported the native language used for clarification. Similarly, teachers and students felt that reading and writing were important in the classroom. Teachers were divided about writing (L 24 and H 24) and reading (L 24 and H 18), whereas students were more supportive of written tasks (L 5 and H 48) and reading (L 4 and H 49). Finally, students' preference for memorising extended vocabulary lists seemed surprising at first. However, a deeper analysis of the high and low scores revealed that the significance was not outstanding. Teachers were reserved about the effectiveness of assigning long vocabulary lists for memorisation (L 34 and H 17), which supports an effective vocabulary teaching methodology. 33% of students negatively valued long list memorisation, and 24% valued it highly. Even though students valued vocabulary memorisation more positively on average, the low and high scores revealed that a more significant number of both students and teachers did not support this strategy. This corresponds to the findings of Hiver et al. (2020) who argue that positive L2 learning experience contributes to learner involvement in the learning process. The same was discovered in the study here. The student seems to be highly motivated by various teaching methods, class environment, and therefore feel fairly motivated to learn the language.

The highlighted items in Table 6 represent significant mean differences where teachers display more value than students to the following question items. A significant mean difference (-0.9) was observed in the value teachers and students give supplemental information to the textbook. Teachers showed a strong need to supplement the existing textbooks (L 0 and H 83), whereas students were more reserved (L 2 and H 57). In other words, most teachers feel strongly about the need to supplement the textbook, and almost half of the students are satisfied with the quality of the textbook. A similar analysis applies to class participation rules. Teachers strongly believe in providing class rules (L 0 and H 80) due to the requirement in the department to provide clear guidelines to the students, whereas almost half of the respondents (L 7 and H 56) did not care so much about the clear class participation rules. These findings do not support the finding that of Tan et al. (2017) that L2 learning experience is influenced by the curriculum and the teaching materials. In fact, the students were satisfied with the books and did not feel motivated by supplemental books or changes in the curriculum. While it is possible to interpret this as a factor related to motivation, it can also be an indirect measure of motivation as the extra materials mean more learning and potentially harder to get a positive grade. Therefore,

when the information is in the book, the students know how much to learn even if the information is old fashioned and not interesting. Therefore, the quantitative data is not adequate to make strong conclusions about the importance of additional materials or changes in curriculum.

Moreover, a small significant difference was observed in the small group work peer review and library research. More teachers than students valued this type of work, and only 6% of teachers and 5% of students did not value group or peer work. A higher difference can be observed in library research, where 6% of teachers did not value library work, and 18% of students did not appreciate it. On the opposite side, 69% and 64% of teachers valued group work and peer work highly, and a much smaller number of students, at 48% and 45%, respectively, valued group and peer work. Rather surprisingly, library work was valued almost equally by teachers (32%) and students (28%).

Research question 3: to propose how to reconcile the differences and how these findings may further inform L2 instruction that is motivational to students.

Any conclusions drawn from these data should be considered tentative as it is challenging to interpret quantitative data but the data at large show a strong teachers' motivation not simply to teach English (H 77) but to seek the newest teaching methods and strategies (H 77) to provide practical English skills (H 75) that would allow students to communicate efficiently inside and outside the classroom (further education, travel, career). However, the student's data is conflicting. While students understand the need for practical English (H 73) and want to communicate efficiently (H 65), only half of the students have high motivation to learn English (H 56 and L 2). This may be explained by the fact that C1 level of English completion is compulsory for all the students at the university, so many might not feel the need to acquire English at such a high level (the study featured mainly B2 (49) and C1 (51) student respondents who already manipulate language fairly fluently). The difference in motivation suggests that several L2 learning experience elements require consideration.

Limitations

It can be acknowledged that the research has several evident limitations. First, the study mainly represents first and second-year students who already have B1 or C1 levels. As a result, the research does not represent the opinions of beginner or advanced-level students. Second, the data could be analysed further by comparing students based on their study year, language level or other characteristics. Third, the questionnaire could be further elaborated to include recently increasingly more discussed frameworks such as mediation, multiculturalism, green issues, climate change, etc. Finally, the quantitative nature of the questionnaire can be criticised as lacking detail and not allowing interpretation of the results' underlying causes.

Implications & recommendations

The statistically significant differences presented in the previous section suggest the following implications for the classroom:

1. A great number of students (H 70) feel motivated to perform class activities when the native language is used as the means of mediation in more complex language situations, especially when the students get stuck. However, only 37% of teachers support native language use in the classroom. This may be explained by the fact that many respondents teach English in higher proficiency levels and may have perceived this question not as much from a motivational perspective but rather from the practical angle that switching between languages when L2 becomes a struggle slows down acquisition. Moreover, it could be culturally inappropriate if

there are students from different countries. However, this fact may not be known to the students, and teachers should explain that language struggles give self-satisfaction and confidence as well as improve communication skills. Therefore, praising any successful attempt should be stressed in teaching to meet this difference in opinion between teachers and students. On the other hand, it is advisable to hear the students out in their native language and then ask them to try to explain the same in English to create that bridge, at least in the early learning stages that the students can feel engaged and positive while learning a second language.

2. Reading and writing tasks in class are considered motivational by students (H49 and H48) compared to teachers (H18 and H24), respectively. Students felt more strongly, to a statistically significant degree, that teachers should provide reading and writing tasks in class. Unfortunately, due to the ambitious level requirements and time limits, teachers often leave reading and writing classes for homework. Reading is known to have very positive effects on language learning, and due to the popularity of social media, writing is one of the more essential skills today; therefore, priority needs to be given to these tasks in the classroom. It is highly advisable to allot time for reading and writing and turn them into regular classroom routines.

3. A strong connection to reading may be observed in another statistically significant item. Memorisation of long vocabulary lists is viewed more positively by students (H24 and L20) than teachers (H17 and L34). This finding indicates that teachers understand that memorising vocabulary without context is not an effective language learning strategy, yet students understand the importance of vocabulary and are willing to learn words at any cost. The implication of this finding suggests that teachers need to stress the importance of acquiring vocabulary in context. Rather than memorising long vocabulary lists, students need to understand the importance of reading and learning vocabulary from a meaningful context.

4. Students are less supportive of class rules than teachers. On the one hand, university officials strongly recommend clear class rules; thus, this may highly influence teacher preference for rules. On the other hand, class rules provide more order and clarity in the classroom. At the same time, students view class rules as demotivating, so explaining to the students why the rules benefit them is essential.

5. Supplementing textbooks with other materials is viewed more positively by teachers than students. Supplementing materials is a common practice among teachers. For one or another reason, textbooks are limiting as topics age, the books provide inadequate practice, or there is a mismatch between the book and the curriculum. Furthermore, working with the same textbook year after year may become boring. Therefore, supplemental materials are viewed as motivational by teachers (H83 and L0) but contrary for students. In contrast, going beyond the main textbook for students may reduce their motivation (H57 and L2) because it is easier to lose track of what is important, making it easy to get distracted. Arguably, this question presented a conflicting response from the students' side because later in the questionnaire, they voiced an opinion that using only textbooks provides a dull teaching method. It remains unclear if that is caused by the textbook itself or the way it is used in the classroom.

6. Library research is more favoured by teachers than students, yet there is no big enthusiasm for library research in English classrooms on both sides. A small number of teachers valued library research (H32 and L6), and even smaller numbers are seen among students (H28 and L13). While library research has many advantages, it does not clearly and directly connect to the day-to-day aspects of L2 acquisition – skills to communicate and express oneself in social

situations. It might be the main reason why library research is not perceived as motivating by teachers or students.

7. Group and peer work is valued more by teachers (H69 and H64) than students (H48 and H35), respectively. Many earlier studies have observed students' hesitancy toward group and pair work, starting with Shultz (2001). Such mismatch may reflect fundamental differences in perceiving how L2 is acquired. This ambivalent attitude toward group/pair work may simply reflect logistical difficulties that sometimes arise given particular interpersonal dynamics or when teachers engage students in group work within a particular physical space.

The literature review revealed the key elements in creating a motivating the L2 learning experience: the curriculum, the L2 teacher, the peer group, and the teaching materials (You & Dornyei, 2016; Tan et al., 2017). The results of this study confirm the importance of these elements. The data reveal that for L2 learning experience, such motivating L2 key elements as the curriculum, the peer group, and the teaching materials have an important effect on learning. Consequently, teachers seem to be role models for the changing trends in L2 research. While earlier studies suggested teachers' preference to move from discreet grammar points to a communicative teaching approach before their students were ready to do so (Shultz, 2001; Bell, 2005; Brown, 2009), the data today reveal the same trend. The teachers are pioneers in moving teaching beyond simple communication toward English for specific purposes, cross-cultural awareness, social justice, project learning, and academic English. In other words, teachers are more aware of the demands of English today and the need to participate in a turbulent context. Therefore, one important implication is to continue to raise awareness of the more academic demands of English through project work, library research, authentic reading and writing tasks on social media. Another significant implication for the teachers is to make sure that the English language teaching is made practical and communicative, as the students seem to be highly motivated by the demands of the labour market.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study highlights that while students and teachers largely agree on the motivational value of certain L2 teaching strategies, notable differences exist in their preferences for specific methods. Teachers tended to prioritise communicative competence and group work, while students placed greater value on individual tasks and vocabulary acquisition. These insights suggest that L2 instruction can be optimised by balancing both structured and communicative approaches tailored to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Some teaching strategies revealed not only different evaluations between teachers and students but also within the group of teachers. This demonstrates that the teaching process is not rigidly structured and controlled but rather creative, allowing each teacher to design their own approach. However, when learners' motivation is considered, it might be useful for the teachers to have a meeting to discuss their strategies. This could result in better mutual understanding and convince some teachers to make adjustments to their teaching plans.

Finally, the conflicting data from students makes a rather obvious point that each group is comprised of people with different L2 skills, coming from different backgrounds and bringing their own experiences. It creates a puzzle for the teacher whether to: a) implement their teaching plan by expecting the students to accept it or by putting effort to convince them that the plan is valuable and efficient, or b) adjust the teaching plan to match the trends and expectations circulating among the students to make them excited and motivated about the L2 acquisition.

Although the study does not resolve this dilemma, the results certainly direct the teachers to seek better communication with the students.

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PROBLEMS OF LEGAL REGULATION AND ENSUREMENT OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

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Abstract. *Freedom of expression was established in the last century, due to new technologies, the expansion of communication methods and everyone's inner need to express their thoughts and beliefs, the growth of the process of globalization and the dynamic way of life, the increase in opportunities to present their point of view without revealing their identity, requires re-examination of the concept of freedom of expression, the peculiarities, sufficiency and shortcomings of its legal regulation, established in a modern, digitized society. The implementation of freedom of expression, due to the insufficiently clearly defined boundaries of this right, may lead to a narrowing of the rights of others, or the violation of the rights of others.*

This scientific article's aim is to reveal the concept of the right to self-expression, problematic aspects and reasons. After analyzing legal doctrine, court practice and the results of the empirical study, it was revealed that, the concept of freedom of expression is a heterogeneous concept that includes the ability to have and form one's own beliefs, the ability to share them in all ways and means. Freedom of expression must be seen both as a way of self-realization and as a fundamental condition for the existence of a harmonious democracy. However, the cornerstones that separate hate crimes from self-expression must be taken into account when assessing each situation individually. In particular, unjustifiably damaging and hateful information must be made public, directed at persons belonging to minority groups, and the content of the thoughts disseminated must be such as, albeit indirectly, to encourage discrimination and hatred towards persons belonging to minorities. Disseminated information should not simply disturb or shock, but should unreasonably denigrate a certain group of persons, often encouraging them to deal with them by using mental or physical violence. From the data obtained, it can be seen that when delimiting freedom of expression from a hate crime, police officers pay attention to the purpose of the perpetrator to incite hatred and other persons, the prejudice of the perpetrator and the publicity of the act committed.

Keywords: *freedom of expression, freedom of speech, hate speech, legal regulation.*

Introduction

The basis of modern democratic society is the natural right to freely express one's opinion, feelings and beliefs, to choose the desired lifestyle, work, faith and leisure time. It would be difficult to imagine a society and its individual members without the possibility for everyone to communicate and debate freely on both personally important and universally sensitive issues without fear of divergence of opinion or lack of a final consensus. However, although freedom of expression was established in the last century, due to new technologies, the expansion of communication methods and everyone's inner need to express their thoughts and beliefs, the growth of the process of globalization and the dynamic way of life, the increase in opportunities to present their point of view without revealing their identity, requires re-examination of the concept of freedom of expression, the peculiarities, sufficiency and shortcomings of its legal

regulation, established in a modern, digitized society. Among other things, the expansion of the limits and possibilities for freedom of expression leads to the risk of undermining the other natural rights of each person, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This is also confirmed by statistical data – over the past five-year period, the growth of registered criminal offenses corresponding to the features of Article 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania is observed, and in 2022, the number of criminal offenses qualified under the said article was recorded the most in the entire decade (*Mano teisės, 2023*).

Freedom of expression is not a new phenomenon. These are the widely established and applicable components of natural rights that are characteristic of most democracies. Due to the prevalence of this phenomenon, there are also many authors and scientific works that have dealt with these two fundamental rights. Freedom of expression and speech was examined by authors such as Algimantas Šindeikis (2010), who in his work examined the intersection of the implementation of freedom of expression and honor and dignity through the prism of the judicial practice of the Republic of Lithuania. Donatas Murauskas (2023) also wrote on this topic, analyzing the specifics of the implementation of freedom of expression in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Also, Eric Barendt (2005), who examined the importance of protecting freedom of speech and individual types of expression. However, most of the studies were limited to theoretical analysis of literature sources and review of various court practices. In addition to the interpretation of the courts on the issues of delimitation of rights, this study, unlike those mentioned, will examine the attitude of police officers who, in their day-to-day activities, are faced with statements of persons regarding the violation of specific rights, the measures they use to delimit the exercise of freedom of expression from hate speech or violations of human honor and dignity, and violations of public order.

Research problem of the scientific article. The implementation of freedom of expression, due to the insufficiently clearly defined boundaries of this right, may lead to a narrowing of the rights of others, or the violation of the rights of others.

The **purpose of this scientific article** is to reveal the concept of the right to self-expression, problematic aspects and reasons.

The following **research methods** were used in the scientific study: the scientific literature research method aimed at analyzing the opinion of scientists on freedom of expression; qualitative research - a survey in the form of interview, with the aim, from a practical point of view, to investigate the opinion of specialists regarding the peculiarities and signs of the legal regulation of freedom of expression, which help distinguish the violation of the law from the implementation of the law.

The intersection of freedom of expression and hate speech

One way to implement a freedom of expression is the freedom of speech, the ability to express their views publicly, heard or seen by everyone, on various issues, regardless of whether they are supported or reprimanded. In modern society, where censorship is prohibited and almost every person has access to social spaces where information can be disseminated unhindered, there are various conflicts of views and values. Such disagreements flare up over issues that are being decided in the nation or around the world, new trends, for example, due to the large migration of the population and the arrival of foreigners, and the interweaving of religions and customs. Some adhere to traditional views, others, on the contrary, fight for a tolerant society that values diversity and pluralism, for a state where everyone has a place regardless of their views.

The internet opened wide avenues for communication between cultures, allowed information and ideas to be shared across borders, and offered vast spaces of knowledge to be visited from one link to another (Kaye, 2019). It is now becoming common to openly and publicly express one's position on the aforementioned aspects by posting it on various internet portals, social networks or live gatherings. However, often such expression of opinion, taking advantage of the natural freedom of speech, develops into incitement to hostility and causing real harm to other persons (Iganski, 2008). It is the comments published on websites that account for about 90% of all discord incitement in Lithuania (Human Rights Monitoring Institute, 2024). However, the question arises - where is the line, at which the freedom of speech and dissemination of information naturally belonging to each person ends and the criminal act - incitement of hatred – begins. On the one hand, freedom of expression is a fundamental element of human dignity and therefore deserves strong protection in the digital age but on the other hand, in order to preserve the value and importance of this right, it would be appropriate to exclude the cloak of hatred and other illegal expressions from freedom of expression (Susi, 2024). Since there is a small difference between a person exercising his / her positive right to express his / her point of view and active incitement to hatred, it is necessary to discuss the essential aspects of the existing separation between the two phenomena, failure to do so risks unlawfully and exaggeratedly limiting a person's ability to express his / her thoughts or the state failing to fulfill its positive duty to ensure the safety and protection of the rights of each person. As stated by Dovilė Murauskienė (2024), proper recognition and investigation of criminal acts motivated by hatred and/or prejudice helps to protect fundamental democratic values.

In order to distinguish the use of freedom of expression from incitement to hatred, the essence and meaning of incitement to hatred should be reviewed. Incitement to hatred is the public dissemination (verbally, in writing) of information (ideas, opinions, knowingly incorrect facts) that mocks, despises, encourages hatred, incites discrimination, violence, and physically confronts a group of people or a person belonging to it. This type of information usually causes tension in society, intolerance to traits other than those of the majority and thus creates a conflict-friendly space in society (Mano teisės, 2024). Thus, freedom of expression differs mainly from the dissemination of hatred in that the information provided is not only disturbing or unusual, unacceptable, but discriminates against a certain group of persons, usually belonging to minorities, among other things, society is encouraged to hate, insult and oppress, and in the end to cause physical harm to those belonging to that group of people. Therefore, although a state that unreasonably restricts the dissemination of information cannot be considered democratic and ensuring human dignity, as with many fundamental rights and freedoms, the implementation of self-expression must be limited in certain cases (Lankauskas, Mulevičius, Zaksaitė, 2013). Jeffrey W. Howard (2019) agree that by banning hate speech, the democracy of society decreases and part of the possibilities of this order are denied, but no valuable things are lost when introducing restrictions, on the contrary, it stops xenophobia, hateful discourse and discrimination. For this reason, democratic societies are often in favor of such restrictions and the abandonment of part of their democracy.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania in its ruling interpreting Article 25 of the Constitution has argued that the provisions of Article 25, Part 2 of the Constitution, stating that a person must not be prevented from seeking, receiving and spreading information and ideas, cannot be interpreted as allowing the freedom of information to be used in such a way as to violate such values as: human health, honor and dignity, private life, morality or constitutional order (resolutions of January 26, 2004 and May 16, 2019). The list of protected constitutional values listed in Article 25 (3) of the Constitution cannot be interpreted as exhaustive, exhaustive, and therefore as preventing the restriction of freedom to receive and

disseminate information when it is necessary to protect other, not mentioned constitutional values (resolution of September 29, 2005). The constitutional concept of freedom of information (as well as freedom of expression of beliefs) does not include the alleged freedom to carry out the criminal acts specified in Article 25, Part 4 of the Constitution - to spread such thoughts, views, etc., which fundamentally negates constitutional values. i.e. which incite national, racial, religious or social hatred, coercion and discrimination, defame individuals or otherwise misinform the public or its individual members; the ban on disseminating information of the aforementioned content is absolute (resolutions of July 8, 2005, September 19, 2005, and May 16, 2019). According to the Constitution, the freedom to express beliefs and disseminate information is incompatible with any acts contrary to the law that incite national, racial, religious or social hatred, abuse and discrimination, defame or otherwise disinform society or its individual members (resolutions of September 19, 2005, and May 16, 2019). The freedom to express beliefs and disseminate information guaranteed by Article 25 of the Constitution cannot be interpreted as allowing the freedom of information to be used in such a way as to encroach not only on the values mentioned in Article 25, Part 3 of the Constitution, but also those enshrined in other provisions of the Constitution, *inter alia*, by publicly expressing such thoughts, beliefs or disseminating other information that denigrates, ridicules or otherwise humiliates persons, showing hatred towards these persons or their group due to their gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs or views, as well as due to other characteristics.

In the case of criminal acts of hate speech, two fundamental values collide - the equality of individuals and freedom of expression. In order to strike a balance between two fundamentally equivalent values, the courts have introduced the concept of danger, which helps to assess whether a specific violation of the limits of freedom of expression by going beyond the limits of equality of persons is so dangerous that it would be proportionate and rational to apply the most severe – criminal liability (*Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, 2020*).

In March 13, 2018, the Supreme Court of Lithuania, in the ruling of the criminal case ruling, stated its position between freedom of expression and the exclusion of incitement to hatred. The Supreme Court of Lithuania stated that, first of all, these acts are committed publicly – to an indefinite circle of people; directed against persons belonging to a minority group; the opinion expressed must not be just hurtful, unpleasant or despicable, but must be directly directed to the goal – to create an indefinite circle of people to hate, discriminate, form a derogatory attitude towards persons belonging to minorities, and, finally, to publicly promote crackdown, physical or mental abuse against those persons. Only in this case will the speeches made or written be considered dangerous enough to incite criminal liability and be classified as hate speech or incitement. If these specified points of view are not found in a person's act, the act committed can be considered an insult to honor and dignity, and if there are no signs of this act, it is a legitimate freedom of expression. Among other things, the ruling of the Supreme Court of Lithuania (2018), already mentioned, also emphasized the systematicity – a large amount of comments made by one person, from which all written comments are directed in the same directions – to discrimination, humiliation and contempt of persons belonging to minorities.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has also expressed in a number of cases the main signs of incitement to hatred and exclusion from freedom of expression. Incitement to hatred does not necessarily mean calling for violence or other criminal acts. Attacks on individuals by insulting, mocking or slandering specific groups of the population may prove sufficient for the authorities to tackle racist language through irresponsible use of freedom of

expression (*The European Court of Human Rights, 2020*). Among other things, the ECHR criticized the tendency of Lithuanian courts to emphasize the above-mentioned systematicity when assessing the amount of comments written. In this regard, the ECHR stated that Lithuanian judicial practice is not uniform, sometimes one comment of intense content is enough to bring a person to justice, in other cases, individuals are exempted from criminal liability by emphasizing that the comments were not written systematically. The ECHR points out that the number of comments can only be a circumstance that shows the gravity of the crime, but it is not a prerequisite (*The European Court of Human Rights, 2020*).

In the light of the foregoing, it can be seen that although there is a fine line between the protected and legitimate implementation of freedom of expression and its transformation into incitement to hatred, which is sometimes disputed by the courts themselves, the cornerstones that separate these two phenomena must be taken into account when assessing each situation individually. In particular, unjustifiably damaging and hateful information must be made public, directed at persons belonging to minority groups, and the content of the thoughts disseminated must be such as, albeit indirectly, to encourage discrimination and hatred towards persons belonging to minorities. Disseminated information should not simply disturb or shock, but should unreasonably denigrate a certain group of persons, often encouraging them to deal with them by using mental or physical violence. However, in the presence of inconsistent court practice and only abstract rules for distinguishing self-expression from hate speech, individuals may face situations in which, thinking that they are using freedom of expression, they actually exceed its limits and may face not just any, but the most severe - criminal liability.

Practical approach to the peculiarities and issues of ensuring the legal regulation of freedom of expression

Research methodology. After discussing the problematic aspects of freedom of expression, which are partly related to the hard-to-see boundary between the natural use of freedom of expression and a hate crime or a violation of a person's honor and dignity, various questions arise regarding the delimitation of these phenomena in practice and the police officers who carry out the initial assessment of the situation and decide on an administrative offense or initiation of pre-trial investigation, practically applied rules and methods. *Purpose of the study* is to analyze the attitude of specialists in this field towards the situation of limitation of freedom of expression and violation of law in Lithuania from a practical point of view.

Research object. Peculiarities of legal regulation of freedom of expression and issues of ensuring it.

Research process and its logic. The conducted empirical research consists of the following stages of the process: selection of respondents according to the chosen selection criteria; creation and justification of research questions; collecting research data through interviews; analysis of research data; research results and their discussion. The study was conducted in March, 2024. In order to maximize the quality, completeness and validity of the data received, the study is carried out in writing, giving respondents interview questions.

Based on the fact that the qualitative content analysis strategy is related to the interpretation of the information obtained during the interview in the context of a specific field of science (*Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydžiūnaitė, 2008*), this strategy was chosen for the study in order to be able to interpret the obtained information in the field of the individual's right to freedom of expression and to compare it with the theoretical material, to analyze the similarities and differences of the obtained data.

Research scope. When conducting a qualitative study-interview, it is not the number of subjects that is important, but their distinctive characteristics, according to which the authors of the scientific article select suitable persons for the study (*Žydžiūnaitė, 2011*), therefore, in the selection of subjects, the specifics of the topic under consideration were taken into account – this is a special topic that is relevant to the field of law, the analysis of which requires not only appropriate education, but also the practice of legal work, therefore, in order to obtain complete and valuable data that will help to examine the problematic aspects of the topic, a targeted critical sampling method was chosen, which, according to L. Rupšienė, is not only effective, but also helps to collect quality data (*Rupšienė, 2007*). Thus, for this study, police officers with higher legal education and at least five years of legal work experience were selected.

Data collection method. In order to obtain detailed and argumentative data, a qualitative study was chosen – a semi-structured interview. In preparation for the interview, eight interview questions were compiled, and it was also provided that, depending on the answers of the respondents, and in case of ambiguity or for a deeper analysis of the situation, the subjects could be presented with clarifying questions. This type of qualitative research is useful in that it provides an opportunity to obtain deep, related to the questions studied, open answers of the study participants, most revealing their points of view, opinions, feelings, knowledge, and experience (*Gaižauskaitė, Valavičienė, 2016*). In order to understand and analyze the topic under study, to see the fundamental problems and possible ways to solve them, or the necessary changes in the legal regulation itself, which will determine the situation and guarantee of human rights of the entire population of the country, detailed and deep legal knowledge is required. Among other things, in order to reflect the tools and experiences of each individual, decision-making police officer, they can only be conveyed in a broad narrative and through personal experience, in the opinion of the authors of the work, this type of qualitative research will best help to clarify the answers to the questions of concern and best depict the practices that have developed in the current legal system. Based on the fact that the method of a semi-structured interview helps to turn the study in the right direction – when the researchers learn new aspects about the object of study, the opportunity is left to inquire about them more widely, as a result of which more detailed and systematized information is obtained (*Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydžiūnaitė, 2008*), researchers will ask questions that require a detailed answer, and in case of ambiguity, they will ask additional questions that will help to get detailed answers.

Research instruments. During the preliminary interview stage, eight specific questions were drawn up, which were asked to the respondents during the interview: 1) Based on what criteria do you distinguish hate crimes from the implementation of freedom of expression? In this matter, based on a practical point of view, the aim was to analyze one of the main observed problems - the hard-to-see boundary between the legally used freedom of expression and the violation of the law, for which an extreme measure is provided - criminal liability. 2) What is the difference between the use of freedom of speech and the violation of public order? The latter question is particularly related to social networks, which are inseparable from modern day-to-day life - they not only provide a wide opportunity to use freedom of expression, but also reach a large audience of people, as a result of which there is a need to find criteria on the basis of which self-expression would be distinguished from violation of public order. 3) Which minority groups are most often targeted by hate speech? This question aims to reveal the situation of ensuring the rights of persons belonging to various minorities, including religious ones, in Lithuania. 4) What measures are you taking to prevent hate speech? The question is aimed at revealing the preventive methods and measures used in practice in order to curb possible violations of natural human rights in advance. 5) How often do hate speech directed

against religious minorities occur? The latter issue is partly related to the two questions discussed above, but at the same time it is aimed at revealing the guarantee of the right to freedom of religion in Lithuania. 6) Which signs of hate speech are the most difficult to prove? This question seeks to conduct a more detailed analysis of the distinction between the use of free speech and hate speech. To establish that a person's utterances are prohibited by criminal law and understood as hate speech, it is necessary to disclose the composition of the criminal act. If it is not established that the committed act fully corresponds to the act specified in the criminal law, it shall be considered that the person used the freedom of speech. Therefore, it is very important to determine which signs of hate speech are the most difficult to prove. 7) In what way do violations of personal honor and dignity occur in practice? Violations of a person's honor and dignity are also related to the perverted use of freedom of speech, which often includes insulting a person by using obscene words, presenting information that does not correspond to reality, so this question seeks to learn the most common ways in practice. 8) Based on what criteria do you distinguish the violation of the honor and dignity of a person from the use of freedom of speech? This question was also raised when it was determined that the theory emphasizes the need for facts that correspond to reality in order not to violate human dignity, so we want to determine whether theoretical truths are applied in practice.

Research progress. The study began with a preparatory phase in which, in accordance with the above-mentioned criteria, respondents were contacted orally or by phone and offered to participate in the study. Police officers who agreed to be respondents to the study were presented in writing with the topic and objectives of the study, all respondents were also informed about the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time, the volunteerism of participation and confidentiality of the study were emphasized. This information is followed by written e-mail or direct submission of prepared research questions to respondents, informing them that, if necessary, clarifying questions will also be presented in the course of the study. Each subject shall provide his / her prepared answers in writing.

Based on the four-step qualitative content analysis method proposed by V. Žydžiūnaitė (2008) the obtained data were analyzed in the following order: 1) reading the received answers to the interview questions; 2) observation of essential elements; 3) sorting of found elements into categories; 4) interpretation of the received data in the context of the analyzed literary sources related to the right to freedom of religion and expression.

Research results. With the first question ("*Based on what criteria do you distinguish hate crimes from the implementation of freedom of expression?*"), the authors of the work sought to find a constructive rule applied in practice, which would make it easier to delineate the legal use of natural expression from a hate crime, which is prohibited by the criminal law. As a result of the analysis of various literary sources, it was noticed that until now the delimitation of these two phenomena is not strictly defined, which makes it possible for individuals to interpret legal norms in accordance with their subjective perception. After conducting interviews and analyzing the data obtained, it was found that although the respondents named various elements of delimitation of these phenomena, but in their essence the answers of the respondents are similar, therefore, the resulting answers of the subjects can be distinguished into categories.

Table 1. Categorization of the separation criteria provided by respondents.

Category	Subcategory	Excerpt from the interview
1. Goal.	1. The striving to speak publicly. 2. The goal is to incite others to commit crimes or crimes out of hatred.	1. Excerpt from the second interview: "In my opinion, what distinguishes a hate crime from the implementation of freedom of expression is that the perpetrator's goal is to spread hatred in public."

		2. Excerpt from the third interview: „if<...> the opinion expressed is aimed at humiliating, discriminating, inciting others against a certain group – I regard it as hate crimes.“
2. Motive.	1. A person's internal extremely negative prejudice. 2. Motive to spread hatred.	1. Excerpt from the first interview: "The crime of hate is distinguished from the implementation of freedom of expression by the prior determination of the perpetrator to spread hatred." 2. Excerpt from the fourth interview: "the crime committed must be enshrined in law, and the act must be committed in the existence of a motive of hatred."

Source: authors of this study

Analyzing the answers received from the interviews, two clear boundaries identified by all respondents can be seen, which allow us to distinguish a hate crime from the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression - the motive characteristic of such a criminal act, that is, prejudice and the desire to spread hatred, as well as the characteristic goal - one's own radically negative statements or other actions to be done in public, in the sight and hearing of others and with free access to extremely negative information, and also the goal is to create a certain circle of people so that the latter also begin to hate, oppress a certain group of persons belonging to minorities, use violence against the members of this group. Among other things, the respondents in their answers to the first question of the interview also revealed signs inherent exclusively in freedom of expression. The third respondent indicated that freedom of expression in her understanding is a subjective opinion expressed by a person and an assessment of the environment from the very aspect of perception of the worldview. The fourth respondent said that self-expression is the expression of an opinion without the moment of incitement from others to commit offenses or crimes.

It can be concluded that the main aspects of a hate crime are publicity, incitement to hate and discrimination against other persons and, among others, incitement to physical violence.

In accordance with legal regulation, freedom of expression may be restricted when it is intended to protect not only individuals or groups of individuals, but also public order, which is important for the coherence of society. However, recently, as social networks and cyberspace have become an integral part of the everyday life of many, the concept of public order has outgrown the boundaries of reality and is perceived, among other things, as a secure cyberspace that would be suitable for every member of society. Therefore, the need arose to discover the boundaries between the implementation of freedom of expression and the violation of public order, which is sought in the second question of the interview (*“What is the difference between the use of freedom of speech and violating public order?”*).

A review of the responses received during the interview shows that it is difficult to distinguish between the violation of public order and the use of freedom of expression. The first respondent stated that a public order violation "is an act committed in a public place - insolent behavior, threats, malicious mockery of another person or group of persons, acts showing disrespect to society." Meanwhile, the third respondent stressed "if the expression of an opinion manifests itself in a certain agitation, in a specific incitement, in discrimination, in the formation of a derogatory attitude" it is considered a violation of public order. The fourth respondent emphasized the existence of obscene words in case of violation of public order. It agrees with the answer of the first respondent that in order to classify certain actions as a violation of public order, it is necessary, first of all, that such actions be carried out in the sight and hearing of an

indefinite circle of persons, in public, and also in such actions a person must not only express his opinion and reveal his worldview, but act extremely insolent, despicable, show disrespect to others. Such acts include the obscene words mentioned by the fourth respondent, but they should be considered only as one of the constituent parts of the public policy violation and not as a whole. The answer of the third respondent is also partially supported in cases where the agitation and the formation of a derogatory attitude is related not to a group belonging to minorities, but to a person belonging to the majority and a group of persons who are being treated disrespectfully. Thus, from the responses received, it can be concluded that in practice, freedom of expression is delimited from public order when assessing whether personal information is made public and whether it offends, shocks and angers surrounding members of society, whether such actions show disrespect for others. Meanwhile, the vast majority of respondents, answering the second question, identified freedom of speech as expressing opinions, thoughts and views without seeking to offend anyone.

The third *the question ("Which minority groups are most often targeted by hate speech?")* the aim was to identify which groups of vulnerable persons are not sufficiently protected by the legislator, and against which groups of persons, using their freedom of expression, exceed the permissible limits and disseminate discriminatory data. According to interviews, two out of four respondents indicated that hate speech was mostly directed at groups belonging to sexual minorities. One respondent mentioned the frequency of hate speech in relation to Jewish communities, while the remaining respondent highlighted discrimination against national minorities. Thus, it can be seen from the received answers of the respondents that there is not exclusively one group of persons who experience contempt. Although the majority of respondents drew attention to the hate speech more often experienced by sexual minorities groups, it can be seen that such crimes against groups of persons are also experienced by persons belonging to religious communities. Two respondents highlighted the existence of hate speech on the internet, social networks and manifestation through various speeches, notes.

The fourth question (*"What measures are you taking to prevent hate speech?"*) sought to reveal the methods used in practice, which could be used to prevent human rights violations caused by the use of hate speech in advance. From the interview responses received, it follows that various methods of prevention are used in practice – the first respondent noticed the activities carried out by the "Virtualus Patrulis" ("Virtual Patrol") in one of the social networks. The second respondent highlighted various promotions in schools, other educational institutions, advertising posters promoting the reduction of hatred. The third respondent referred to preventive interviews with individuals as one of the measures taken, while the fourth respondent emphasized the ongoing monitoring of social networks and the awareness of the possible responsibilities of individuals, which could be attributed to the already mentioned preventive conversations with individuals. It is noteworthy that in practice, different preventive measures are applied, of a different spectrum, in order to combat hate speech and prevent radical, cross-cutting expression of opinion. Since in practice there is already a need not only to apply different types of responsibility, but also to take preventive measures, it is considered that cases of hate speech occur quite often, which is precisely due to the inability of the population to distinguish between the use of freedom of speech and the violation of the law. It should be considered that it is becoming more and more relevant to develop an educational program that integrates the awareness of individuals to the extent and limits of their natural freedoms. Such a preventive measure would not only prevent violations committed by individuals due to lack of information, but would allow those around them to recognize the violation of the boundaries of the person and take appropriate measures.

The fifth question ("*How often do hate speech directed against religious minorities occur?*") and the question that specifies it ("*against which religious communities does it occur?*") sought to reveal the situation of ensuring the rights of religious communities in Lithuania and to see the most vulnerable religious communities. The third and fourth respondents noted that hate speech aimed specifically at religious communities is rare. The second respondent indicated that the most vulnerable religious communities are those of the Islamic religion. The fourth respondent emphasized the Jewish community, while the first respondent referred to both religious communities mentioned above. Other religious minorities were not mentioned in the responses. Among other things, the first respondent added to the response by pointing out that hate speech is increasing significantly after various terrorist acts, military attacks involving individuals associated with the relevant religious communities. Thus, an increase in intolerance after the events that have shaken the world – often the intolerance that prevails in society for a particular religious community changes in the course of time, and these changes are due to different processes taking place in the world and the relationship of individuals with religious communities.

The sixth question ("*Which signs of hate speech are the most difficult to prove?*") analyzed to a certain extent the separation of freedom of expression from hate speech, and aimed to determine what difficulties arise in practice in order to prove that a person committed an act prohibited by the law, and did not use self-expression legally. The data obtained during the interview can be distinguished into three categories, which are presented in the second table.

Table 2. Categorization of hate speech signs that are most difficult to prove.

Category	Subcategory	Excerpt from the interview
1. Goal.	1.The striving to incite others to spread hatred.	1. Excerpt from the first interview: "the most difficult thing to prove is that hate speech was intended to incite others, to encourage the spread of hatred against a person or group of individuals because of their identity, race, views, etc." 2. Excerpt from the third interview: "it is difficult to distinguish between expressing an opinion using freedom of speech and inciting hatred."
2. Motive.	1.Prejudice, bias.	1. Excerpt from the fourth interview: "it is difficult to prove that the prejudice, bias, hatred of the perpetrator went beyond the limits of freedom of expression." 2. Excerpt from the third interview: "it is difficult to prove the main purpose and motive in the hate speech aspect."
3. The way of committing the crime.	1.Used mental abuse.	1. Excerpt from the second interview: "In my opinion, the most difficult thing is to prove mental abuse."

Source: authors of this study

After analyzing the answers received during the interview and dividing them into three categories, it can be seen that in the practical situations experienced by the respondents, it was difficult to prove the purpose of the criminal act - that the suspect, with his words or actions, aimed specifically to make those around him hate a certain group of people, as well as the suspect's extreme prejudice and bias to members of a minority group, as well as the method of committing the criminal act, when the criminal act is committed using mental abuse, rather than outwardly noticeable and visible actions. It is noteworthy that two out of four respondents

mentioned that it is still difficult to distinguish the opinion expressed, that is, the use of freedom of speech, from hate speech, and a third respondent, highlighting the difficulty in proving mental abuse, which is often expressed in words, indirectly indicated that the words spoken are difficult to qualify as hate speech. Nevertheless, it is mentioned that one of the main signs of distinguishing a hate crime from freedom of expression is the purpose of inciting those around him to hate a certain group of people.

The seventh question of the interview ("*In what way do violations of personal honor and dignity occur in practice?*") aimed to reveal the main ways in which a person's honor and dignity are violated in practice, since the analysis of various literature and court practice showed that insults using obscene words are the most frequently mentioned, as well as spreading false information. After analyzing the data obtained during the interview, it was noticed that three out of four respondents emphasized the information presented on social networks when writing various comments. One of the respondents mentioned the manifestation of violation of honor and dignity through the prism of humiliations, information that does not correspond to reality, and the distribution of intimate photos and videos. One respondent highlighted insults, bullying and mobbing. Attention should be paid to the response of the third respondent, which mentions the dissemination of intimate photos and videos. Such disclosure is not only about the humiliation and trampling of a person's reputation and inherent human dignity acquired in the course of his life, but also about the violation of the right to private life of a person. Although such videos and photos do not involve information that does not correspond to reality, they obviously go beyond the interests of the person who shared such a photo with a certain person or group of persons and the desired addressee. Therefore, one sees not only the intersection of the use of self-expression with the violation of the honor and dignity of a person, but also the crossing of the boundaries of a person's private life.

The eighth question ("*Based on what criteria do you distinguish the violation of the honor and dignity of a person from the use of freedom of speech?*") it was sought to verify the information obtained from the analysis of literary sources. It is from various sources of theory and jurisprudence that the violation of the honor and dignity of a person is distinguished from freedom of expression, first of all, by separating opinions from knowledge presented as true facts, and, second, by applying the criterion of truth to knowledge and assessing whether the facts presented correspond to reality. So we want to know if in practice, police officers who assess real life situations through the prism of violation of law apply the same rules of separation, or perhaps they have other principles of separation that are not analyzed in theory. After reviewing the questions of the respondents, it was noticed that all four respondents indicated that it is important to evaluate both the person's purpose and the content expressed or otherwise presented - whether the person was only trying to express his opinion, as the fourth respondent indicated - to present a subjective assessment of the person, or to mislead those around him, to present reality inconsistent information as true facts. The first respondent noted, among other things, the importance of readers, listeners – whether they perceived the information presented as the opinion of the writer, speaker or as real, indisputable information presented. Thus, from the data obtained, it can be said that the objective criterion – the perception of readers or listeners – and the subjective criterion – the purpose of the writer himself and, as indicated by the first respondent - his own perception, knowledge of the injustice of the facts are important in separating freedom of speech from the violation of the honor and dignity of a person. Among other things, as indicated by the fourth respondent, if the information is presented as real data it can be verifiable, therefore, in order to delimit these two phenomena, the data of the comment itself should be checked with reality.

Summing up the information obtained during the interview, it can be said that although the opinions of the police officers involved in the study were divided on certain issues, but the main trends in the problematic issues under consideration are noted. When separating freedom of expression from hate crime, police officers pay attention to the purpose of the perpetrator to incite hatred of other persons as well as to the motive of prejudice towards a certain group. Among other things, police officers also mentioned these important signs of demarcation as most difficult to prove in practice. Also, police officers unanimously spoke out on the separation of the violation of the honor and dignity of a person from freedom of expression, emphasized the differences of opinion and fact, which were also discovered in the analyzed theory. Although the respondents' responses to questions such as the most vulnerable minority groups and religious communities against which hate speech is used diverged, these questions are exclusively related to their subjective experiences and the practical situations examined, so it is natural that each of the respondents gave different insights into the trends studied. The study also found that police officers use very different measures to prevent hate crimes in practice, but this only ensures wider public reach and informing individuals from different groups of possible responsibility. Thus, it can be concluded that the separation of hate crimes from self-expression, as well as the separation of public order violations, proving the elements of composition is a complex process, which depends on the police officer himself, who chooses the most suitable means in his opinion for the elements of composition, to prove the motive of hatred.

Conclusions

The concept of freedom of expression is a heterogeneous concept that includes the ability to have and form one's own beliefs, the ability to share them in all ways and means. Freedom of expression must be seen both as a way of self-realization and as a fundamental condition for the existence of a harmonious democracy.

Only abstract rules for the separation of self-expression and hate speech are discernible, associated with the publicity of extreme negative information, targeting minority groups, encouraging them to deal with them. A similar situation can also be seen when restricting self-expression from the violation of a person's honor and dignity, in this case only the guidelines created by court practice were observed, which mention the validity of the expressed content with evidence, correspondence with reality, the intensity of the information itself when assessing its impact on the person's reputation, the separation of fact and opinion. However, the existence of only abstract rules can lead either to too severe and disproportionate restriction of freedom of expression, or to violation of other rights of a person.

The results of the study confirmed, the separation of hate crimes from self-expression, as well as the separation of the violation of the honor and dignity of a person, proving the signs of composition is a complex process, depending on the police officer himself and his practical experience. However, from the data obtained, it can be seen that when delimiting freedom of expression from a hate crime, police officers pay attention to the purpose of the perpetrator to incite hatred and other persons, the prejudice of the perpetrator and the publicity of the act committed. In distinguishing between the delimitation of personal honor and dignity from freedom of expression, the respondents emphasized the differences between opinion and fact that were also discovered in the analyzed theory.

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PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND ILL-TREATMENT IN LITHUANIAN PRISONS

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Abstract. *The reports of the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment show that Lithuanian prisons still do not provide safe prison conditions for inmates. Considering that, the article aims to present whether Lithuanian legal regulation meets international and EU requirements and how Lithuania’s court and Seimas ombudsperson review system facilitate ensuring the protection of prisoners from violence and ill-treatment. The focus is on fulfilling the obligations of the prison authorities to ensure nonviolent prison conditions for inmates. The article analyses international, EU, and Lithuanian laws on ensuring the safety of prisoners and the decisions of Lithuanian Ombudsperson and Lithuanian courts on this issue for the period of 2022-2024.*

Keywords: *prisons, rights of prisoners, human rights, violence, ill-treatment.*

Introduction

The risk of human rights violations during imprisonment is a serious concern that requires special attention. When sentences are carried out in an environment that does not respect human rights and dignity, the purpose of the imprisonment becomes meaningless. Additionally, social reintegration for the convicted person becomes nearly impossible. It is paradoxical that through its structures, the state may violate the laws it prohibits citizens from violating (Sakalauskas & Norvaišytė, 2022, p. 342).

A sudden change in life and the experience of isolation can heighten inmates' feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. Therefore, daily living conditions in prison should not appear to punish the convict more than what was intended by the indictment. The execution of a prison sentence should not inflict additional suffering beyond the deprivation of liberty itself (Sakalauskas & Norvaišytė, 2022, p. 434).

The reports of the Council of Europe’s Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) show that Lithuanian prisons still do not provide safe prison conditions for inmates. The report on the CPT ad hoc visit to Lithuania in February 2024, published on 18 July 2024, emphasises that the Lithuanian authorities are still far from fulfilling their responsibility to protect prisoners. Illicit drug use, informal prisoner hierarchy, and catastrophically low staff presence inside dormitory-type accommodation are the main causes of inter-prisoner violence. The report also highlights the authorities' failure to conduct effective investigations into all credible allegations of ill-treatment, including those inflicted by fellow prisoners.

Furthermore, the report states that the Committee is concerned about treating detained individuals from the lowest caste of inmates in Lithuania. In some instances, this treatment „could amount to modern slavery”, which could be considered as degrading treatment under Art. 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. States are required to take all necessary measures to prevent such treatment.

Notably, Seimas Ombudspersons are authorised to check how detainees' human rights and freedoms are ensured in Lithuanian prisons under the national violence preventive mechanism established by the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and optional protocol (Law of Seimas Ombudspersons, 1998, Art. 3 (3) & 19¹) and Lithuanian courts have right to assess actions of prisons' staff and award damages to the victims of violence and ill-treatment.

Thus, the question arises of whether the Lithuanian legal framework facilitates the necessary standards in providing a nonviolent environment for inmates set by international and EU law and how effective Lithuania's court and Seimas ombudsperson review system is. Accordingly, the article aims to present whether Lithuanian legal regulation meets international and EU requirements and how Lithuania's court and Seimas ombudsperson review system facilitate ensuring the protection of prisoners from violence and ill-treatment. The main focus is on fulfilling the obligations of the prison authorities in ensuring nonviolent prison conditions for inmates.

Methodology of the research: Analysis and generalisation methods were applied to the study. International, EU, and Lithuanian laws on ensuring the safety of prisoners and the decisions of Lithuanian Ombudsperson and Lithuanian courts on this issue for the period 2022-2024 were analysed. The article summarises and highlights the gaps in the Lithuanian practice of ensuring detainees' safety in prisons by applying the generalisation method. This method is also applied to present the conclusions.

International and EU requirements for ensuring fundamental rights in prisons

In assessing the suitability of the measures to prevent violence and ill-treatment in Lithuanian prisons, the common minimum standard on this issue, defined in international universal and regional documents and EU laws, should be discussed.

First, it should be mentioned that international universal and regional documents, as well as EU laws, clearly stress that no one can be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This notion is embedded in Art. 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed as “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” (UN Resolution 217 A, 1948). The state's commitment to ensure this principle can also be found in Art. 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1996), Art. 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), and Art. 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000).

Under international law, torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from them or a third person information or confession, punishing them for an act they have committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing them or other persons or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity (UN Resolution 3452 (XXX), 1975, Art.1(1); Convention Against Torture, 1966, Art.1). The UN Convention Against Torture in Art. 2 establishes the obligation of each state to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction.

Alice Jill Edwards, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, emphasised the prohibition of torture - an *erga omnes* and *jus cogens* norm, as an absolute human right, “reflected in its non-derogability.” Such treatment is “prohibited in peacetime, in armed conflict and during other public emergencies and is without

territorial limits” (Edwards, 2022, § 28). In the case of torture, there is not only a human rights violation actionable by individuals against Governments and by Governments against Governments but also a crime under international law (Edwards, 2022, § 29).

Edwards also noted that “[l]esser forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited under customary international law” (2022, § 28). Under Art. 16 (1) of the UN Convention Against Torture, each contracting state undertook to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture. Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment also asks states to condemn the same way any other act of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (1975, Art. 2). Declaration requires all states not to permit or tolerate not only torture but also other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Art. 3) and take effective measures to prevent such treatment or punishment from being practised within its jurisdiction (Art. 4). Similarly, the Nelson Mandela Rules (2015) ask states to take all necessary measures to protect all prisoners not only from torture but also any other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. No circumstances whatsoever may be invoked to justify mistreatment. In no circumstances can restrictions or disciplinary sanctions amount to such treatment or punishment (Rule 43 (1)).

International and EU documents specifying the rights of people in prisons indicate that all persons deprived of their liberty must be treated with humanity and with respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human persons. This requirement can be found in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, Art. 10 (1)), Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (1990, Art. 1), Nelson Mandela Rules (2015, Rule 1), Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000, Art. 1), and the European Commission Recommendation on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons subject to pre-trial detention and on material detention conditions (2022, § 11). The Committee of Ministers issued an additional Recommendation concerning foreign prisoners, which asks member states to treat foreign prisoners with respect for their human rights and due regard for their particular situation and individual needs (2012, § 3).

International documents require ensuring all prisoners' rights to all prisoners without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Art. 2(1); Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, 1990, Art. 2; Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015, Rule 2 (1)). In addition to the grounds listed for the prohibition of discrimination, the European Convention on Human Rights also specifies the prohibition of discrimination on grounds related to a person's association with a national minority (1950, Art. 14). The Nelson Mandela Rules go further; they specify that prisoners' religious beliefs and moral precepts must be respected (2015, Rule 2 (1)).

Following the states' commitments embedded in the international agreements and EU laws, the guidelines—Prisons' Rules—at universal, regional, and EU levels specify conditions for fulfilling the requirements. International universal rules – the Nelson Mandela Rules (2015) and the Bangkok Rules (2010), focus on a prisoner–prison authority relationship, whereas other rules – European Prison Rules (2006), Recommendation concerning foreign prisoners (2012) and European Commission Recommendation on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons subject to pre-trial detention and on material detention conditions (Commission's Recommendation) (2022), in addition to the issues addressed by international universal rules, also consider general safety requirements in the prisons and the need to protect prisoners from violence or ill-treatment by fellow inmates.

Aiming to ensure inmates' safety in prisons, the following recommendations should be highlighted, summarising the provisions in the mentioned rules and recommendations.

Firstly, rules and recommendations indicate general safety requirements. Under the Commission's Recommendation, the EU member states are asked to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of detainees and to prevent any form of torture or ill-treatment (§ 52). The Recommendation concerning foreign prisoners asks prison staff to ensure good order, safety and security through dynamic security and interaction with foreign prisoners (§ 32.1). The recommendation asks states to put every effort into enhancing mutual respect and tolerance and preventing conflict between prisoners, prison staff, or other persons working or visiting the prison (§ 32.3). The European Prison Rules indicate that good order in prison should be maintained by considering the requirements of security, safety, and discipline (§ 49).

The prison must ensure that inmates are protected from staff as well as from other fellow inmates' violence or ill-treatment. The Commission Recommendation (2022, § 52) asks Member States to take all reasonable measures to ensure that detainees are not subject to violence or ill-treatment by prison staff and are treated with respect for their dignity. European Prison Rules indicate that prison staff could use force against prisoners only in self-defence situations, in cases of attempted escape, or active or passive physical resistance to a lawful order. The use of force should always be a last resort. The force should be the minimum necessary and imposed for the shortest time (§§ 64.1 & 64.2).

The recommendation concerning foreign prisoners (2012, § 32.2) requires prison staff to be alert to potential or actual conflicts between groups within the prison population that may arise due to cultural or religious differences and inter-ethnic tensions. The obligation to ensure protection against inmates' violence applies not only to foreign prisoners but also to other prisoners. Following the ECHR decision in case *T v. Lithuania* (Application no. 29474/09) for the establishing the violation of the Article 3 right (prohibition of torture) of the European Convention on Human Rights, it is enough to demonstrate that the authorities had not taken all steps which could have been reasonably expected of them to prevent real and immediate risks to the prisoner's physical integrity, of which the authorities had or ought to have had knowledge. (2013, § 53).

Secondly, rules and recommendations ask states to apply minimum-security measures to ensure a secure prison environment. The European Prison Rules state that only the minimum necessary security measures should be applied to inmates to achieve secure custody (§ 51.1). To ensure that the Rules recommend that after admission, each prisoner's assessment is conducted as soon as possible to determine whether they pose a safety risk to other inmates, prison staff, or other persons or are likely to harm themselves (§ 52.1). Following the assessment, special measures can be applied against the prisoner to ensure the safety of others and the prisoner. However, every possible effort should be made to allow these prisoners to participate safely in daily activities. Each prisoner should be able to contact staff anytime, including at night (§§ 52.2 – 52.5).

Thirdly, as a last resort, special high security or safety measures could be imposed on prisoners who threaten the security or safety of the other inmates and prison staff. European Prison Rules acknowledge that special high security or safety measures could be imposed on prisoners who threaten security or safety. However, the rules indicate that such measures should only be applied in exceptional circumstances and only for as long as security or safety cannot be maintained by less restrictive means (2006, §§ 53.1- 53.2). The Rules indicate that disciplinary procedures should be mechanisms of last resort (§ 56.1). Whenever possible,

prison authorities should use mechanisms of restoration and mediation to resolve disputes with and among prisoners (§ 56.2).

Special high security or safety measures may include the separation of a prisoner from other inmates in solitary confinement (§ 53.3). However, such measures should be applied individually, considering only the current risk, should be proportionate to that risk and shall not entail more restrictions than are necessary to counter that risk (§§ 53.7- 53.8). In addition, the Bangkok Rules state that punishment by close confinement or disciplinary segregation cannot be applied to pregnant women, women with infants and breastfeeding mothers (2010, Rule 22).

Fourthly, prison rules give particular attention to the instruments of restraint. Nelson Mandela Rules stresses that instruments of restraint should never be applied as a sanction for disciplinary offences (Rule 43 (2)). The use of chains, irons, or other restraint instruments that are inherently degrading or painful should be prohibited in any circumstances. Other instruments of restraint, such as handcuffs, restraint jackets and other body restraints, could only be used when authorised by law and are needed as a precautionary measure against escape during a transfer or to prevent a prisoner from injuring themselves or others or damaging property (Rule 47 (1)). Instruments of restraint should only be imposed when no lesser form of control would be effective in addressing the risks posed by a prisoner. The method of restraint should be the least intrusive, necessary, and reasonably available and proportional to the level and nature of the risks (European Prison Rules, 2006, Rules 68.1 & 68.2.). Instruments of restraint must be used only for the time the risks are present (European Prison Rules, 2006, Rule 68.3.). The Bangkok Rules stresses that instruments of restraint shall never be used on women during labour, during childbirth and immediately after birth (2010, Rule 24).

Fifthly, the Nelson Mandela Rules also pay attention to the procedure for searches of inmates and cells. Rules specify that searches should be conducted only in a manner that respects the inherent human dignity and privacy of the individual being searched. While implementing the searches, the principles of proportionality, legality, and necessity should be respected. Searches should not be used to harass, intimidate or unnecessarily intrude upon a prisoner's privacy (Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015, Rule 50 & 51). Intrusive searches, including strip and body cavity searches, should be undertaken only if strictly necessary (Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015, Rule 52 (1)). In addition, the Bangkok Rules require respecting women prisoners' dignity during personal searches. Women staff should only do the search (2010, Rule 19).

Finally, European Prison Rules address the issue of weapons. Under the Rules, lethal weapons should be carried by the prison staff within the prison perimeter only in case of operational emergency when there is a need to deal with a particular incident (2020, §§ 69.1 & 69.2)

In summary, international and EU documents indicate that preventing violence and ill-treatment should be the primary consideration of all EU member states.

Lithuanian legal framework on prevention of violence and ill-treatment

The Lithuanian Penal Code establishes the procedure, conditions and principles for executing punishments (Penal Code, Art. 1 (1)). The principle of humanism enshrined in the Code requires that the measures applied during the execution of punishments must not limit the rights and freedoms of the sentenced person if this is not justified and necessary. In addition, torture, cruelty, humiliation, and medical, biological and other scientific experiments on convicts are prohibited (Art. 4 (1)). However, the Code does not provide a more detailed explanation of how this humanism principle should be implemented in practice. This issue is regulated in other legal acts.

As already mentioned in the previous section, the prisoner must be protected both from the violence of the prison staff and from the violence of other inmates.

Discussing the protection from violence by prison staff, it could be said that the Law on the system of execution of punishments (2022) foresees that Lithuanian prison service officers must, in the institutions of deprivation of liberty, respect and protect the human dignity of the prisoners, ensure and protect their human rights and freedoms, and protect them from imminent danger to their health and/or life (Art.11). The law specifies in what circumstances prison staff have the right to use coercion and/or firearms. Under the law, prison staff can use coercion to protect themselves or to protect others from imminent danger to life or health, to force the convict to comply with the demands or instructions of the officers, to repel an attack on a firearm, special equipment, means of communication and to recover these objects, to repel attacks on buildings, vehicles, property, territories, to enter territories, premises or means of transport during a search or seizure or searching hiding sentenced person or to prevent criminal acts. The coercion measures can also be used in cases of riots conducted by convicted or arrested persons, group resistance to the administration of a prison, illegal group actions violating the internal order of a prison, and hostage-taking situations (Art.13(3)).

The law allows prison staff to use coercion measures just in proportion to the existing danger, considering the specific situation, the nature of the violation of the law, the intensity, and the offender's characteristics. When there is no imminent danger to the life or health of the prison staff or other persons, the use of physical coercion and special measures (except for handcuffs, means, or tools for arresting, tying or restraining persons) is prohibited against persons with disabilities, vulnerable persons, pregnant women and minors (Art. 13 (8)). However, contrary to what the International and EU documents recommended, the law does not distinguish women after birth.

In addition, the Code of Conduct for employees of the Lithuanian Prisons Service requires prison staff to respect the honour and dignity of every person and their fundamental rights and freedoms when performing their duties. They cannot act in a way that is considered torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, nor encourage or tolerate such actions (2023, § 8 (1)). When other measures are ineffective, the guards can use a restraint, such as tying a person to a special bed. (The instruction for organising protection and supervision, 2023, §§ 209 – 221).

Lithuanian Prisons Service's instructions for protection and supervision approved by the Minister of Justice distinguish situations when guards must record contacts with convicted persons to ensure proper behaviour from both sides, the prison staff and prisoners. Such records should be done when contacting convicted persons during their meal, when taking them out of the living quarters and accompanying them inside the prison territory, when escorting and conveying them, checking convicted persons for intoxication, conducting personal searches, checking their belongings, inspecting prison premises and its entrances, dealing with inmates who behave aggressively are drunk or intoxicated, when conducting inspections of prisoners and preventing criminal acts and violations (Instruction for organising protection and supervision, 2023, §§ 119 – 122).

Regarding ensuring protection from violence by other inmates, the Instruction for organising protection and supervision asks the prison administration to ensure protection and a safe environment for detained persons. Following the instructions, to reduce the number of cases of violent behaviour in places of execution of punishment, the director of the Lithuanian prison service issued the Description of the procedure for the prevention of violent behaviour and investigation of physical injuries of arrested and convicted persons, the preparation, processing and accounting of related documents at the places of execution of the sentence

(execution of the arrest) (2024), which establishes violence risk assessment measures and control methods, determines the actions of prison staff and their duties and control measures, establishes the procedure for cooperation between prison units in the event of violent behaviour being observed.

The Description focuses on preventing violence. It specifies that prevention aims to create a safe, favourable environment for the resocialisation of detained persons, where they and prison staff feel safe and respected, and their opinions and recommendations are listened to and considered (§ 6). In addition, the Description declares "zero tolerance" for any violence, including verbal harassment and bullying in everyday work (§ 7). It also provides a definition of violence. Under Description, violence (violent behaviour) means actions or omissions that cause intentional physical, mental, sexual, economic or other effects on a person, resulting in physical, material, psychological or other non-material damage (§ 7). Physical violence is considered unlawful and intentional physical impact against a person aiming to take their life, harm health, cause a helpless state, cause physical pain or other physical suffering. Physical violence can manifest in various beatings, hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, strangling, spitting, burning, stabbing, pinching, wounding, pulling hair, torture, etc. Psychological violence is the intentional effect on a person's mental state by making him fear that threats will result in violent physical or other behaviour. Examples of psychological violence are insulting words, remarks, prohibitions, threats aimed at hurting, intimidating, making a person dependent on the abuser, etc. Economic violence manifests in a ban on work, deprivation of money or other property, forcing the victim to get cash for various needs, etc (§ 8).

In addition, the Description also asks prison administrations to create and promote a positive culture in places where punishment is executed, develop prison staff's teamwork competencies, and train on violence prevention topics (§ 7).

To achieve the goals, the Description presents a violence prevention mechanism that can be divided into nine parts.

Measures for newly arriving prisoners. When a new detainee arrives, the receiving officer must assess their vulnerability, likelihood of violence, signs of hostility toward others, and tendencies toward conflict. This assessment should help accommodate the newcomer. Additionally, a psychologist conducts a psychological evaluation to assess the same aspects: vulnerability, propensity for violence, hostility levels, conflict tendencies, and communication characteristics. During the introductory interview, resocialisation specialists must identify whether the new detainee has difficulties communicating with other inmates. They should explain where the detainee can seek help if needed.

Prison staff must know detainees who tend to harm others. The description requires that the staff be attentive to prison surroundings, respond promptly to any conflicts or signs of escalation, and take necessary measures to protect the lives and health of prisoners. When possible, they should act to prevent severe damage.

Promotion of non-violent behaviour. Prison staff should observe detainees' adaptation characteristics, behaviours, and interactions during individual and group consultations. Any signs of violence must be reported to the anti-violence commission and relevant personnel. Resocialisation specialists should pay attention to how individuals communicate in their living environment. They should consult detainees on how to solve problems without violence and highlight the harmful impact of subculture on interpersonal relationships and personal development.

Reaction to sights of violence. Prison staff must take immediate action to prevent conflicts whenever they observe any signs or indications of potential conflict. In case of any violence—whether verbal, psychological, or physical—among inmates, the prison staff must assess the

situation and implement measures to prevent any incidents. When staff receive information about the rising probability of violence among detainees—or when there are visible signs of possible violence—they are required to relocate detainees at risk to a different cell or living area. Additionally, they must take measures to de-escalate the situation. In the future, instigators of violence should be monitored more closely in their living and communal areas.

Daily check of detainees. At the start of a shift, the officer on duty must check whether each prisoner is present and visually assess them for facial or bodily bruises, scratches, and signs of intoxication. If the officer observes any injuries on a prisoner's body, they must report this to the security and supervision officers (Instruction for organising protection and supervision, 2023, §§ 42 – 50). During duty shifts and inspections of detainees, prison staff should also pay attention to persons who avoid communication, are dressed not under the season, or are trying to conceal their appearance. Duty officers must also look for persons who do not participate in inspections or are sleeping in areas not designated for them. If such behaviour is noted, staff must investigate its reasons and check whether those prisoners are not victims of physical or mental violence.

Help the victims of violence. When prison staff observe signs of injury in detainees, they must provide them with emergency aid and then transfer them to a doctor for a more comprehensive examination. Inmates who have experienced psychological or physical violence can consult with a psychologist. Additionally, the psychologist provides methodological support to prison staff in managing the violent situation.

Recording of violence. When the injured inmate is found, the prison staff must register their injuries, including taking a photo of the body. They also must secure the scene where the violence took place and make its inspection, collect the evidence and register them. In addition, the staff must also perform a detailed investigation of the circumstances, including questioning the victim and witnesses.

Administrative arrangements. A special commission in the prisons collects data about cases of violence and its causes and provides recommendations on how to prevent violence in the future. The head of the prison must organise staff meetings at least once a quarter to discuss issues such as the prevention of violence, the microclimate, how to create peaceful communication between prison staff and inmates, and how to solve conflicts.

Training of prison staff. The heads of prisons must encourage guards and other prison staff to participate in training on risk management and the prevention of violence against vulnerable detainees.

In summary, legal regulation in Lithuania facilitates ensuring safe conditions for inmates in Lithuanian prisons. The question arises as to why there is still violence in Lithuanian prisons, about which the CPT reports remind Lithuania. It seems that what is declared and required in legal acts does not work in practice. The control mechanism is vital in ensuring the proper implementation of legal acts. Therefore, finding out how the control mechanism works in Lithuania is important. Next, this article analyses the decisions of the two control mechanisms, the Seimas Ombudsperson, acting under the national violence preventive mechanism, and the courts, assessing the lawfulness of the decisions and actions of the Lithuanian public bodies.

The findings of Seimas Ombudsperson regarding violence and ill-treatment in prisons

Article 3 (3) and Article 19¹ of the Law of Seimas Ombudsperson (1998) indicate that ombudspersons are authorised to check how detainees' human rights and freedoms are ensured in Lithuanian prisons under the national violence preventive mechanism established by the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

and optional protocol (Optional Protocol, 2002). The purpose of the national mechanism for the prevention of torture is to identify the possible causes, risks and signs of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in places of restriction of liberty, to improve the treatment of persons whose liberty is restricted, the conditions of detention of these persons, as well as to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Procedure for the organisation of the NPT, 2022, point 3).

The analysis of the Ombudsperson's reports for the period 2022 – 2024 indicates that preventive measures are not enough to eliminate violence in Lithuanian prisons. It can be said that the violence in prisons is not the main focus area of Seimas Ombudsperson's institution. During this period, only one report was available, which only partially touched on the issue of violence in prisons. The report covered some violence issues under thematic study on the Prevention of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, Hiv/Aids, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (2023). The latest report, 14 June 2024, on the situation of human rights in the Panevezys prison discusses resocialisation, employment, psychological help, contact with the external world, and the feeding and healthcare of inmates. However, the theme of violence and ill-treatment is not covered in the report. The reasons are not clear. Maybe the number of personnel in the Seimas Ombudsmen's institution is too small to examine the situation in Lithuanian prisons more closely.

Discussing the findings in the thematic study on the Prevention of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, Hiv/Aids, and Sexually Transmitted Infections, and the availability of treatment for these diseases in Prisons conducted in 2023, it could be said that it indicates the manifestation of sexual abuse in prisons. In Alytus prison, a pre-trial investigation was launched due to the possible sexual abuse of a detainee. The staff of the Pravieniskiai 1st prison also informed that in 2022, one case of sexual abuse was recorded (§ 3.3.24.). In the Pravieniskiai case, the victim was examined by a doctor. In Alytus prison, the victim got help, which included the victim's isolation and counselling by the prison's psychologist. Personal interviews with the detainees of Pravieniskiai 1st prison (among them were detainees transferred from Marijampole and Alytus prisons) revealed that the number of victims of sexual abuse could be higher than recorded (§ 3.3.24.). More detainees noted they had experienced sexual abuse. Detainees explained they did not report to the authorities about sexual abuse against them because of the risk of being assigned to the lowest caste of the prison subculture hierarchy if the case of sexual abuse came to light. The convicts said the sexual abuse usually takes place in the shower or the toilet of the cell, without using condoms (§ 3.3.24.).

The study revealed that Alytus prison did not collect data on the sexual violence experienced by detainees, and they could not comment on whether the detainees have sexual relationships. Still, they were aware that used condoms were found in the places where the detainees stayed. The staff of the Pravieniskiai 1st prison also admitted that they had noticed cases when a detainee offered sexual services to other inmates for money, cigarettes, etc. (§ 3.3.24.).

Answers provided by the Marijampole prison staff in 2022 indicate that there is no approved procedure for help and assistance to the victim of sexual violence and how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. In case of sexual violence, the prison staff would act considering the circumstances and the needs of the victim. The Pravieniskiai 1st prison staff also did not know what specific actions must be taken in case of sexual abuse (§ 3.3.24.). The action plans of the prisons also did not include specific measures for the prevention of sexual violence among inmates. Documents do not provide for actions that must be taken in prisons to protect a person who has suffered from sexual violence, provide him with the necessary assistance and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (§ 3.3.25.). Lithuanian Prison Service

confirmed that the prisons did not have approved algorithms dealing with the prevention of infectious diseases and the treatment of victims of sexual violence (§ 3.3.25.).

Victims of sexual violence admitted they were isolated from the perpetrators. Still, they were not provided with the necessary psychological help, and healthcare specialists did not examine their bodies. Detainees who experienced anal and oral sexual abuse complained that they were not tested for infectious diseases. They also noted that only pre-trial investigation officers communicated with them; however, they did not get complex assistance. Healthcare specialists, psychologists and resocialisation specialists claimed they are not informed about cases of sexual violence among convicts.

Considering the study's results, the Seimas Ombudsperson recommended that the Lithuanian Prison Service change the situation.

In addition, it is worth noting that the Seimas Ombudspersons also investigate applicants' complaints regarding human rights violations and freedoms in detention (Law on Seimas Ombudspersons, 1998, Art. 12 (1)). During the 2022-2024 period, several decisions touched on the issue of violence in prisons.

On 7 August 2023, the Seimas Ombudsperson, in decision No. 4D-2023/1-406, found that the prisoner possibly injured by the prison staff was not provided with immediate and appropriate medical care and an investigation on whether the officers did not exceed the use of necessary force was not carried out. In this case, the detainee of Marijampole prison claimed that his hand was injured (he was diagnosed with a sprained wrist and bruises) due to physical coercion measures - combative wrestling actions and handcuffs used by prison staff against the detainee. On the day of the injury, the detainee was consulted by the prison doctor, who did not find serious injuries. Just after three days, when the detainee repeatedly visited the doctor due to arm pain, he was escorted to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a fracture of the palmar bone. The Seimas Ombudsperson noted that the prison did not investigate whether the physical force used by the prison staff was excessive. They also did not preserve the videos of the day of the injury. (Notably, this is a repeating practice when prison staff do not preserve videos even in cases where the detainees asked them to do that because of the need to investigate a complaint). Considering that, the Seimas Ombudsperson concluded that prison staff did not take the required measures to eliminate the dangerousness of their physical force actions against the detainee and to prevent the occurrence of such actions in the future and asked the director of the Lithuanian Prison Service to conduct the required investigation. The Seimas Ombudsperson also expressed concern about the inactivity of prison staff regarding ensuring the protection of the rights and freedoms of detainees. The situation when officers do not fulfil their positive duties to respond effectively in case of health impairment of the detainee is not compatible with the duties of the prison officers to respect and protect human dignity, ensure and protect human rights and freedoms, protect persons from threats to their health and life. The Seimas Ombudsperson asked the director of the Lithuanian Prison Service to take measures to ensure that officers immediately respond to information about detainees' injuries and take all necessary actions.

In another case, No. 4D-2022/1-638, 30 December 2022, the Seimas Ombudsperson found that in Panevezys prison, prison staff were performing preventive checks during the night 2-3 times, entering the living room, in the absence of necessity. The Ombudsperson concluded that such a measure was not proportionate to ensuring the regime of correctional institutions and, therefore, violated the human rights of detainees.

Lithuanian Courts' Case Law regarding violence and ill-treatment in prisons

Lithuanian court decisions also show manifestations of violence in Lithuanian prisons. During 2022-2024, six court decisions touched on violence issues in Lithuanian Prisons. In five administrative cases, the prisoners asked for damages for pain and suffering because of violence. In one criminal case, the prison guards were sentenced for unjustified use of violence against the prisoner.

In the Regional Administrative Court decision in administrative case Nr. eI1-2396-505/2024, 26 June 2024, the detainee appealed to the court, asking the court to order a detailed investigation into the circumstances of the violent behaviour of Alytus prison staff and to award 1,000 euros in non-pecuniary damage. The detainee stated that three officers of the Criminal Intelligence Department entered his cell and demanded that the detainee move to another cell and arrange the belongings of the inmates who had been in that cell before. When he refused to do so, four more officers were called, who came and started dragging the applicant around the entire cell, threw him to the ground, grabbed his hand and began to press his face to the wall, humiliating the detainee in front of another inmate. The officers acted without turning on the video recorder. Also, one officer threatened the detainee that if he cut himself, he would be "hanged". As a result, the detainee felt humiliated and ruined; he could not bear the emotional stress, so he injured himself and was escorted to the hospital. The detainee appealed to the head of the Alytus prison with a complaint about the actions of the Criminal Intelligence Department and Alytus prison officers. The Immunity and Internal Investigation divisions of the Prison Service interviewed the officers involved in the incident. They concluded that there was no evidence of disrespectful behaviour or inappropriate actions by the officers. The detainee appealed to the court, asking to request an order for a detailed investigation and pay non-pecuniary damage for pain and suffering.

The court decided that there was no need to conduct a detailed investigation. However, it found that the officers did not use video recorders during their service because they did not even have them. According to officers, using video recorders is not mandatory for investigators. The court stated that it is impossible to reconstruct the course of events in the cell and find the exact circumstances in such a situation. As a result, in the court's opinion, all doubts about the circumstances of the event must be considered in favour of the detainee. Considering this, the court awarded the detainee 70 EUR for non-pecuniary damage.

In another Regional Administrative Court decision in administrative case No II-7778-473/2024, adopted on 23 May 2024, the detainee appealed to the court to award non-pecuniary damage because, among other circumstances, a subculture was facilitated in the Praveniskiai 1st prison, and the inmates were divided into castes. According to him, he was humiliated by other "higher caste" inmates, subjected to psychological violence, and forced to "watch streams" so that other higher caste inmates could use mobile phones, drugs and alcohol. The detainee also stated that the canteen's dishes are divided into two groups. The inmates belonging to the higher caste get new dishes and more significant portions, while the inmates belonging to the lower caste are given old green dishes and smaller portions. Upper-caste inmates shop in the prison shop first, and then lower-caste convicts can shop.

Following the arguments provided by the court to prove such a claim, the detainee must show that he addressed the prison psychologists for help due to emotional distress, mental suffering, inconvenience, feelings of inferiority, and violation of dignity, which could have been caused by unsuitable prison conditions in Praveniškių 1st prison due to bullying of other inmates or manifestations of subculture. To prove that the portions of food were too small, or the dishes were not given out properly, he should have written complaints to the property and

management department of the prison. His complaint was rejected as unfounded since he did not have such evidence. The explanations provided by the prison service were sufficient for the court to justify such a decision.

The court decision shows that the burden of proving the claim is too excessive for the prisoners to fulfil. In the case of the existence of subcultures in prisons, the life of prisoners who start making complaints about the issues discussed in this court case would make their life in prison unbearable. The court should not require such evidence to prove the claim. It is worth noting that the subculture's existence in prisons is not once indicated in CPT reports and even in other court decisions (Supreme Administrative Court, Administrative Case No.TA-63-556/2022, 8 June 2022). Event lawyers in other countries ask courts not to hand over the suspects to Lithuania under the European Arrest Warrant because of the existence of subculture and violence in Lithuanian prisons. Therefore, there should be a presumption of subculture's existence in prisons unless the prison authorities can prove otherwise.

In the Regional administrative court decision in administrative case No. II-4330-422/2023, 25 September 2023, the prisoner complained to the court about the actions of the prison guards at the medical point, where he had to take medication under the supervision of the medical worker and the prison guard. According to the Prisoner, when he nodded that he had taken the medicine, the prison guard grabbed the applicant's jaw without gloves and pressed it with force. He stated that he experienced violence, psychological pressure, psychological pain, emotional depression, mental suffering, and physical pain. The court reasoned that the guard had the right to use coercion against the prisoner if there were suspicions that he did not swallow the medicine in the health care office. To verify the officers' actions, the court reviewed the video records. The video showed the officer raising his hand to the prisoner's face, but at that moment, the camera was directed at the people in the corridor. As a result, there was no video showing what happened after the hand was raised to the prisoner's face. Therefore, based only on the testimony of the prison staff, the court concluded that the prisoner's rights were not violated. Unfortunately, the court did not provide any argument about prison guards turning the camera away from the scene of action at a crucial moment; the facts presented in the case raise suspicions that the prison guards may be hiding the actual behaviour.

In the Vilnius Regional Administrative Court decision in administrative case II-809-596/2023, 14 March 2023, the prisoner asked for 11,600 EUR in non-pecuniary damage because he was not provided with safe prison conditions.

In this case, the director of the Vilnius Prison decided on 14 October 2021 to transfer the prisoner from the 2nd squad to the 7th squad. After the transfer to the new place, the inmates started threatening that if he did not move from the 7th squad, they would use physical violence against him. He informed the prison administration about this. He was isolated from other convicts for 48 hours. Later, he was temporarily transferred to another prison. On 22 October 2024, upon returning to Vilnius prison, in the place of residence in squad 7, other inmates started threatening him. The prisoner informed the authorities that he was in danger. However, according to him, the officers did not notice this. When he returned to the premises of the 7th squad, he was attacked and beaten. Because of this event, the victim-prisoner was transferred to a temporary detention cell for 48 hours. When, at the end of the 48-hour isolation period, the prison staff wanted to return him to his assigned place in squad 7, he wrote an explanation to the prison administration that he agreed to be in squad seven but informed that his health was at risk there and asked to be transferred to the squads 1-3. Instead of making any changes, the prison staff returned him to the temporary detention cell for 48 hours. This situation was repeated until 25 November 2021, when the director of the Vilnius prison decided to change his place of imprisonment from the 7th squad to the 5th squad, where, according to the prisoner,

the subculture existed. According to the prisoner, on the day of the transfer, he received threats from other prisoners not to try to move to the 5th squad. As a result, he informed the prison administration that his life and health were in danger if he was transferred to squad 5 and asked to be transferred to squads 1-3. He was again isolated for 48 hours. The isolation was repeated until 4 January 2022. In total, he spent 76 days in isolation.

In addition, in one month, in December, he was given three disciplinary sanctions for not stating any specific reasons or indicating persons for which his health or life would be in danger. The prison administration concluded that the prisoner's explanations, including the statement that he agrees to go to the assigned squad and that his life and health are in danger in that squad, are misleading the officials, with which the convict seeks favourable decisions.

The prisoner expressed his dissatisfaction several times because no one talks to him and does not solve his problems. He was also dissatisfied with the disciplinary sanctions imposed on him. He expressed his dissatisfaction in a raised tone, saying he takes measures as he had nothing to lose. As a result, he was included in the list of prisoners prone to assault. Finally, due to three disciplinary sanctions, he was transferred from the ordinary group prison conditions to the disciplinary group on 4 January 2022. On 1 February 2022, he was transferred from Vilnius prison to Praveniskiai prison.

In this case the court awarded 200 EUR non-pecuniary damage only for the fact that on 22 October 2021, when the prisoner was returned to squad 7, he was beaten. In the opinion of the court, if the protection of the prisoner was effective, other convicts would not have had the opportunity to commit illegal acts against him, and he would not have experienced physical violence (beating). However, the court did not award damages for a 76-day stay in the cell in isolation. It even justified the disciplinary sanctions against the prisoner, stating that he did not prove a threat to him and, therefore, was not right to refuse to go to designated squad 5. The court relied only on the explanations of prison authorities. They said that they asked prisoners in the 5th whether they knew the Prisoner and threatened him, and they answered negatively. Unfortunately, the court also did not consider the impact of subculture in this case. The court decision shows that to prove the threat to life, the prisoner must be beaten or must indicate which person threatens him. In a subculture environment, this is hardly possible, especially when there is no trust in prison authorities.

Finally, in Kaunas Regional Court Ruling in criminal case No 1A-32-954/20244, 4 March 2024, prison guards of Praveniskiai 2nd prison G.M. and L.T. were sentenced for exceeding their authority when, without any duty necessity or legal basis, they used special measures against prisoner A.M. on 18 August 2021, who was under their supervision, that is, they used electroshock "Taser" against him at least four times and hit him at least two times with a stick in different parts of his body, knocked him down and kept him pinned to the floor for some time. The victim tried to crawl out of the cell, but G.M. and L.T. pulled back the victim inside the cell. With such actions, they caused a blow wound on the forehead of the prisoner, an elongated bruise on his back, skin abrasions on his right elbow, both knees and legs and in this way, caused the victim physical pain and impaired his health. The court imposed a fine on the convicts, deprived them of the right to work in the civil service and ordered the victim of the convicts to pay a total of EUR 1000 in non-pecuniary damages.

The court ruling indicates that prison guards acted not incidentally but were prepared and intentionally acted violently. The court noted that both prison guards, although according to them they knew about prisoner A.M.'s aggressive behaviour for the second day, before entering the victim's cell, turned off the video recorders and removed them, leaving them at the security post in the corridor. Notably, according to the established procedure, the recorders must be used, among other things, when communicating with detainees. In addition, G.M. pulled out

the baton from the sleeve and G.T. unclipped the taser magazine at the moment of entering the victim's cell, showing preparation for the action.

The court ruling also shows that the internal investigation is ineffective. Notably, the prison's internal inspection, which finished on 25 August 2021, did not find any misuse of power by prison guards. It concluded that mental and physical coercion against prisoner A.M. was used only to the extent necessary for official duties.

In addition, it should be noted that the victim indicated that after the violent actions, the same officers told the victim to "go and wash off the blood", but he did not go to have proof of violence. Then G.M. came a second time and said, "go wash your face because we will put your head in the toilet and wash it ourselves", but he still did not wash off the blood.

In addition, the presented court cases show that not all prisons have call buttons for officers. There is no obligation to install call buttons in dormitory-type prison rooms (Regional Administrative Court administrative case Nr. I1-7778-473/202423, May 2024). Call buttons must be installed only in cells. However, even in cells, the call buttons sometimes do not work. Such a situation is noted in the Kaunas Regional Court Ruling No 1A-32-954/2024, 4 March 2024.

Conclusions

International and EU documents indicate that preventing violence and ill-treatment should be the primary consideration of all EU member states. Prohibition of torture is an *erga omnes* and *jus cogens* norm required to be ensured in all states. Lesser forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited under customary international law. Considering that, the prisons must ensure that inmates are protected from staff as well as from other fellow inmates' violence or ill-treatment. Prison rules defined in international policy documents specify conditions to be maintained to ensure the non-violent treatment of prisoners.

The analysis of the Lithuanian legal framework shows that legal regulation in Lithuania facilitates ensuring safe conditions for inmates in Lithuanian prisons.

Despite the international effort to encourage states to ensure a nonviolent environment for prisoners and even governments' willingness to establish a perfect legal framework to facilitate that, it does not work if implementation in practice and the monitoring and supervision system is ineffective. Lithuania's case has pretty good regulation; however, the practice needs improvement. Such practice, when the person who needs help is kept in solitary confinement for a long time in a similar way as those who are under punishment, should not be a common practice. Nor should there be such a norm when a person asking for help gets disciplinary sanctions for it and cannot even express dissatisfaction because he will be recognised as a violent person and even transferred to worse prison conditions, from the ordinary group to the disciplinary group. Prison guard's violent and ill-treating behaviour, without any doubt, should not be tolerated in Lithuanian prisons. More effective control measures are needed to ensure the use of video recordings by prison guards when contacting the inmates.

In addition, Lithuania needs a more effective monitoring and supervision mechanism. Courts should be more active in protecting prisoners' rights. When they award 70-200 EUR for moral damages, such court decisions do not push prisons to correct the situation.

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AIR CRASH OF THE PLANE IL-62 PLL LOT „NICOLAUS COPERNICUS” - SELECTED ISSUES FROM CASE STUDY

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Abstract. *On March 14, 1980, on the territory of the 6th Fortress of Warsaw, in the area of the Warsaw-Okęcie International Airport, a long-range jet crashed IL-62 designated as SP-LAA , “Nicolaus Copernicus”.*

The incident resulted in the deaths of all those on board, including singer Anna Jantar, who was at the height of her fame at the time, American ethnomusicologist Dr. Alan P. Meriam, a delegation of Polish students, and an amateur boxing team along medical staff and trainers. Due to censorship and the secret services, the real causes of the disaster were kept secret for many years.

To date, no one in Poland or abroad has undertaken to edit a scholarly work related to the event, so there is no officially authorized material that could be successfully used as a compendium of knowledge and a reliable source of information.

The article presents the most relevant information from an independent scientific monograph of more than 300 pages, where the legal, historical, forensic as well as those related to the safety of air travel are discussed in detail. Conducting reliable research has made it possible to correct facts that have been fixed in public opinion, but are not reflected in the file material, and relevant threads and hitherto concealed issues of a strategic nature have been raised in an effort to clarify the real cause-and-effect sequence as a result of which the crash occurred.

The author has analyzed the collected material in particular historical, legal and forensic aspects. Issues and aspects surrounding the event that have not been discussed so far have also been elaborated. The not inconsiderable role of propaganda, censorship, disinformation carried out by the organs functioning in the previous regime has also been taken into account. In addition to the case files in the archives' resources, I have analyzed more than a thousand copies of the Polish press, about two hundred foreign newspapers /American press/ I have also made use of literature imported from abroad, among others from Russia, Germany and the USA, published during the existence of the USSR, so as to confront the file information with official documents issued by the aircraft manufacturer, which the Soviet side refused to make available to Polish scientists in 1980. The author reveals information hidden from the public and tries to explain the actual algorithm of the crash taking into account the interdisciplinary dimension of the methods he adopted.

Keywords: *plane crash, investigation*

Introduction

The tragic plane crash, an IL-62 aircraft belonging to the LOT Polish Airlines fleet performing flight no. 007 on the New York-Warsaw route, occurred on March 14, 1980 on the grounds of a military fort, near Okęcie International Airport. (now EPWA) . As a result of the collision with the ground resulting in the disintegration of the machine into small pieces, the death of all persons on board occurred.

In order to reliably explore the issues surrounding the disaster in question, the author undertook a review of the case files archived in the archives of the National Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), analyzed the documentary materials produced to date related to disasters and aviation during the communist era. In addition, the statements of scientists who were members of expert teams investigating the causes of the plane crash, employees of the aviation infrastructure and representatives of the authorities operating at the scene were confronted.

Due to the fact that the events discussed in this case study took place in a completely different reality and, to be more precise, they fell on the period of operation of the People's Republic of Poland, Poland was not a member of the European Union it should be remembered that the operation of the civil aviation sector during the Cold War had a completely different dimension than the model of conduct in modern times, especially taking into account the safety of travel and stringent requirements for technical operation of aircraft. Due to the limitations related to the length of this article, the author decided to present the most important threads of his scientific research of any left documentation on the catastrophe, which were carried out over a period of more than two years.

The IL-62 aircraft was developed by the S. Ilyushin design bureau in the early 1960s, and the first test flight took place in 1963.

The fact that adjacent engines were grouped together posed a real risk of damaging another engine if one of them failed. However, the Soviet manufacturer explained this as a deliberate measure to bring significant benefits to the operation of the machine, among other things, to improve the aerodynamics of flight, facilitate eventual launching and landing without released landing gear. The IL-62 was able to fly from Moscow to New York without a stopover for 7700 km.

On March 29, 1971, a contract was signed between the Polish headquarters of Polmot and the Soviet Avioeksport for the delivery of three IL-62 aircraft.

The first IL-62 to be imported from the Ilyushin factory in Kazan to Poland was a model with the factory number 11004, its production was completed on February 1, 1972 the machine was named after Nicolaus Copernicus. On July 19, 1972, an air service agreement was concluded between the People's Republic of Poland and the United States.

The inaugural flight across the Atlantic Ocean took place on May 5, 1972 and was a ceremonial event. It was held on the Warsaw-Chicago route. The introduction of this type of machine to the airline contributed to the opening of a network of new routes, increased the prestige of the carrier, and above all was the driving force behind the propaganda element, which played a considerable role at the time. In addition to flights to New York and Chicago at the turn of 1972/1973, Polish travel agencies chartered LOT IL-62 for flights to Boston, Cleveland and Detroit in the US, as well as Montreal and Toronto in Canada. Even during the inauguration of the new routes, it happened that the aircraft in question succumbed to malfunctions that made the flight impossible. The operation of the IL-62 aircraft was so problematic in terms of the frequency of failures that as early as 1978 a much more modern, economical version, of the IL-62M type, was ordered from the Soviet Union and incorporated into the company's fleet in 1979.

Copernicus' last flight

On March 13, 1980, flight 006 on an airplane from Warsaw with (a stopover in Gander) landed in New York in the midday hours by Captain Tomasz Smolicz. This was the last successful landing of this aircraft.

The crew reported no technical malfunctions, the aircraft was handed over to the ground crew, while the staff went to quarters, where they met the crew of Captain Pawel Lipowczan, who was to make a return trip to Warsaw on this aircraft. The weather deteriorated significantly - there was a heavy snowstorm over the New York airport, hampering airport operations.

A total of 77 tickets were purchased for Flight 007 from New York to Warsaw on March 13, 1980. Among the passengers on the Copernicus were the singer Anna Jantar-Kukulska, who was at the height of her fame at the time, who at the time had awards in the form of two gold

longplay records and in 1979 was awarded the badge of "Meritorious Cultural Activist" returning from a three-month tour, Dr. Alan Perkhaust Meriam, a lecturer at Indiana University, an American entomusicologist and researcher in the anthropology of music traveling to Warsaw at the invitation of the Institute of Musicology at Warsaw University, who was to deliver several lectures there.

Six students representing Warsaw universities at the conference of the International Association of Students of Economics and Business Sciences taking place in New York, and 14 amateur boxing fighters from the U.S. amateur team, along with the other eight members of the delegation representing doctors, trainers and massage therapists....

The trip to Poland and the boxing competitions in Krakow and Katowice were intended as a form of reward for the young athletes for their achievements to date. For several of them, these were their first sparring sessions outside the US.

According to the flight schedule, the plane was scheduled to land in Warsaw at around 9:40 am, but due to a delay of more than two hours, it was scheduled to land at 11:15 am.

At 11:13 a.m., a final descent for landing was undertaken. At that time, the aircraft was at a distance of about 8 kilometres from the airport, being at an altitude of 300 meters above the ground. The commander of the aircraft reported the lack of proper signalling of the release of the landing gear nacelle, in view of which, in accordance with procedures, the fact of the release of the landing gear could be confirmed by personnel from the air traffic control tower, in the alternative option the aircraft was directed to circle over the airport and attempt an emergency ground release. The second way was generally a better decision-making option for two reasons because it then allowed immediate verification of whether only a bulb had burned out or whether the landing gear nacelles had in fact not been properly released.

Captain Lipowczan therefore chose, in accordance with the established procedure, the safer option to solve the technical problem. The engine revolutions during the landing approach were reduced and operated at a power limited to the safe amount prescribed for this procedure. The pilot reported the fact of the emergency to flight control and was instructed to increase the altitude to a ceiling of 650 meters.

In order to be able to carry out the standard procedure of going to the second circle, it was necessary to raise the machine to 650 meters, for this purpose it was immediately necessary to increase the power of all engines. A few seconds after moving the engine speed control manoeuvres to the position for maximum takeoff power, the shaft was twisted and the turbine of engine number 2 exploded. The aircraft was then about 3.5 km. from the airport. plating of the engine casing, and succumbed to gravitational forces without doing any other damage and fell to the ground, the second fragment hit the nacelle of engine No. 1 damaging it which disrupted the propulsion system, and resulted in a reduction in the efficiency of this engine. The third turbine disk fragment caused the most havoc. Piercing the fuselage of the aircraft, it encountered the elevator pushrods, rudder pushrods, and electrical wiring harnesses in its path, finally hitting the nacelle of engine No. 3 still, also disrupting its operation. The extent of the damage done by the final fragment was critical to the continued flight. The breakage of the aforementioned pushrods, caused the rudder of the altitude to drop under the influence of lack of tension with further elements leading to the cockpit and the activity of gravitational forces. This put the machine into a flight aimed at an inevitable collision with the earth's surface. The only possible device to change the trajectory slightly remained the ailerons located on the aircraft's wings, whose actuators connecting the cockpit to the wings did not reach the rear of the fuselage, so they could not be damaged. They worked without interference until the right wing detached as a result of hitting a tree, and a few seconds later the plane collided with the surface of the frozen moat of Fort Okęcie. The thickness of the ice reached up to about 35 Cm,

while the depth of the moat was a length of 3.5 meters, the height of the earth embankment measured from the surface of the ice sheet was 5.9 meters.

Had it not been for the life-saving measures taken by the pilot to save the lives of those on the ground, i.e. deflecting the ailerons to allow the plane to deviate from its original course, the plane would have hit the juvenile correctional facility located on Development Street, now named after Captain Lipowczan. At the time, its building housed many juvenile males along with their guardians and teachers. In addition, it is necessary to point out other circumstances that may indicate an attempt to control the machine and change the flight path to one that was aimed at saving lives. Despite the crew's surprise at the extent of the damage and the time pressure that accompanied them from the moment of the explosion to the moment of impact with the ground, i.e. only 26 seconds, it is documented that they attempted to change the flight path by adjusting the engines. Engine No. 2 and No.3 were set to idle, engine No. 4, as the only operable engine, was set to full takeoff power, while the power regulating manoeuvre of engine No. 1 was pushed violently to increase power, twelve seconds before Ilyushin crashed.

Buses with stretchers and equipment, the fire department and ambulances were dispatched from the airport. Several minutes after the crash, LOT management and the Minister of Communications and the commander of the Warsaw Militia arrived on the scene.

Immediately, 250 representatives of the fire department, more than 550 militia officers, the investigative bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the forensic department and other services were directed to undertake rescue operations and secure the scene. As a result of the reconnaissance carried out, it was determined that the death toll was all those traveling on the plane.

A large group of family members waited for the plane's arrival; it usually takes a long time to stay overseas, returning to Poland is a celebration and event for the whole family, people arrive by cab from various places in the country.

People waiting for the arrival of travellers from New York were not immediately informed of the disaster. An announcement was given about the delay of the plane then around 12 o'clock they were asked to a separate room where they were informed about the tragic disaster, they proceeded to compile a list of victims of the catastrophe. The list was verified until the evening. Teletypewriters from the LOT representative office in New York, Pan American, were arriving. After it was read in the evening, the list of passengers of Flight 007 appeared in the press the next day.

After securing the crash site, photographic and video documentation and visual inspections were carried out. This was followed by the completion of bodies and human remains, and a search of the scene for identity documents and other valuables.

In order to powerfully clear the military area in its entirety and extract fragments of passengers' bodies, engines, luggage and cargo it was necessary to bring in specialized water pumps from the "Bogdanka" mine to remove water from the 3.5-meter moat.

Documents, property, luggage, and cargo found with the corpses were transported to Militia Headquarters, where they were subjected to visual inspection and preliminary selection. At a later stage of the operation, they were shown to persons representing the rights of the tragically deceased. During the cleanup work, the remains of the plane were transported to one of the hangars in Okecie airport, where experts were able to conduct further research.

Picturing the final moments before the crash from the perspective of the events taking place inside the jet and, therefore, from the point of view of the crew and passengers, it should be presumed that the violent explosion, the roar of the uneven operation of the engines and the sudden tilt of the aircraft to the right and then the momentum towards the ground were a significant surprise to them and, at the same time, a cause of severe stress. Despite this, the

crew, mastered their emotions and tried until the last moments to find a solution to the critical situation. The sudden change of course and the abrupt departure from the runway could have been noticed by passengers occupying seats directly by the window and especially those who often travelled using the Warsaw airport. About the full awareness of the danger of the situation in which the travellers found themselves, can be deduced from the position that some of them took immediately before the crash. One of the officers conducting the identification activities of the victims stated: *“you could see how these people were fighting for their lives, because the positions in which their bodies were in were contracted, in some places their hands were clenched on parts of the seats and they had long muscles, these boxers had detached, this showed that they were clasping with all their strength, trying as if to hold on to the seats”*.

The injuries resulting in the deaths of those on board were compounded by factors such as the speed of the aircraft, the angle of the machine relative to the plane of the earth, the obstacles the machine hit immediately before crashing, the shape of the moat surface and the fort, and the displacement of the interior of the passenger cabins. More specifically, they died as a result of sustaining multiple organ injuries, dismemberment by sharp elements and crushing by the jet's equipment. Corpses and human remains were thrown a considerable distance, with a range of several hundred square meters, none of the bodies were found whole. Fragments of corpses were revealed on the grounds of the fort and the adjacent military unit, in niches near the fort's wall, in the moat after water had been pumped out of it, and between damaged parts of the aircraft as they were disassembled. The bodies and fragments of human organs that were revealed were numbered and photographed, and then transported to the Forensic Medicine Institute in Warsaw on Oczki Street, which were successively subjected, with the participation of prosecutors, officers of the Capital Police Headquarters and doctors specializing in forensic medicine, to activities aimed at identifying the identity of the victims and other medical and forensic examinations. Before the autopsy began, the corpses were again photographed, secured and any deposits such as documents or valuables were described. The bodies were then fingerprinted and autopsied. Once completed, the corpses were wrapped in white sheets, placed in a plastic bag and transferred to coffins for transport to the cemetery's cold room.

All of the laboratory tests conducted for the presence of alcohol in the blood of the Copernicus crew had negative results, and the health of the pilots was also not in question. In the course of conducting an examination of the corpses and remains of the victims, special attention was paid to, elements of clothing, physical characteristics, the type and distribution of injuries sustained, and blood was drawn. The type of clothing some of the victims were wearing at the time of death made it possible to identify the pilots and, in part, the boxing team players.

In an article by American scientists on the activities that were carried out by a delegation of experts from the United States in March 1980, information can be obtained on methods of identifying corpses. The team consisted of two dentists, an endodontist, an expert in aviation medicine and toxicology. Pathomorphologists examined a total of 44 victims and the odontology team examined 34 bodies.

The Americans arrived with medical records that had been created while the victims were still alive and had been maintained by general practitioners, sports medicine doctors and dentists. In the case of four of the bodies, the medical team waived the odontological identification procedure given the successful outcome of an earlier analysis of fingerprint prints by FBI agents. X-rays were taken of each of the victims with special attention to the mouth and dental fragments. The researchers found no burn marks on the corpses that were examined. Identity recognition by an organoleptic method (visually) was also carried out by members of the amateur boxing association who flew in from the US, who knew the deceased boxers personally. On the basis of visual assessment, only four of the deceased were identified, using

only fingerprint methods, the identity of seven victims was established, using only dental records, a match was found with the personal information of eight people. In other cases, combined methods were used, given the injuries of the victims of Flight 007. A total of 30/31 American passengers were identified.

An attempt by the Soviet side to blame the SP-LAA crew for the disaster that occurred Polish investigators presumed that the catastrophe was the result of design shortcomings that were revealed during the operation of the IL-62 aircraft and engine defects, while representatives of the USSR, who participated in the commission's meetings, categorically rejected such conclusions.

As the cause of the crash, the Soviet side considered pilot errors of the machine, or more precisely, pilot error. Following the line of thinking of Soviet experts, Captain Lipowczan, for unknown reasons in the final phase of the flight, would have had to intentionally steer the machine towards the ground to cause the intended disaster. This primitive attempt to blame the crew making the last flight of the SP-LAA is contradicted by numerous circumstances indicating a completely different course of events. Parts of the engine and other components were thrown outside the engine nacelles and the fuselage of the aircraft - they were found on the ground in the area over which the aircraft directly flew. The parts of the machine ended up outside the fuselage of the aircraft as a result of the action of the violent displacement of the turbine disk components, which broke into three virtually evenly spaced pieces.

Individual parts of the IL-62 constituted valuable research and evidence material that made it possible to reconstruct the history of material changes that occurred as a result of the engine's operation. This was significant enough, for the sake of further actions of the Soviet side, consisting in not accepting the findings and conclusions of Polish specialists leaning on the crash. When the team of domestic experts unequivocally refuted the claims of the crew's piloting errors, representatives of the USSR claimed that the damage to the N-K-8 engine was caused by a collision with the ground. In simple terms, this meant that, according to Soviet experts, the plane's engines were not damaged when the plane was over Warsaw in the airport area 26 seconds before the crash and were damaged when the machine crashed into the fort area.

This was, of course, another attempt to avoid responsibility on the part of the USSR and Ilyushin's design bureau, since admitting design errors would have opened up the possibility of claiming damages and would have forced the redesign, to some extent, of the technological solutions in the manufactured model (IL-62 continued to be manufactured until 1995 after modernizations. The device recording flight parameters did not record all due information on the status of the onboard instruments, but only the course of the engines. Data on navigation, communication with the ground, crew conversations were missing. This meant that the black box was partially inoperative, nevertheless the aircraft was allowed to operate passenger flights. The device was tested and installed in a twin aircraft - thus proving that at the time of the crash it was not working correctly.

Among the main factors that had a direct impact on the occurrence of the disaster were the aspects listed below

1. It happened that the scheduled overhaul did not take place due to staff shortages in the positions of licensed mechanics. Documents on the essential maintenance of the IL-62 showed that the technical controller allowed one flight, while in reality the aircraft still made several flights, despite the defects reported by the crews. Information coming directly from an operational contact who was one of the members of the crew flying on the IL-62 confirmed the facts of sending inoperative aircraft on foreign routes, as well as the lack of efficiency of the

apparatuses intended to diagnose and detect possible damage to the engine turbines, during technical tests before the aircraft was cleared and handed over to the crew.

2. Intermediate stops were made at the Canadian-owned airport in Gander, Newfoundland. In the case of the IL-62 aircraft, they were necessary in order to refuel the route from Warsaw to New York. The reasons for the forced stopovers in Gander starting in 1973 were the insufficient length of the runway in Warsaw, which prevented the machine from being fully refuelled.

In addition, it should be added that each stopover caused earlier fatigue and shortened the manufacturer-imposed limit of landings after which a general overhaul of the jet was necessary.

3. PLL LOT's imposed economic policy of seeking savings on aviation fuel. Domestic fuel was much cheaper than that available at airports in capitalist countries, and for this reason LOT's management put pressure on pilots to refuel planes economically and with sufficient foreign regulations to make a return flight. It was not uncommon for these planes to arrive at the New York airport with the sound and light signals sounding to alert them to critical fuel levels, as discussed above.

4. In the first half of March 1980, i.e., the last days preceding the crash, IL-62, with SP-LAA markings, did not meet the basic safety requirements required for air travel. In addition, the electrical installation responsible for recording parameters, was damaged and did not adequately record the relevant data that was originally supposed to be recorded with its use. The aircraft made regular flights while being technically inoperative, i.e. having defects that precluded the possibility of operating the aircraft if they occurred.

5. Warsaw Okęcie Airport did not have adequate technical facilities, i.e. an engine dynamometer and a workshop with a laboratory to be able to carry out any reliable scientific research that would make it possible to determine the legitimacy of extending the service life of the NK-8-4 propulsion unit. Therefore, it was not possible to carry out expert opinions that would serve as an argument in favor of extending the service life, or to measure the fatigue life of the engines, whose components were known to be damaged even before the warranty period expired. The nearest research and development unit with the equipment required for such activities was located in Rybinsk in the USSR. The original service life envisaged in the jet's technical specifications of 5,000 hours was extended initially to 6,000 and then up to 8,000.

6. Another of the glaring deficiencies was the lack of a working ILS system during the Copernicus' approach to landing. This system was damaged on January 23, 1980, when an emergency landing of a Tu-134 SP-LGB aircraft took place. The machine damaged the aforementioned equipment, lost a wing, fell off the runway and burst into flames. A total of 51 days elapsed between this incident and the SP-LAA crash, the country's largest airport with international airport status was operating without a system that should have been repaired immediately.

7. According to the secured documentation, the aircraft's resource on the day of the crash was: 5537h 45 min for engine No. 1, 5459h 41 min for engine No. 2, 8001 h 21 min for engine No. 3, 3178 h 40 min for engine No. 4. In fact, the technical assumptions predicted the maximum service life of the NK-8-4 engine at 3000-5000 hours. Propaganda by Polish airline representatives presented in the press gave falsified technical data on the maximum operating time of engines installed on this type of jet. Jacek Kujawa, who was employed by PLL LOT, assured that the engine that initiated the plane's failure had the smallest runtime and was scheduled to work 18,000 hours.

An attempt by the Soviet side to blame the SP-LAA crew for the disaster that occurred

In the opinion of Polish scientists, the catastrophe is the result of design shortcomings that were revealed in the course of operation of the IL-62 aircraft and engine defects, while representatives of the USSR, who participated in the commission's meetings, categorically rejected such conclusions. The Soviet side considered the cause of the crash to be piloting errors of the machine, or more precisely, pilot error. Following the line of thinking of Soviet experts, Captain Lipovchan, for unknown reasons in the final phase of the flight, would have had to intentionally steer the machine towards the ground to cause the intended disaster. This primitive attempt to blame the crew making the last SP-LAA flight is contradicted by numerous circumstances indicating a completely different course of events. Allegations initiated by the Soviet Union are contradicted in particular by the following facts:

1. Parts of the engine and other components were ejected outside the engine nacelles and fuselage of the aircraft - they were found on the ground in the area over which the plane directly flew. These subassemblies were discovered by the ZOMO as a result of a search of the area over which the plane flew, as well as by bystanders reporting in person to the police station and voluntarily handing over the found fragments for a handover protocol. It does not require more extensive proof that the damage caused by the sudden physical forces that occurred in the airspace in the power unit moments after the crew increased the engine speed is different from that caused by the machine hitting the ground at about 350km/h. Thermal traces, friction and damage to the directional rudder pushers clearly indicated that the sequence of damage occurred in less than a few seconds while the machine was still in flight, and immediately after the decision was made to go to the second circle. For this reason, the assumption strenuously pushed by the USSR is all the more preposterous, since, as proven by numerous mechanoscopic studies, expert opinions and simulations carried out by investigative bodies and research and scientific units in Poland.

2. When the team of domestic experts unequivocally refuted the claims of the crew's piloting errors, representatives of the USSR claimed that the damage to the engine of the N-K-8 was caused by a collision with the ground. In simple terms, this meant that, according to Soviet experts, the plane's engines were not damaged when the plane was over Warsaw in the airport area 26 seconds before the crash and were damaged when the machine crashed into the fort area. This was, of course, another attempt by the USSR and Ilyushin's design bureau to avoid responsibility, since admitting design errors would have opened up the possibility of claiming damages and would have forced some redesign of the technological solutions in the model being produced. IL-62 continued to be produced until 1995 after modernizations.

3. Deliberate introduction of Polish scientists by representatives of the Soviet scientific committee. Prof. Jerzy Maryniak an expert in the field of mechanics and aviation, a professor at the Warsaw University of Technology, explained the background of this incident in 2008 in the program Aviation Stories with the words: , "The Russians claimed that the plane could still sustain itself in level flight on a single engine. Then, from the flight dynamics side, I demanded that they provide engine characteristics since they claimed that it could still hold on one, on one engine... nothing was provided [by the representative of the Soviet side] completely nothing. Also, all this had to be recalculated on its own... " Given the Soviet engineers' unwillingness to cooperate honestly, the professor had to use the intrigue of informally obtaining this data from the original source, the Soviet Union, to conduct his own research and calculations. Prof. Maryniak asked the then chief of pilots Capt. Dr. Tomasz Smolicz to copy sensitive data on the specifications of the NK-8 engine when propelling the IL-62 aircraft in terms of generating enough power to investigate whether the aircraft would be able to continue flying on a single

engine. Dr. Smolicz honored the professor's request while on a delegation to the USSR and redrew the relevant parameters that had been concealed from Polish scientists. The Soviet side claimed that it was as possible, while according to the professor's calculations and later control calculations made by a team of Polish scientists, it turned out that the engine generated insufficient power. With only a working engine, this type of aircraft could only perform a descent flight, depending on the load, and therefore could not maintain a horizontal direction of flight.

Robbing of passengers' bodies and theft of property from luggage at the scene

Only a few minutes elapsed between the moment of the crash and the arrival of service officers on the scene, and bystanders appeared at the fort, which was then the site of a military unit. One of the first present there was Jerzy Dziewulski - then head of the Anti-Terrorist Unit. He confirmed the fact of looting of survivors' property, which was met with his firm response - he was to fire a gun shot into the air to chase potential thieves away from the site. The theft of banknotes and other valuables is confirmed by Wiktor Mikusinski lieutenant present at the scene with the words: , *"... this access to the casemates was full, scattered empty wallets, purses of purses, some of the officers lose, as if at all, understanding of what is happening and taking the opportunity does not begin to steal, to rob the corpses..."*.

It was widely known that planes making return flights from the US, very often carried items that, due to economic conditions, at the time were seen as luxury goods, unavailable to the wider public. It should be pointed out (p. 68) that a significant amount of gold jewelry, foreign currency and other valuable items were revealed, the value of which was tentatively estimated at about several million zlotys, for the realities of the time, since the incident took place before the denomination made in 1995. On March 16, the Foreign Ministry received a secret cipher from Washington. Its contents indicated that one of the passengers was a security employee of a Polish diplomatic post and was in possession, during the air travel, of cash in the amount of \$2,000, representing his savings. Also revealed was a voucher generated by the American branch of PKO 11 days before the crash entitling the passenger to take delivery of a Fiat 126p special version car, equivalent to \$1,640. The fact that a purse belonging to Anna Jantar-Kukulka was found was also pointed out. During the interrogation, on July 11, 1980, the former officer testified, about the fact that the information about the disclosure of the purse belonging to the victim of the plane crash, he had received from, "an unspecified policewoman", and in view of this, there is no chance or circumstances to identify the officer. It was also stated that in view of the enormity of the size of the crash, "the services acted showing maximum diligence." The above laconic statement contradicts the situation that took place immediately before the letter was drafted by J. Kukulski - the singer's husband. From his memoirs on the disaster we can read, among other things: , *"One of the officers of the Citizens' Militia came to our house and said that he was in the team that worked on extracting the bodies, and he saw her passport, in which there were also a few thousand dollars"* and , *"It was all lost, the money, the suitcases. Even the jewellery that Anya was wearing, they ripped it off her"*.

The fact that onlookers arrived at the scene of the tragedy was also confirmed by the press report: , *"Men, women and children forcing without restraint the precarious ice of the moat in which more than one had already drowned and scratching at the slimy turf of the forts. Immediately afterwards - I guess it wasn't five minutes after the accident? - white ambulance personnel follow in their footsteps. How many ambulances were there? A lot. Very many. Unfortunately, they were quickly turning back with nothing. Well, and the MO arrived, bringing order"*. The fact that the singer had cash in her possession, in the amount of more than \$4,000

during her air travel, was confirmed in an official letter by members of the TRAGAP band accompanying her on a recent tour of Polish clubs.

Other valuables she took with her on the return trip included a white gold ring with diamonds, a second white gold ring with five diamonds, a gold chain, a report bag and a camera (type model). The aforementioned items the singer had with her when she boarded the plane. One of the biographical books dedicated to the person of the artist reveals the significant handling of property and irregularities in the activities conducted on March 14, 1980. J. Kukulski recalled that after a heated discussion, the singer's passport, previously considered lost, was found. On May 27, 1980, one of the MIA's second lieutenants gave a written explanation that read: *“I, the undersigned, declare that I participated in the rescue operation related to the plane crash of plane IL-62 at Okecie on 14.03.80 in a group of frogmen. I also declare that I am aware of the fact of finding a woman's purse with its contents, which contained, among other things, a passport in the name of Anna Kukulska Jantar. At the same time, I mention on the basis of my own observations that the action of securing the property of the tragically deceased passengers was carried out on the day of the crash in a disorganized and chaotic manner”*.

The role of censorship and conspiracy theories about the disaster

The dissemination of any information regarding defects or irregularities in the operation of passenger aircraft belonging to a state-owned enterprise was forbidden to representatives of any media as early as August 27, 1974 by the General Office of Press and Radio Control. Only the Polish Press Agency was authorized to inform the public through the mass media, while other materials and publications had to be coordinated with its corporate management on a case-by-case basis. The investigation files also include a prohibition on informing crews and flight personnel performing flights on IL-62 about irregularities that were revealed in the course of investigative activities, both in an official manner and by operational methods. The above order also applied to journalists. Such a course of action was illogical - in most aviation companies, issues of unusual incidents or difficulties in the use of aircraft are discussed on an ongoing basis with personnel, and in case of doubts that are not regulated in the aircraft's manual, consultations are sought directly with the manufacturer. Just a few days after the crash of Ilyushin, numerous understatements, rumors and sensational information began to emerge in the public divining around the tragic event regarding the circumstances, causes and reasons why the plane did not reach its destination. These inquiries reflecting public unrest, differing from the facts that one encounters when analyzing the totality of available materials collected in the file documentation. Underlying the urban legend appearing in several narratives was the identity of the passengers aboard the Copernicus during flight 007, and was closely linked to singer Anna Jantar and foreign travellers.

Rumor had it that the crash near the Warsaw airport of a plane making transatlantic flights was orchestrated by the special services while the artist was sold to a harem in agreement with the government of the People's Republic of Poland, which for a price of gold appropriate to the singer's weight was to cover up the fact. The passengers on the plane were also supposed to be Soviet scientists who, due to their advanced knowledge of the sciences and the classified information they possessed, were "inconvenient" to the authorities. Another narrative claimed that the singer was supposed to cooperate with foreign services, and due to her popularity at home and abroad, a crime scenario characterized as an unfortunate accident was planned. Explosive charges were to be installed in the engines and contraption of the plane.

Numerous people and many reasons were mentioned for the hijacking and sale of the singer's eventual disappearance or death. Another version claimed that the singer had fled to Hungary and was living there under altered personalities. Leaving aside the wide range of conspiracy theories, the hypothesis of a possible sabotage, terrorist attack was initially considered as one of the investigators' versions. However, it was quickly rejected. Col. T. Kwiatkowski requested that the plane be subjected to tests for acids, corrosives and explosives. On March 25, 1980, the possibility of possible sabotage and the contribution of third parties to the crash was ruled out.

Discontinuance of proceedings

Despite having a full range of file documentation, knowledge from witness testimony alarming about the disastrous technical condition of the machinery and unfair practices carried out at LOT Polish Airlines exposing passengers, crews and also bystanders on the ground to tragic death, no one has been held accountable to this day for condoning such practices.

The occurrence of the catastrophe clearly and thoroughly exhausted the elements of Article 136 §1 of the 1969 Criminal Code concerning the importation of an event that endangers human life or health or property of significant size, taking the form of, a catastrophe in land, water or air traffic . There should also be no doubt about the group of people who should bear criminal responsibility. Given the political circumstances, none of the individuals have incurred responsibility, either criminal or disciplinary. They enjoyed impunity and high financial emoluments, in a situation where it was not uncommon for the families of Flight 007 victims to lose their only breadwinner. The prosecutor's investigation was discontinued on March 30, 1981. Signing the procedural decision, the then provincial sub-prosecutor Stanislaw Mikke took the following position in justification of the discontinuance in view of the failure to establish a crime: "Based on the full documentation of investigations and analyses, the Government Commission unequivocally established that the following had no influence on the occurrence and course of the catastrophe: the training and psychophysical condition of the crew, the preparation of the crew and equipment, the resource / service life / of the aircraft and individual engines, the weather, the radio-navigation cover and the work of the means of communication, and the activities of the air traffic authorities. Therefore, since the sole cause of the crash was the engine shaft rupture discussed above, the prevention of which was not within the capabilities of the user - the criminal proceedings should have been discontinued".

Despite the accumulated material in the prosecutor's file, which in many aspects indisputably indicated that the technical condition of the aircraft, the resource of the engines, the superficial manner in which the pre-flight inspection was carried out raises serious objections and constitutes negligence on the part of the human factor, the prosecutor reasoned that the above-quoted circumstances "had no influence on the occurrence and course of the catastrophe". In the case of a thorough prosecutorial investigation and therefore the treatment of the entirety of the collected premises, evidence and evidence, it would have been easy to seek the prosecution of those responsible for the decisions he made. In addition to allegations of contributing to bringing the air traffic disaster, given the actions and omissions of the decision-makers, it would have brought the state bodies into disrepute given that the Ministry of Communications would have had to discipline a group of citizens to whom, just two months before the incident, it had given substantial monetary rewards for technical progress.

Summary

The article presents the most important threads concerning the plane crash of a Polish airline plane that occurred on March 13, 1980 in Warsaw.

The manufactured propaganda regarding the crash officially stated that the sole and exclusive cause was a hidden internal defect in the engine, impossible to predict. Based on this, the public was informed that the crash could not have been prevented. However, if the correct resurances delineated for propulsion units had been observed, the No. 2 engine initiating the unfortunate course of events should not have been assigned to propel the machine as early as 1979. It should also be emphasized that much of the documentation in the file was not made available to citizens of the People's Republic of Poland representing the rights of the deceased victims, and was classified as secret files. The report on the causes of the crash prepared for foreign aviation organizations by Donald Snyder also fails to reflect any authentic causes of the incident. Significant facts were omitted, including that decision-makers at PLL LOT and the Ministry of Communications shared responsibility for the crash. It should be added that the erroneous conclusions and observations formulated in the report of the investigator of the causes of the catastrophe were not his intentional act in bad faith, but were most likely caused by the fact that he was not allowed access to all the information and materials, as confirmed by the Information dated March 27, 1980 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In view of the above, the documentation he received had to be selectively chosen to prevent him from revealing issues unfavorable to the Polish side. The company's authorities were keen to conceal inconvenient facts, indicating that in direct knowledge of the orders he was given, they put the desire to save money above passenger safety. Acting CEO of LOT Polish Airlines W. Wilanowski was removed from his post in 1981. There was no cooperation with other companies operating IL-62 in which accidents and disasters were reported, in terms of exchanging insights aimed at seeking safety improvements. The recommendation for cooperation was introduced only at the initiative of the commission in 1980. It should be noted that in addition to the indisputable guilt of the Soviet manufacturer in the structural defects of the aircraft and the plants performing maintenance on the internal plants of the N-K-8-4 engine, the complicit in the tragic event were also the employees of LOT Polish Airlines, in particular, the management, directors of the technical division, and ground personnel - mechanics allowing the aircraft to fly despite visible defects disqualifying the possibility of safe flight. The Government Commission appointed to investigate the causes of the crash specified guidelines addressed to both LOT Polish Airlines and the manufacturer of the IL-62 aircraft. These included, among other things:

- *the need for the engine manufacturer to take appropriate measures to eliminate material and workmanship defects that fundamentally reduced the characteristics of the low-pressure compressor shaft.

- *significant damage caused by a segment of a torn turbine flying through the fuselage leads to the suggestion of necessary consideration of design changes aimed at securing control systems and installations

- *existence of the need to take into account the conclusions of the established facts in the process of inspection and repair. The development of appropriate diagnostic methods and equipment is expected here

- *recommend that necessary preventive measures be taken immediately to eliminate the causes that led to the catastrophe of IL-62 SP-LAA and in particular

development, verification and introduction of appropriate methods and diagnostic equipment for the inspection of low-pressure rotor shafts of NK-8-4 engines in the process of operation and repair

*conducting detailed inspections of all NK-8-4 engines in use at LOT Polish Airlines and eliminating from operation those units about which suspicions arise about the existence of similar defects to those found in engine No. 2 of the IL-62 SP-LAA aircraft.*equipping all aircrafts used at LOT Polish Airlines with MSRP-64 flight recorders, or others with not worse performance parameters, starting from IL-62 aircraft, and developing, verifying and introducing in pre-flight inspections methods of MSRP-12 and MSRP-64 or others with not inferior performance parameters starting from the IL-62 aircraft, and to develop , verify and introduce in pre-flight inspections methods of MSRP-12 and MSRP-64 control allowing to assess the full range of their work.

*add to the flight manual the rules for crew operations in cases where more than two engines are eliminated from operation.

However, the above recommendations, despite the compelling legal interest as well as safety considerations, were not implemented by the Soviet aircraft manufacturer.

On May 5, 1987, a modernized version of the I-62 aircraft crashed in Warsaw during the approach to landing, the biggest disaster in the history of Polish civil aviation in terms of casualties to date. The death toll was a total of 183 people on board.

Despite the political changes in the USSR that took place between 1980 and 1987, attempts to exert pressure on countries dependent on the Soviet Union, and using aircraft manufactured in the Soviet Union, were rampant. The same manufacturer, producing a modernized version, i.e. the 62M, joining in the investigation of the crash of the SP-LBG aircraft on 5.9.1987, as in 1980, again tried to push the thesis that the cause of the damage to the engines of the IL-62M , "Tadeusz Kosciuszko" was the collision with the ground. As shown in this work, this kind of statement, in any case, could not be defended, admittedly, in fact, the engines were significantly damaged as a result of impact with the earth's surface, however, it has been proven in several ways independent of each other that in the case of both „Copernicus" and „Kosciuszko" the claims of Soviet representatives are false. The second aired information:" Most of the recommendations of the commission after the crash of the „Copernicus" were not taken into account at all by the manufacturer of the IL-62M ." testified to the misconception of the constructors about the reliability of the machine, the use of which in a rational economic system for a certain period of operation, required the implication of more modern technological solutions, especially those aimed at improving safety levels. The period of time that occurred between the original tests of the aircraft in 1962 and the formulation of recommendations by Polish researchers in April 1980 was 18 years. To this day, none of those responsible for the disaster have suffered punishment.

Keywords: plane crash, file investigations, Copernicus crash, polish airlines crash, Okęcie crash.

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IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

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Abstract. *Economic security is a relatively young discipline within the field of economic science, yet it plays a critical role in national security. Despite its importance, it has historically received insufficient attention from researchers. Economic security is essential for achieving economic sovereignty, fostering sustainable development, implementing effective social policies, protecting society from environmental risks, and enhancing national competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected global economy. An effective economic security system enables a country to identify threats to its national economic interests proactively, thereby preventing potential damage to the socio-economic structure. Unfortunately, in most cases a comprehensive understanding of economic security often emerges only after economic threats have materialized.*

In today's rapidly evolving world, ensuring economic security has become one of the primary priorities for nations. It serves as the cornerstone of national security and development. The dynamic nature of global developments continuously alters the risks associated with economic security, making it imperative for countries to identify and mitigate these risks promptly. The issue of economic security has gained increased attention, particularly as economies become more open and integrated into global economic processes. However, there remains no universally accepted definition of economic security within the broader context of national security. It is often conceptualized as a social phenomenon that safeguards the vital interests of individuals, society, and the state from potential dangers and threats.

Main object of an article is to analyze how economic security impacts economic growth in EU countries. The study showed that for weak economies, a high level of GDPpC growth could be provided even with relatively low values of development indicators. At the same time, for advanced economies, high values of these indicators are a prerequisite for continued growth. Based on the model obtained in the study, it is possible to distribute countries by clusters. Such an interpretation is necessary to understand in which direction the country's economy should develop to ensure the sustainable development. Thus, the proposed method makes it possible to objectively assess the potential of the country's economic development.

Keywords: *economic security, economic growth, composite indicators, international indices, economic development, statistical analysis.*

Introduction

Economic security has emerged as a critical factor influencing economic growth, especially in the context of the European Union (EU), a region characterized by a complex

interplay of economic policies, integration processes, and diverse member state economies. In the increasingly interconnected global economy, the concept of economic security transcends traditional notions of national security and encompasses a broader spectrum of issues including financial stability, energy supply security, labor market resilience, and the integrity of critical infrastructure. These components collectively shape the economic environment, affecting both individual member states and the EU as a whole.

The European Union, as a unique political and economic union, faces distinct challenges in maintaining economic security. The diversity of its member states, in terms of economic development, resource endowments, and policy approaches, creates a multifaceted landscape where economic security can significantly impact growth trajectories. For instance, the 2008 financial crisis exposed vulnerabilities within the EU, leading to a prolonged period of economic stagnation in several member countries. Similarly, ongoing geopolitical tensions, energy dependency issues, and the COVID-19 pandemic have underscored the importance of robust economic security mechanisms to safeguard against external shocks.

Economic security in the EU context involves ensuring stable and sustainable growth through effective economic governance, crisis management frameworks, and policies that promote innovation, competitiveness, and social cohesion. These elements are crucial not only for preventing economic disruptions but also for fostering an environment conducive to long-term growth. The interdependence of EU economies means that economic security in one state can have profound implications for the entire Union, highlighting the need for coordinated policies and collective action.

This article explores the impact of economic security on economic growth within the EU, examining how various dimensions of economic security—such as financial system, innovation capability, environmental performance, etc. — affect growth outcomes. By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to provide insights into the ways in which the EU can strengthen its economic security to support sustained economic growth across its member states.

Research results

The economic growth is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Its analysis is based on identifying the content, qualitative and quantitative indicators, models and types of growth. Of great importance is the definition of the principles of growth of economic indicators and the economy as a whole. The category of the economic growth reflects the process of improvement over certain periods. The basic definition of the economic growth: a long-term increase in productive capacity. This concept is associated with all sectors of life and elements of social development, including its economic component. The economic growth is a category that reflects the general trends of positive or negative changes in the country's economic development. The economic growth is an important component and criterion of the economic development. It is expressed directly in the quantitative increase in GDP and its components.

The economic growth is one of the key problems of modern reality. The economic development provides new opportunities for the implementation of projects to improve the living standards of the population. For enterprises, such growth is a necessary feature of existence. Transformative processes taking place in the national economy and changes in the level of development of the country significantly affect the economic growth, which largely affects the life of the state and its future. The economic growth and economic development are not the same concept. The economic growth is considered to be an increase in the volume of production of the gross national product, and the economic development is the improvement of production and an increase in the socio-economic indicators of the country. All this creates new

questions and problems, contributes to an increase in interest in discussions related to the search for new factors and the formation of additional conditions for the economic growth. At present, for a long period, the economic growth has remained stable, despite the difficulties that countries had encountered over the past twenty years. The economic growth is possible thanks to human efforts. Human potential, acting as a productive resource within the enterprise, is embodied in the employee's ability to solve professional problems and sets the impetus for the development of production, because it is the person who is the engine and inspirer of progress. The economic growth is a constant increase in the volume of the growth of goods and services over a certain period of time. The economic growth can be compared to the evolution of the economy. Although the term evolution is not found in the works of the first economists, this definition is indirectly present in their socio-philosophical argumentation. Currently, this concept has become one of the most used in the economic theory. There are two types of the economic growth: extensive and intensive. It should be noted that in life these two types of the economic growth do not exist in their pure form, but act as a mixture in which one of the types dominates. The condition for the economic growth is a stable macroeconomic environment that promotes the attraction of new resources into economic circulation and their efficient use. The main conditions for the economic growth are: effective economic state institutions; competitive business; high aggregate demand; development of the service sector and information technology; structural shifts in the economic system. Entrepreneurs have a growing interest in increasing production capacity and improving the efficiency of their own production due to the high aggregate demand. It is important to develop science-intensive industries such as the chemical industry, the production of electrical equipment, the microbiological industry, instrument making, and the computer science industry.

The economic growth has a number of goals that need to be achieved. The main goals of the economic growth are: improving the living conditions of the population; implementation of the achievements of scientific and technological progress in practice; increasing the productive capacity of the economy; stabilization of the economic system. The drivers of the economic growth are the circumstances that govern the rate and extent of a long-term increase in a country's real output. The factors of the economic growth are often grouped by the type of the economic growth. Extensive factors are considered to be the growth of capital and labor costs, intensive factors are technological progress, the growth of the educational and professional level of workers, increase in the mobility of resources, improvement in the production management of enterprises, the necessary change in legislation in the field of the economy, that is, everything that can significantly improve the quality of production factors, so and the process of using them. The main factor of the sustainable economic growth today is the ability to compete, which is based on the innovative side of business. Thus, to ensure a balance in the interaction of economic and competition policy, it is necessary: - to apply a more flexible approach to the subjects of economic relations in antimonopoly regulation; – to develop regulatory documents with the participation of competition policy authorities. In addition, the factors of the economic growth include: natural resources of the national economy, labor (human) potential of the society, capital (fixed and circulating), the entrepreneurial ability of businessmen, scientific and technological progress and aggregate demand. With the economic growth, the country's potential should also increase: there is an increase in fixed and circulating capital, and labor force. The economic growth should be optimal, such that the incomes of all social groups in the country increase over a long period. The economic growth without the development of new high-quality production is the lot of underdeveloped countries. In order to increase the economic growth, it is necessary to observe a number of conditions: to use natural resources efficiently, because they are the basis for the country's further development, not to

waste them thoughtlessly and on unrealistic projects that can aggravate the economic situation; to use the opportunities of international economic integration, expand positions in the world sales markets, taking into account a thorough marketing analysis; to strengthen the innovative component in the socio-economic development of the country, having studied the demand for science-intensive products, to master its production; to use the state, as a market entity, to maximize the national security of the country and provide a decent working atmosphere for the development of science, production and business. To date, one of the key factors ensuring the achievement of the stable economic growth is the creation of conditions for the innovative development, which will reduce, but not eliminate the dependence of the country's economy on raw materials and open up new opportunities for modernizing the structure of the national economy, improving the quality of life of the population, and reducing income differentiation in the society and, accordingly, the allocation of a large percentage of the middle class.

Economic security and economic growth are fundamental objectives for countries worldwide, representing key drivers of long-term prosperity, societal well-being, and global competitiveness. Achieving and maintaining economic security is essential for withstanding shocks and uncertainties, ensuring stability, and fostering sustainable development. Economic growth, on the other hand, is the cornerstone of progress, signifying the ability of a country to increase its production, generate wealth, and improve living standards over time. Based on empirical data, theoretical foundations and international comparisons, the author aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of indicators that underlie economic security and economic growth. By understanding these indicators and their interaction, it will be possible to formulate an effective model for assessing the impact of economic security on economic growth. As it was mentioned before, there is no single definition of the economic security and economic growth of a country which scientists use. The essence of these two concepts is complicated and multifaceted.

According to Makštutis (2006), economic security refers to a state in which economic and governmental institutions are structured in a way that safeguards the nation's key interests. This state ensures that the country's development is balanced and socially oriented while maintaining robust economic and defense capabilities, regardless of whether domestic or international events are favorable or unfavorable.

Markevicius (2011) asserts that economic security and national welfare should always be top priorities for governments, as well as for political and national leaders. He identifies three distinct contexts for national security: philosophically, security should be regarded as a universal value; politically, it involves creating policies and tools to protect and uphold this value; economically, it focuses on the well-being of the population and the development of strategies to enhance this well-being.

Cernius (2019) describes investment security as a condition in which both private and public enterprises play a regulatory role in investment activities and actively participate in the investment process. Daujotas (2015) highlights that foreign direct investment is a crucial source of capital for developing nations, supplying essential resources for infrastructure, technological advancement, and the enhancement of economic capacity. Quinn and Cahill (2016) suggest that scientific and technological security is vital for ensuring adequate social, economic, and political stability within a society. Carter (2011) thinks that the food security is one of the main objectives of the economic policy. Access to safe, nutritious and affordable food is strongly related to socioeconomic factors. According to Malnar (Malnar and Malnar, 2015) the demographic development is a decisive factor in modern security studies, and demographic factors can be signs of a security situation and possible change.

The author thinks that choosing the right sub-indicator system is the key to obtaining an objective assessment of it. This scorecard should consider all threats to the economic security. All indicators used must be independent, comparable and representative. The author proposes to base the assessment of the level of the economic security of the country on a hierarchically constructed system of indicators, which includes the compiled indicator formed on the basis of sub-indicators grouped by components. As described earlier, the formation of a system of subindicators for assessing the economic security of a country should be carried out in accordance with the principles of representativeness, reliability and availability of information.

During determining the indicators of the economic security, the subjective position of the researcher, the priority of identified interests, threats, indicators and their threshold levels should be taken into account. To assess the economic security, it was proposed to use the following groups of indicators (Figure 1).

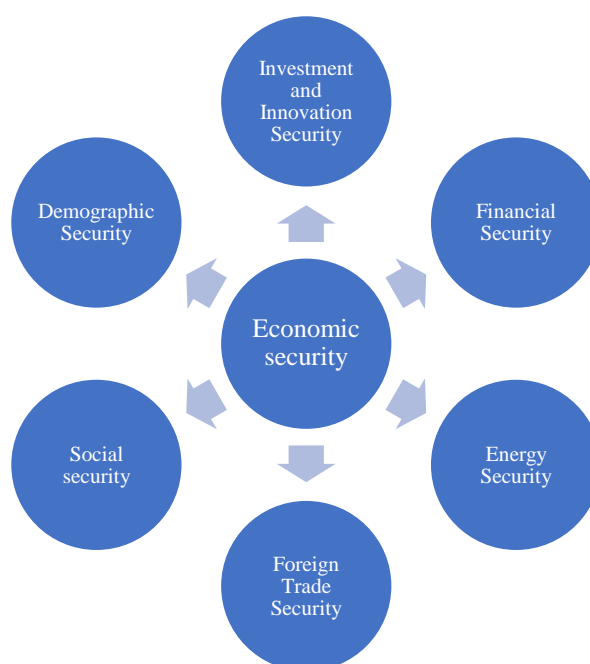


Figure 1. Main indicators of economic security

(Source: created by author based on previous researches)

In order to form a system of indicators for assessing the level of the economic security of a country, the author analyzed the composition of the subindicators used by well-known international indices and ratings. Based on the analysis of literary sources (Gryshova et. al., 2020), it is established that in the most well-known and widely accepted indicators in world theory and practice measurement and comparative analysis are: Global Competitiveness Index; Index of Economic Freedom; Fragile states index; Globalization Index KOF; Human Development Index; Worldwide happiness; Doing business; Democracy index; Corruption Perceptions Index; Prosperity Index Legatum and the Environmental Performance Index. The author examined their compliance with the above principles and the main threats to the economic security, as well as the elimination of the same indicators. As a result, those sub-indicators were selected that clearly characterize individual components of the country's economic security. The selected indicators were checked for the absence of multicollinearity. To avoid an increased effect in calculating the compiled indicator of the country's economic security, the correlation analysis will be used to check the density of statistical relationships

between numerical series for the selected indicators, which could be used to assess the country's economic security. According to Denysov (Denysov, 2016), criteria of the economic security determine the qualitative position, which, in turn, forms a strategy of deterrence and counteraction to danger. The use of an objective system of criteria, parameters, indicators and thresholds makes it possible to properly identify the magnitude of real and potential threats. The threshold level is a certain numerical expression of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the state of economic security of the subject, which characterizes their maximum allowable values. In turn, non-compliance with these values harms the process of the normal development of various elements of reproduction and, as a consequence, leads to the consolidation of destructive trends in the economy. The composition of the selected sub-indicators made it possible to distribute them by components: economic, political, social and environmental.

To find out how the economic security impacts the economic growth of a country the main indicator of the economic growth should be found. According to Kiseľáková (Kiseľáková et.al., 2018) the World Economic Forum (WEF) defines the economic growth as "the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity of the country". The productivity of a country means a country's ability to maintain a high level of income, but it is also one of the main factors influencing the return on the investment that reflects the growth potential of the specific economy. In summary, the economic growth is understood as the ability of the country to achieve sustained high growth rates of GDP per capita.

In the author's opinion, the economic growth of a country is the ability of the economy of one country to compete with the economies of other countries in terms of the effective use of national resources, increasing the productivity of the national economy and ensuring, on this basis, a high and constantly growing standard of living for the citizens of a state. When choosing dependent variables, the author will proceed from the fact that the main economic indicators of the country's development are in one way or another related to the volume of the gross domestic product (GDP). Usually, such indicators as the total GDP and GDP per capita are distinguished. At the same time, the use of absolute indicators in a generalizing study is inappropriate, since they can differ significantly in different countries.

Thus, as the main dependent variables, the author chose the indicators of the relative GDP growth and relative growth of the GDP per capita. In addition, as studies show (Ludvigson et al, 2020), macroeconomic processes are rather slow and inertial. Therefore, the results in the form of changes in the GDP growth rates may appear with some delay. Therefore, it is necessary to include in the dataset the output variables taken with a lag in relation to the input ones.

Authors think that choosing the right sub-indicator system is the key to obtaining an objective assessment of it. This scorecard should consider all threats to economic security. All indicators used must be independent, comparable and representative. Authors propose to base the assessment of the level of economic security of the country on a hierarchically constructed system of indicators, which includes a compiled indicator formed on the basis of sub-indicators grouped by components. As described earlier, the formation of a system of subindicators for assessing the economic security of a country should be carried out in accordance with the principles of representativeness, reliability and availability of information.

It is obvious that the countries analyzed in the work differ significantly from each other. Even a cursory analysis of the array of input data shows significant differences both in indicators of economic development (including specific ones) and in the analyzed factors. At the same time, as a rule, in the behavior of individual objects of research, regularities can be identified that make it possible to combine their groups for joint study and building generalizing conclusions.

Therefore, in addition to the obvious use of the constructed models for predicting economic development indicators (changes in the value of GDP and its share per capita), it is also advisable to consider the possibility of clustering individual countries into groups that unite countries that are closest in terms of their development characteristics.

To solve the clustering problem, a fairly large number of methods have been developed, including both statistical ones, which differ favorably in operating speed, and intelligent ones, built on the basis of neural networks and characterized by the ability to find nonlinear relationships in data. Let's consider how these algorithms work.

When solving applied problems of analysis, the formation of feature descriptions of objects is a more complex operation than determining the measure of their similarity. As an example, we can compare several photographs, when it is easier to conclude that they depict the same object than to determine the array of features on the basis of which such a decision was made. Thus, the task of classifying objects based on their similarity to each other, when the belonging of training objects to any classes is not specified, is called the clustering problem. In other words, clustering is the task of dividing a set of objects into groups according to the criterion of their similarity. Within each of the obtained groups there are similar objects, and the objects of different groups are most different from each other. The effectiveness of solving the formulated clustering problem is difficult to assess due to the lack of an objective criterion for assessing the quality of the results obtained. In addition, the specifics of the work of one or another clustering algorithm involves entering a certain set of input parameters before starting the analysis. One of the most common parameters is the number of clusters into which the initial array of objects of the analysis being analyzed should be divided. The goals of applying clustering algorithms to data can be divided into two large groups: 1. Using clustering as an intermediate step in data processing. Clustering due to its relative ease of use is often used in exploratory analysis to initially determine the structure of the analyzed array and apply more complex algorithms to the resulting groups or form a secondary array of objects that have average characteristics for each cluster to reduce the amount of stored data. 2. Using clustering to solve the problems of detecting anomalous objects. In this case, it is assumed that the anomalous object will not belong to any of the clusters, however, such output marking options are possible for a limited number of clustering algorithms. It should be noted that for this case of their application, it is possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the algorithms. Classification of clustering algorithms can be carried out according to different criteria that characterize both the nature of the partition (hierarchical and flat) and the belonging of objects (clear and fuzzy) to clusters. Evaluation of the efficiency of clustering algorithms is subjective and may vary for different data sets, however, the quality of their work in solving applied problems determines their popularity and the need to include software implementations in open libraries of data mining algorithms.

After researching methods of clustering, authors propose the use of manual clustering when it is needed to build a visual display of data using a scatter plot. Since the diagram is plotted using one parameter, only the vertical position of the points matters, and the horizontal difference serves only to separate countries closely located on the diagram. Next authors constructed a similar diagram for two parameters - avg and avg_ which allows you to clarify the picture of the distribution of countries into clusters.

Thus, the proposed method makes it possible to objectively assess the potential of the country's economic development. Let us also consider the results of applying the formal method of data clustering using the k-means and g-means algorithms. The algorithm will be running on input data with various settings that govern the clustering process.

After above actions are done the relationships between clusters can be graphically displayed. It illustrates the location of links between clusters, that is, the degree of their "similarity" to each other. These data can be used to analyze the possible directions of development of countries in the transition from cluster to cluster.

Authors are interested in constructing an economic interpretation of the adjustment factors for dummy variables. Such an interpretation is necessary to understand in which direction the country's economy should develop to ensure sustainable development. Based on the principle of operation of the panel regression model with fixed effects, the coefficients for dummy variables show how much it is necessary to correct (increase or decrease) the result of model calculations for each object under study. Thus, it can be hypothesized that the adjustment coefficient shows the effectiveness of the country's economic development. The larger this coefficient, the less efforts the country needs to make to achieve high growth rates of per capita income. Author should plot the average GDPpC and cluster number for each country. A similar result is also obtained if the average values of the correction factors are plotted instead of the cluster numbers.

It was noted above that the panel regression model with fixed effects showed the best result among statistical models. In this model, for each object, the value of unobservable individual effects is calculated, for which the method for determining the regression coefficients is corrected. Thus, for each country, the model forms its own adjustment coefficient, which serves to compensate for its individual characteristics.

This adjustment factor can be viewed as a generalized indicator of the individual characteristics of a country and used as the main indicator for grouping countries. According to methodology, the construction of a diagram for two parameters – avg for models describing relationships in the current period and $avg_{_}$ for models describing relationships in the future allows to clarify the picture of the distribution of countries into clusters (Figure 2).

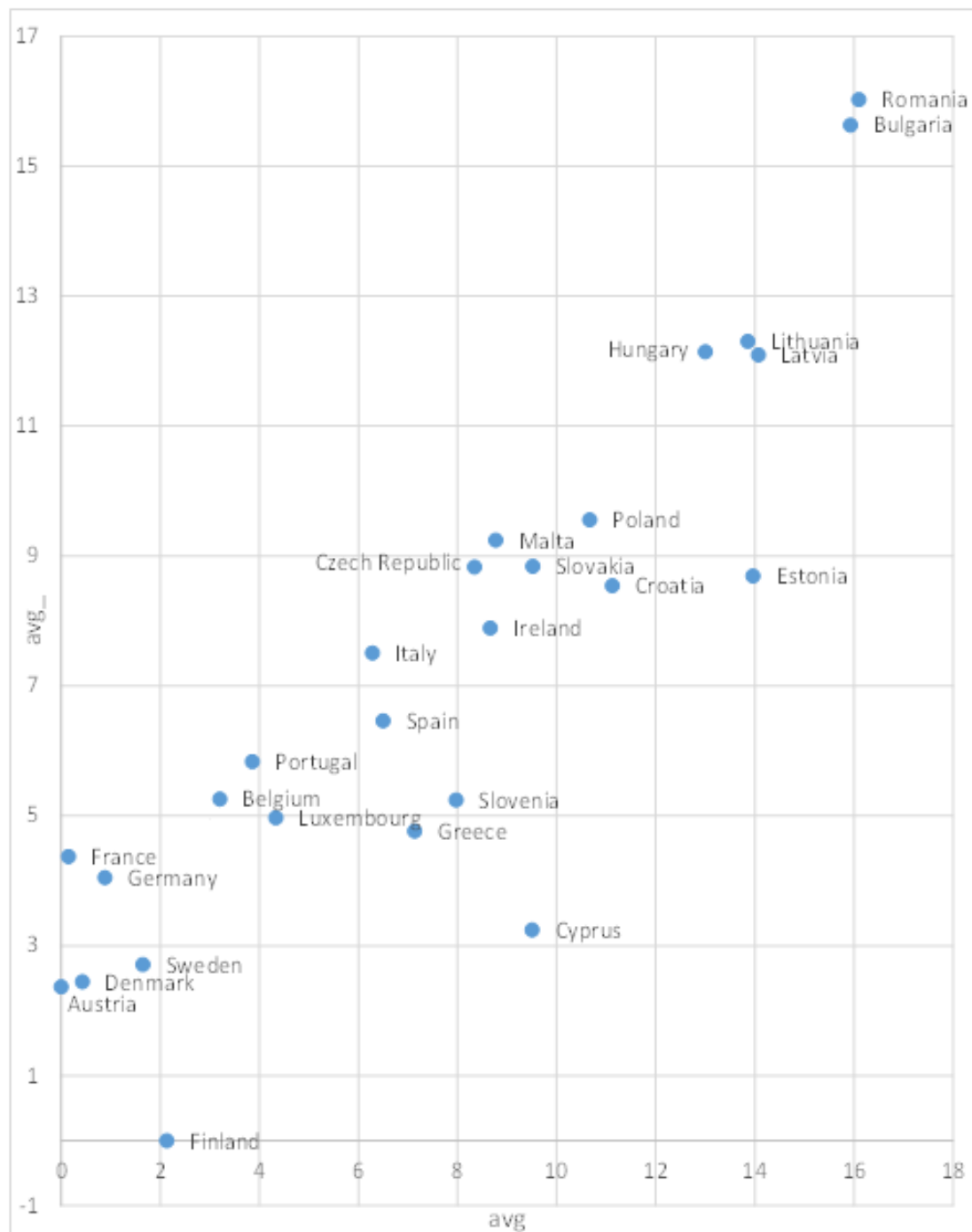


Figure 2. Distribution diagram of countries based on avg и avg_.

Source: Authors` own calculations

Obviously, this distribution is not random. The analysis shows that countries that are close economically, and often also geographically, fall into one group. At the same time, there is a tendency that the countries with the most developed economies are closer to the base of the coordinate plane, and the countries with a weakened or developing economy are the most distant from it. According to methodology, the algorithm was run on input data with various settings that govern the clustering process (Table 1).

Table 1. Results of clustering data by country

COL1	Cluster number	Distance to cluster center	Average cluster distance
Finland	6	0	0
Sweden	5	0,07374	0,0672
Netherlands	5	0,087706	
Germany	5	0,073136	
France	5	0,090842	
Denmark	5	0,031469	
Austria	5	0,046426	
Portugal	4	0,049002	0,0482
Luxembourg	4	0,054576	
Belgium	4	0,01689	
Spain	3	0,123557	0,084
Slovenia	3	0,023043	
Greece	3	0,040557	
Cyprus	3	0,149035	
Slovakia	2	0,077127	0,0671
Malta	2	0,056134	
Italy	2	0,137686	
Ireland	2	0,041509	
Czech Republic	2	0,023099	
Poland	1	0,093547	0,1192
Hungary	1	0,158377	
Estonia	1	0,126342	
Croatia	1	0,098706	
Romania	0	0,1426	0,1295
Lithuania	0	0,127084	
Latvia	0	0,132298	
Bulgaria	0	0,116193	

Source: Authors` own calculations

It can also be noted that the algorithm placed Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania, Latvia in one cluster (№ 0), although visually they are quite far from each other. It can be concluded that in this case the limitations of the automatic algorithm appear. Note that this cluster is characterized by the largest average distance from the elements to the center, that is, it is the first candidate for additional division.

The relationships between clusters can be graphically displayed as follows:

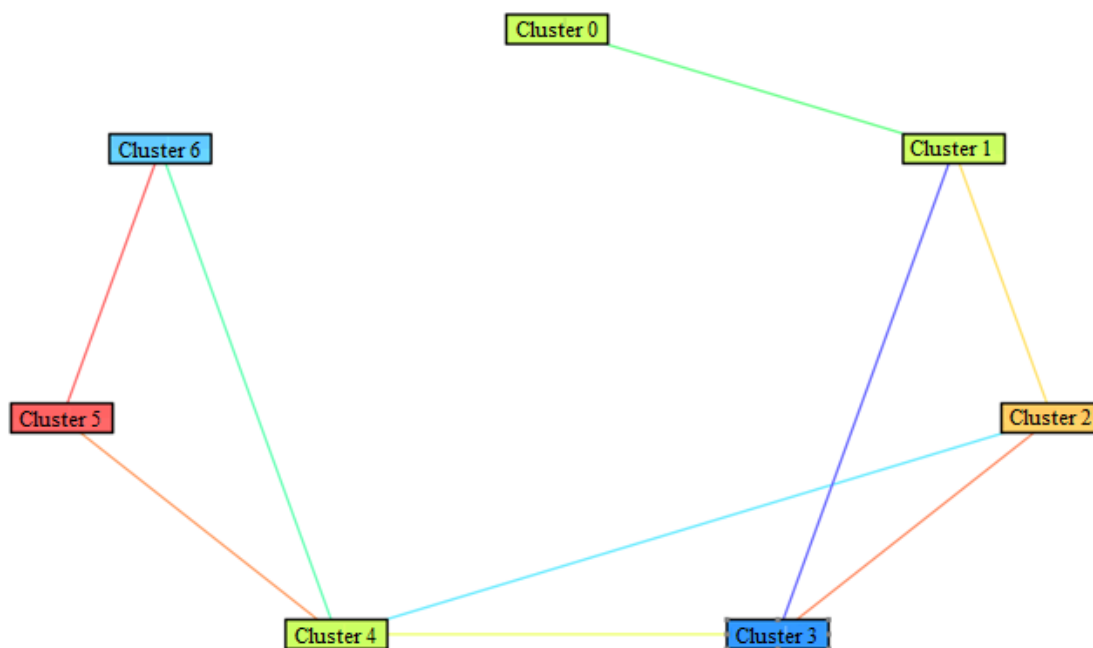


Figure 3. Cluster connections
Source: Authors' own calculations

Figure 3 illustrates the location of links between clusters, that is, the degree of their "similarity" to each other. These data can be used to analyze the possible directions of development of countries in the transition from cluster to cluster.

Conclusions

During research theoretical bases of economic security and economic growth of were analyzed. Main concepts of economic security of the country and economic growth were determined. The study statistically proved the existence of a relationship between the country's economic growth, expressed through indicators of the dynamics of GDP per capita, and the factors of economic security, which are represented by a system of indicators of economic, political, social and environmental development. The analysis showed the correspondence between the calculated and empirical values of economic growth.

Based on the model obtained in the study, it is possible to distribute countries by clusters. Such an interpretation is necessary to understand in which direction the country's economy should develop to ensure sustainable development. Thus, the proposed method makes it possible to objectively assess the potential of the country's economic development.

Further researches will be aimed at identifying closer relationships between economic and non-economic indicators and their impact on economic growth and economic security of the EU countries. Due to the lack of researches in this field, author believes that such studies and modelling can bring unexpected results.

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LIETUVOS RINKOJE PARDUODAMŲ IŠVYKIMO KREPŠIŲ ATITIKIMAS OFICIALIOMS CIVILINĖS SAUGOS REKOMENDACIJOMS: TURINIO IR KAINOS TYRIMAS

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Anotacija. Prasidėjus karui Ukrainoje, civilinės saugos mokymų metu Lietuvoje, visuomenė pradėta supažindinti su išvykimo krepšiu, jo paskirtimi ir turinio elementais. Mokymų metu dalyviai dažnai teiraujasi kokį išvykimo krepšį pirkti arba kurioje parduotuvėje jį galima įsigyti. Klausimas aktualus, nes tikrai kai kuriose internetinėse parduotuvėse atsirado tokių krepšių pasiūla. Internetinių parduotuvių išvykimo krepšių turinys nėra reglamentuojamas jokiais specialiais įstatymais, tad tik nuo paties pardavėjo priklauso kokį turinį jis komplektuoja parduodamame išvykimo krepšyje. Tyrimo metu siekta ištirti ar Lietuvoje parduodami išvykimo krepšiai atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas skelbiamas internetiniame puslapyje LT72.LT. Tyrimo metu buvo palyginti penkių internetinių parduotuvių išvykimo krepšių siūlomo turinio sąrašai su oficialiu sąrašu. Taip siekta išsiaiškinti ar parduodamas turinys atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas. Taip pat siekta palyginti vieno iš Lietuvoje parduodamų išvykimo krepšio kainą, kurią pirkėjas sumokėtų jei įsigytų iškart sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį, su kainomis jei pirkėjas įsigytų pavienius to paties krepšio turinį sudarančių elementus. Pirmuoju atveju išsigrūninus rekomenduojamą sąrašą buvo lyginama kiek jie sutampa ir pagal tai daromos išvados ar galima tokį krepšį rekomenduoti įsigyti; antruoju vieno išvykimo krepšio siūloma kaina buvo lyginama su jo turinio sąraše esančių pavienių elementų kainomis kitose internetinėse parduotuvėse. Tyrimas parodė, kad jei vertintume tik sąrašą, kai kurie išvykimo krepšiai iš dalies atitiktų oficialias rekomendacijas (t. y. vertinant tik elementų skaičių, bet ne jų kokybę, perteklinius ar besidubliuojančius daiktus). Kita tyrimo dalis parodė, kad perkant iškart sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį, mokama beveik dvigubai didesnė kaina nei tuo atveju jei asmuo išvykimo krepšį komplektuotų savarankiškai. Siekiant įgyvendinti pirmąjį uždavinį naudotas lyginamoji analizė, siekiant pagal krepšio paskirtį apibrėžti jo turinį. Antrajam uždaviniui naudota palyginimo-sugretinimo metodas, kuriuo vadovaujantis nustatytas Lietuvos rinkoje parduodamų išvykimo krepšių atitikimas oficialioms civilinės saugos rekomendacijoms. Trečiasis uždavinys įgyvendintas naudojant atvejo ir duomenų analizės metodus, kurių dėka buvo galima apskaičiuoti kiek pirkėjas permoka įsigydamas konkretų išvykimo krepšį.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: išvykimo krepšys, pasirengimas ekstremalioms situacijoms, prekyba išvykimo krepšiais, išvykimo krepšio kaina, civilinė sauga.

Įvadas

Karo Ukrainoje kontekste, Lietuvoje vykstančiuose civilinės saugos mokymuose atsirado tema vadinama *išvykimo krepšiu*. Nepaisant to, kad išvykimo krepšio principai, tiek Lietuvoje, tiek užsienyje, jau seniai yra išdėstyti civilinės saugos vadovėliuose, tačiau Lietuvos visuomenei ši tema vis dar yra nauja ir sunkiai suprantama. Dėl sąlyginio naujumo, parengtus temą gvildenančius metodininkus turi tik Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamentas bei Lietuvos šaulių sąjunga. Dėl pažinimo stokos visuomenėje randasi įvairių spekuliacijų apie išvykimo krepšį, tiek kalbant apie jo turinį, tiek apie paskirtį. Paklausa kuria pasiūla, tad Lietuvos internetinėse parduotuvėse pamažu atsiranda galimybė įsigyti įvairius išvykimo krepšio atitikmenis, tačiau kyla klausimas: ar jų turinys atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas?

Asmeninė autoriaus patirtis rodo, kad noras įsigyti parengtą krepšį, vilioja ne vieną mokymų dalyvį, todėl jie dažnai klausia: Kur galima įsigyti išvykimo krepšį? Kurį krepšį

rekomenduotumėte pirkti? ir pan. Šis tyrimas yra bandymas rasti atsakymą į paskaitose nuolat girdimus klausimus apie išvykimo krepšį Lietuvos rinkoje.

Visų pirma siekta išsiaiškinti ar prekyboje esantys išvykimo krepšiai atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas skelbiamas internetiniame puslapyje LT72.LT. Tuo tikslu buvo išžvalgytos lietuviškos internetinės parduotuvės, internetinės paieškos metu naudojant raktažodžius tokius kaip: išvykimo krepšys, evakuacinė kuprinė, išgyvenimo kuprinė arba jų variacijas. Buvo išsiaiškintos pagrindinės prekyvietės kuriose esama išvykimo krepšio analogų, tuomet pagal išsikeltus kriterijus buvo neatstatyta, kiek parduotuvėse siūlomi išvykimo krepšiai atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas. Antroje tyrimo dalyje siekta teoriškai apskaičiuoti koks gaunasi kainos skirtumas užsisakant sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį iš internetinės parduotuvės Lietuvoje ir perkant jo turinio elementus pavieniui iš skirtingų tiekėjų. Taip siekta atsakyti į kitą mokymuose keliamą klausimą: Geriau pirkti sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį ar komplektuoti pačiam? Šioje tyrimo dalyje susidurta su problema, nes tik dvejose parduotuvėse siūlomų išvykimo krepšių inventorius įmanoma identifikuoti, tad apskaičiuotos buvo dviejų išvykimo krepšių pavienių elementų kainos. Kitų aptiktų išvykimo krepšių kainų apskaičiuoti nepavyko, nes neaišku kokių gamintojų prekės įeina į komplektaciją; prekių modeliai nepažymėti nei greta esančiuose sąrašuose nei matosi iliustracinėse nuotraukose.

Nepaisant to, kad Lietuvoje pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijoms tyrimai yra atliekami ir dalis jų publikuojami mokslo žurnaluose, kita dalis tyrimų atliekami įvairių universitetų magistrantūros baigiamųjų darbų pavidalu, tačiau išvykimo krepšio tyrimų Lietuvos akademinėje literatūroje nebuvo aptikta. Pavienius išvykimo krepšio tyrimus atliko Ugniagesių gelbėtojų mokykla, tačiau jie nebuvo skelbti recenzuojamuose mokslo žurnaluose ir pateikiami tik pačios mokyklos internetiniame puslapyje prie Civilinės saugos mokymo priemonių (Ugniagesių gelbėtojų mokykla 2024) arba išvykimo krepšys, kitų temų kontekste, aptariamas neakademinėje civilinei saugai skirtoje literatūroje (pvz. Baniulienė et al. 2014, 133). Taigi šis tyrimas yra pirmasis bandymas akademiškai tirti išvykimo krepšio klausimą Lietuvoje.

Užsienyje išvykimo krepšio klausimas nagrinėtas gana plačiai, įvairiais aspektais, tačiau tyrimo nagrinėjančio atitikimą oficialioms kurios nors šalies civilinės saugos rekomendacijoms bei rinkos kainos tyrimų aptikti nepavyko. Dažniausiai akademiškai svarstomi sekantys išvykimo krepšio klausimai: įrodymai apie išvykimo krepšio turinio efektyvumą ir panaudojimo galimybes prasidėjus ekstremaliai situacijai (Heagele 2016); išvykimo krepšių įsigijimo didėjimo-mažėjimo pokyčiai prieš ir po katastrofos (Beatty, Shimshack ir Volpe 2019); kitais tyrimais siekta nustatyti išvykimo krepšio turinio elementų būtinybę ekstremalioje situacijoje, tad svarstytas klausimas ar tikrai viską ką rekomenduojama reikia su savimi turėti (Sopha ir Asih 2019) ir sukomplektuoto išvykimo krepšio svarba pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijoms planavime (Wukich 2019), taip pat įvairiuose pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijoms planavimo lygmenyse (Vaillancourt 2016) bei sveikatos apsaugos sistemos srityje (Sohn, Jae, Bum, Won ir Kyoung 2016). Kai kurių tyrėjų buvo paliestas išvykimo krepšio turinio klausimas Covid-19 pandemijos metu (Schnall et al. 2023). Ukrainoje, dar iki karo pradžios aptarinėtas civilio asmens išvykimo krepšio klausimas (Зенченко 2017, 299-300), o vėliau išvykimo krepšio turinio pokyčiai prasidėjus karui (Рущенко ir Ляшенко 2023, 80-83). Taip pat buvo tirtas klausimas apie maisto ypatumus išvykimo krepšyje bei ekstremalios situacijos metu, vertinant pagal kultūrinius ir religinius poreikius (Said, Khin, ir Nurizzati 2019). Taigi, nagrinėjama tema tyrimų užsienyje aptikta nebuvo.

Tyrimo tikslas: Apsvarstyti išvykimo krepšio problematiką, bei palyginti Lietuvos rinkoje parduodamų išvykimo krepšių turinio elementus su oficialiu Lietuvos Respublikos civilinės saugos išvykimo krepšio rekomenduojamu turinio sąrašu bei apskaičiuoti Lietuvos

rinkoje platinamų krepšių kainas ir palyginti skirtumą jei jų turinį išsigtume pavieniais elementais.

Uždaviniai:

1. Apibrėžti išvykimo krepšio paskirtį ir skirtumą nuo panašaus pobūdžio krepšių.
2. Ištirti Lietuvos rinkoje parduodamus išvykimo krepšių (bei jų analogų) turinio atitikimą oficialiam civilinės saugos rekomendaciniam išvykimo krepšio sąrašui.
3. Ištirti Lietuvos internetinėse parduotuvėse siūlomų išvykimo krepšių kainą kurią sumokėtų pirkėjas, įsigydamas siūlomo išvykimo krepšio ar jo analogo elementus pavieniui.

Metodai: Siekiant įgyvendinti pirmąjį uždavinį naudotas lyginamoji analizė, siekiant pagal krepšio paskirtį apibrėžti jo turinį. Antrajam uždaviniui naudota palyginimo-sugretinimo metodas, kuriuo vadovaujantis nustatytas Lietuvos rinkoje parduodamų išvykimo krepšių atitikimas oficialioms civilinės saugos rekomendacijoms. Trečiasis uždavinys įgyvendintas naudojant atvejo ir duomenų analizės metodus, kurių dėka buvo galima apskaičiuoti kiek pirkėjas permoka įsigydamas konkretų išvykimo krepšį.

Išvykimo krepšio paskirtis

Ekstremalios situacijos Lietuvoje gana dažnas reiškinys, štai vien 2024 m. gegužės 19 dieną buvo tokios ekstremaliosios situacijos: „valstybės lygio ekstremaliosios situacijos – 2; savivaldybių lygio ekstremaliosios situacijos – 6. Kiti įvykiai: [...] kilusių gaisrų skaičius – 31, iš jų 6 – gyvenamosios paskirties pastatuose, 3 – pagalbinių ūkio paskirties pastatuose, 1 – transporto priemonėse, 9 – atvirosiose teritorijose [...]. Gelbėjimo darbai: atlikta gelbėjimo darbų – 41, iš jų 14 kartų talkinta kitoms specialiosioms tarnyboms, 14 kartų teikta pagalba gyventojams buityje, 7 darbai atlikti po transporto priemonių avarijų“ (Lt72.lt 2024a). Vien dėl gaisrų pasaulyje kasmet miršta apie 310 000 žmonių, iš kurių trečdalis jaunesni nei 20 metų, o remiantis 2017–2021 m. Lietuvos gaisrų statistika, per dešimt metų mūsų šalyje vidutiniškai kilo 8785 gaisrai, vien per 2022 metų 10 mėnesių Lietuvoje kilo 7344 gaisrai, o juose žuvusių žmonių skaičius siekia 2022 (Batuchina et al. 2022, p. 4). Dalyje minėtų ekstremalių situacijų, nukentėjusiems tačiau likusiems be gyvenamojo būsto asmenims, išvykimo krepšio turėjimas tikrai galėjo palengvinti būtį ir padidinti išgyvenimo galimybes.

Valstybinio audito atliktas tyrimas parodė, kad 2018–2020 m. Lietuvoje ekstremaliųjų įvykių buvo apie 660, o per 2018–2021 m. 4 ekstremalios situacijos buvo valstybinio lygmens ir 64 savivaldybės lygmens (Nalivaikienė et al. 2022, p. 4). Nepaisant to, praeitų metų tyrimas parodė, kad „tik penktadalis (18 proc.) Lietuvos gyventojų turi susiruošę išvykimo krepšį, o šeimos planą, kaip elgtis nelaimės metu, su artimaisiais yra aptarę 15 proc. gyventojų. Būtinausių atsargų 72 val. (maisto, vandens, vaistų, higienos priemonių) pasiruošę turi 50 proc. šalies gyventojų“ (Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamentas 2023). Tai parodo kiek yra svarbu šviesti visuomenę civilinės saugos klausimais.

Norint apibrėžti kriterijus kuriais vadovaujantis galima būtų ištirti Lietuvos rinkoje esančius išvykimo krepšius, dera išsiaiškinti paties išvykimo krepšio paskirtį. Taigi, nepaisant to, kad Lietuvoje daugelis išvykimo krepšį sieja su karu, jo paskirtis yra gerokai platesnė. Jis skirtas bet kokiai ekstremaliai situacijai, kai asmeniui tenka skubiai evakuotis iš savo gyvenamosios vietos. Tai gali būti ir karas, bet taip pat ir potvynis, gaisras, uraganas, katastrofinis užtvindymas, potvynis ar bet kokia kita stichinė arba technogeninė nelaimė bei katastrofa. Tačiau kadangi dabartiniu metu, visuomenė daugiausia girdi apie karą, su juo ir siejamas išvykimo krepšys. Šiuo atveju Ukrainos pavyzdys rodo išmoktas pamokas, nes pas juos išvykimo krepšys įeina į visas bazines žmogaus saugos rekomendacijas, neapsiribojant tik karu (Андрієнко et al. 2022, p. 224).

Lietuvos civilinės saugos mokymuose teigiama, kad „radiacinės nelaimės atveju susidėti daiktus ir evakuotis bus galima galbūt net per parą, tačiau, pavyzdžiui, dėl katastrofinio užtvindymo pavojaus nebus galima gaisri ir kelių minučių. Jeigu iš anksto turime sudėtus visus reikalingus daiktus, tai gali padėti išsaugoti ir sveikatą, ir gyvybę. Daugelio daiktų gali prireikti ne tik skubiai evakuojantis, bet ir liekiant nelaimės atveju namuose. Todėl geriausia juos laikyti supakuotus, kad prireikus galima būtų greitai paimti“ (Baniulienė et al. 2014, p. 194). Taigi, išvykimo krepšys yra specialiai ekstremaliai situacijai parengtas daiktamaišis, kurį bet kurią akimirką galima skubiai paimti ir nedelsiant evakuotis. Išvykimo krepšys komplektuojamas taip, kad asmuo būtų aprūpintas „būtiniausias poreikiais ateinančias 72 valandas po išvykimo ar evakuacijos“ (Klimenka ir Klimenka 2023, p. 92). Kitaip tariant jame yra viskas, kas padės autonomiškai išgyventi tris paras, nes paprastai laikoma, kad per tiek laiko žmogus sulaukia vyriausybinių institucijų ar gelbėtojų pagalbos (Nazli, Sipon ir Razdi 2014, p. 577).

Lietuvos rinkoje parduodamų išvykimo krepšių ir jų analogų pavadinimus galima suskirstyti į tris esmines rūšis: išvykimo krepšys, evakuacinė kuprinė bei išgyvenimo kuprinė. Kiekvienas iš jų turi vis kitokią semantinę krūvį bei reikšmę. Išvykimo krepšys nesąmoningai siejamas su kelione po kurios vyks sugrįžimas, evakuacinė kuprinė – su priverstiniu išvežimu iš nesaugios teritorijos be galimybės sugrįžti, o išgyvenimo kuprinė yra visiškai kitos kategorijos daiktamaišis, kurio paskirtis būti pasirengus ne evakuacijai kaip tokiai, o išgyvenimui ekstremaliose situacijose, paprastai laukinės gamtos sąlygomis. Panašu, kad prekyboje vyraujantys pavadinimai leidžia sukurti įvaizdį, kad tai kas parduodama atitinka Lietuvos Respublikos civilinės saugos rekomendacijas. (Klimenka 2024, p. 16-18). Tokį patį įvaizdį kuria ir skaičiaus 72 bei Lietuvos tarptautinio kodo LT naudojimas pavadinimuose.

Neretai sinonimiškai naudojamos sąvokos *išvykimo krepšys*, *evakuacinė kuprinė* arba *išgyvenimo kuprinė*, gali gerokai klaidinti. Jei išvykimo krepšį ir evakuacinę kuprinę dar galime laikyti sinonimais, tai sąvoka *išgyvenimo kuprinė* yra visiškai kitokios koncepcijos daiktamaišis. Išgyvenimo kuprinė būtų tai ką anglakalbėse šalyse vadina *Survival Kit*, (Pewtherer 2010, 6-11), Lietuviškuose šaltiniuose apie išgyvenimą ekstremaliose situacijose, nusakant *Survival Kit* kartais naudojamas pavadinimas *išgyvenimo paketas*, o jo paskirtis apibrėžiama taip: „ekstremalioje situacijoje turėti pačias būtiniausias priemones, kurios padidintų tikimybę Jums išsaugoti savo sveikatą ir gyvybę“ (Daugirdas, 2020, 18). Taigi tai neapibrėžtam laikui skirtas išgyvenimo rinkinys skirtas turėti pirminius įrankius patyrus laivo arba lėktuvo katastrofą arba pasiklydus gamtos sąlygomis, pvz. džiunglėse arba kalnuose, be to šio rinkinio komplektacija yra gana laisvo pobūdžio ir paprastai priklauso nuo vietovės į kurią asmuo keliaus. Išvykimo krepšys anglakalbėse šalyse paprastai vadinamas *Disaster Supplies Kit* (Ready 2023) ir jis kaip jau kalbėta skirtas 72 valandas autonomiškai išgyventi ekstremaliose situacijose. Jo komplektacija yra labai aiškiai apibrėžta civilinės saugos rekomendacijose.

Nepaisant viešai naudojamų pavadinimų semantinių skirtumų, tyrimo metu naudojama sąvoka *išvykimo krepšys*. Išvykimo krepšio identifikavimas, kai parduotuvėje jis vadinamas kaip nors kitaip, vyko visų pirma pagal paskirtį, t.y. skirtas evakuacijai ir 72 valandas autonomiškai išgyvenimui; antra – buvo vienokios ar kitokios nuorodos į oficialias civilinės saugos rekomendacijas, kaip antai: paminėjimas, kad šį produktą rekomenduoja puslapis LT72.LT; sąvokų arba sutrūkinimų naudojimas, pvz. evakuacija, kurpinė 72 valandoms; LT72 ir pan.

Lietuvos rinkoje esantys išvykimo krepšiai vs. oficialios rekomendacijos: palyginimas

Pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijoms mokymai paremti oficialiomis civilinės saugos rekomendacijomis, o ir prasidėjus pačiai ekstremaliai situacijai „išgirdę kaukiančią sireną, gyventojai privalo įjungti radiją ar televizorių ir išklausti informaciją bei rekomendacijas“ (*Ką turime žinoti apie pasirengimą* 2014, p.18), todėl labai svarbu, nuo rekomendacijų nenuklysti, nes jos yra iš anksto parengti elgsenos algoritmai kurie skirti padėti gyventojams išlikti maksimaliai saugiams ar net išvengti mirties. Visas pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijom planas statomas ant rizikos įvertinimo ir pagal tai kuriami veiksmingi algoritmai kurie nuolat tobulinami (Poljanšek et al. 2019, 15-16). Taigi, ruošiantis ekstremalioms situacijoms, svarbu vadovautis oficialiomis rekomendacijomis, nes jų nesilaikant galima pasiruošti netinkamai arba apskirtai būti nepasirengus.

Išvykimo krepšio klausimas taip pat apvarstytas ir jam parengtos oficialios rekomendacijos. Oficialų daiktų, kurie turėtų būti įdėti į išvykimo krepšį, sąrašą galima rasti Priešgaisrinės apsaugos ir gelbėjimo departamento prie Vidaus reikalų ministerijos internetiniame puslapyje LT72.LT skirtame padėti visuomenei pasirengti ekstremalioms situacijoms. Lentelėje 1 išdėstyti visi oficialiame sąrašė esantys turinio elementai.

Lentelė 1. Oficialus rekomenduojamų išvykimo krepšio daiktų sąrašas
Lt72.lt 2024b

Oficialus rekomenduojamas išvykimo krepšio turinio sąrašas
Žibintuvėlis su papildomais elementais
Svarbūs dokumentai – gimimo ir (ar) santuokos liudijimai, pasai, vairuotojo teisės, draudimo dokumentai, turto nuosavybės dokumentai
Artimųjų nuotraukos (jų prireiks ieškant artimųjų)
Radijo imtuvas su papildomais elementais
Akiniai ar kiti regai bei klausai reikalingi daiktai
Maisto davinys 3 paroms
Vandens atsargos, supilstytos į mažas talpyklas
Papildomas maistas, esant specialiesiems poreikiams
Mechaninis konservų atidarytuvas
Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys, vartojami vaistai
Vandenilio peroksido tirpalas
Maistas kūdikiams, sauskelnės
Drėgnos servetėlės
Žaislai ir (ar) knygos vaikams
Drabužiai persirengti (patogūs batai, neperšlampama ir nuo vėjo apsauganti striukė, megztiniai, šiltos kelnės)
Tualetiniai reikmenys – rankšluostis, muilas, dantų šepetėlis, tualetinis popierius ir kt.
Šilta antklodė ir (ar) kompaktiškas miegmaišis
Kaukė nuo dulkių
Degtukai, sudėti į vandeniui atsparią dėžutę
Pieštukas ir popierius
Grynieji pinigai ir juvelyriniai dirbiniai (išskirstykite ir saugiai paslėpkite tarp kitų daiktų)
Cigaretės
Šeimos nariams būtini medikamentai

Toks sąrašas rekomenduojamas Lietuvoje, tačiau kitose šalyse jis gali skirtis, nepaisant to, principai visur išlieka daugiau mažiau tapatūs, skiriasi tik smulkios detalės. Pagrindiniai elementai siūlomi išvykimo krepšio elementai yra maistas, vanduo, medikamentai, elektros

prietaisai, komunikacijos prietaisai, higienos reikmenys ir pan. (Kohler et al. 2020, p. 10). Ugniagesių gelbėtojų mokyklos atliktas tyrimas, kuriame buvo lyginami įvairių šalių išvykimo krepšio turinio rekomendaciniai sąrašai, parodė, kad dauguma šalių savo gyventojams rekomenduoja turėti atsargų ne mažiau kaip trims paroms (72 val.), tuo tarpu Estija rekomenduoja turėti atsargų savaitei, o Jungtinė Karalystė – nuo trijų dienų iki savaitės. Turinio skirtumai yra nežymūs, pvz. dauguma šalių, kaip ir Lietuva, rekomenduoja turėti 12 l vandens vienam žmogui 72 valandoms, t. y. 4 l parai, Estijoje rekomenduojami 3 l parai, Prancūzijoje – 6 l (72 valandom), Lenkijoje į išvykimo krepšį siūloma įsidėti tik vieną vandens butelį ir pasiimti vandens filtrą (Ugniagesių gelbėtojų mokykla 2024). Taigi išvykimo krepšio komplektacijos principai daugiau mažiau panašūs visose šalyse, tad Lietuvoje pateikiamas rekomenduojamas sąrašas yra tinkamas, kad galima būtų juo vadovautis lyginant Lietuvos rinkoje esamų išvykimo krepšių bei jų analogų atitikimą rekomendacijoms.

LT72.LT rekomenduojamo išvykimo krepšio sąrašo daiktus galima suskirstyti į dvi kategorijas: individualūs ir bendro pobūdžio. Pirmuosius išvykimo krepšio savininkas turėtų susirinkti pagal individualius poreikius, tai būtų: svarbūs dokumentai, artimųjų nuotraukos, akiniai ar kiti regai bei klausai reikalingi daiktai, sauskelnės, maistas kūdikiams, papildomas maistas, esant specialiesiems poreikiams, atsarginis rūbų komplektas, grynieji pinigai ir juvelyriniai dirbiniai, šeimos nariams būtini medikamentai, žaislai ir knygos, cigaretės (kaip valiuta mainų prekybai). Šie daiktai yra pasirenkami individualiai pagal žmogaus ūgį, sveikatos būklę bei kitus individualius poreikius bei savybes. Kiti daiktai yra, bendro pobūdžio t. y. tie, kuriems nebūtinai individualus pritaikymas, tad jie gali būti standartinio, visiems tinkančio, išvykimo krepšio komplektacijoje, kurią pirkėjas gali įsigyti vienu kartu. Tyrimo metu, oficialus rekomendacinis sąrašas buvo naudojamas kaip kontrolinis, su kuriuo ir buvo palyginami Lietuvos rinkoje esančių išvykimo krepšių bei jų analogų atitikimas rekomenduojamam bendro pobūdžio daiktų sąrašui (žr. Lentelė 2, stulpelis *Rekomenduojamas sąrašas LT72.LT*).

Tiriant Lietuvos internetinėje prekyboje esančius išvykimo krepšius, ne visi juose esantys daiktai buvo tapatūs, tad vertinant į vieną gretą buvo statomi panašią funkciją atliekantys turinio elementai, pvz. rekomenduojamame sąrašė minima, kad reikalingas mechaninis konservų atidarytuvas, tačiau tokią pačią funkciją gali atlikti daugiafunkcinis peilis; miegmaišio funkciją dalinai gali atlikti šiltas pledas ir pan.

Jei internetinėje parduotuvėje yra siūlomi keli išvykimo krepšio variantai (pvz. minimalus, vidutinis ir maksimalus) tuomet buvo imamas didžiausias ir išsamiausias iš siūlomų variantų. Dydžio pasirinkimas taip pat buvo svarbus, nes sudarė galimybę vertinti maksimalią siūlomo krepšio komplektaciją.

Buvo palygintos penkiose, toliau išvardintose, internetinėse parduotuvėse siūlomi išvykimo krepšiai, o būtent *Evakuacinė kuprinė* (Evakuacinė kuprinė 2024b), *Į žvalgybą* (Į žvalgybą 2024b), *SOS kuprinė* (SOS kuprinė 2024a), *Liumenai* (Liumenai 2024), *Kurpinė72.lt* (Kurpinė72.lt 2024a) internetinėse parduotuvėse parduodami išvykimo krepšiai. Daugiau įmonių prekiaujančių išvykimo krepšių analogais nepavyko aptikti.

Tyrimo metuose svarstyta ar verta įtraukti į sąrašą „Išgyvenimo Kuprinė - Pilietinio Pasipriešinimo Rinkinys“ parduodamą internetinėje parduotuvėje Nepasiduok.lt, tačiau atsisakyta, nes tai konceptualiai skirtingo pobūdžio krepšys, skirtas pilietiniam pasipriešinimui, tad jame, kaip skelbiama puslapyje, sudėta „viskas, ko reikia pasirengimui ir gynybai“ (Nepasiduok 2024), bet ne evakuacijai. Taip pat atsisakyta palyginimus daryti su perparduodamais išvykimo krepšiais iš kitų šalių, pvz. lenkų gamybos *Help Bag* (Help Bag 2024) perparduodamas *Pigu.lt* (Pigu.lt 2024), nes jis komplektuojamas pagal Lenkijos civilinės saugos rekomendacijas, tad netinka norint tirti produktų atitikimą Lietuvos civilinės saugos

rekomendaciniam sąrašui. Toks pasirinkimas yra pakankamas norint nustatyti krepšių siūlomų Lietuvos rinkoje atitikimą oficialioms rekomendacijoms, tuo pačiu nebandant apimti ir kitų šalių patirties.

Tiriamų išvykimo krepšių palyginamasis sąrašas išdėstytas žemiau pateikiamoje lentelėje (žr. Lentelė 2). Pirmajame stulpelyje surašyti bendro pobūdžio Lt72.lt rekomenduojamame sąrašė esantys daiktai, kituose aukščiau minėtų parduotuvių siūlomos išvykimo krepšio komplektacijos elementai. Jiems sutampant elementai buvo rašomi toje pačioje eilutėje, nesant elemento paliekamas tuščias langelis. Lentelės pabaigoje surašyti visi pavieniai turinio elementai, (ne)pasikartojantys kituose esančiuose išvykimo krepšiuose.

Lentelė 2. Rekomenduojamo Išvykimo krepšio bendrų daiktų sąrašo su palyginimas Lietuvos internetinėse parduotuvėse esančiais variantais.

Rekomenduojamas sąrašas	Evakuacinė kuprinė	Išvykimo krepšys LT72	Evakuacinė išgyvenimo kuprinė	Evakuacinė kuprinė - su įranga	Išgyvenimo kuprinė 72 Optimali Kuprinė72
<i>LT72.LT</i>	<i>Evakuacinė kuprinė</i>	<i>Į žvalgybą</i>	<i>SOS kuprinė</i>	<i>Liumenai.lt</i>	
Žibintuvėlis	Žibintuvėlis	Žibintuvėlis Fokus FOX	Žibintuvėlis	Galvos žibintuvėlis	Žibintuvėlis
Radio imtuvas	Kišeninis radijas	Mini nešiojamasis radijas	Kišeninis radijas		Radio imtuvas
Elementai prietaisams	Baterijos		Baterijos		Papildomi elementai AAA
Maisto daviny 3 paroms				Džiovinata jautiena, Maisto daviny	Sublimuoto maisto batonėliai
Vandens atsargos 3 paroms				Geriamasis vanduo	
Mechaninis konservų atidarytuvas	Daugiafunkcinis peilis	Daugiafunkcis įrankis Big FOX	Daugiafunkcinis peilis	Būtinausi įrankiai	Multifunkcinis peilis
Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys	Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys	Pirmosios pagalbos vaistinė	Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys	Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys	Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys
Vandenilio peroksidas	Vandenilio peroksidas		Vandenilio peroksido tirpalas		
Drėgnos servetėlės	Drėgnos servetėlės		Drėgnos servetėlės		Drėgnos servetėlės
Rankšluostis	Rankšluostis		Rankšluostis	Rankšluostis	
Muilas (prausimosi priemonės)	Muilas, Šampūnas, Dušo gelis		Muilas Šampūnas/dušo gelis		
Dantų valymo priemonės	Dantų šepetėlis, dantų pasta		Dantų šepetėlis Dantų pasta		
Tualetinis popierius	Tualetinis popierius		Tualetinis popierius		

Šilta antklodė arba miegmaišis	Pledas	Pirmosios pagalbos miegmaišis FOX	Šiltas pledas	Antklodė	
Kaukė nuo dulkių	Respiratorius	Apsauginė veido kaukė MFH	Respiratorius	Daugkartinio naudojimo apsauginė kaukė	Respiratorius nuo dulkių
Degtukai (arba kitas ugnies šaltinis)	Žiebtuvėlis, Degtukai	Atsparūs vėjui ir vandeniui degtukai su dėžute	Žiebtuvėlis, Degtukai	Laužo užkūrėjas, Amžinas degtukas	
Rašymo priemonės (pieštukas ir popierius)	Užrašų knygelė, Rašiklis				Kompaktiška užrašų knygutė kontaktams
Daiktai kurių nėra rekomenduojamame sąrašė					
	Higieninis rinkinys		Higienos rinkinys		
	Šukos		Šukos		
	Lietpaltis		Lietpaltis	Apsiaustas	Tvirtas lietpaltis
		Vandeniui atsparus dokumentų dėklas FOX	Vandeniui atsparūs maišeliai su daiktų sąrašais		Neperšlampami maišeliai
	Artimųjų kontaktų lentelė, Žvakė			Parašiotinė virvė, Vandens valymo tabletės, Vandens filtras, Karabinas, Turistinė viryklė, Kietasis kuras, Grandininis pjūklas, Vandens rezervuaras, Cheminis šildytuvas, Puodas	Taktinis išgyvenimo rinkinys (Ugnies skeltukas, peiliukas, žvakė, siuvimo rinkinys, rankinis grandininis pjūklelis, žvejybos komplektas, signalinis švilpukas), Virvė (10m.), Šilumą sulaikanti antklodė, Karabinai (2 vnt.), Tvirta lipni juosta, Lietuvos kelių žemėlapis

Taigi apibendrinant lentelės duomenis, svarbu atkreipti dėmesį į tai, kad aptariamuose išvykimo krepšiuose numanomai siekiama išlaikyti formalų atitikimą oficialiam sąrašui, tačiau

jo griežtai nesilaikoma, tad daug kas vertinama gana laisvai. Puslapyje *I žvalgybą* minima, kad „išvykimo krepšys LT72 yra itin svarbus sprendimas, kuris atitinka bendrąsias valstybės ekspertų rekomendacijas (www.LT72.lt)“ (*I žvalgybą* 2024b), tačiau čia parduodamo išvykimo krepšio turinys su rekomenduojamu bendro pobūdžio LT72.LT sąrašo elementais sutampa tik 7 iš 17 punktų. Parduotuvėje *Evakuacinė kuprinė* minima, kad „kuprinė ir jos turinys atitinka VPGT ir lt72.lt paruoštas rekomendacijas“ (*Evakuacinė kuprinė* 2024a), o bendrų rekomenduojamų elementų sutaptis didelė: 15 iš 17. Puslapyje *SOS kuprinė* rašoma, kad „kupinėje esantys daiktai atitinka rekomendacijas nelaimės atveju pirmosioms 72 valandoms ir daugiau“ (*SOS kuprinė* 2024b), tačiau sutaptis yra 14 iš 17. Puslapis *Lumenai* nereferuoja nieko iš LT72.LT rekomendacijų, taip pat nesiremia jokiais institucijomis, ir jų sąrašo atitiktis yra 9 iš 17. Parduotuvėje *Kuprinė72* skelbia, kad tai yra „72 valandų išgyvenimo kuprinė yra jūsų gelbėtojas ekstremaliose situacijose. Kruopščiai sukomplektuota, ji turi viską, ko reikia trims paroms: maisto, pirmosios pagalbos reikmenų, daugiafunkcinių įrankių ir apsaugos priemonių“, tačiau atitikimas oficialioms rekomendacijoms yra menkas: 8 punktai iš 17.

Vertinant tik skaitinę reikšmę, elementų sutaptis, o ir pačių elementų kiekis, atrodo dideli, tačiau nesant galimybės objektyviai įvertinti siūlomų išvykimo krepšių elementų kokybės, neįmanoma įvertinti krepšio komplektacijos kokybės. Tarkime *Lumenai* nurodo, kad krepšyje yra įdėtas maisto daavinys, tačiau neaiškus nei jo kiekis, nei maistinė vertė, nei galiojimas ar paties produkto kokybė. Viena, jei tai yra pilnas maisto racionas trims dienoms ir visai kas kita jei įdėtas sausas turistinis maisto daavinys ir užkandis, o būtent taip ir apibrėžiama, kad tai maisto daavinys ir džiovinta jautiena. Kitas pavyzdys galėtų būti daugiafunkcinis įrankis, kurio kaina gali būti nuo kelių iki kelių šimtų eurų, na, o pagal kainą paprastai būna ir atitinkama kokybė. Asmeninė autoriaus patirtis rodo, kad retas kuris daugiafunkcinis įrankis kainuojantis mažiau nei kelios dešimtys eurų bus kokybiškas, o matant bendrą parduodamų krepšių kainą, labai tikėtina, kad jame nebus sudėti brangūs ir kokybiški daiktai. Taigi, subjektyviai sprendžiant apie pavyzdžiuose pateiktus įrankius, panašu, kad nebuvo rinktasi iš pačių brangiausių, pvz. puslapyje *Evakuacinė kuprinė* nėra nurodytas daugiafunkcinio įrankio modelis, tad čia gali būti ir gana vidutinės kokybės daugiafunkcinis įrankis *Ferrino*, kurio kaina straipsnio rašymo dieną Lietuvoje buvo nuo 15,99 € (ten pat reguliari kaina 21,99 €) (*Power Sport* 2024a) ir labai panašus į jį, kainuojantis tik 6.61 \$ analogas iš *Ebay* (*Ebay* 2024). Kiek kitaip yra su puslapiu *I žvalgybą* ir *Kuprinė72*, ten daugiau mažiau įmanoma nustatyti pavienių daiktų kainas, nes sąrašė nurodyti konkretūs modeliai ir gamintojai be to jie matomi iliustracinėje nuotraukoje pagal kurią galima atsekti kokius konkrečius daiktus yra įdėti į jų parduodamą išvykimo krepšį. Kadangi kainos išsamiau, bus aptartos kitame skyrelyje, čia daugiau nesiplėšime.

Palyginus rekomenduojamą sąrašą su internetinėse parduotuvėse siūlomų išvykimo krepšių turinio sąrašais, paaiškėjo, kad visuose siūlomuose išvykimo krepšiuose yra perteklinių arba besidubliuojančių daiktų. Kai kurie daiktai atitinka kituose nei LT72.LT šaltiniuose, pateikiamus sąrašus pvz. virtuviniai reikmenys, universalus peiliukas, šiukšlių maišai, siūlai ir adatos, kastuvėlis, replės, švilpukas, virvė, lipni juosta ir pan. (*Ką turime žinoti apie pasirengimą* 2014, p. 81). Kai kurie daiktai tokie kaip antklodės arba pirmosios pagalbos miegmaišis nėra tokie funkcionalūs, kad atstotų standartinį miegmaišį, tačiau nei viena parduotuvė nesiūlo miegmaišio, tik pledai arba pirmosios pagalbos miegmaišį. Kiti sąrašuose esantys daiktai funkciškai dubliuoja vienas kitą, pvz. degtukai ir žiebtuvėlis: čia galioja išlikėjų principas, kad degtukai yra prasčiausiais įmanomas pasirinkimas, tad geriau su savimi turėti du žiebtuvėlius arba ugnies skiltuvą, nes „sušlapusio degtuko neįmanoma uždegti, neretai net išdžiovintas jis taip ir lieka pagaliuku su ruda galvute ir nebeatlieka savo funkcijos“ (*Klimenka ir Klimenka* 2022, p. 21). Na, o perteklinių daiktų, pavyzdys galėtų būti toks: *Lumenai* siūlomame krepšyje yra įdėta turistinė viryklėlė ir kietas kuras, tad natūraliai kyla klausimas:

jei jau yra turistinė viryklėlė, kam tada bus naudojamas kietas kuras? Žinoma, parduodant prekę ir į ją įdėjus papildomą daiktą už niekinę kainą (pvz. degtukų dėžutę), galima ženkliai pakelti bendro rinkinio kainą, tai taip sakant normali rinkodara.

Kita problema yra ta, kad *Lumenai* ir *Į žvalgybą* siūlomi išvykimo krepšiai yra militarizuoti, t. y. pati kuprinė ir joje esantys elementai atspindi karybą besidominčių žmonių aprangos stilių. Karo atveju tai gali būti pavojinga, nes besievakuojantį civilį asmenį priešas (ar net savi) gali palaikyti kombatantu. Rekomendacijos vengti militarizuotų aprangos ir įrangos elementų, aiškiai išsakoma pasirengimo ekstremalioms situacijoms mokymų medžiagoje: „Jokių maskuojamųjų spalvų ar kariškų simbolių negali būti jūsų aprangoje, jokių specialių pirštinių, matomoje vietoje pakabintų medžioklinių peilių ar gertuvių. Jūs esate civilis ir turite tai iš karto parodyti. Karo lauke kas atrodo kaip karys, tas ir kariauja. Jei esate civilis ir tai aiškiai parodote, vargu ar kas nors skubės jus žudyti“ (*Ką turime žinoti apie pasirengimą* 2014, p. 89). Puslapyje *Nepasiduok* siūloma *Išgyvenimo Kuprinė - Pilietinio Pasipriešinimo Rinkinys* yra visiškai militarizuota, tačiau juk ir jos paskirtis padėti pilietinio pasipriešinimo dalyviui. Tačiau ji netinka pilietinio pasipriešinimo dalyviui, nes pilietinio pasipriešinimo atveju, naudodamas militarizuotus elementus savo aprangoje, pasipriešinimo dalyvis iškart išsидуos arba bus įtariamasis besas kombatantu. Pilietinis pasipriešinimas yra nesmurtinis, psichologinių, ekonominių, politinių ir socialinių priemonių naudojimas trukdantis okupantui veikti, pvz. naudojant 199 pilietinio pasipriešinimo būdus pagal Gene Sharp'ą (*Pilietinio pasipriešinimo abėcėlė* 2020, 30-420). Internetinėse parduotuvėse *SOS kurpinė* ir *Evakuacinė kurpinė* siūlomi išvykimo krepšiai yra visiškai demilitarizuoti, tad vizualine prasme, puikiai tinka civiliams.

Ar kaina atitinka realybę: atvejo analizė

Tyrimo metu buvo siekta apskaičiuoti realią siūlomų išvykimo krepšių ir jų turinio kainą, t. y. jei asmuo norėtų savarankiškai susikomplektuoti, lygiai tokio paties turinio, individualų išvykimo krepšį, kiek jis sumokėtų. Pavienių išvykimo krepšio elementų kainos aptarimas yra svarbus, nes pvz. puslapyje *Į žvalgybą* nurodyta, kad reguliari išvykimo krepšio kaina be nuolaidos yra 212,59 €, taip pat pažymima, kad „atskirai perkant identiškus produktus, sumokėtumėte žymiai daugiau - net 212 EUR“ (*Į žvalgybą* 2024b), tad tokį, liaudiškai tariant, per gerai skambantį teiginį būtina patikrinti. Žemiau pateikiamos dvi lentelės kuriose nurodytos reguliarios krepšio turinio elementų kainos iš kitų arba tų pačių internetinių parduotuvių. Jei žiūrėjimo dieną puslapyje šiai prekei buvo išpardavimas, tuomet skliausteliuose nurodoma kaina su nuolaida. Greta kainos pridėta nuoroda į literatūros sąrašą, pagal kurią galima pasitikrinti ar teisingai pateikti duomenys.

Kadangi didžioji dalis aptariamų išvykimo krepšių pardavėjų nenurodo išvykimo krepšių turinio gamintojų ir modelių, labai sudėtinga buvo nustatyti bent apytiksliai jų kainą. Tik dviejų krepšių turinys yra ganėtinai aiškus, t. y. parduotuvės *Į Žvalgybą* ir *Kurpinė72.lt* siūlomi išvykimo krepšiai. Tad jų turinio kainos ir yra apskaičiuotos žemiau.

Internetinėje parduotuvėje *Į žvalgybą* siūlomas išvykimo krepšio turinio sąrašas pateiktas 3 lentelėje. Pirminės pastabos:

1. Siūlomas krepšys išlaiko tyrimo tikslą atitinkantį pavadinimą t. y. *Išvykimo krepšys LT72*;

2. Parduotuvėje esančiame išvykimo krepšio apraše yra nurodyti konkretūs turinio elementų modeliai, o tai leido aptikti juos kitose internetinėse parduotuvėse bei apskaičiuoti apytiksliai kainą kurią sumokėtų pirkėjas įsigydamas visus elementus atskirai, tad buvo galima palyginti su puslapyje esančio išvykimo krepšio kaina;

3. Deja ne visus aptariamame išvykimo krepšyje esančius elementus pavyko aptikti Lietuvos internetinėse parduotuvėse, tad dviejų elementų (t.y. pirmosios pagalbos vaistinė ir pirmosios pagalbos miegmaišis FOX) kainos nurodytos iš užsienio parduotuvių.

Lentelė 3. Prekės „Išvykimo krepšys LT72“ kainų suvestinė

Išvykimo krepšys LT72 <i>I žvalgybą</i>	Žemiausia aptikta kaina
Vandeniui atspari kuprinė FOX® (18 L.)	35,99 € (Front.lt 2024a)
Žibintuvėlis Fokus FOX	23,59 € (16,50 €) (I žvalgybą 2024c)
Mini nešiojamasis radijas	3,50 € (Merkandi 2024)
Daugiafunkcis įrankis Big FOX	23,99 € (16,99 €) (I žvalgybą 2024a)
Pirmosios pagalbos vaistinė	6,95 € (Military & Outdoor 2024)
Apsauginė veido kaukė MFH	1,49 € (Trenk.lt 2014)
Atsparūs vėjui ir vandeniui degtukai su dėžute	7,49 € (Front.lt 2024b)
Pirmosios pagalbos miegmaišis FOX	11,95 € (Ferre Hogar 2024)
Vandeniui atsparus dokumentų dėklas FOX	2,91 € (Power Sport 2024b)
Viso suma:	117 € (103,77 €)

Kita ištirta kurpinė siūloma internetinėje parduotuvėje *Kurpinė72.lt*. Sąrašas 4 lentelėje. Pirminės pastabos:

1. Siūlomo išvykimo krepšio turinio elementų sąrašė nenurodyti gamintojai ir modeliai, tačiau greta sąrašo yra pateikiama iliustracinė nuotrauka, kuri yra žemos rezoliucijos, tad ne visuomet aiškiai matosi koks tai produktas. Nepaisant to, turinio elementus pateiktus nuotraukoje pavyko atkurti, tačiau vis tiek lieka nedidelė tikimybė, kad žemiau esančioje lentelėje duomenys nebus visiškai tikslūs, tačiau ši paklaida vis tiek nėra tokia didelė, kad ženkliai iškreiptų duomenų rodmenis.

2. Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad iliustracinė nuotrauka ne visai atitinka sąrašą pateikiamą puslapyje, tad čia galima kelti papildomus klausimus apie realų parduodamo krepšio turinį, tačiau tai nėra šio tyrimo uždavinys. Turinio elementai esantys sąrašė, tačiau netinkantys iliustracinės nuotraukos nurodyti yra šie: 5 vnt. AAA tipo elementai – nuotraukoje yra pavaizduoti 4 vnt. AA tipo elementai, be to jie yra pakraunami, tad turinio sąrašė turėtų atsirasti ir elementų pakrovėjas, tačiau jo nėra; nuotraukoje matomas kompasas, sąrašė jis neminimas; nuotraukoje yra žaizdų dezinfekavimo skystis, tačiau sąrašė jis nenurodomas.

3. Dėl mažos iliustracinės nuotraukos rezoliucijos, kai kurių turinio elementų modelio nustatyti nepavyko, tuomet buvo imtas panašios išvaizdos ir funkcionalumo daiktas.

4. Taip pat, ne ką mažiau svarbu atkreipti dėmesį ir į tai, kad ieškant kai kurių pavienių krepšio elementų, iliustracinė nuotrauka buvo sukarpyta į atskirus segmentus ir ieškoma pagal iškirptų elementų išvaizdą. Šio proceso metu didelę dalį, paskirų daiktų, identiškas nuotraukas pavyko aptikti internete, tad susidaro vaizdas, kad *Kurpinė72.lt* pateikiama iliustracinė nuotrauka padaryta ne iš realaus siūlomo produkto elementų, bet internete surinktų nuotraukų. Nesant galimybės pamatyti realaus krepšio turinio, šis teiginys yra tik subjektyvi prielaida, tačiau kelianti klausimus apie parduodamo išvykimo krepšio kokybę bei sąžiningą prekybą kaip tokią, bet tai galėtų būti ištirta kituose tyrimuose.

Lentelė 4. Prekės „Išgyvenimo kurpinė 72 – Optimali“ kainų suvestinė

Išgyvenimo kurpinė 72 - Optimali <i>Kurpinė72.lt</i>	Žemiausia aptikta kaina
Kurpinė	38,00 € (Armijai ir civiliams 2024)
Žibintuvėlis	10,00 € (Military Range 2024)
Papildomi elementai AAA	10,29 € (Dymo 2024)
Neperšlampami maišeliai	0,16 € (E-pigiau 2024)
Radio imtuvas	7,99 € (UrmoKaina.lt 2024)
Sublimuoto maisto batonėliai	12,20 € (Traversas 2024)
Multifunkcinis peilis	10,95 € (TacticalShop.lt 2024)
Taktinis išgyvenimo rinkinys	6,50 € (Turisto pasaulis 2024)
Pirmosios pagalbos rinkinys	13,00 € (Decathlon 2024)
Drėgnos servetėlės	7,79 € (Euro vaistinė 2024)
Šilumą sulaikanti antklodė	1,45 € (Gintarinė vaistinė 2024)
Respiratorius nuo dulkių	0,71 € (Saugima 2024)
Kompaktiška užrašų knygutė kontaktams	1,76 € (Lpromo.lt 2024)
Virvė (10m.)	3,99 € (Helmand Baltics 2024)
Karabinai (2 vnt.)	5,58 € (Moki veži 2024)
Tvirta lipni juosta	5,59 € (Senukai 2024)
Tvirtas lietpaltis	2,24 € (Jupoja 2024)
Lietuvos kelių žemėlapis	4,99 € (Knygos.lt 2024)
Viso suma:	143,09 €

Taigi apibendrinant šių dviejų išvykimo krepšių kainas, perkant sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį parduotuvėje *I žvalgybą* kaina yra 95,59 € didesnė už tą kurią sumokėtų asmuo visus paminėtus elementus pirkdamas savarankiškai (117 € sudaro 55,04% internetiniame puslapyje siūlomos reguliarios kainos). Nebent jeigu išvykimo krepšys perkamas su nuolaida. Straipsnio rašymo metu parduotuvėje *I žvalgybą* kaina su nuolaida 89,39 €, tad finansiškai, kaip ir labiau apsimokantis variantas. Tačiau net ir šiuo atveju parduotuvės teiginys, kad už pavienius daiktus klientas sumokėtų daugiau nei 212 € neatitinka realybės. Kito aptarto išvykimo krepšio reguliari kaina 225,00 €, išpardavimo kaina 165,00 €, apskaičiuota pavienių elementų bendra kaina 143,09 €. Taigi pirkejas pirkdamas krepšį permoka ~82 € (su nuolaida ~22 €). Be to, šis krepšys yra militaristinio stiliaus, o tai kelia aukščiau aptartas problemas. Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad nuolaida trumpalaikis dalykas, neretai sąlygotas noro išsiparduoti užsistovėjusias prekes. Nuolaidos viena dažniausių parduotuvėse taikomų pardavimo skatinimo priemonių, ypač kai kainos sumažinimas akivaizdžiai parodomas, pavyzdžiui, nubraukiama sena kaina ir šalia parašoma nauja mažesnė (Ištoraite 2013, p. 122), tai galimai rodo, kad toks pasiūlymas pirkėjui neatrodo viliojantis, gal būt todėl, kad ieškantis lengvesnio kelio asmuo jau šiek tiek susigaudo koks turėtų būti išvykimo krepšio turinys, tad matydamas siūlomo išvykimo krepšio neatitikimą Lietuvos civilinės saugos rekomendacijų sąrašui, neskuba įsigyti siūlomos prekės.

Atliekant tyrimą bandyta nustatyti ir kituose *Lentelėje 2* pateiktų išvykimo krepšių turinio pavienių elementų kainas, tačiau susidurta su *no name brand* problema, t. y. pagal puslapyje pateiktus duomenis, tame tarpe ir vizualinius, nebuvo įmanoma nustatyti konkretaus gamintojo ar prekės medelio, nes visos prekės yra bevardės. Pvz. parduotuvėje *Evakuacinė kurpinė* didžioji dalis išvykimo krepšio turinio gamintojai nėra aiškūs, nes ant prekių nesimato jokių logotipų ar užrašų, tokia informacija nepateikiama ir prekės aprašyme. Parduotuvėje *SOS kuprinė* situacija analogiška. Puslapyje *Lumenai* greta išvykimo krepšio esančiame paveikslėlyje matoma, kad prekės yra konkrečių firmų, galima neaiškiai įžiūrėti logotipus, tačiau paveikslėlis neryškus, jo pasididinti nepavyksta, tad taip pat neįmanoma tiksliai nustatyti didžiosios dalies prekių gamintojų ir pagal tai surasti juos kituose prekybos šaltiniuose. Taigi kitų nurodytų išvykimo krepšių kainų apskaičiuoti nepavyko, nes nenurodyti įrangos modeliai, jų taip pat neįmanoma nustatyti pagal iliustracinėse nuotraukose esamus pavyzdžius. Bandant apskaičiuoti „iš akies“, kaina bus pernelyg subjektyvi ir nutolusi nuo realybės. Norint pamatyti ar pirkėjas sutaupyti pirkdamas pavienius siūlomų krepšių elementus, pakanka dviejų pavyzdžių, nes jie puikiai parodo tendenciją.

Savaime suprantama, kad mums nėra žinomos tiekimo kainos bei parduotuvės vykdomi sandoriai, taip pat suprantama, kad parduotuvė privalo užsidėti antkainį, tad čia vertinamas tik kainų dydis perkant rinkinį arba komplektuojant analogišką išvykimo krepšio turinį savarankiškai. Taip, pat esama ir kitų elementų galinčių iškreipti galutinės kainos sumą, pvz. siuntimo mokesčiai, sugaištas laikas ir t.t. Taigi pirkėjas komplektuodamas krepšį savarankiškai, net ir pirkdamas identiškas prekes, gali gerokai sutaupyti, tik sugaiš daugiau laiko, o norint, kad įsigytas išvykimo krepšys pilnai atitiktų rekomendacijas, vis tiek turės jį papildomai komplektuoti.

Išvados

Tyrimo apvarstyta išvykimo krepšio paskirties klausimas parodė, kad kiti naudojami pavadinimai pvz. išgyvenimo kurpinė, neatitinka išvykimo krepšio koncepcijos, nes yra skirta išgyventi tokiose situacijose kaip pasiklydimas miške, lėktuvo katastrofa ir pan. tad netinka naudoti kaip išvykimo krepšio sinonimą. Rekomenduojama vengti sinonimiškumo, nes tai klaidina visuomenę, tad siūloma likti prie oficialiai naudojamo pavadinimo *išvykimo krepšys*.

Tyrimo metu nustatyta, kad Lietuvos rinkoje siūlomų išvykimo krepšių turinys tik dalinai atitinka oficialias rekomendacijas. Juose esama perteklinių ir besidubliuojančių elementų. Norint nustatyti tokių išvykimo krepšių turinio kokybę, derėtų atlikti praktinį tyrimą ir sukurti kokybės vertinimo metodologiją. Tyrimas taip pat parodė, kad kai kurie rinkoje esantys išvykimo krepšiai, dėl militarizuoto stiliaus bei turinio elementų, karo atveju gali kelti pavojų jį turinčiam civiliui asmeniui. Kadangi internetinių parduotuvių išvykimo krepšių turinys nėra reglamentuojamas jokiais specialiais įstatymais, tad tik nuo paties pardavėjo priklauso kokį turinį jis komplektuoja parduodamame išvykimo krepšyje.

Parduodamų išvykimo krepšių turinio kokybė kelia daug abejonių, ypač jei pavyksta nustatyti pavienių elementų kainas ir jas palyginti su bendra sukomplektuoto išvykimo krepšio kaina. Internetinėse parduotuvėse *I žvalgybą* ir *Kuprinė72* parduodamų sukomplektuotų išvykimo krepšių pavadinimų *Išvykimo krepšys LT72* ir *Išgyvenimo kurpinė 72 - Optimali* reguliarios kainos palyginimas su tapačių, pavienių jo turinio elementų kitose internetinėse parduotuvėse parodė, kad pirkėjas įsigydamas sukomplektuotą išvykimo krepšį, sumoka beveik dvigubai didesnę kainą. Galima daryti išvadą, kad savarankiškai susikomplektuoti išvykimo krepšį finansiškai labiau apsimoka, juo labiau, kad tokiu atveju galima įsigyti prekių

kokybės kontrolė. Taigi, civilinės saugos mokytojams, sulaukus klausimo kur arba kokį krepšį pirkti, rekomenduojama siūlyti išvykimo krepšį susikomplektuoti patiems.

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COMPLIANCE OF SUPPLIES KITS SOLD ON THE LITHUANIAN MARKET WITH OFFICIAL CIVIL PROTECTION RECOMMENDATIONS: A CONTENT AND PRICE RESEARCH

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Summary

Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, civil protection training in Lithuania began to introduce the public to the Disaster Supplies Kit, its purpose and contents. This is a special kurpine for emergencies. The Disaster Supplies Kit is a pre-prepared kit that contains everything you would need to survive autonomously for 72 hours. During the civil safety training, participants often ask what kind of Disaster Supplies Kit to buy or where to buy it. The question is relevant as some online shops have indeed started to offer such Disaster Supplies Kits. The contents of the Disaster Supplies Kits in online shops are not regulated by any specific law, so it is up to the seller to decide what contents he includes in the Disaster Supplies Kit he sells. The aim of the study was to investigate whether the Disaster Supplies Kits sold in Lithuania comply with the official recommendations published on the on the official website of the Fire Protection Department - LT72.LT.

The research compared the lists of contents offered by the four Disaster Supplies Kits with the official list. The aim was to find out whether the content sold is in line with the official guidelines. It also sought to compare the price that a customer would pay for one of the departure bags sold in Lithuania if they bought a complete Disaster Supplies Kit with the price that they would pay if they bought the individual contents of the same bag.

In the first case, the recommended list was extracted and compared to the extent to which they overlapped, leading to conclusions as to whether such a Disaster Supplies Kit could be recommended for purchase. The

checklist was taken from the LT72.LT website. From this list, individual and general purpose items were distinguished. Individual items are packed according to people's own needs, but the generic list is such that it can be fully packed in the Disaster Supplies Kits provided by online shops. These items on the official list, the general purpose items, have been compared with the contents of the commercially available Disaster Supplies Kit. The official name of the Disaster Supplies Kit (išvykimo krepšys) used in the civil protection training in the Republic of Lithuania, but synonymous terms such as Evacuation Backpack (evakuacinė kuprinė) or Survival Backpack (išgyvenimo kuprinė) are often used alongside it, which can be confusing. While the departure bag and the evacuation rucksack are still synonymous, the term survival rucksack is a completely different concept. A survival rucksack would be what in English-speaking countries is known as a Survival Kit, a package designed to provide you with the essentials in an emergency to increase your chances of preserving your health and life. It is thus an indefinite survival kit designed to have the basic tools in the event of a ship or plane crash or if lost in natural conditions such as jungles or mountains, and the contents of this kit are rather loose and usually depend on the area to which the person will be travelling. The departure bag in English-speaking countries is usually called the Disaster Supplies Kit and is designed to provide 72 hours of autonomous survival in emergency situations. Its equipment is very clearly defined in the civil protection guidelines. Following the list of civil protection recommendations of the Republic of Lithuania allowed us to compare the compliance of the bags on the market.

In the second case, the suggested price of a single Disaster Supplies Kit was compared with the prices of the individual items in the list of contents in other online shops. The research showed that if only the list was considered, some of the Disaster Supplies Kits would be partially in line with the official recommendations (i.e. considering only the number of items, but not their quality, redundant or duplicated items). In this case, the contents of one of the departure bags in Lithuania were taken. The price of a complete Disaster Supplies Kit was compared to the price of a person who would buy everything himself and make his own individual Disaster Supplies Kit. Each element of the departure bag in question was found in other shops. The calculation of the purchase price of the individual items came to 117 euro, which is EUR 95.59 less than the price of a complete bag in a shop. The cost of the complete Disaster Supplies Kit is EUR 212.59. The estimated cost of the individual elements of the other departure bag was €143.09. This is less €82 more expensive than buying a complete departure bag in a shop where the regular price of a departure bag is €225.00. So a person buying a complete Disaster Supplies Kit pays twice the price.

Another part of the research showed that buying a pre-packed Disaster Supplies Kit almost doubles the price of a self-packed departure bag. An important part of the research was the semantic meaning of the name of the Disaster Supplies Kit. By comparing this name with other names used synonymously (such as Evacuation Bag and Survival Backpack), it was found that the use of the official name, i.e. Disaster Supplies Kit, does not create a negative perception of the emergency situation itself. Calling it an Evacuation Bag creates a negative attitude towards the emergency. The other name often used synonymously, i.e. Survival Backpack, is not appropriate because of the different purpose of the backpack.

In order to achieve the first task, an interpretative semantics approach is used to determine the most appropriate structure for the name of the bag in question. For the second task, a comparative analysis was used to determine the compliance of the departure bags sold on the Lithuanian market with the official civil protection recommendations. The third task was implemented using case study and data analysis methods, which allowed to calculate how much a buyer overpays when purchasing a specific Disaster Supplies kit.

Keywords: Disaster Supplies Kit, Emergency Preparedness, Disaster Supplies Kit Trade, Disaster Supplies Kit

DIGITALISATION AS A FACTOR AGAINST CORRUPTION AND ENSURING THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF THE STATE

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Abstract. *The relevance of the study lies in the fact that the war in Ukraine has changed almost nothing in the state system of the country and the level of corruption has remained unchanged, therefore it is important to analyse this problem to identify the system's shortcomings and identify possible ways to improve the country's digital processes. The purpose of the study is to establish, based on the analysis of the international and Ukrainian experience, digital transformation of the main means of combating corruption and ensuring the economic security of states, formulating recommendations for the effective use of digitalization means in Ukraine in order to reduce the level of corruption, increasing the general level of economic security and investment attractiveness of the country at the international level. The research is based on the theoretical and methodological principles of domestic and foreign researchers. A survey of 25 experts was conducted to provide detailed analysis. Among the research methods, a systematic approach, a structural-functional approach, a comparison method, an analysis method, and a correlation analysis are used. As a result of the study, it was found that digitalization provides transparency and automation of processes, which reduces the risk of interference and abuse of official powers, ensures control over cash flows, which reduces the risk of loss or embezzlement of public funds, allows monitoring of companies' actions and identification of possible violations. All these functions of digital technologies contribute to combating corruption and ensuring the economic security of the state.*

Keywords: *digitalization, digital economy, corruption, economic security of the state, cybersecurity.*

Introduction

The digital transformation of the economy has a significant impact on various aspects of society, business and the functioning of the state. Digital technologies allow people to get more information, to be educated and informed. Innovations affect people's perception of the world, their way of communication and relationships. Digital transformation contributes to the development of production, the creation of new goods and services, the development of new sectors of the economy, qualitative and quantitative changes in the workforce at enterprises. Digitization of the state allows you to automate and optimize various processes, which increases the productivity of state institutions, provides a competitive advantage of the state in international relations, allows you to receive and process relevant data in a timely manner, which helps to make timely decisions for the stable development of the country and ensuring

the economic security of the state. Many tools that accelerate the digital transformation of the economy are already known: mobile devices and applications, the use of geolocation in logistics, cloud services, digital identification, the development of artificial intelligence, etc.

Since digitalization helps increase the level of transparency of public administration, strengthen public control, and reduce the bureaucratization of society, it can obviously increase the level of economic growth and reduce the level of corruption in the country. The use of digital technologies in the state will make it possible to expand citizens' access to public information, check the activities of state and local self-government bodies, digitize administrative services and provide an opportunity to report corruption.

Corruption is one of the biggest threats to the economic security of the state. Despite the fact that corruption is an integral part of the system of functioning of the state, its influence is assessed as negative, as it interferes with maintaining an adequate level of economic security. It should be mentioned that economic security ensures the stability of the state against various destructive phenomena, is the basis of the sovereignty of the state and guarantees a decent standard of living of the population.

Therefore, there is a need to analyse the relationship between digitalization, corruption and the level of economic security in different countries of the world and study anti-corruption approaches in these countries. Of course, the level of corruption and the means of combating it depend on the level of economic development of the country, political regime, national traditions, mentality, etc. The problem is urgent due to the fact that, unfortunately, the war in Ukraine has not changed much in the state system of the country and the level of corruption has remained unchanged, so it makes sense to study this topic even more deeply, analysing foreign experience of solving similar situations.

Literature review

Digitalization can give a significant impetus to the country's economic growth, because it creates new sources of income, expands the country's economic capabilities, increases the state's competitiveness at the global level, and improves the living conditions of the population.

Kibik (2022) says that at the moment, the digitalization of the economy is characterized by the trend of open innovation processes, which makes it possible to overcome communication, geographical and institutional barriers. In the open innovation model, all contractors, partners and employees have the opportunity to take advantage of networks and digital platforms.

Pugachevska K.Y. (2018) states that the digital economy is impacting industries such as banking, retail, transportation, energy, education, healthcare, and many others. Digital technologies, such as the Internet of Things, big data, the use of mobile devices and devices, are changing the ways of social interaction, economic relations, and institutions. There are new methods of cooperation and coordination of economic agents to jointly solve certain tasks.

Parida V (2019) examines changes in the system of enterprise functioning under the influence of digitalization. It is noted that the implementation of innovative business models based on digitalization requires a significant transformation of the company's ecosystems (especially in relation to customers) to a state where value is created jointly by suppliers, ecosystem partners and customers by optimizing the use of resources and effective work and use of digital technologies.

Mondejar, M. E. (2021) studied the impact of digitalization on agriculture, the state of ecology, energy challenges, industry, social well-being and the climate. He found that digital

technologies are increasing the scale of sustainable management of agricultural lands and resources and strengthening related productivity, services and livelihoods around the world.

Bondar-Podhurskaya (2020) relates the effectiveness of digital technologies to the fact that computerization and the development of telecommunications also provide great opportunities for automated access to various sensitive, personal and other important critical data in society (citizens, organizations, etc.).

On a global scale, digital technologies create the threat of new conflicts at the regional, national and international levels. Some scientists believe that in the process of digitization there is no equalization of incomes, but rather their stratification. Developed countries begin to develop even faster and become even richer, and countries that cannot implement digital transformations of the economy will become even poorer and remain suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour for developed countries. Instead of destroying or weakening manifestations of inequality, digitalization, on the contrary, can strengthen them and make them more acute in many ways.

Maurseth, P. B. (2020) examined the impact of digitalization of the economy on the development of underdeveloped countries and concluded that the new paradigm based on information and communication technologies creates as many new obstacles to development as the opportunities it opens up. The process of creating new technologies and their international distribution is currently more difficult for catch-up countries due to the greater requirements for skills, competences and capabilities required by modern ICT-based global competition.

Kotova O. (2020) explains that politics, legal formalities, traditions and culture, the achieved level of economic development, the level of education and the country's own technological base and many other factors play an important role in the digital transformation of the country's economy.

Digitization can act as an important anti-corruption factor because, according to J.X.Haytov (2023), the use of information and telecommunication technologies in the field of public administration, business, education, and medicine contributes to ensuring the transparency of the process of providing services and reducing the level of corruption.

However, the opinion of some scientists has shown that digitization as a phenomenon is not capable of solving this problem on its own. Effective implementation of digital technologies should be accompanied by state support: implementation of appropriate measures to fight corruption. Vasytsiv (2022) emphasizes the fact that the high rates of development of the digital economy, its effectiveness and prevalence in all branches and sectors of the economy depend on the quality of state regulation of these processes. Leonard Eben Ezer Simanjuntak (2022) believes that in order to fight corruption, it is necessary to take transformational measures, including the digitalization of law enforcement agencies and ensuring effective management.

In general, scientists interpret the concept of "corruption" in different ways. For example, Khidirov Khoshim Ibodullaevich and Tursunova Dildora Bahromovna (2020) claim that corruption is the abuse of official position for the purpose of receiving bribes and violating the values of the organization or the illegal use of another person's official position for the benefit of public and state legitimate interests. It may also include the illegal granting of privileges to other people or legal entities, in particular, the performance of such actions in the interests of a legal entity.

Kristina Ambrazeviciute, Egle Kavoliunaite-Ragauskiene and Petras Ragauskas (2020) believe that corruption is the behaviour that does not comply with the powers granted to a private sector actor or the standards of behaviour derived from them, with the aim of obtaining

benefits for oneself or others and with the understanding that it may harm the interests of third parties or the public.

Melnyk S.I. (2023) revealed the reasons for the high level of corruption in the state and the corruption of officials at the highest level, in particular: a rather long tradition of informal and very often corrupt connections in society; low level of development of inclusive institutions; merger of business and government; low level of development of democratic institutions and, accordingly, democratization of society; low level of legal culture of the population and the so-called legal arbitrariness of representatives of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary; the advantage of the clan system in the organization of socio-economic relations; high degree of bureaucratization of state and public administration.

According to Heidenheimer (2020), there are three types of corruption: black, grey and white. Black corruption characterizes specific actions that do not agree with the opinions of the elite and the public. The population condemns what was committed and wishes to punish the perpetrators for breaking the law. Gray corruption characterizes specific actions that do not agree with the opinion of the elite, and they seek to punish the perpetrators, but others do not agree with this opinion. In this case, most opinions remain ambiguous. White corruption characterizes specific actions that the elite and the public do not criticize and make no effort to punish the perpetrators.

Corruption is a complex social problem, so its causes and consequences are studied even in psychology. Alina Mungju-Pippid and Till Hartmann (2019) argue that corruption is a social dilemma because when corruption is systemic, it becomes a social norm. Individuals adapt to it and do not resist.

Scientists claim that the initiators of corrupt actions can be both representatives of the authorities and members of society. A. Vozniuk (2019) describes various reasons for the desire to take bribes from people in power. For example, there is a theory that the corrupt behaviour of certain individuals, which is systematic, can turn into a mental addiction to undue benefit, which in psychology is called bribery. This is the desire of an official to constantly receive an illegitimate benefit, which brings pleasure (in the case of a positive result) or oppression, or psychological discomfort (in the case of a negative result).

On the other hand, the population can also become a catalyst for the development of a corrupt environment in the country. A. Vozniuk (2019) says that if there is an opinion in society that officials are corrupt, dishonest or untrustworthy, citizens will be convinced of the impossibility of trusting even those people who are required by law to serve the interests of society. Citizens will see that most members of a society where government officials are plagued by corruption are forced to engage in corrupt practices and other such practices in order to get what they believe is rightfully theirs. Thus, they will conclude that most other people cannot be trusted. The individual will come to the opinion that in order to survive in such a society, he/she will also be forced to engage in corrupt and clientelistic practices.

Many scientists consider corruption to be one of the main threats to the country's economic security. Nataliya H. Pihul (2022) says that the negative impact of corruption is manifested in the slowdown of the country's economic growth, a decrease in economic activity, an increase in the shadow economy, and a deterioration in the well-being of citizens, which in turn affects the decrease in the economic security of the state.

Ensuring the economic security of the state is a strategically important goal. Babenko (2022) names the following main tasks of economic security: ensuring proportional and constant economic growth, overcoming inflation and unemployment, forming an effective structure of the economy, reducing the budget deficit and public debt, ensuring social protection

and improving the quality of life of the population, stabilizing the national currency, increasing the country's competitiveness, etc.

Xurramov (2023) argues that economic security refers to a state of economic well-being, stability, and protection against risks and vulnerabilities of an individual, household, or nation. It covers various aspects and dimensions that contribute to the overall economic stability and sustainability of the system.

Therefore, corruption is one of the key threats to the country's economic security. It can lead to a slowdown in economic growth, a decrease in economic activity, an increase in the shadow economy, and a deterioration in the well-being of citizens. The fight against corruption requires effective state regulation and the introduction of digital technologies to increase the transparency and efficiency of public administration. Digitization can be both a means of improving the country's economic security and a factor contributing to an increase in the number of risks, depending on the way it is implemented and supported by the state. On the one hand, digitalization contributes to the emergence of new sources of income and the improvement of living conditions of the population, affects various industries, such as banking, retail trade, transport, energy, education, health care, and others. On the other hand, digital technologies can increase income stratification between developing and developed countries and deepen inequalities. In order to achieve an appropriate level of economic security, it is necessary to implement a balanced anti-corruption program, to ensure the transparency of state administration and the safe functioning of digital processes.

Methodology

The theoretical and methodological bases of the research are the scientific works of domestic and foreign scientists in the field of international economics. Also, as part of the research, a survey of 25 experts in the fields of economics, law and IT was conducted. The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire with a rating scale, closed and open questions.

Among the research methods, a systematic approach is used in the study of digitalization as a factor in combating corruption and ensuring the economic security of the state, a structural-functional approach for determining the components of anti-corruption activities of states, a method of comparison in the study of foreign and Ukrainian experience in the fight against corruption, an analysis method in the analysis of means of combating corruption and ensuring the country's economic security while formulating practical recommendations. Correlation analysis is used to identify and assess the relationship between the level of digital transformation and the level of corruption.

According to the goal, the following tasks were set: to analyse the role of digital technologies in the implementation of anti-corruption measures in Ukraine, to analyse the level of economic security in Ukraine, to study the international experience of digital transformation in preventing the spread of corruption, and to analyse the potential possibilities of implementing foreign experience in the fight against corruption in Ukraine.

Discussion

The digitalization process in Ukraine began a long time ago and is designed to develop digital technologies used by the state, business and citizens. This process permeates all spheres of life, improves the quality of life of the population, creates new products and services,

accelerates the development of the economy and the growth of the country's competitiveness at the international level.

The first attempt to introduce digitalization processes in Ukraine was the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On the National Informatization Program" in 1998, which determined the directions for solving information needs in various spheres of activity. The next stage in the development of digitalization of Ukraine is characterized by increased protection of informational electronic resources, introduction of electronic document management and development of informatization of banking activities. In 2007, the Law "On the Basic Principles of Information Society Development in Ukraine for 2007-2015" was adopted, which defined strategic goals for the development of the information society.

Since 2015, Ukraine has started an active digitalization program. For example, on January 17, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the "Concept of the Development of the Digital Economy and Society of Ukraine for 2018-2020". The purpose of this concept was the development of digital infrastructure, the development of digital literacy, the promotion of the development of innovative sectors of the economy based on digital technologies, the use of digital technologies in ensuring public safety, environmental protection, urban life, cooperation with European and global scientific projects. In 2021, the President of Ukraine signed the Law "On stimulating the development of the digital economy in Ukraine", which aims to create favourable conditions for the development of innovative business in Ukraine, the development of digital infrastructure and the attraction of investments and talented specialists.

Significant achievements of digitalization in Ukraine are the automation of medical and public services. For example, the eHealth medical information management system and the *helsi.me* website have been created, which allow to find information about medical services, hospitals, prescriptions and other useful materials easily. ProZorro's public procurement system helps ensure open and transparent procurement, which not only simplifies the procurement process, but also allows to control the expenditure of public funds. Online auctions for the sale and rent of ProZorro property have appeared. Sales bring significant funds to the budget and ensure fair competition. Spending, the only web portal for the use of public funds, provides public disclosure of information about the use of public finances. The official e-declaration system obliges civil servants to submit declarations about their property assets. This system helps detect illegal enrichment. In 2020, the Diia application was launched, which greatly simplifies the process of obtaining government services. Mykhailo Fedorov – Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine (2022) – says that Diia is one of the best government applications in the world. More than 17.4 million Ukrainians use it now. All the necessary documents are at hand. You can pay your taxes in just a few clicks, watch TV and pay for the army.

With the help of the Action, citizens can confirm their identity, even if they have lost a physical copy of the document; submit reports on damaged or destroyed real estate as a result of hostilities, issue unemployment status and receive appropriate payments for Ukrainians who were officially employed, but lost their jobs or cannot continue their activities as private entrepreneurs due to the war; to receive the status of an IDP and corresponding payments from the state; get a document confirming the registered place of residence; issue duplicate certificates and statements birth, death, name change, and marriage in case of their loss, which is especially relevant during a full-scale war; issue a document that will replace 374 types of various permit documents (in particular, licenses, permits, certificates); record the movement of Russian equipment (allows to send photos and videos showing the presence of Russian troops and their equipment).

Of course, there are still Ukrainians who are afraid to use digital technologies, or simply do not know how to deal with them. According to the Ministry of Digital Transformation (2023), in 2022, only 63% of Ukrainians used online services. 88% of experts believe that Ukraine should develop programs for the introduction of digital specialities into the relevant curricula of higher educational institutions, while the other 12% hesitate to make a decision.

Bringing public services online and digitalizing processes are important components of various strategies and agreements aimed at the development of Ukraine and its integration into the European Union. One of the important steps to achieve this goal is the ratification of the Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union on Ukraine's participation in the "Digital Europe" program (2021-2027). This will allow Ukraine to participate in EU digital transformation programs, which will stimulate the Ukrainian digital economy, IT business and digital technologies of the country. Such cooperation with the European Union is an important step for the further stable development of Ukraine and ensuring its competitiveness at the global digital level.

The results of a survey of 25 experts in the fields of economics, law and IT showed that 100% of experts have a positive attitude to the digitalization process, but only 48% of them believe that digitalization can really improve the state of Ukraine's economy, and 68% believe that integration into the Single Digital Market The EU will provide a number of advantages for Ukraine.

Digitalization of public services is an important component of Ukraine's fight against corruption. Since corruption has been one of the main obstacles to sustainable development for a long time, the European Union called on Ukraine to ensure an effective fight against corruption and to create and implement the appropriate legislative and political framework. In the contractual agreements between Ukraine and the EU, the fight against corruption was mainly considered as a prerequisite for the consolidation of the rule of law.

To assess the dynamics of the level of perception of corruption in Ukraine, determine the trend in the fight against corruption, evaluate the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures and compare the data for 2022 with the indicators of the countries of the European Union, we will use the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). The index developed by Transparency International reflects the level of perception of corruption in different countries of the world and is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 100 (countries with higher scores are considered less corrupt, and countries with lower scores have significant problems with corruption).

Figure 1 shows that the Corruption Perception Index grew from 2013 to 2022.

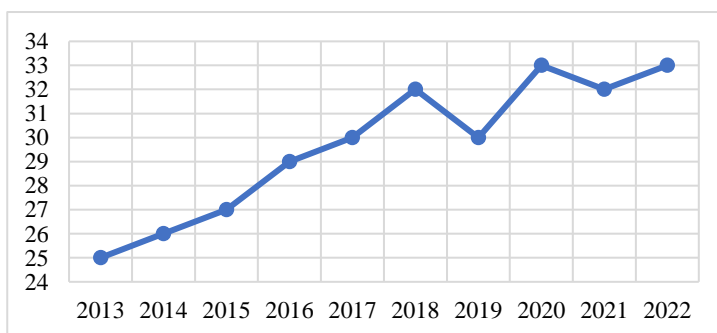


Figure 1. Dynamics of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Ukraine over 10 years
Source: developed by the authors based on data from Transparency International Ukraine (2022)

In general, it increased by 8 points, which indicates the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures. In 2022, Ukraine scored 33 points on the SRI indicator, which demonstrates steady progress in the fight against corruption even during the war.

Positive changes in the anti-corruption direction indicate the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities and society in ensuring transparency, efficiency and openness in public administration, despite complex internal and external challenges. For example, for 2022, the Ukrainian authorities adopted the State Anti-Corruption Strategy and appointed the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAP). Effective cooperation between the head of the SAP and the High Anti-Corruption Court was noticeable, and in 2022, 49 cases were considered, and 37 verdicts were issued.

The anti-corruption strategy of Ukraine for 2021-2025, which was approved on June 20, 2022, formed a number of principles based on the results of the analysis of the level of corruption in Ukraine and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-corruption policy in previous years. The main goals of this strategy are the optimization of the functions of the state and local self-government, which involves the elimination of the duplication of powers by various bodies, the digital transformation of state authorities and local self-government, ensuring the transparency of activities and openness of data, which will become the basis for minimizing corruption risks, creating legal and convenient alternatives to existing corrupt practices meeting the needs of individuals and legal entities, ensuring inevitable legal responsibility for corruption and corruption-related offences, forming public intolerance to corruption, promoting a culture of integrity and respect for the rule of law. In order to assess the role of digitalization in the implementation of anti-corruption measures in Ukraine, we will conduct a correlation analysis that will allow to establish whether there is a connection between the level of digitalization and the level of corruption in the country and how strong this connection is.

To assess the level of digital transformation and development of e-government, we will use the UN e-Government Development Index (EGDI). This index consists of three equivalent indices. The first one, the Online Services Index (OSI), reflects governments' ability and willingness to digitize public sector service delivery. The second one — Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (TII) — reflects the state of the existing infrastructure for the implementation and functioning of e-government. The third one — the Human Capital Index (HCI) — reflects the level of literacy and education of citizens.

Table 1. CPI and EGDI indicators in Ukraine

Source: developed by the authors based on data from Transparency International Ukraine (2022) and E-Government Development Index (2022)

Year	CPI	EGDI
2014	26	0,5032
2016	29	0,6076
2018	32	0,6165
2020	33	0,7119
2022	33	0,8029

In Microsoft Excel, we will use the function CORREL (array_1; array_2) to calculate the correlation coefficient. According to the results of the calculation, the correlation coefficient is equal to 0.87, which indicates a strong correlation between the level of digitalization and the level of corruption. In Figure 2, we can see that the coefficient of determination R² is 0.7639, which indicates that 76.39% of the variation in the level of corruption in Ukraine depends on

the variation in the level of digital transformation and the development of e-government, and 23.61% is due to other factors.

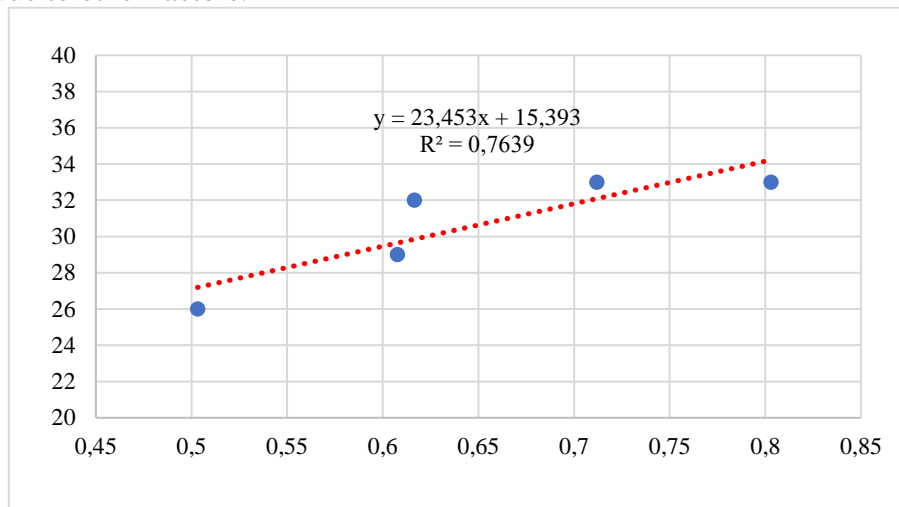


Figure 2. Graph of dependence of CPI on EGDI

Source: authors' own development

So, the study showed that it is impossible to say that the level of corruption depends only on the level of digitalization. There are other factors affecting the level of corruption in the country. The experts were of the same opinion. Only 20% completely agreed with the opinion that digitalization can positively affect the level of corruption in the country, 48% agreed, but had some doubts about this question, 16% could not decide on the answer, and the rest did not agree with this opinion. 40% of experts believe that digitalization will be able to change society's attitude to corruption, however, the same percentage hesitate to answer and 20% of experts do not agree with this opinion. Of course, in order to change the attitude to corruption in Ukraine, it is necessary to cultivate a public culture of intolerance to corruption. 32% of experts believe that it will be possible to do this, 56% have certain doubts, and 12% believe that it is impossible to achieve this.

Some experts believe that automated public services, where the human factor is minimal, prevent corruption. Digitalization saves the state money and changes people's culture, eradicating domestic corruption from life: gratitude for receiving a public service. This is the main advantage of digitalization of public services. However, there is also a threat, because corruption can be caused by human actions, such as bribery, use of influence or abuse of power. Even with the use of digital technologies, if the systems are not open and accessible to public scrutiny, there is a risk of hiding corrupt practices.

Comparing the CPI index of Ukraine with the index of EU countries (Fig. 4), we can see that Ukraine has the lowest score. Among the other countries that also received 33 points are: Algeria, Angola, Zambia, Mongolia, El Salvador and the Philippines. Among the EU countries, Hungary got the lowest index score, and Denmark got the highest. Among our other neighbour countries bordering Ukraine, Poland has 55 points, Slovakia — 53 points, Romania — 46 points.

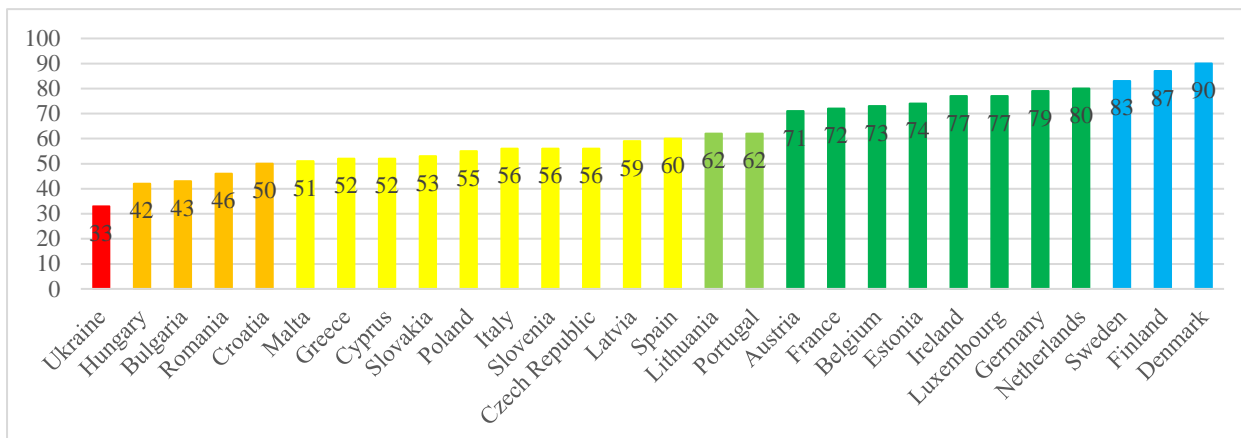


Figure 3. Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Ukraine and EU countries in 2022

Source: developed by the authors based on data from Transparency International Ukraine (2022)

In general, the level of corruption in the countries of the European Union (EU) is lower compared to many other regions of the world. In developed EU countries, where democracy and the rule of law are firmly rooted, there is a sufficient level of transparency in management, a high level of access to information and an effective reporting system, the level of corruption is naturally lower. It should be mentioned that despite the low level of corruption, constant monitoring is carried out in these countries, because the prevention of corruption remains an important component of their political and social strategy.

EU countries pay a lot of attention to the process of digital transformation of public administration as a means of combating corruption. Digitalization is influenced by many factors: technological, economic, administrative, management-strategic, educational and political. Countries that actively develop digital technologies get the opportunity not only to increase their competitiveness in the global market, but also to become an example for other countries.

Comparing the EGDI indicator of Ukraine with the indicator of the EU countries (Fig.5), we can see that the level of development of digital technologies in the public sector in Ukraine is lower than the average one with an indicator of 0.8088. Romania has the lowest score among EU countries, and Denmark has the highest score. Among other countries bordering Ukraine, indicators vary. For example, the indicator of Poland reaches 0.8437, Slovakia — 0.8008, Hungary — 0.7827.

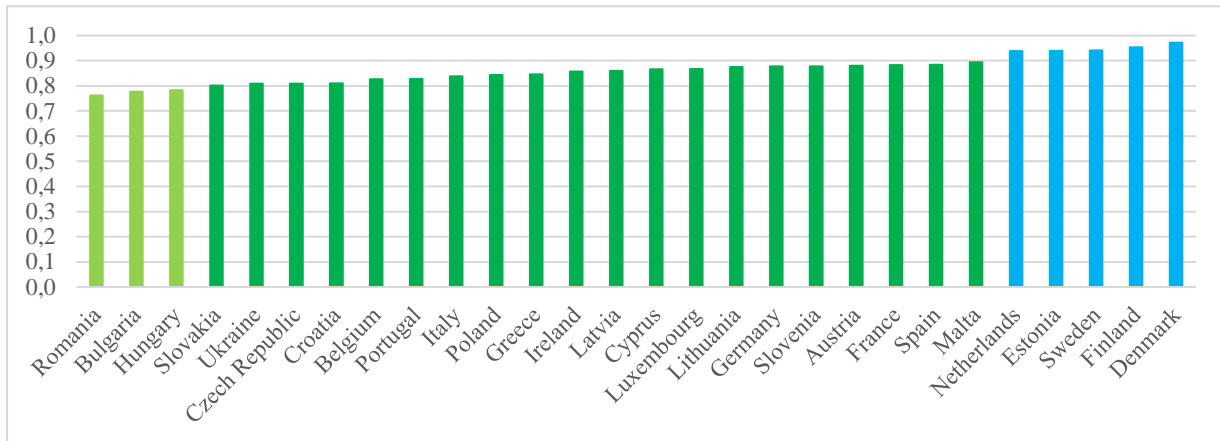


Figure 4. The UN Electronic Government Development Index (EGDI) of Ukraine and EU countries in 2022

Source: developed by the authors based on data from E-Government Development Index (2022)

EU countries actively use digital technologies to fight corruption. For example, Denmark, which has the highest EGDI score and is considered the least corrupt country in the world, has implemented the NemID digital identification system, which allows citizens to access various government services and online platforms with a single login securely. This system increases security and ensures seamless interaction with government agencies, reducing the risk of corruption.

The second country after Denmark in terms of digital development and level of corruption, Finland has adopted Open Data initiatives, making government data available to the public through various platforms. A vibrant technology-driven civil society has played a key role in popularizing initiatives to use open data for public integrity in various fields.

Sweden, which is the third country in these two rankings, offers a wide range of public services online, from filing a tax return to making an appointment with a doctor. Of course, this reduces the need for personal contacts between people, minimizing the threat of corruption schemes. In Sweden, as well as in Finland, they wanted to adopt the concept of Open Data, however, the government was faced with the high decentralization of the Swedish public administration, which led to a low awareness among civil servants of the potential of open data to combat corruption. This slowed down the digitalization process a little.

Estonia has a high rate of digitalization of public services and a slightly lower corruption index compared to previous countries. However, Estonia remains an excellent example of how a country can fight corruption with the help of digital technologies. For example, to solve transparency issues, the government implemented the "No citizen left behind" program, which is aimed at providing access to the state's electronic services to as many people as possible. As a result, free Wi-Fi access points and 700 Internet access points were created in rural and urban areas. To reduce the number of intermediaries in corruption schemes, the government introduced the "Making efficiency and effectiveness a reality" program. This program envisages the transition to almost complete conduct of all interactions with the government online. Estonia introduced electronic voting, which significantly increased voter turnout. Of course, there are also imperfections in Estonia's implementation of digitalization processes. For example, Estonia's ID card is known to be vulnerable, which threatens to leak citizens' confidential data and creates opportunities for corruption.

Latvia, which has an average level of digitalization and corruption, has made significant progress in implementing the concept of open data in recent years. The government actively disclosed data to ensure public accountability in the areas of public procurement and state-owned enterprises. However, e-government initiatives in Latvia, for example, have not been effective. There were concerns in the country about the level of transparency and public accountability, as the lack of clarity in decision-making processes could undermine efforts to fight corruption.

Spain, which has a fairly high EGDI score and an average Corruption Perceptions Index score, has created a digital public procurement platform that simplifies the procurement process and increases the transparency of the use of funds. This platform allows businesses to participate in tenders electronically and provides real-time access to information on procurement opportunities. Despite the fact that Spain has made some progress in digital transformation, the country still has a digital divide in certain regions. This poses a threat to the country and the population, because it limits certain groups of the population to access public services and information and creates a false reality for the state.

Italy, which has below-average EGDI and SRI scores compared to other countries, has launched an online portal that reflects successes and efforts in combating corruption. The portal provides information on the risks of corruption, measures to prevent it, and government initiatives to fight corruption. However, on the other hand, Italy's digitalization process is sometimes criticized for creating a digital bureaucracy that duplicates the shortcomings of the traditional one and creates opportunities for corruption.

Bulgaria, which has low EGDI and SRI scores, has implemented an electronic accounting and monitoring system for public procurement, which allows citizens, journalists and public authorities to track all stages of procurement procedures. This helps increase the level of transparency and ensures fairness in the distribution of public funds. However, Bulgaria faced difficulties in implementing its e-government system. There were problems related to user access, technical errors and lack of integration between different systems. Such ineffective efforts created opportunities to make new corruption schemes.

Therefore, in recent decades, the countries of the European Union actively use digital technologies as a means of fighting corruption, increasing the level of transparency and efficiency of public administration. Examples of various countries testify to the importance of comprehensive planning of actions, cybersecurity measures, constant monitoring and high awareness of society in the digital transformation of the state. These actions can prevent unintended negative consequences that will undermine the fight against corruption.

It is important to implement anti-corruption measures to ensure the economic security of the country, because a high level of economic security creates favourable conditions for stable economic development and ensuring the stability of the state. Economic security is a key factor in the functioning of the state, as it is aimed at protecting national interests. An important characteristic of economic security is its ability to maintain stability against external and internal threats.

Economic security and the digitalization process of the modern state are inextricably linked, as digital technologies affect various aspects of economic activity and play an important role in ensuring economic stability and security. For example, in Ukraine, the Presidential Decree No. 392/2020 of September 14, 2020 approved the decision on the National Security Strategy of Ukraine. It defines digital transformation as one of the main directions of the country's foreign and domestic policy. The goal is to ensure national interests and security through the effective implementation of modern information technologies and the provision of administrative services through a secure single window. Attention is also focused on the need

to form digital literacy, cyber resilience and cybersecurity of the national information infrastructure.

In addition, the National Economic Strategy until 2030, approved by Resolution No. 179 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated March 3, 2021, defines the digital economy as one of the key factors of the country's economic growth. The main orientation of economic policy is the construction of an effective digital state and compact state institutions. The Law of Ukraine "On stimulating the development of the digital economy in Ukraine" became the basis for further digitalization of the country and support for the development of digital technologies in various sectors of the economy.

Among the surveyed experts, only 32% believe that digitalization will be able to increase the level of economic security of Ukraine, 48% have doubts about this opinion, and 12% believe that digitalization will only create unnecessary threats. Of course, with the growing use of digital technologies in all spheres of activity, there is a threat of cyber-attacks and theft of confidential information. Therefore, the most important aspect of the successful implementation of digital technologies without threats to economic security is to ensure an adequate level of cybersecurity. Experts believe that if cybersecurity is not properly insured, digital systems can become victims of hacker attacks or misuse, allowing unscrupulous individuals to gain illegal access to important data and resources.

To assess the level of cybersecurity in Ukraine, we will use the National Cyber Security Index (NCSI), which assesses the level of cybersecurity of national information systems and infrastructure. Among 176 countries, Ukraine took the 24th place with a cybersecurity score of 75.32, which is quite good.

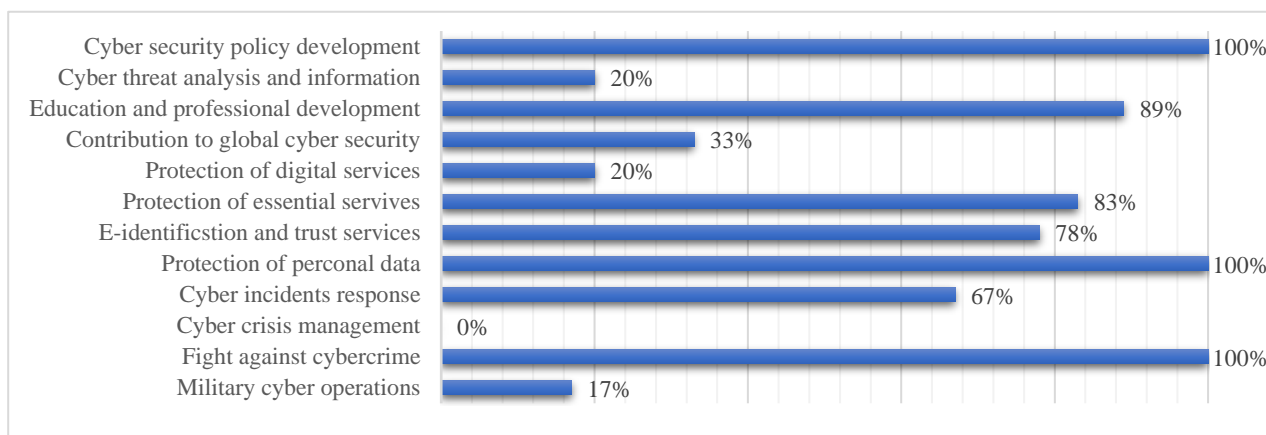


Figure 5. NCSI indicators of Ukraine

Source: developed by the authors based on data from National Cyber Security Index. Ukraine (2022)

The NCSI takes into account various aspects of cybersecurity and has a number of indicators. In Figure 6, we can see that there are three indicators according to which Ukraine is 100% developed: the presence and effectiveness of cybersecurity legislation and strategies, the implementation of measures to protect the personal data of users and consumers, and the presence of a body with the function of combating cybercrime. The average indicators of the development of Ukraine are: the level of availability of education and training in the field of cybersecurity for specialists and citizens, the level of cybersecurity of state bodies and important infrastructure facilities, the use of electronic means to confirm identity, the provision of trust services to ensure security and confidentiality in electronic transactions, the presence and effectiveness of cyber incident response procedures. The lowest indicators are: identification of potential threats to information security, identification of vulnerabilities and

risks in cyberspace, the level of cooperation with other countries, international organizations and global initiatives on cybersecurity, ensuring the security and protection of digital services from various cyber threats and attacks, using cyber squads to influence military, political, economic or other aspects of the enemy's activities with the help of cyber means and technologies. The field of response and management of cyber incidents and cyber threats, which can cause serious consequences for organizations, companies, the state or society as a whole, is completely underdeveloped. A cyber crisis occurs when there are constant attacks, hacking of systems, leakage of confidential information, influence on the operation of critical infrastructures and other areas that violate the security and normal development of the state.

In general, the NCSI indicators showed that Ukraine has a different level of development in various aspects of cybersecurity. On the one hand, it has certain achievements in the development of cybersecurity, on the other hand, there are areas where there is a need to improve and strengthen efforts to ensure full-fledged protection of cyber infrastructure and effective response to cyber threats.

Recommendations

The results of the study became the basis for a number of recommendations for improving the sphere of the digital economy, increasing the effectiveness of the use of digital technologies in order to combat corruption and ensure the economic security of Ukraine:

1. Expand the functionality of the "Diia" platform. This will provide new opportunities for optimizing the work of inefficient state units.
2. Increase the pace of digitalization of business. This will be able to increase the efficiency of human capital, there will be an additional impact on profitability, investment attractiveness, the competitiveness of the enterprise, labour productivity, the degree of validity and objectivity of decision-making at the enterprise, opportunities for personnel development, etc.
3. Increase the level of digital literacy in society by introducing education in schools, lyceums, higher education institutions and free courses for the elderly and vulnerable population groups. It is important to provide free public support for lifelong learning in the technical aspects of communication in a digital society. This will not only provide knowledge of the basics of computer literacy, but also increase the level of cybersecurity.
4. Make changes to the register of professions and develop programs for the introduction of digital specialities into the relevant curricula of higher educational institutions.
5. Create a national system of digital statistics and establish national models for calculating indicators of the digital economy, etc. The methodology for calculating the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) can be taken as a basis.
6. Reduce digital inequality in society in terms of access to social, economic, educational, cultural and other opportunities by increasing the number of free Wi-Fi access points in rural and urban areas.
7. Create an effective judicial system that will impose adequate punishments on violators of corrupt practices.
8. Regularly conduct educational campaigns to inform citizens about the negative consequences of corruption for society, the economy, and the development of the country.
9. Include the issue of corruption in educational programs. This can help the younger generation to understand the damage they are causing to society.
10. Develop a code of conduct for civil servants as part of the employment contract and create an internal body to identify corrupt officials and bring them to justice.

11. Develop a plan for resolving crisis situations in case of large-scale cyber incidents.
12. Regularly conduct cybercrisis management training at the national level.
13. Regularly conduct training on cyber operations or with a cyber operations component for the Armed Forces.
14. Create a unit of the Armed Forces (cyber command, etc.) that specializes in planning and conducting cyber operations.
15. Create a competent body in the field of cybersecurity, which has the authority to supervise public and private providers of digital services regarding the fulfilment of cybersecurity requirements.
16. Regularly cooperate with international organizations on cybersecurity in order to improve risk management methods, ensure confidentiality, and increase the overall level of cybersecurity in the country.

Conclusion

Therefore, the digital economy acts not only as a key factor in the development of countries, but also as a powerful tool in combating corruption and ensuring economic security. Ukraine, like many other countries, is actively implementing digital technologies in order to improve the economic situation and competitiveness at the international level. The fight against corruption is a complex and multifaceted task that requires a comprehensive approach and the implementation of various measures. While digital transformation can play an important role in ensuring transparency, control and efficiency in government operations, other factors also have a significant impact on the level of corruption. Building strong institutions responsible for fighting corruption, developing and implementing effective laws, and ensuring accountability for corrupt practices are key elements. Education and raising awareness among citizens is also an important step in combating corruption by promoting honesty and moral values. Growing digital dependence also creates risks, particularly in the area of cybersecurity. It is important to ensure an adequate level of cybersecurity to prevent cyberattacks and abuses that can threaten not only economic security, but also national security as a whole. Despite the potential threats, digital transformation can still be an important tool for ensuring economic security, if the implementation and protection of digital data is approached correctly.

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INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract: *This article examines the dual impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the EU's economic security, focusing on its opportunities and threats: While AI contributes to economic growth and stability, it also creates new vulnerabilities. The paper discusses the role of AI in fighting economic crime, improving risk management, and fostering innovation. At the same time, it also highlights the risks of AI misuse in cyberattacks and manipulations, as well as potential losses for businesses. The report's conclusions emphasize the need for international cooperation and national cybersecurity strategies to effectively use AI and overcome potential challenges.*

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, Economic security, European Union*

Introduction

The global economy is currently experiencing a period of high uncertainty and instability. The COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, climate change and other factors have a significant impact on economic growth, trade, investment and employment.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a deep recession of the global economy in 2020. There was some recovery in 2021, but it was uneven and fragile. The pandemic disrupted global supply chains, increased prices of energy, food and other commodities, and exacerbated inequality and poverty.

Also, the uncertainty of today's world is largely due to the profound transformation of the socio-economic sphere brought about by the rapid development of digital technologies. Artificial intelligence (AI) is penetrating all spheres of life, having a significant impact on the global economy. On the one hand, AI opens up new opportunities for growth, innovation and prosperity. On the other hand, it creates new challenges and threats to the economic security of nations (United Nations Development Programme, 2021/2022).

Economic security is one of the key elements of national security as a whole. It ensures the stability and sustainability of the economic system, its ability to withstand internal and external threats. In the digital era, when economic processes are increasingly dependent on information technology, ensuring economic security is of particular relevance (Black, 2022).

Economic security is crucial for the stability of states. It creates the conditions for sustainable economic growth, which in turn provides jobs, income and resources for investment in education, health and other important public services (International Monetary Fund, 2022).

In addition, economic security contributes to social stability by reducing poverty and inequality, which can lead to social unrest and conflict. As noted in the 2019 Human Development Report, "inequality undermines social cohesion and trust, which can lead to instability and conflict" (UNDP, 2019, p. 2).

Economic security also contributes to political stability by reducing the likelihood of discontent and protests against the government. According to the 2020 Democracy Index, "economic hardship and inequality are among the key factors contributing to democratic backsliding" (EIU, 2021, p. 5).

Thus, countries that lead in digital technologies including AI may gain economic and political advantages. This may lead to increased competition between countries for digital supremacy. The article will further discuss the concept of economic security in the context of AI, global threats to economic security and methods to counter them.

Relevance

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is an important aspect that requires attention and analysis. In the modern context, many scientists (Ahmad 2021, Mints 2022, Deloitte 2022) are increasing discussion about the possibilities of using innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence, in the public sector. More attention is paid to modern challenges, analysis and opportunities to overcome threats using new information technologies, such as artificial intelligence.

AI provides unique opportunities in the field of ensuring economic security. It can be used to analyze large volumes of data, detect financial fraud and prevent economic crimes. In addition, the use of AI in the security field makes it possible to automate the processes of monitoring, identifying and analyzing threats, which helps increase the efficiency of protecting economic interests. However, like any other innovation, the use of artificial intelligence technologies can create new threats in the field of economic security. The use of AI in the field of economic security requires ensuring data protection, preventing cyberattacks and ensuring the reliability of digital infrastructure.

Identifying and managing such threats is becoming increasingly important at national, regional and international levels. To identify such threats in a timely manner, it is important to consider the experience and strategies of the European Union and its members in the application of artificial intelligence in the field of economic security.

Purpose of the study: analysis and generalization of European experience in the use of artificial intelligence in the field of economic security. This includes an analysis of the strategies, policies, and practices adopted by the European Union and its members to protect economic interests in the face of new information technologies, including artificial intelligence, as well as an analysis of the response of the European Union and its members to potential threats associated with the use of artificial intelligence in economics

The object of the research: Artificial intelligence in the field of economic security

The objectives of the research:

1. Identification of approaches to define Artificial intelligence in the context of the influence of economic security.
2. Analyze the impact of artificial intelligence on EU economic security and this affects on the EU's economic stability
3. Analyze the EU strategy and methods of countering threats to economic security; analyze the development of national digital security strategies.

Research methods: Scientific literature analysis, document analysis, case study, systemic analysis

Case study: studying the case of Google, we considered the impact of artificial intelligence on economic security

1. Identification of approaches to define Artificial intelligence in the context of the influence of economic security.

- 1.1. Analysis of approaches to defining economic security

The concept of economic security has been introduced quite a while ago, but despite this, it continues to be improved and supplemented. Changes in approaches to the key points of “economic security” over time have been described by a number of studies. The concept of economic security research can be viewed by scholars from different angles.

According to Olvey (1984), economic security is improving the quality of goods that provided competitive advantages in the external market, reducing the dependence of the state on external loans, strengthening the country's ability to fulfill international obligations in trade, economic and other sectors (Olvey, Dolden, Kelly, 1984)

Machovskij (1985) considered economic security as preservation of the country's economic autonomy, the country's ability to make decisions for its own interests in economic development (Machovskij, 1985). It can be seen that over time, the approach to defining economic security has changed. The optimal ratio of expenditures on the country's defense capacity and the efficiency of the country's economy as a whole (Luciani, 1988). The possibility of the economy of the country as a whole and its regions separately to ensure the stable development and appropriate protection of the economic interests of individuals, business entities, regions and the country (Cable, 1995), Defines the economic security as a human value that intersects with the categories of freedom, order, solidarity, which must be ensured by the state (McSweeney, 1999), Maintain an existing standard of living and its further growth (Murdoch, 2001), Security against several of the great disturbing factors in life--especially those which relate to unemployment and old age (Security history, Reports & Studies, 2015), The ability of individuals or communities to meet their basic needs adequately and on an ongoing basis (Case, 2015), The economic security is considered as a guarantee of a country's economic growth (Simanavičienė, Stankevičius 2015), Ensuring the protection of vital interests of all residents of the country, society and the state in the economic sphere from internal and external threats (Shpilevskaya, 2016).

Thus, it can be noted that the first definitions of economic security focused on protection from external threats such as unemployment, population aging and economic instability, but over time, the emphasis has shifted to economic growth. There has been a shift in emphasis towards the importance of economic growth and economic development for economic security. This includes factors such as competitiveness, technological progress, and the ability to fulfill international obligations. Recent definitions emphasize the role of economic security in the well-being of individuals and societies. This includes concepts such as basic needs, quality of life, and social protection. It has now expanded to include broader elements such as economic autonomy, resilience, and the ability to defend against internal and external threats.

Overall, this shows a shift from a narrow protectionist view of economic security to a more inclusive and human-centered understanding. The concept has evolved to reflect the changing economic and geopolitical environment.

There are many different approaches to the definition of the concept of “economic security”, among which we will highlight the traditional, complex and human-centered approaches.

The traditional approach to economic security focuses on the protection of national economic interests from external threats. In this context, economic security can be defined as “the condition of the economy that allows it to withstand external shocks and maintain an acceptable standard of living for its citizens” (The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017, p. 10).

A comprehensive approach to economic security takes into account both external and internal threats. In this context, economic security is defined as “the condition of the economy that allows it to meet the basic needs of its citizens, ensure sustainable economic growth, and

maintain social and political stability” (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022, p. 1).

The human-centered approach to economic security focuses on the well-being of people. In this context, economic security is defined as “a state in which people have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to meet their basic needs and realize their potential” (UNDP, 2019, p. 2).

The disadvantages of these definitions in the context of this study are that none of them takes into account the impact of digital transformation processes on economic security. Therefore, in the era of AI, the concept of economic security should be rethought taking into account the new threats and opportunities created by AI. An integrated and human-centered approach to economic security, which takes into account both external and internal threats, as well as the well-being of people, is crucial for ensuring the stability and resilience of states in the AI era.

1.2. Specificity of economic security in the context of AI

Although the concept of AI was introduced a long time ago, it has never the less continued to be refined and finalized. A number of studies have shown how the approach to the key issue of 'artificial intelligence' has changed over time, but let us now consider the concept as it is defined by scientists: Artificial intelligence is the general name of the technology for the development of machines, which are created entirely by artificial means and can exhibit behaviors and behaviors like human beings, without taking advantage of any living organism (Mijwel, 2015), AI can be generally defined as sub-discipline of computer science dealing with the development of data processing systems that perform functions normally associated with human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, and self-improvement (Organization for Standardization, 2017), Artificial intelligence is a term used to describe machines performing human-like cognitive processes such as learning, understanding, reasoning and interacting. It can take many forms, including technical infrastructure (i.e. algorithms), a part of a (production) process, or an end-user product (European Union, 2019), In essence, AI refers to machines learning. AI is a software that is running on a computer. The difference to traditional software that's been around for decades is that AI is learning to do job X better with experience, something that traditional software will never accomplish. An AI is a neural network that is trained on a dataset (Trifan, Buzatu, 2020), Progressively, AI is becoming indispensable technological support for daily social life and economic activities (Naimi-Sadigh, 2021), Artificial intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. Examples of AI applications include expert systems, natural language processing (NLP), speech recognition and machine vision (Craig, Laskowski, Tucci, 2022), AI represents a wide spectrum of technologies designed to enable machines to perceive, interpret, act, and learn with the intent to emulate human cognitive abilities (Cazzaniga, 2024).

Initially, people thought of AI as machines that could replicate human thinking, especially in terms of reasoning, learning, and self-improvement. Later, the focus shifted to AI's ability to learn and get better at tasks over time.

More recently, AI has come to be seen as an important part of our daily lives and economy. This new understanding emphasizes how AI has the potential to change society in the future.

AI technologies can be used to improve the efficiency and productivity of businesses, which can make them more competitive and resilient to economic shocks. For example, the use of cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and big data can help businesses optimize their operations, reduce costs, and improve the quality of products and services (Ahmad, 2021).

At the same time, AI creates new points of vulnerability that can be exploited by attackers to damage the economy. For example, cyberattacks can disrupt critical infrastructure, financial institutions, and businesses. Therefore, in the AI era, economic security issues take on a special specificity. This is largely due to factors such as increased vulnerability, dynamic development and the cross-border nature of threats in the AI era.

However, many scholars believe that digital technologies are developing very rapidly, which requires constant updating and adaptation of economic security measures. This process has accelerated especially strongly with the development of generative artificial intelligence and the rapid growth of the threat and quality of Deepfakes (Mints, Sidelov, 2022). The problem is also exacerbated by the fact that cybercrime and other digital threats have no boundaries, making them difficult to track and counter.

The nature of the impact of digital transformation on economic security is maximized. AI not only creates new threats, but also changes the nature of existing threats. On the other hand, AI can create new opportunities to improve economic security.

One of the most serious threats is cybercrime. Cybercriminals can use digital technology for data theft, fraud, extortion, and sabotage. It is estimated that the damage from cybercrime in 2021 was about \$6 trillion dollars (Purplesec, 2021).

Countries that depend on foreign technology may also be vulnerable to external pressure and manipulation. For example, if a country depends on foreign software to manage its critical infrastructure, it may be vulnerable to cyberattacks by foreign states (Bagwandeem, 2021).

AI can also exacerbate existing threats such as geopolitical conflicts. For example, digital technologies can be used to spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion, which can destabilize the global economy (Pinto & others, 2021).

It is important to note that these threats do not exist in isolation from each other. They can interact and reinforce each other. For example, cybercriminals can exploit technological dependencies to conduct cyberattacks. And geopolitical conflicts can be used to fuel cybercrime.

Scholars believe that another critical aspect that should also be considered is the society's acceptance of AI. Acceptance may vary from job to job. Some professions can easily integrate AI tools, while others may face resistance due to cultural, ethical, or operational issues. This uncertainty becomes particularly evident in labor markets. While AI has potential for manufacturing-oriented applications, its impact is likely to be mixed. In some sectors where human supervision of AI is required, it could increase worker productivity and labor demand. On the contrary, in other sectors, AI could pave the way for significant job displacement. The rise in aggregate economic productivity could, however, boost overall economic demand, potentially creating more job opportunities for more workers in a ripple effect. Moreover, this evolution may also lead to the emergence of new sectors and job roles - and the disappearance of others - beyond simple inter-industry reallocation. (Cazzaniga, 2024)

Artificial intelligence challenges the belief that the technology affects mainly middle-skill positions and, in some cases, low-skill positions: its advanced algorithms can now expand or replace high-skill positions that were previously considered immune to automation. While the historical waves of automation and IT integration have mostly affected routine tasks, the capabilities of artificial intelligence extend to cognitive functions, allowing it to process huge amounts of data, recognize patterns, and make decisions. As a result, even highly skilled professions that were previously considered immune to automation due to their complexity and reliance on deep expertise now face potential disruption.¹ Jobs that require fine judgment, creative problem solving, or complex data interpretation-traditionally the domain of highly educated professionals-can now be augmented or even replaced by advanced AI algorithms,

potentially exacerbating inequalities between and within professions. This shift challenges the conventional wisdom that technological advances primarily threaten lower-skilled jobs and points to a broader and deeper transformation of the labor market than in previous technological revolutions. (Cazzaniga, 2024)

1.3. AI impact and complementarity

A review of scientific literature has shown that in recent years, scientists have also focused on the impact of AI on the labor market, which is a fairly new concept. This issue was described in the most detailed way by Cazzaniga, where it is possible to trace how each profession is likely to face the introduction of AI.

According to Cazzaniga, high-impact professions for which artificial intelligence can perform tasks independently may experience a decrease in labor demand, which will lead to lower wages. Jobs that require human supervision by artificial intelligence may increase productivity, which will boost labor demand and wages for incumbents. However, even in occupations where AI can complement human labor, workers without AI-related skills risk being laid off. Thus, the ease of acquiring AI-related skills will determine the ultimate impact of this technology. (Cazzaniga, 2024)

Based on these two criteria, professions can be classified into three groups: “high impact, high complementarity”, ‘high impact, low complementarity’ and ‘low impact’. Although the indicators (and the thresholds used to define what is high and low, represented by their median values) are relative measures, this categorization highlights the general differences between occupations in terms of their AI impact and potential for complementarity. Occupations with a high degree of exposure and a high level of complementarity have significant potential for AI support, as AI can complement workers in their tasks and decision-making. However, there is limited room for uncontrolled use of AI in these positions. These are primarily cognitive jobs with a high degree of responsibility and interpersonal interactions, such as those performed by surgeons, lawyers, and judges. In such positions, workers can potentially benefit from the productivity gains of AI, provided they have the skills necessary to interact with the technology. On the other hand, high impact, low complementarity occupations are well suited for AI integration, but there is a higher probability that AI will replace human tasks. This may lead to a decrease in demand for labor and slower wage growth in these jobs. Telemarketers are a prime example. Finally, “low-impact occupations” have minimal or no potential for AI application. This group covers a wide range of occupations, from dishwashers and performers to others. (Cazzaniga, 2024)

Some scholars note that there is also a positive effect of AI on economic security. AI can be used to improve risk management. For example, AI-based risk management systems can help businesses detect and prevent fraud and manage supply chain risks (Deloitte, 2022).

In addition, AI can create new opportunities for economic growth, such as through the development of e-commerce and platform economies. These new business models can help enterprises enter new markets and access new customers. (McKinsey Global Institute, 2016).

Thus, having analyzed the works of scientists and identified the main approaches to defining the concept of AI and its impact on economic security, we can conclude that the concept of economic security has evolved over time from a narrowly focused protection against external threats to a more comprehensive approach that covers economic growth, social welfare and sustainability, and modern definitions of economic security increasingly focus on human needs, i.e., ensuring a decent standard of living for every citizen. At the same time, AI has a dual nature: AI is both a source of new opportunities and a potential threat to economic security, namely, AI gives rise to new types of threats, such as cybercrime, information manipulation, and technology dependence, while on the other hand, AI can increase production efficiency,

improve risk management, and foster innovation. In addition, the impact of AI on the labor market is becoming a new challenge, where it can lead to both the creation of new jobs and the reduction of some categories of workers, especially those whose functions can be automated.

2. Analyze the impact of artificial intelligence on EU economic security and this effects on the EU's economic stability.

Analyzing the work of scientists on the impact of artificial intelligence on economic security, it has been found that it can be a powerful tool in the fight against economic crime, but it can also be used by criminals to commit complex and elusive crimes. Cooper, for example, believes that with its ability to analyze huge amounts of data and identify patterns, artificial intelligence has fundamentally changed the way we approach economic crime prevention. Machine learning algorithms can sift through mountains of financial transactions, detecting anomalies and flagging suspicious activity that might otherwise go unnoticed. (Cooper, 2023)

In addition, a number of measures to combat economic crime can be traced to the activities of large corporations and companies. For example, in June 2023, Google Cloud launched its anti-money laundering tool based on artificial intelligence to much fanfare. This marks a significant departure from traditional AI tools for economic crimes, as instead of starting with human-defined rules that tell the AI where to look, Google's tool does everything itself. This AI-based approach has proven successful at HSBC, which reported that the Google tool reduced alerts by 60% and increased genuine referrals by two to four times. Such AI developments will continue to reduce costs for financial institutions and allow human experts to focus on the most serious cases. Ultimately, this should reduce economic crime and strengthen the integrity of the financial system. (Cooper, 2023)

However, as artificial intelligence evolves, so do the tactics used by criminals. They are quickly adapting and using the very technology designed to thwart them. Cybercriminals are using artificial intelligence to develop sophisticated attacks that make traditional security measures increasingly difficult to deal with. AI-powered bots can mimic human behavior, bypassing security protocols and infiltrating systems unnoticed. This has led to a surge in identity theft, phishing scams, and ransomware attacks, causing billions of dollars in annual losses. (Cooper, 2023)

One of the most disturbing aspects of economic crime caused by artificial intelligence is the possibility of deep fakes. Deepfakes are processed video or audio that convincingly depict someone saying or doing something they have never done. Criminals can use this technology to impersonate high-level executives and enable fraudulent transactions. The consequences of such deep fake attacks can be catastrophic, undermining confidence in financial institutions and destabilizing markets.

Researchers also consider threats to economic security in connection with the use of AI in terms of fraud. Credit card fraud is also one of the threats. Credit card fraud is a widespread problem that has many causes, from card skimmers to lost or stolen cards. With nearly \$29 billion lost to credit card fraud in 2019, financial data theft is the most common form of identity theft. (Reilly, 2024)

As technological advances have changed the way people live, credit card fraud has also changed how people can become victims. Traditionally, the rules that define what credit card fraud looks like had to be implemented manually, taking time and effort.

Today, with around 3 billion credit cards in the world, these traditional methods are not working because manual analysis simply cannot handle the sheer volume of financial data created. There are more credit card issuers than ever, which means more potential fraud cases. What's more, users are demanding more sophisticated and faster responses from those charged

with protecting people's money. Automating credit card fraud detection is the perfect way to meet user needs and ensure security at scale. (Reilly, 2024)

The most effective anti-fraud tools rely on artificial intelligence to ensure that no one can get away with misusing a credit card, financial information, or account number without being detected. At the most basic level, AI fraud detection algorithms analyze data sets and flag anomalies. But what actually happens when an AI algorithm processes transaction data? Researchers identify 4 main aspects:

1. Pattern recognition: AI algorithms group similar data points together based on inherent similarities or correlations in the data. By establishing a baseline of normal activity, these algorithms can quickly detect when something is suspicious. (Sift Trust, 2024)

2. Anomaly detection: Once an inconsistency is detected, fraud detection AI flags transactions or actions that are significantly different from established patterns of normal behavior. For example, if a person suddenly makes an unusually large transaction, artificial intelligence can detect anomalies and alert for further investigation. (Sift Trust, 2024)

3. Real-time monitoring: Detecting anomalies in a data set is one thing, but fraud happens faster than humans can react. Artificial intelligence constantly analyzes incoming data streams and immediately blocks suspected fraudulent activity as soon as it occurs. This real-time monitoring can prevent fraudulent transactions from reducing your business's profits. (Sift Trust, 2024)

4. Machine learning. Machine learning models are trained by analyzing past fraud cases. This allows the algorithms to identify underlying patterns and signs of fraud, helping to develop predictive models. The iterative nature of machine learning allows artificial intelligence systems to continuously improve their (Sift Trust, 2024)

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that AI has a major impact on security and is becoming an increasingly powerful tool in the fight against economic crime, but at the same time it increases risks. On the one hand, AI is able to analyze large amounts of data, detect anomalies and suspicious activities that may indicate fraudulent schemes and allows automating many routine security tasks, freeing up specialists to solve more complex problems. In addition, the use of AI helps to reduce the cost of fighting economic crime and increase the efficiency of law enforcement agencies and financial institutions. But at the same time, AI is creating new threats to the security sector. Criminals can use AI to develop more complex and sophisticated attacks, such as deep fakes and phishing attacks. Therefore, AI attacks may be more difficult to detect because they can mimic human behavior and adapt to new conditions. It is noted that AI is used to conduct large-scale cyberattacks, information manipulation and other criminal activities. This is the dual nature of AI: AI is both a tool for fighting crime and a tool for committing it. With the development of AI, new threats are constantly emerging, which requires constant improvement of security measures.

3. Analyze the EU strategy and methods of countering threats to economic security; analyze the development of national digital security strategies.

Artificial intelligence threats are cross-border in nature, so international cooperation in the field of cybersecurity is necessary to combat them. One important area of international cooperation in cybersecurity is the development of an international legal framework. Currently, there is no single universal treaty that would regulate cybersecurity. However, there are a number of regional and international initiatives aimed at developing such a framework. For example, in 2017, the UN General Assembly established the Group of Governmental Experts on the Development of Information and Telecommunication Technologies in the Context of International Security (GGE). The GGE is authorized to develop norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior of states in cyberspace (United Nations, 2017).

The development of an international legal framework for cybersecurity is a complex undertaking, as countries have different views on how cyberspace should be regulated. Some countries favor stricter rules, while others prefer a more lenient approach. In addition, the rapid development of technology makes it difficult to develop a legal framework that can keep up with the times.

Another important area of international cooperation in the field of cybersecurity is joint operations to combat cybercrime. Law enforcement agencies from different countries can cooperate in investigating and disrupting cybercrime, as well as share information and best practices. For example, Europol, the European Union's law enforcement agency, coordinates joint operations to combat cybercrime between EU member states and other countries (Europol, 2022).

Joint operations against cybercrime can be very effective as they allow law enforcement agencies to pool their resources and expertise. However, such operations can be hampered by differences in legislation and enforcement practices between countries.

In addition to the development of an international legal framework and joint operations to combat cybercrime, there are other areas of international cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. For example, countries can cooperate in research and development to create new cybersecurity technologies and techniques. Countries can also cooperate in the exchange of information and best practices to help each other improve their cybersecurity posture.

Developing national digital security strategies

Each state should develop and implement its own digital security strategy that takes into account its specifics and vulnerabilities. One of the key elements of a national digital security strategy is to strengthen cybersecurity. This includes:

- Development and adoption of laws and regulations governing cybersecurity;
- establishing institutional mechanisms to coordinate efforts in the field of cybersecurity;
- investing in the technical infrastructure necessary to ensure cybersecurity;
- raising awareness of digital threats among citizens and companies and educating them on how to protect themselves.

Cybersecurity laws and regulations should establish clear cybersecurity rules and standards, as well as penalties for cybercrime. For example, in 2018, the European Union adopted the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which sets strict rules for the protection of personal data (European Commission, 2018).

Countries should also invest in the development of national technologies and digital infrastructure. This will help reduce dependence on foreign technologies and increase resilience to external threats.

For example, countries can invest in cybersecurity research and development to create new cybersecurity technologies and practices.

Countries can also invest in their digital infrastructure, such as power grids, financial and communication systems, to make it more resilient to cyberattacks. Estonia's Digital Transformation Strategy, published in 2021, aims to make Estonia a "digital leader". It includes measures to develop digital infrastructure, promote digital skills, and create an enabling environment for digital innovation (Government of Estonia, 2021).

Having analyzed the threats associated with artificial intelligence, we can conclude that they are becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world. They are cross-border in nature and require joint efforts at the international level. The key methods of countering these threats include the following Development of a legal framework: Internationally recognized norms and rules of conduct in cyberspace should be established to regulate the use of AI. Joint operations: Cooperation of law enforcement agencies from different countries in the investigation of

cybercrime. Exchange of information and technologies: Sharing experience, technologies, and resources to improve cybersecurity. Equally important methods of influencing the BS in the context of AI are the development of national strategies that would include actions aimed at protecting against cyber threats and the adoption of laws and regulations that establish cybersecurity rules. Raising public awareness is also an important factor in the negative impact of AI on ES. Conducting information campaigns to improve the level of cybersecurity of citizens is one of the main factors of the country's well-being

Recommendations

To effectively counter threats to economic security in the AI era, a comprehensive approach is required. This approach should include measures at the national and international levels, as well as measures aimed at:

- Strengthening cybersecurity: This includes developing and implementing cybersecurity strategies, investing in technical infrastructure, and raising awareness of digital threats among citizens and businesses.

- Reducing technological dependence: This includes investing in research and development and supporting domestic technology companies.

- Regulating the market for digital assets: This includes developing regulations governing the market for cryptocurrencies and other digital assets to reduce risks to financial stability and combat money laundering.

- Protecting digital infrastructure from geopolitical conflicts: This includes investing in resilient digital infrastructure as well as developing measures to protect against cyberattacks by foreign governments.

Education and awareness-raising are crucial for economic security in the digital age. Citizens and businesses need to be aware of digital threats and have the skills necessary to protect themselves and their organizations. This can be done through various means such as awareness campaigns, educational programs and training. Thus, ensuring economic security in the digital age is challenging, but it is necessary to ensure the stability and prosperity of nations. Countries need to adapt to the new threats and opportunities posed by digital technologies and take comprehensive measures to protect their economic interests.

Conclusions

The interaction of economic, technological and political forces has created conditions for global economic security. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the growing pace of digital transformation have increased vulnerability and the need for reliable strategies to protect economic interests. Artificial intelligence is seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it has enormous potential to enhance economic security by analyzing data and detecting fraud. This creates new risks, such as cyberattacks, job losses, and the possibility of abuse. The European Union faces significant challenges as a global economic powerhouse. It needs an adaptive strategy that balances innovation, security and ethical considerations. The EU can position itself at the forefront of building a sustainable and secure economic future if it understands the impact of artificial intelligence. Ensuring economic security in the AI era involves governments, businesses, and international cooperation. Only by working together can we maximize the benefits of artificial intelligence.

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THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE THROUGH BLOCKCHAIN AS A WAY TO INTEGRATE, FILL GAPS AND ADDRESS THE CRISES OF WARS IN A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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Abstract: *This paper aims to shed light on the field of European defense policy. The final objectives are to address on the legal instruments that are in the hands of the Treaty of Lisbon relating to defense policy, as well as due to the gap in legislation where it is capable through a logistical mechanism of the blockchain to find suitable solutions to protect the European people of the member states of the European Union. In parallel, European defense through an important industry at a global level should evaluate, control the system of the blockchain even in an experimental stage and play an active role towards the approach for European armies of integration, paths that follow the defense policy not to bring greater security to the European system but as a "mandatory" necessity to address war crises and not only. The method used in the present work is based both on the doctrine in question as well as on the relevant jurisprudence of the CJEU. The doctrine is updated and makes use of the latest binding and not acts of the institutions of the European Union.*

Keywords: *European Union law, European defence, European security, blockchain, logistics, EBSI, CSDP, PESCO, European integration.*

Introduction

Talking about Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) we immediately think of a reorganisation of politics at a European level. The main topic for the security and defence of the Union is, according to the principles of international law, the maintenance of international security as a response to a series of factors that prevent the Union from decisively referring to the management of each European, international crisis. The unity of intentions, especially through the Treaty of Lisbon, to put an order to the European chaos of continuous crises highlights the work of the European Commission and the European Parliament to make the competences, between institutions involved in this sector, work better. A supranational governance makes the role of European defence also think about national armies. Strengthening a process of integration of armies of the Members of the Union towards a common process that rationalises the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) through a collaboration of national defence apparatuses has as a consequence the greater exploitation of technologies and mechanisms of rules in the CSDP sector, thus bringing the foreign policy of each country of the Union closer together.

The common defense is based on Art. 42, par. 2 TEU. It puts the fear of domestic states for the intergovernmental method in the CFSP context at the forefront by redefining the dedicated rules. NATO as a protagonist has played an important role for years for the foreign policy of the Union and especially the last years after Brexit¹ thus allowing to create a boundary

¹ Ø. Svendsen, "Brexit and the future of EU defence: a practice approach to differentiated defence integration", in Journal of European integration, 2019, n. 8, 5ss.

of a secondary role of organization and interventions². Through a joint Declaration between NATO and EU of 10 January 2023³ a strengthening axis of the block of the Union was underlined as a response to the Russian-Ukrainian war and in contrast with the strategic competition of China⁴ thus coordinating the Member States in the defense sector attributing to the USA to appear a greater will against an emancipation of the European defense of a common defense of the Union and contributing to the duties in the role of peacemaker that the USA has had up to the present day⁵ allowing thus a new path of destination towards other resources of internal affairs⁶.

Thus, the common European defense presents itself as a need for a spirit that does not deceive the creators of the Union but only the needs that are different from those of the past. A strong political will⁷ has as a basis for demonstration the application in the defense sector of the blockchain⁸ towards an international cooperation between armed forces of the Union favoring in such a way the coordination and proximity of individual national armies and creating a common European defense. It is a supranational integration mechanism with the intention of creating a common coal and steel market that has led to a strong complex of the union in the economic, political and representation sector of the Union towards foreign countries⁹.

We need a “new” approach to defense and public order that responds to the needs and values that work as a tool for the recognition of a defensive union that creates a collateral effect of cooperation of the blockchain system that is common to European armies. The objective of the Union according to art. 42, par. 2 TEU is the favorable vote of the European Council that unanimously takes into account the body (art. 15, par. 2 TEU) for the representatives of all

² P. Cornish, “EU and NATO: Co-operation or Competition?”, in Briefing Paper, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, European Parliament, p. 8.

³ According to art. 8: “NATO remains the foundation of collective defense for its Allies and is essential to Euro-Atlantic security. We recognize the value of a stronger and more capable European defense, which contributes positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to and interoperable with NATO”.

⁴ A. Aktoudianakis, “Fostering Europe’s Strategic Autonomy. Digital Sovereignty for Growth, Rules and Cooperation”, EPC Analyses, December 2020, p. 4. D. Castro, M. McLaughlin, “Who Is Winning the AI Race: China, the EU, or the United States?-2021 Update”, Center for Data Innovation, January 2021, J. Dobbins, H. J. Shatz, A. Wyne, “Russia is a rogue, not a peer; China is a peer, not a rogue. Different challenges, different responses”, Rand Perspectives, October 2018. The ex President of the ECB Mario Draghi in 16 April 2024 affirmed in a conference in La Hulpe: “a strategy for how to keep pace in an increasing cutthroat race for leadership in new technologies. Today we invest less in digital and advanced technologies than the US and China, including for defence, and we only have four global European tech players among the top 50 worldwide. We are lacking a strategy for how to shield our traditional industries from an unlevel global playing field caused by asymmetries in regulations, subsidies and trade policism (...)”.

⁵ C. Maier, Alliance and Autonomy, in M.J. Lacey (ed.), “The Truman Presidency”, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 278ss. G. Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945- 1952”, in Journal of Peace Research, September 1986, pp. 263-277

⁶ J.R. Shiffrin, “The Dominance Dilemma: The American Approach to NATO and its future”, in Quincy Brief, 2021, n. 8, pp. 3-15, which is affirmed that: “prepare for a broader recalibration of political responsibilities in Europe. Precisely because the United States has other domestic and international obligations, and because NATO’s European members are increasingly disenchanted with U.S. predominance, conditions are ripe to empower the European allies. The objective should be to strengthen intra-European solidarity and cooperation while the United States steps back from active management of European security. The United States should pivot toward becoming the pacifier of last resort rather than the manager of early squabbles”.

⁷ The president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in European Parliament in 15 September 2021 declared that: “(...) expeditionary forces, on their type and number: battle groups or EU intervention forces (...) part of the debate and I think it will also be part of the solution. But the fundamental question is why this has not worked in the past (...) you have the most advanced forces in the world, but if you are never ready to use them, what is their use? What has held us back so far is not just a lack of capabilities: it is a lack of political will. If we develop this political will, we can do a lot at EU level (...)”.

⁸ <https://eda.europa.eu/webzine/issue14/cover-story/blockchain-technology-in-defence>

⁹ G. Majone, “Unity in Diversity: European integration and the enlargement process”, in European Law Review, 2008, n. 4, pp. 462ss.

member states who are chosen among heads of state or government and the president of the European Council and of the European Commission try to create a common defense according to every time urgent need thus founding the distrust of the states to a transfer of supranational governance in foreign policy matters.

What does blockchain technology do and offer?

For the supply of individual European armies and in the CFSP matter the difficulty of identifying a "representative" alongside the European institutions presents itself as an important gap for the integration of military apparatuses. Exploiting and making use of blockchain technology and the related rules in the CSDP area by creating a common defense that encourages the definition of this European defense is interpreted as an important step in the redefinition of CFSP rules. The functioning of blockchain technology favors from the IT point of view, the data to be performed to the operations with a value that offers transparency, immutability and precision of a decentralized structure to a verifiable environment given the relationship between trust and users that requires intermediaries for centralized control.

The technical characteristics of the blockchain are identified as elements that try to create possible ideas for all typologies. Such a system with the presence of nodes creates a competition of a consensus formation mechanism that transforms chained blocks from alphanumeric strings to hash functions with an algorithmic mode. Such components fill the definition of a blockchain technology that is part of the category of Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLT). It works as a system of a register that distributes devices on a network thus constituting an independent node that approves register operations. The algorithm allows the relative update and the operation is approved by a number of nodes that are sufficient. Thus the registers are distributed and used for other operations and take into account the nodes and the relative devices. A single manager cannot have a register, as well as the management of a collective decision-making process.

The blockchain thus respects the traditional DLT and its own configuration which is presented as "blocks" that are connected cryptographically through temporal mechanisms or timestamps allowing thus the distribution of information among all the nodes: "structured will contain an ordered sequence of verified and validated transactions, the truth of which has been accepted by the set of participants who have adopted the same rules of the distributed consensus protocol"¹⁰.

The information of the blocks is unchangeable and the transactions are translated into hash¹¹ because they are presented as a digital fingerprint that each block contains the hash from the previous one and so the block is modified causing thus the relative shutdown of the system and the cessation of the entire blockchain. The relative consensus of mechanisms that are used are different according to the type of blockchain and are distinguished into public and private according to a prior identification of participants called "permissioned and permissionless" according to the methods that validate the consensus. The private blockchains only of the

¹⁰ See the speech of the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen in European Parliament in 15 September 2021.

¹¹ The hash has a cryptographic function where through algorithms that operate and translate each input and output constitute in a unique way even in the case that there are two identical hashes. As for the output that goes back to the input, the process is admitted where the blockchain through the SHA hashing algorithm operates on an alphanumeric system with six digits from 0 to 9 and letters from A to F where in reality they represent numbers that go from 10 to 15 and that are thus combining strings with a number that includes 64 characters each of them.

permissioned type differ from the public ones and are complex since they frequent hybrid systems.

In permissionless blockchains the relative pre-selection of participants and the trustless environment allow mechanisms for forming a consensus as well as the use of bitcoin¹², i.e. the Proof of Work (PoW) which creates a functioning related to mining as a type of competition between nodes where the reward represents a quantity of cryptocurrencies that are destined for those who cannot solve mathematical problems and blocks in the chain. Differently from the Proof of Work is the Proof of Stake (PoS) which is part of the Ethereum blockchain. In such a case the nodes chosen are screened and validated according to an algorithm that takes into account two factors related to the quantity of cryptocurrencies and the time that has passed since this deposit. Validation with a commission of validated transactions evolves from the Proof of Stake and is the Delegated Proof of Stake as validators who are elected by the participants themselves.

The permissioned blockchain is part of the mechanism relating to the proof of authority (PoA) where the subjects have the power to validate the related transactions decentralizing thus the characteristics that are distinct from the blockchain. They are represented to a development that respects the permissionless blockchains used for business and industrial purposes. The management of production chains require a control that has blockchain technology as its objective and so an exchange of cryptocurrencies is created.

This type of model is important for the creation and use of armies in the Union as a type used by logistics and the management of the market as a unique defense where the aspects also make use of smart contracts and broaden the application of the blockchain. The guarantees of transparency and technology improve the automation to smart contracts thus contributing to a process of integration of defense policy in the Union. Such techniques identify the blockchain model that seems to be abstract to the use of military logistics but highlights the points of contact between use in national armies and the policies of the Union to a high-tech military field.

Is it possible to use blockchain in domestic armies?

Yes, since blockchain is also used and applied at a national level to the armies of various member states of the Union¹³. The organizational structures and blockchain technology are limited to an efficiency of a supply chain where it is traced and that allows¹⁴ a secure management of data as well as the identity of a high cybersecurity system¹⁵.

12 S. Nakamoto, “*Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System*”, in Bitcoin, 2008: <https://bitcoin.org/bitcoin.pdf>

13 A blockchain project is based on Virtual Logistic System (VLS) where it indicates the support service within a group of projects that are part of a logistics system that seeks to simplify, plan and manage, organize materials in transit through the Air Terminal Operations Center (ATOC), i.e. the operational centers of operations that are unloading aircraft by putting the man machine at a more efficient level through solutions for the material that should be loaded. Thus the blockchain technology integrates the VLS with the aim of autonomously creating a technical documentation to track the goods. Thus the VLS seeks to exploit the smart contracts autonomously following agreements that seek to reduce the need that minimizes the margins of error. Thus the projects are different and evolving.

14 The blockchain also puts into operation the notarization to bring to a secure archive and catalog system that begins to manage, maintain the military vehicles thus knowing the technical information of origins for each component of the vehicle where also considers the Eurofighter to have a number more than eighty thousand

15 See also in argument the Advanced Social Engineering and Vulnerability Assessment Framework. Blockchain has a technical nature and that concerns 3% of attacks and incidents related to security that have the form of human error. The computer compromises cryptographic and symmetric systems based on a blockchain project related to the development and quantum proof solutions. See in argument also: P. Swathy, D. Boscovic, “*A Survey on Quantum-safe Blockchain System*”, Conference Paper, in Arizona State University, 2022, pp. 6. From December of 2023 we have in technological development some new initiatives that are signed by twenty-three member states entitled: “European Declaration on Quantum Technologies” that have as their basis a quantum technology for the states that have signed it and that are obliged to collaborate with a

Thus, information security is renewed, which considers the logistical advantages in a collaboration of armed forces of member states with a facilitated way¹⁶. Blockchain technology is spread with an important way at domestic level as the basis of a transnational scale of the Union. Thus, it contributes to the creation of an experimental form of military cooperation, capable of opening the way to common defense with an official way.

The process of European defense integration, which is also foreseen by the treaties, through blockchain, blocks the distrust of the delay and the definition of the rules that are efficient in the matter of the CFSP to a continuous attack from the past of the intergovernmental method that has not taken into consideration important points for the integrative evolution of a logistical type, practical in this sector. Blockchain technology is common for armies and represents an application where it determines a step forward in a strategy for security and defense.

Especially, we refer to the Council Act 7371/2022 of 21 March 2022 which has put a further step forward in the integration process for European armies. Art. 24 TEU imposed the definition of a common defense that still has gaps but is consistent with the strategy of the European Commission which presents the gold standard for blockchain technology in Europe¹⁷ following a European infrastructure of the related blockchain services as a body that is part of the European Blockchain Partnership (EBSI)¹⁸. In this way, a network is formed that has as its objective the integration and sharing of data for national authorities within a fiscal and social assistance sector, the related financing of small and medium-sized enterprises as well as the management of asylum applications in an expansion phase that involves the defensive sector

development that makes the EU according to par. 2 as: “(...) quantum valley of the world (...)”. We note that already since 2018 we have the “Quantum Technologies Flagship” as a research budget that has exceeded the figure of one billion euros through a collaboration of research institutes, public financiers, industries and the relative affirmation of leadership from the Union. In this spirit we also note the “European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking” (EuroHPC JU) which has the objective of creating a pan-European quantum infrastructure.

¹⁶ The advantages in the civil sector allows the supply chain sector to exploit blockchain technology in the management of transport documents where tracking goods and monitoring fleets are physical assets that convert digital objects to a unique representation for distributed ledgers thus creating a register that will be shared to manage data generated in the systems of an infrastructure where it provides information relating to other racking of movements to a supply chain that requires intermediation in a safe and automated way. Thus, blockchain platforms make logistics to be connected in an efficient and safe way through monitoring to a process of an asset that interacts through scanning QR codes that highlights statistics that deliver in an updated and real-time way in a transparent way a process documentation to a supply chain.

¹⁷ We speak about the EU Digital Strategy according the objectives of the Commission in its Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade” of 9 March 2021 COM/2021/118 final. As main objectives we have the creation of a safer digital system, respect for digital opportunities, access to data for start-ups and SMEs, creating innovation infrastructures, fair competition, online availability of public services, research and development of resource allocation that are efficient, high-level cybersecurity. It was the same communication that highlighted the profile of a vulnerability and dependence on technology for non-democratic countries that set the time limit of 2030 thus completing a digital transformation for Europe. So there are four guidelines such as the training of people through qualified digitalization and digital professionals who are qualified, the creation of digital infrastructures that are safe and also sustainable thus transforming companies in a digital way, a digital system of services not only private but also public. For further analysis see also: R. Atkinson, EU Digital Single Market: Pursuing Contradictory Goals?, in G. Xavier Bender (ed.), “*Seeing the forest for the trees: Why the Digital Single Market Matters for Transatlantic Relations*”, German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington, 2016, pp. 5-14.

¹⁸ The European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI) has had as its main objectives the advantages of blockchain related to the management of public services. The EBSI contains three main elements: API (Application programming Interfaces), smart contract and registry. It is a registry where the operation is part of one of the cases of EBSI where the application connects with the API where the information is part of a registry to add in transactions. The API puts a smart contract where the operation records the transactions. Blockchain technology is immutable to the cases related to EBSI where the application connects to the API reading the information on the registry that adds the transactions. The request to use the API via a smart contract follows changes where the EBSI services host a network of nodes that are distributed throughout Europe respecting the governance rules that guarantee integrity and stability for the networks.

relating to the spirit and organization of the European Defense Agency¹⁹ as an important network that includes the tasks assigned according to art. 45, par. 1 TEU²⁰.

Blockchain and the european defense market

Defense policies in the European context and the strategy of creating a single market passes to various levels of infrastructures that contribute to faster levels of integration on the one hand and on the other hand to a competitive market that realizes an institutional plan of an economic type.

Common defense outside the military industry offers a model of demands not only regional, European but also global as a result that does not organize military operations and considers the single market through national budgets in an efficient way by reducing costs and increasing the quality of the related products. In such a way the behaviors of the member states are oriented to the promotion of national producers that limit imports at an international level. The question is not to sell abroad or not but the rapprochement of European armies where through public funding trying to realize further steps of integration and harmonization of the European defense industry pursuant art. 173 TFEU²¹.

¹⁹ See 2004/551/CFSP, Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP of 12 July 2004 on the establishment of the European Defence Agency, *OJ L 245, 17.7.2004, p. 17-28. Council Decision 2011/411/CFSP of 12 July 2011 defining the statute, seat and operational rules of the European Defence Agency and repealing Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP. OJ L 183, 13.7.2011, p. 16–26*

²⁰ The European Defence Agency has the following tasks: “(...) (a) to contribute to the identification of the military capability objectives of the Member States and to assess compliance with the capability commitments made by the Member States; (b) to promote the harmonisation of operational requirements and the adoption of efficient and compatible acquisition methods; (c) to propose multilateral projects for the achievement of the military capability objectives and to ensure the coordination of the programmes implemented by the Member States and the management of specific cooperation programmes; (d) to support research in the field of defence technology, to coordinate and plan joint research activities and studies to outline technical solutions that meet future operational needs; (e) to contribute to the identification and, where appropriate, implementation of any useful measure to strengthen the industrial and technological base of the defence sector and to improve the effectiveness of military expenditure (...)”.

²¹ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS European Defence Action Plan COM/2016/0950 final. Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 (Text with EEA relevance), PE/11/2021/INIT, *OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p. 149–177. Regulation (EU) 2018/1092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme aiming at supporting the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union's defence industry, PE/28/2018/REV/1, OJ L 200, 7.8.2018, p. 30–43. Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the European Defence Industry Programme and a framework of measures to ensure the timely availability and supply of defence products ('EDIP'). COM/2024/150 final. The above mentioned allow us to conclude that the establishment of a European Defence Fund (EDF) as well as other actions are efficient for common defensive expenditure that promote industrial development in an innovative and competitive way. Thus the EDF anticipates the Preparatory Action for Defence Research (PADR) where the actions are efficient for defensive expenditure that promote development from an industrial point of view. The EDF has anticipated for about 90 million euros for the period 2017-2019 as a European Programme for Development in the Defence Industrial Sector (EDIDP) with an endowment that reaches 500 million euros for the period 2019-2010. From March 2021 through the European Peace Facility (EPF), a budget of €5.7 billion has been created until 2027. The EPF aims to increase the capacity of the Union to prevent conflicts, build security and international peace also outside the Union. Thus the FED becomes operational with a budget that is agreed with almost 8 billion euros for the period 2021-2027. the support program for industry and defense (EDIP) as well as the introduction of a framework where it measures and guarantees defense products that reaches 1.5 billion euros within a scope that is part of the budget for seven years and for the period between 2028-2035. the main objectives are as an increase in a military equipment that is purchased collaboratively that reaches the percentage of 40% by 2030 as an increase in intra-EU trade that reaches 35% to a total market for defense by 2030 for Union.*

The EDIRPA Regulation²² is an important step that rests on the part of the member states to the application of European market rules in defense materials where economic benefits are important for the joint purchase of products in the defense sector. The reform of public procurement that began with the directive 2009/81/EC²³ has made progress towards transparency and competition for the tender procedures for the purchase of defense services and products. The Union is now capable, more mature to face the threats to the security of both its citizens within the European framework as well as its industry where from the material point of view it overcomes the divisions of the member states to a management of the defense apparatus²⁴.

The creation of a common market also in the defense sector according to art. 346, par. 1 TFEU allows investments for the production and trade of weapons. War material is an evolving mechanism that also shows the trend that has been cultivated for years in this sector. The European Commission has already interpreted restrictively the clause that has established with necessary way the balancing of domestic interests with general objectives that comes from the birth of the Union²⁵. It was also the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)²⁶ to make use of the derogation clauses by the states where it contributes to the blockchain the advantages of the treatment where according to the clause of art. 346 TFEU. It shares with determinable way the interests as a recourse to this clause allowed by the same Treaty of Lisbon.

The blockchain pursues the objectives of the ASAP²⁷. The regulation increases, cultivates and evolves the European defense industry through technology where the tools available are the financial support capable of continuing production and supply chains thus ensuring the production of European defense products quickly, accurately and effectively. The funding leads to a logistics system that manages through blockchain technology and leads to the consolidation of the Union pursuing the creation of a defense machine with a coordinated and individual way

22 Regulation (EU) 2023/2418 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement (EDIRPA). PE/40/2023/REV/1. *OJ L*, 2023/2418, 26.10.2023.

23 Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security, and amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC (Text with EEA relevance), *OJ L* 216, 20.8.2009, p. 76–136. *Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/1950 of 10 November 2021 amending Directive 2009/81/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council in respect of the thresholds for supply, service and works contracts (Text with EEA relevance)*, C/2021/7927, *OJ L* 398, 11.11.2021, p. 19–20

24 The President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen stated on 28 December 2024 in the European Parliament that: “(...) a new “European defence mindset” is needed, embracing not only institutions, but also industry and investors (...) Europe should strive to develop and produce the next generation of battle-winning operational capabilities and ensure that it has the sufficient amount of material and technological superiority that we may need in the future (...) it must be a simple principle: Europe must spend more, spend better, spend in Europe (...)”: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/speech-president-von-der-leyen-european-parliament-plenary-strengthening-european-defence-volatile-2024-02-28_en?prefLang=it

25 Interpretative communication on the application of Article 296 of the Treaty in the field of defence procurement {SEC(2006) 1554} {SEC(2006) 1555}, COM/2006/0779 final

26 CJEU, sentence of 15 December 2009, *Commission v. Finland*, C-284/05, ECLI:EU:C:2009:778, I-11705

27 Regulation (EU) 2023/1525 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 2023 on supporting ammunition production (ASAP), PE/46/2023/REV/1, *OJ L* 185, 24.7.2023, p. 7–25. *The regulation is linked to the development which represents a direct response to the invitation of the Council which provides ammunition to Ukraine and aids member states as well as restores stockpiles. The art. 4, par. 1 states that: “(...) instrument is to promote the efficiency and competitiveness of the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB) to support the enhancement of production capacity and the timely delivery of relevant defence products through industrial reinforcement (...)”. Financial resources in the form of grants in types of actions through the European defence industry increases production capacity. The regulation implements industrial-type actions of a tripartite approach of ammunition according to what has been approved from March 2023. The regulation has provided approximately 500 million euros for the period between 2023 and 2025.*

that has as its objective the link with the blockchain and the digital divide phenomena through a digital ecosystem that favors and achieves similar results of an integration of European armies. Blockchain logistics shares and brings domestic armies closer considering the security costs that blockchain technology entails as an immutable type of trust engine for the data it guarantees. The individual national armies form in a mutual and trusting way the national armies thus following a cooperation between the states in the defense sector and the idea of the common defense of the Union follows the path set out by art. 42, par. 2 TEU.

Pesco

Art. 42, par. 6 TEU has allowed to create in an institutionally coherent manner²⁸ a military capacity mechanism through the establishment of a permanent structured cooperation within the Union (PESCO)²⁹, as it was established by the decision CFSP 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017. This is an instrument that constitutes in a precise and peculiar manner the CSDP through the intergovernmental method of multi-speed cooperation according to art. 42, par. 3 TEU making thus available to the union with civil and military capacity multinational forces inspired by international law where according to par. 5 of art. 42 the Council entrusts the performance in a disciplinary manner of the mission and pursuant to art. 44 TFEU to a specific group of states. Establishing PESCO and overcoming the limitations of instruments for the enforcement of commitments and decision-making procedure requires unanimity for the participating states of a process of integration for the European defence with formal way that represents a significant turning point.

The objectives are not only symbolic³⁰ but also part of the integration tool capable of defending the member states³¹ where interoperability guarantees the waste of resources. Thus, the number of projects is confirmed and evaluated through PESCO decision (CFSP) 2023/995 that leads to a precise military cooperation. The projects enter a blockchain infrastructure to a treatment that adheres to a regulatory system that outlines protocol no. 10 which is attached to the treaties providing for rules that refer to PESCO. Art. 2, par. 2 of the PESCO has provided for the member states: “their defense instruments, in particular by harmonizing the

²⁸ F. Mauro, “La Coopération structurée permanente: la Belle au bois dormant de la défense européenne”, Note d’analyse du GRIP, 27 May 2015, pp. 8ss. C. Prieto, “La “coopération structurée permanente”, début d’un nouveau cycle pour la politique de défense”, in *Revue Trimestrielle de Droit Européen*, 2018, 54 (1), pp. 3-6. A system to be effective of an instrument of an elitist nature that adheres to all member states that affirms the integration of defense through the Treaty of Lisbon.

²⁹ PESCO is differentiated from a general institution that has to do with enhanced cooperation according to art. 326 TFEU where the object for the development of European defense is based on the institution that requires unanimous votes of the council and only according to the qualified majority that requires a minimum number of participants. Thus the initiative that twenty-six states have joined puts as a system that does not influence the relative aspect. The decision based on art. 46, par. 1 after notification to the participating states and in particular to the council and the high representative as proposed by Germany, France, Italy, Denmark under the subjection of the CFSP has notified the council and the high representative of the intention to participate in PESCO according to 23 March 2023 as a party in defense matters. The accession of Denmark within the PESCO family and through the adopted projects has broadened and deepened the new avenues of cooperation. Thus the member states invest in the development, the capabilities of new military forces in the European context. The projects through PESCO are 68 and concern land training systems, training structure, maritime systems, air systems, information technology, services related to space and support.

³⁰ M. Pengili, T. Santos, “*Knowledge Management and the Adoption of Innovation in Defence: The Case of PESCO*”, Centre for Defence Management and Leadership, 2022, p. 7.

³¹ Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1797 of 19 November 2018 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, ST/13939/2018/INIT, *OJ L 294*, 21.11.2018, p. 18–22. Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/1909 of 12 November 2019 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, ST/13386/2019/INIT, *OJ L 293*, 14.11.2019, p. 113–118. Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1746 of 20 November 2020 amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO, *OJ L 393*, 23.11.2020, p. 12–16

identification of military needs, pooling and, where appropriate, specializing their defense means and capabilities, as well as promoting cooperation in the fields of training and logistics³².

Creating a blockchain platform that shares the individual national armies within the Union reduces over time in a coherent way the provisions that provide for a private and/or permissioned system that allocates in real time supplies suitable for the management of exercises, military operations. Thus the system facilitates cryptographic exchange where the blockchain mechanism with precise techniques represents an ideal solution in the defense sector³³. Logistics in the defense sector introduces blockchain quickly and integrates European armies thus creating a common defense of the Union and does not constitute reasonable advantages from a practical point of view. It finds a legal basis in the EU Digital Strategy. According to the protocol n. 10 presents itself as a source that is dedicated to military policy. Thus the overall framework of the policies of the Union and in digital matters enhances blockchain to manage administrative services that are inherent to defense and improving logistics in a positive, progressive way for European armies.

Conclusions

Logistics in the defense sector through the development that enables blockchain and together with the Treaty of Lisbon make use in the military sector and gives the opportunity to create a military sector that is foreseen by EBSI as a solution that promotes to an industrial market products related to defense according to the clause of art. 346 TFEU.

PESCO has constituted a suitable legal basis for a multifunctional instrument with analogies that reach a logistical nature and contributing in a collateral way the proximity for the European armies. The European integration of defense is moving forward with stable steps and with careful mechanisms through permanent structured cooperation. The member states have in their hands technical tools to pursue objectives in the defense sector thus experimenting in a precise way and on a large scale. Thus the logistics cooperation creates a circle to a framework of trust where from the institutional point of view it effectively leads to the common defense of the Union.

The continuous crises, the global instability of security and defense requires a more schematic, disciplinary role for the defense activity thus offering at an international level greater security for international defense by taking into account the deficient legislation that also needs an amendment of the Treaty of Lisbon in the field of security and defense. Blockchain technology presents itself as a potential act that outlines, constitutes an opportunity that puts the process of integration of European defense on a basis of a future recognition that puts first of all the security of a people and the political will to be at a second level and collaborating

³² In this framework see the project: “Robust communication infrastructure and networks” (ROCOMIN) which is part of a collaborative project that was introduced by the Council. So member states such as Sweden where the coordinator such as Estonia and France. The project coordinates, facilitates activities for military capabilities in robust communication infrastructure and networks through a digitalization system for armed forces and secure interoperability.

³³ R.A. Manning, “Emerging Technologies: New Challenges to Global Stability”, in *Atlantic Council*, 2020, pp. 18ss. M. Drent, D. Zandee, “*More European defence cooperation: the road to a European defence industry?*”, in Clingendael Institute, 2018, pp. 12. R. Adhikari, “*Fourth Industrial Revolution: From Least Developed Countries to Knowledge Societies, in Corridors of Knowledge for Peace and Development*”, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2020, pp. 58ss. C. Whyte, Poison, “*Persistence, and Cascade Effects: AI and Cyber Conflict*”, in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 2020, n. 4, pp. 29ss. A. Dowse, J. Blackburn, “*Improving Supply Chain Resilience through Preparedness*”, in *Security Challenges, Geo-politics in the Indo-Pacific*, 2020, n. 4, pp. 82-98. A.J. Lewis, “*Implementing Supply Chain Resiliency*”, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2021, pp. 4ss.

towards new paths of greater protection to fill national and European regulations in the European defense sector.

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VIRTUALIZATION IN TOURISM: THE PRACTICE OF USE

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Abstract. *This article examines the transformative impact of the phenomenon of virtualization on tourism, in particular, its role in popularizing innovative tourism for cultural and natural tourist attractions. Advantages and disadvantages of tourism virtualization in the modern world are considered. Examples of benefits include preserving the environment, supporting local communities, and enabling people with disabilities to visit historical sites. This process helps to expand tourism opportunities, increase the accessibility and attractiveness of tourist sites, helps to improve communication between tourists and local communities, and innovates the field of travel. Also preserving cultural heritage through digital archives, promoting inclusivity through accessibility of monuments and promoting environmental protection. The concept of virtualization of tourism from various sources, which allows you to deepen your knowledge, and the analysis of the practice of using 3D technologies, VR-virtual reality and AR-augmented reality, these technologies allow users to explore destinations virtually, offering a realistic and interactive experience without physical presence. Also, VR and AR are designed to recreate an exciting virtual tour, shoot high-quality VR video and 360-photo, digitize real objects or make a historical reconstruction in 3D.*

Keywords: *virtualization, tourism, virtual tours, virtual tourism, virtual reality.*

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. The challenges faced by humanity indicate that the tourism industry is on the threshold of profound structural changes. In particular, the global decline in tourism flows will lead to higher prices for travel services, as service providers will have no choice but to raise prices to keep their businesses afloat in the face of falling volumes. As a result, tourism may become the prerogative of wealthy travellers only. Experts do not rule out that, even if not in the near future, virtual trips and excursions will become the fate of people with incomes not above average. Therefore, it is necessary to decide what can and should be done to quickly restore the situation in tourism and how innovative virtualization technologies can help in this.

Research on virtualization in tourism is important for the development of new strategies and approaches to tourism development at the local and national levels.

Tourism enterprises use virtualization to efficiently use hardware resources and obtain additional profit from investments in them. Virtualization also allows cloud computing services to help tourism organizations effectively manage their architecture.

The purpose of the study- to summarize the world and Ukrainian experience of virtualization of various aspects of the development of the tourism sphere and reveal the possibilities of using innovative technologies, in particular, virtualization as a technology for creating virtual representations of servers, storage, networks and other physical devices in the tourism sphere.

Main tasks: consider the main concepts and consequences of virtualization in tourism; to investigate the peculiarities of the world experience of virtual tourism; analyze the development of virtualization in tourism in the world; to analyze the possibilities of virtualization of tourism in Ukraine.

Research methods: analysis of available scientific sources, advertising products of travel companies, information posted on the Internet, comparison, observation. Modern innovative technologies in the field of tourism are directly related to the perception of the world thanks to the huge number of devices, gadgets, websites, applications and information.

Review the main concepts and consequences of virtualization in tourism.

The virtualization of tourism is a phenomenon of our time that significantly affects all spheres of life, including tourism. In the rapid development of technologies, particularly virtual (VR) and augmented reality (AR), new opportunities arise for creating exciting virtual tours, interactive excursions and immersion in cultural and natural landscapes. These innovations allow people to explore the world without leaving their homes and plan their real-life trips more efficiently. This trend opens up new horizons for tourists and tourism professionals, allowing them to explore worlds and sights that were previously inaccessible.

Virtual tourism is a digital experience that allows people to virtually "travel" to destinations or visit tourist attractions from the comfort of their homes. It uses a combination of technical components such as virtual reality software, audio, video, images, narration and more. Virtual travel experiences can be recorded or streamed in live interactive presentations with experienced and engaging guides (Ursula Petula Barzey, 2022)

The concept of virtual tourism is quite broad and is interpreted by scientists because of technologies, methods and trends affecting this field. Analyzing the concept of virtual tourism provided by scientists in the last 5 years helps to understand better how virtualization changes approaches to travel, making them more accessible, interactive and personalized. Virtual tours are one of the most effective and convincing ways of presenting information at the moment, as they create a complete illusion of presence in the viewer. A virtual tour is a multimedia photo panorama in which you can place videos, graphics, text, and links. But unlike a video or a regular series of photos, virtual tours have interactivity (Levkivska, 2023).

The use of VR and AR technologies is becoming an integral part of the development of the tourism and recreation business. Virtual reality allows customers to experience a virtual hotel stay during the booking process before paying for it to make the right choice for their trip. (Krapivina, Marchenko, 2023)

Virtualization technologies have revolutionized ecotourism and cultural tourism, offering immersive experiences that transcend physical boundaries (Bernardino, 2024).

Virtualization in tourism refers to the creation of virtual images of physical locations or experiences using immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality

(AR). These technologies allow users to virtually explore destinations, offering a realistic and interactive experience without a physical presence. (Bernardino, 2024).

Virtualization of tourism is an innovative process that transforms traditional tourism into a more modern and understandable one for today's society with the help of digital technologies. It includes the creation of virtual tours, the use of virtual reality for virtual travel, the development of new tourist services using technology. This process helps to expand tourism opportunities, increase the accessibility and attractiveness of tourist sites, help to improve communication between tourists and local communities and innovate the field of travel. (Imersum, 2024)

Virtual tourism is a type of tourism of the 21st century, which involves a virtual visit and contemplation by a person of natural, historical and cultural objects of interest to him using modern information and computer technologies and communications and the Internet at any point of space in the online mode. Elements of virtual tourism are virtual excursions and virtual tours, which in modern tourism management act as effective tools to interest a potential tourist or excursionist to actually visit the objects of these excursions/tours. (Biletskyi, Kotyk 2024).

Thus, after analyzing the concepts of virtual tourism provided by scientists, we can make a general conclusion that virtual tourism is a new type of activity that allows users to explore tourist places and attractions through digital technologies without physical presence. This includes virtual tours, tours and interactive presentations using multimedia components such as video, graphics and text. Virtual technologies are significantly changing the travel business, making it more accessible and attractive, and helping users make informed decisions about their travels.

Having analyzed the definitions of scientists regarding technologies that can be used in virtual tourism, they can be divided into two main groups: virtual reality and augmented reality.

Virtual Reality (VR) is a technology that creates an artificial world perceived by a person as reality. With the help of a VR helmet and a controller, users can freely explore this world and interact with virtual objects and characters. This is a revolutionary technology with huge potential to change the world. (Krapivina,, 2023)

In her works, Krapivina divides the technologies of using virtual reality in tourism into 3 main concepts.

Virtual tour. A virtual tour, also known as a virtual excursion, is a new method of displaying three-dimensional space on the screen, which is accompanied by the binding of additional multimedia information components: 3D objects, video and photo gallery, explanatory notes, pop-up windows with additional information, graphically designed keys pop-up controls. control keys (Krapivina, 2023)

Virtual panorama. The 360° photo and video service consists in creating impressive visual content that allows you to view an object or place from all angles in a 360-degree format (Krapivina,, 2023)

Virtual reality. The use of VR and AR technologies is becoming an integral part of the development of the tourism and recreation business. Virtual reality allows tourists and vacationers to experience a virtual hotel stay during the booking process before paying for it to make the right choice for their trip. (Krapivina,, 2023)

According to Krapivina, augmented reality is technology that combines the virtual world with the real one. AR superimposes virtual objects on the real world, for example, through a smartphone or AR glasses. AR/MR is used in various fields such as education, entertainment, design, surgery, etc. AR/MR can increase productivity, visualize information and create new forms of art. (Krapivina,, 2023)

According to the results of the analysis of research related to virtual reality, it is possible to provide 3 main examples of its use in tourism.

Marker Augmented Reality: This type of technology uses a camera and a special passive visual marker, such as a QR code (quick response code), which shows the programmed result only when the sensor reads it. In this way, it is possible to distinguish virtual objects from the real world. This type of augmented reality is most often used for education (for example, placing markers on the pages of textbooks, or printing markers on paper and offering children to investigate certain processes and phenomena within the framework of STEM projects or regular lessons). (Krapivina., 2023)

Markerless augmented reality: Sometimes it is also called coordinate or GPS-oriented. It may use your device's built-in Global Positioning System (GPS), digital compass, speed sensor, or accelerometer to provide data about your location. Thanks to the mass distribution of smartphones and tablets, this technology is used most often at the moment. The most common use cases are directions, finding places like a cafe or office, or in location-based apps. (Krapivina., 2023)

Projection Augmented Reality: It works by projecting light images onto physical surfaces. Special applications help to implement the interaction between a person and the projection, determining the moments of a person's contact with the projected light. This is achieved by comparing the expected projection and the one altered by certain obstacles, such as a hand touch. Another interesting method is the use of plasma technology, thanks to which you can create three-dimensional projections in space. (Krapivina., 2023)

VIO Augmented Reality: Visual Inertial Odometry (Visual Inertial Odometry) is a technology that helps track position and navigate in space using sensors and a camera. Thanks to this, it is possible to create an accurate 3D model of the space around the device, update it in real time, determine the position in it, transfer this data to all applications and overlay additional layers on top of it. The capabilities of this technology are truly unique: you can measure distances, insert various objects into the interior and interact with them. VIO promises to be the most promising technology in AR, currently used by such giants as Google in its Project Tango and Apple in ARKit. (Krapivina., 2023)

To investigate the peculiarities of the world experience of virtual tourism.

To analyze the global experience of virtual tourism, we reviewed information on official platforms and services of tourism virtualization in Ukraine and Lithuania. The most representative platforms for our analysis were Vilnius Go, 3D Vilnius and Amber Museum Virtual Tour Palanga, the description of which is provided in (table 1.)"Popular virtual tourism services and platforms in Lithuania".

Table 1. Popular virtual tourism services and platforms in Lithuania

Name	Description	Services	Link
Vilnius Go	The official tourist app that provides access to various attractions in Vilnius, including museums, galleries and historical sites. The app also offers virtual tours and audio guides.	Virtual tours, interactive maps, audio guides.	https://www.govilnius.lt/visit-vilnius/get-vilnius-pass
3D Vilnius	A project that provides the possibility of a virtual walk around Vilnius in 3D format. Users can explore various historical and cultural sites of the city, getting detailed information about them.	3D tours, interactive maps.	https://3d.vilnius.lt/
Amber Museum Virtual Tour Palanga	Virtual tour of the Amber Museum in Palanga. The tour allows visitors to explore the museum's exhibits, which include unique samples of amber and works of art made from it.	Virtual tours, information guides.	https://turai.limis.lt/gintaro-en/

Sources: official sites of data platforms Vilnius Go, 3D Vilnius, Amber Museum Virtual Tour Palanga

Having analyzed the given information we concluded that virtual tourism in Lithuania actively uses the latest technologies to improve the tourist experience. Here are the main conclusions from the use of virtual tourism technologies in Lithuania:

Improving the accessibility of cultural sites: Platforms such as Vilnius Go facilitate access to cultural and tourist attractions through convenient access to cards that offer free entry, discounts, and interactive tours. This provides convenience and flexibility for tourists, allowing them to plan visits to various facilities within the selected period.

Innovative virtual models: 3D Vilnius offers a detailed 3D model of the city, allowing users to explore Vilnius from different angles. This increases interest in the city and its sights, providing an opportunity to virtually "move" around the city without leaving home.

Immerse yourself in cultural heritage: Amber Museum Virtual Tour Palanga uses virtual tours to showcase the amber museum's exhibits, providing an opportunity to view rare artifacts and learn more about amber and its cultural significance.

Expanding business opportunities: Virtual tourism services like Imersum help create interactive virtual tours and 3D models that not only enhance the tourist experience but also help preserve cultural artifacts and provide new business opportunities in tourism and education.

Global accessibility and convenience: Virtual tourism technologies make cultural objects and tourist destinations accessible to a global audience, which is especially important in conditions of limited opportunities for physical travel.

The most representative platforms for our analysis in Ukraine were Imersum, Ukraine Virtual Tour, Kyiv Digital, Chernobyl VR Project, and Lviv Interactive, the description of which is provided in (table 2.) "Popular virtual tourism services and platforms in Ukraine". The presented table (table 2.) lists five popular virtual tourism services and platforms in Ukraine. They cover a wide range of services, from virtual tours and 360-degree video to interactive maps and VR tours. These services allow users to immerse themselves in virtual trips to various historical, cultural and tourist sites of Ukraine, providing the opportunity to explore them in a

convenient online format. The importance of such platforms is that they allow safe and comfortable visits to places that are either difficult to access or are of significant cultural value.

Table 2. Popular virtual tourism services and platforms in Ukraine

Name	Description	Services	Link
Imersum	A team of specialists who are passionate about developing projects with virtual and augmented reality. We have the necessary knowledge and experience in VR and AR to create an exciting virtual tour, shoot a high-quality VR video and 360 photo for you, digitize real objects or make a historical reconstruction in 3D	Virtual tours, 360-degree videos, 3D modeling and animations.	https://imersum.com/
Ukraine Virtual Tour	A platform offering virtual tours of major tourist destinations in Ukraine, including Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa and other cities. The tour allows users to explore attractions, museums and historical sites in a 360-degree video format.	Virtual tours, 360-degree video.	https://virtualukraine.travel/F1ch1J1iP3/31791736p&0.21h&92.29t
Kyiv Digital	A project that provides the possibility of a virtual walk around Kyiv in 3D format. Users can explore various historical and cultural objects of the capital of Ukraine, receiving detailed information about them.	3D tours, interactive maps.	https://guide.kyivcity.gov.ua/virtual-tours
Chornobyl VR Project	An interactive project that allows users to visit the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in a virtual reality format. The project includes reconstruction of key places of the zone, such as Pripyat, Chornobyl NPP and others.	Virtual tours, VR excursions.	https://store.steampowered.com/app/504010/Chernobyl_VR_Project/
Lviv Interactive	A platform offering virtual tours of Lviv, including its historical and cultural sites. The platform also provides information about events and routes around the city.	Virtual tours, interactive maps, audio guides.	https://lia.lvivcenter.org/#!/map/

Sources: official sites of data platforms Imersum, Ukraine Virtual Tour, Kyiv Digital, Chornobyl VR Project, Lviv Interactive

An analysis of five virtual tourism platforms in Ukraine demonstrates their important contribution to the development of access to the country's cultural and historical heritage. Services such as Imersum, Ukraine Virtual Tour, Kyiv Digital, Chornobyl VR Project, and Lviv Interactive allow users to immerse themselves in detailed virtual tours, visit important tourist sites, and explore cultural attractions from anywhere in the world. Thanks to the use of modern technologies, these platforms significantly expand the possibilities for virtual tourism, making it accessible, convenient and safe for a wide audience.

To analyze the development of virtualization in tourism in the world.

Advantages and challenges associated with the virtualization of tourism

In their works, the scientists studied virtual tourism from the point of view of its advantages and challenges for the development of the tourism industry. For example, Bernardino believes that the advantages of the virtualization of tourism are such factors as:

Environmental friendliness: Virtual tours help protect the environment by reducing the number of actual trips and the associated emissions. They can also protect historical monuments from vandalism and destruction (Bernardino, 2024)

Accessibility: Virtual tourism allows people with disabilities, financial constraints or those who cannot travel physically to experience the atmosphere of different countries and cities. Also, virtual tours are an opportunity to visit hard-to-reach or closed-to-visit places, such as archaeological excavations, Antarctic expeditions or space missions. (Bernardino, 2024)

Protection from destruction: Historic objects lost to the passage of time or destruction can be preserved and restored. (Bernardino, 2024)

Saving time and money: Virtual tours are much cheaper than real trips, and the time spent on planning and organizing the trip is reduced to a minimum. They ensure visits to different places without the need for long journeys. (Bernardino, 2024)

Safety: Virtual tours are completely safe as users are not exposed to any of the risks associated with real travel. (Bernardino, 2024)

Interactivity: Modern technologies allow creating high-quality virtual models with interactive elements, which makes virtual tourism more interesting and exciting. Indeed, it is possible to create personalized excursions based on the preferences of the tourist. (Bernardino, 2024)

Marketing and Promotion: Virtual tours are an effective tool for marketing and promoting travel destinations, as they allow potential tourists to get to know a destination before making a travel decision. The ability to view places before the actual trip helps to better plan routes and determine priorities. (Bernardino, 2024)

Educational applications: Using VR for educational purposes allows students and researchers to be immersed in historical and cultural contexts. (Bernardino, 2024)

(Bernardino, 2024), also examines the challenges of virtual tourism and believes that the main factors related to this are the following aspects:

Hardware: VR and AR hardware is expensive and not always available. To create high-quality virtual tours, you need a powerful Internet, which can be difficult to achieve in some countries. (Bernardino, 2024)

Perception of reality: Excessive use of VR tours can distort the real perception of the journey. (Bernardino, 2024)

Impact on the traditional tourism industry: Demand for traditional tourism services may decrease, which may adversely affect the economy of tourism-dependent regions. (Bernardino, 2024)

Lack of realism: despite the high degree of realism of virtual tours, they cannot completely replace a real trip and do not allow visitors to experience all the nuances and features of the places they visit. (Bernardino, 2024)

Lack of social interaction: Virtual tours do not involve interacting with other travelers or locals, which is an important element of real travel. (Bernardino, 2024)

Dependence on the quality of the content: The quality of the virtual tour depends on the quality of the content created. Low-quality models and lack of details can spoil the experience of a virtual trip. (Bernardino, 2024)

Copyright Issues: Creating virtual models of real places may infringe copyright. (Bernardino, 2024)

Based on the analysis of studies conducted by Bernardino, it is possible to compare what advantages and challenges virtual tourism provides for the development of the relevant industry in general. The following table shows the main benefits and challenges associated with virtual tourism.

Table 3. Advantages and challenges of virtual tourism

Advantages	Challenges
Virtual tours help protect the environment by reducing the number of actual trips and the associated emissions. They can also protect historical monuments from vandalism and destruction	VR and AR equipment is expensive and not always available.
Virtual tourism allows people with disabilities, financial constraints or those who cannot travel physically to experience the atmosphere of different countries and cities.	Excessive use of VR tours can distort the real perception of the journey.
Historical objects lost to the passage of time or destruction can be preserved and restored.	Demand for traditional tourism services may decrease, which may adversely affect the economy of tourism-dependent regions.
Virtual tours are much cheaper than real trips	They cannot completely replace a real trip and do not allow visitors to experience all the nuances and features of the places they visit.
Virtual tours are completely safe as users are not exposed to any risks	Virtual tours do not involve interacting with other travelers or locals, which is an important element of real travel.
Modern technologies allow creating high-quality virtual models with interactive elements, which makes virtual tourism more interesting and exciting	The quality of the virtual tour depends on the quality of the created content.
Virtual tours are an effective tool for marketing and promoting tourist destinations,	Creating virtual models of real places may infringe copyright.

Source: based on research (Bernardino, 2024)

Based on the analysis of the table, we can conclude that virtual tourism has significant advantages, including the reduction of emissions and environmental impact, accessibility for people with disabilities, the possibility of preserving historical objects and economic benefits. However, there are also challenges: high cost of equipment, potential distortion of the real perception of travel, reduced demand for traditional travel services, limited experience, social isolation, dependence on content quality and possible legal issues with copyright.

Virtual tourism is becoming increasingly popular as a tool for exploring the world, offering users the opportunity to travel virtually regardless of physical or geographic limitations. This innovative type of tourism offers many advantages, including accessibility, comfort and the opportunity to immerse yourself in different cultures and natural landscapes from anywhere in the world. At the same time, virtual tourism also faces challenges such as technological limitations, image quality, and immersion

To analyze the possibilities of virtualization of tourism in Ukraine.

Comparison of tourism virtualization in Ukraine and Lithuania.

The authors of the article Novak O.A., Krapivina G.A analyzed information from available sources and created a comparison table regarding the concept of virtualization of tourism in Ukraine and Lithuania, according to certain factors: the number of platforms for carrying out this process, the use of technology, the availability of use for different layers population, focus on objects and popularity of use.

The purpose of our research is to compare the virtualization of tourism in Ukraine and Lithuania for a better understanding of the differences and similarities of these two countries in the context of digital transformation of the tourism and recreation industry. To compare the virtualization of tourism in Ukraine and Lithuania, a number of indicators have been developed and assessments of the development, features and level of implementation of digital technologies in these countries have been given.

Table 4. Comparison of tourism virtualization in Ukraine and Lithuania

Indicators of comparison	Virtualization of tourism in Ukraine	Virtualization of tourism in Lithuania
Number of platforms and services	5	3
Technologies	Virtual tours, 360-degree videos, 3D modeling and animations, audio guides, interactive maps, VR tours	Virtual tours, interactive maps, routes, audio guides, 3D tours
Accessibility	Accessibility for people with disabilities in some services. Support for multiple languages, including English, Ukrainian, and Russian.	Accessibility for people with disabilities is limited. Support for Lithuanian and English languages.
Focus on objects	Historic city centers, museums, cathedrals and churches, natural parks and nature reserves	Cultural events, medieval castles, historic city centers, museums and national parks
Popularity and usage	Popular with domestic tourists, increasing interest among foreigners due to COVID-19 and war	Popular with locals and foreign tourists, growing in popularity after the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: based on research by the authors of the article (Novak, Krapivina, 2024)

The first indicator allows to investigate the number and variety of platforms and services on which virtual tourist services are available in each of the countries of the study. These can be mobile applications, websites, VR platforms, social networks and other digital channels. For example, in Lithuania there are more specialized mobile applications for virtual tours, while in Ukraine web services for virtual trips are more popular.

The next factor for comparison is the technologies used to virtualize tourism. These include VR (virtual reality), AR (augmented reality), 3D modeling, interactive maps and other digital tools. This indicator allows you to investigate what technologies are used in Ukraine and Lithuania to create virtual tourism products, their technical characteristics, quality and level of innovation.

The availability of virtualization in tourism determines the possibility for a wide audience to use virtual tourism services. It includes the following indicators:

- Geographical availability: availability of services for users from different regions of the country.

- Linguistic accessibility: supporting different languages to attract tourists from abroad.
- Inclusiveness: accessibility for people with disabilities (for example, the ability to use services without the need for additional devices).

The aspect of focus on the object is important in understanding which cultural and natural tourism objects of the country are promoted with the help of virtual technologies.

Focusing on the object determines which objects and their characteristics the virtual tourist product focuses on. In Ukraine, examples are natural reserves and historical monuments, and in Lithuania - cultural events and architecture. and in Lithuania - cultural events and architecture.

The most popular objects for promoting Ukrainian culture and customs in virtual tours are the following cities:

- Kyiv is the capital of Ukraine, which leads in the number of virtual tours. These are historical centers, modern architectural monuments, and museums;
- the charming city of Leva - Lviv, its medieval architecture, numerous temples and atmospheric streets attract both Ukrainians and foreigners;
- Odesa - the sea coast of which is loved by everyone from children to adults; catacombs of Odessa are one of the most interesting objects for virtual tours; and the opera theater (Odesa) will not leave anyone without pleasant impressions;
- the city of Kamianets-Podilskyi is famous for its ancient castles and fortresses, city fortifications and picturesque landscapes attract tourists not only in real life, but also in virtual reality.

Regarding the most popular objects in Lithuania. the most common city to visit physically and virtually is the capital city of Vilnius. It offers virtual tours of the historical center, churches, palaces and other attractions.

The second largest city, but no less important, is the city of Kaunas, which has many interesting places for virtual tours: museums, cathedrals and temples that attract with their architecture and interior. Magnificent views from the highest points of the city provide inspiration for artists' paintings.

As for the city of Klaipeda, which is a port on the coast of the Baltic Sea, it attracts tourists with its beaches, forts and historical center. On the beaches you can see wonderful scenery, which provides a new breath of air for those who miss the sea.

Trakai is a city with a medieval castle on an island, which is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Lithuania and, accordingly, has many virtual tours.

Virtual tours are popular among different age groups, but the most active users are young people aged 18-35. This age group is characterized by openness to new technologies and a desire for new experiences.

The average age of users who also actively use virtual tours is 35-50 years. They are often motivated by time constraints and travel opportunities to use such tours.

By gender, men and women use virtual tours about equally, but their preferences can be categorized by content.

Urban residents use virtual tours more often due to better access to the Internet and technology. At the same time, rural residents also find virtual tours useful, especially in situations where access to cultural or natural attractions is limited.

Convenience and accessibility are the main reasons for the widespread use of virtual tours. Virtual tours allow people to "travel" from anywhere without having to physically visit the facility. They are also more cost-effective than actual travel, making them attractive to those on a tight budget.

Virtual tours are also widely used for educational purposes to study history, architecture, art and natural sciences. They are a convenient way to gain new knowledge and expand your horizons, and the hype around COVID-19 has greatly increased the popularity of virtual tours. This is due to the fact that travel restrictions have forced people to look for alternative ways to travel.

In addition, many people use virtual tours to plan future trips because they allow them to preview a place before visiting it in person. This allows them to better plan their trips and choose the most interesting places to visit. Interest in new technologies such as virtual and augmented reality is also encouraging people, especially young people, to try virtual tours.

Conclusions: From the analysis of the table, it can be seen that the virtualization of tourism in Ukraine and Lithuania has its advantages, but also differs in a number of key parameters. Ukraine has more platforms and services providing virtual tourism services and uses a wider range of technologies, including VR tours, 360-degree videos, 3D modeling and interactive maps. This makes Ukrainian virtual tourism accessible to different segments of the population and foreigners, especially thanks to the support of several languages, including UN languages.

Lithuania, on the other hand, focuses on cultural events, medieval castles and national parks, but offers fewer platforms and technologies. Her virtual tours also have less accessibility for people with disabilities, although they support Lithuanian and English languages.

In general, virtual tourism is gaining popularity in both countries, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but Ukraine demonstrates a higher level of technological integration and accessibility for a wide range of users.

Conclusions

Thanks to our research and analysis of available scientific sources, we considered the main concepts and consequences of the virtualization of tourism, determined which technologies are used for the development of this phenomenon in the world. We analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of virtualization, found platforms and services that provide an opportunity for people who for various reasons cannot travel physically - they can be people with disabilities, the elderly, or those who face financial or geographical restrictions. They also summarized the world and Ukrainian virtualization experience and compared them. The virtualization of tourism is a prime example of how modern technologies can transform traditional industries, making them more accessible and inclusive.

With the help of search works on the Internet, opportunities for using innovative technologies were found, in particular, virtualization as a technology for creating virtual representations of servers, storage, networks and other physical devices in the tourism sector. The use of such technologies as VR - virtual reality and AR - augmented reality made it possible to create virtual tours, 360-degree videos, 3D models, animations and interactive maps, which added modernity and accessibility to the field of tourism. In the conditions of rapid development of technologies, there are new opportunities for creating exciting virtual tours, interactive excursions and immersion in cultural and natural landscapes. Virtualization of tourism involves the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies to create digital tours and trips. For example, thanks to VR technologies, users can visit museums, historical sites or even walk the streets of famous cities without leaving home. This not only allows people to explore the world without limitations, but also opens up new opportunities for those who are physically unable to travel for various reasons.

One important aspect of tourism virtualization is that it makes cultural heritage more accessible to a wider audience. For example, imagine the opportunity to view the details of the Sistine Chapel frescoes in VR format with comments from professional guides, or immerse yourself in the atmosphere of ancient Greek theaters with the help of 3D simulation.

We consider that the virtualization of tourism is a phenomenon of our time, which significantly affects all spheres of life. This phenomenon became especially relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when physical travel was limited and the need to discover new places remained. This approach also opens new horizons for the tourism industry, allowing to develop innovative products and services that can interest millions of people around the world. Virtual tours, digital souvenirs, interactive courses on the study of cultures and customs of other peoples are only some of the possibilities created by the virtualization of tourism.

In addition, virtualization makes cultural heritage more accessible, allowing anyone, regardless of place of residence or social status, to study the world's masterpieces and historical monuments. It promotes inclusiveness by providing equal opportunities for all who wish to participate in world culture and knowledge.

Thus, the virtualization of tourism not only expands the boundaries of traditional travel, but also promotes social equality by providing access to new experiences and knowledge to those who may previously have been deprived of such an opportunity. This is a direction that has great potential for further development, taking into account both technological innovations and the needs of modern society for inclusion and accessibility.

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ENERGY SECURITY POLICY IN EUROPEAN UNION AND LITHUANIA

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Abstract. *Energy security remains a multifaceted and dynamic concept influenced by a variety of factors, including geopolitical developments, technological advances, and environmental considerations. The field continues to evolve, addressing new challenges and striving to balance competing objectives for a resilient and sustainable energy future. This article examines the concept and importance of energy security and analyses its status in the EU and Lithuania. It provides an overview of EU energy security policy, including the main guidelines and objectives. It discusses the EU's political strategy for energy security and EU legislation as an essential tool for ensuring energy security.*

The article highlights energy security problems in Lithuania, focusing on the most pressing issue facing the country today – disconnection from the Russian and Belarusian electricity system (BRELL ring) and the synchronization of Lithuania's electricity grid with that of continental Europe. Additionally, it addresses the challenges and future perspectives for energy security, emphasizing the impact of geopolitical challenges and climate change policies on the energy sector.

Keywords: *Energy security, European Union, energy policy, Lithuanian energy security.*

Introduction

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the term “security” is associated with the protection of persons, buildings, or a state against threats such as crime or attacks by foreign countries.¹ More generally, the term security is associated with the absence of risk.²

Traditional approaches to state security usually focus on military, political, economic, social, and environmental threats.³ However, in recent decades, due to rapid technological developments and globalization, the list of threats to state security has been extended. Classical security theories define what security is and what sectors of security are at stake. The importance of energy sectors can be noted here, disruptions to which may cause severe consequences to society and the functioning of the state. This may warrant the inclusion of this sector in discussions about state security. Modern threats to state security are very diverse, and can threaten several sectors at once (e.g., cyber threats) or be linked to different security sectors (e.g., energy security).

Energy security refers to a country's ability to secure the energy resources necessary to sustain its national power without undermining its foreign policy and economic, social, and environmental goals. It is crucial to state and human security and has become an increasingly significant concept. Energy has always been pivotal in the growth and development of civilizations. Still, its importance in the everyday functioning and progression of society has never been as pronounced as it is today. Energy underpins economic activities, healthcare

¹ The Cambridge Dictionary, available from: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/security?q=Security>, accessed on August, 2024.

² Baldwin, D. A. (2018). The concept of security. In *National and International Security*. Routledge.

³ Stone, M. (2009). Security according to Buzan: A comprehensive security analysis. *Security discussion papers series, 1*.

services, and the general operations of modern society, with global demand surging at an unprecedented rate. To ensure the seamless operation of societies and safeguard their citizens from disruptions and shortages, it is crucial to meticulously monitor and manage energy resources, addressing potential risks with secure and efficient strategies.⁴

This article aims to present the diverse definitions, frameworks, and aspects of energy security, to discuss the main issues of energy security in the EU and Lithuania, and to provide an overview of EU energy security policy.

The concept and importance of energy security

Energy security has long been a central issue in energy policy discussions: “In the 21st as well as in the 20th century, energy security policies focused on reducing risks to energy services which are vital for the functioning of modern nations.”⁵

Contemporary literature on energy security reveals a broad spectrum of definitions, both theoretical and applied. A review of various studies shows that energy security remains a multifaceted and frequently debated subject. There is no uniform agreement among academics regarding its definition or elements. This lack of consensus is typical in the social sciences where multiple interpretations often coexist.

As a result, the literature presents a range of diverse interpretations of energy security. Scholars often emphasize different aspects, sometimes in opposition to one another, transforming energy policy discourse into a battleground for defining energy security and determining the most applicable methodologies for various scenarios.⁶

It's generally accepted that energy security's interpretation varies with context and stakeholder perspectives. The myriad definitions of energy security are influenced by the global variations in energy infrastructure, economic landscapes, and governmental policies. This variability is justified for several reasons: energy systems are not uniform worldwide, each presenting unique security issues. Additionally, the scope of "energy security" often expands to encompass related policy issues like energy equity, environmental sustainability, and national energy autonomy. Therefore, the definitions crafted by theorists and practitioners alike are reflections of their specific circumstances and viewpoints. According to B. W. Ang, W. L. Choong and T. S. Ng, “the definition of energy security is contextual and dynamic in nature. The scope of energy security has also expanded, with a growing emphasis on dimensions such as environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.”⁷ Modern literature presents a variety of both conceptual and operational definitions of energy security. When reviewing individual publications, one can get the impression that energy security is a controversial concept, to say the least. There is no unanimity among authors with regard to the theoretical framework or the components of this notion. However, the issue of diversity of views is quite typical in social sciences and should not be taken negatively.

Current literature on energy policy provides a wide spectrum of definitions of energy security, which appear to explain the problem more precisely and comprehensively than

⁴ Paravantis, J. A., & Kontoulis, N. (2020). Energy security and renewable energy: a geopolitical perspective. In *Renewable energy-resources, challenges and applications*. IntechOpen., p. 20

⁵ Pachauri, S., & Cherp, A. (2011). Energy security and energy access: distinct and interconnected challenges. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 3(4), 199-201.

⁶ Ayoo, C. (2020). Towards Energy Security for the Twenty-First Century. IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.90872

⁷ Ang, B. W., Choong, W. L., & Ng, T. S. (2015). Energy security: Definitions, dimensions and indexes. *Renewable and sustainable energy reviews*, 42, 1078.

competing approaches. Hence, literature is overwhelmed by the diversity of perspectives for explaining energy security. Most authors dealing with the issue of energy security expose its different aspects while standing in opposition to competing concepts. As a result, literature that addresses the problems of energy policy is becoming a platform for debates on the essence of energy security and the applicability of its various approaches to individual situations.

The diversity in perceiving energy security is influenced by a considerable diversity in the global scale of energy systems, economic conditions and public policies implemented under different political systems. This diversity of conditions causes a great variety of risks to which energy systems are exposed. As a result of these conditions, the concepts of energy security adopted by individual authors reflect different contexts and perspectives assumed by their creators.

Energy security priorities and policies vary between countries. Different interpretations of energy security can also arise when the term is used by those who aim to elevate the importance of other policy agendas by framing them as issues of “energy security.” These efforts underscore the importance of separating the discussion of energy security as a concept from normative and empirical debates about climate change mitigation, energy poverty reduction, and other energy policy goals, regardless of how valid these agendas may be.

Energy security refers to the relationship between a nation’s security and its access to natural resources for energy consumption, distinct from household energy insecurity.⁸ The importance of the security of energy sector can be underscored by the fact that “in the 21st century, one of the key drivers of most economies in countries throughout the world is energy.”⁹ The modern world depends on a vast energy supply to power everything from transportation to communication and healthcare systems. In the industrial world, producing one kilocalorie of food requires an investment of ten kilocalories of oil and gas energy. This energy is used in fertilizers, pesticides, packaging, transportation, and farm equipment. Energy is vital to a country’s national security, as it fuels its economic engine.

Energy security is mainly a concern at the national level, while energy access issues are more prevalent at the household level. However, these two levels are interconnected. For instance, inadequate access to energy can drive governments to invest in additional infrastructure and secure fuel supplies, which may be seen as an extra burden on energy security. Conversely, disruptions in affordable energy access can threaten political and economic stability. As a result, both energy security and energy access are linked through complex financial, economic, and policy frameworks.

Access to affordable energy is crucial for the functioning of modern economies, yet the unequal distribution of energy resources across countries creates significant vulnerabilities. International energy relations have both facilitated globalization and contributed to energy security concerns and vulnerabilities.

Some authors describe energy security as the “reliable and adequate supply of energy at reasonable prices.”¹⁰ The concept of reliable and adequate supply is quite clear: it refers to an uninterrupted flow of energy that fully satisfies the demands of the global economy. However, the notion of reasonable prices is more complex, as it evolves over time and varies in perception

⁸ Pranevičienė, B., & Vasiliauskienė, V. (2019). Hybrid threats to energy security: perspectives of international law. *Czech yearbook of public & private international law. Praha: Czech Society of International Law, 2019, vol. 10. ISBN 9788087488348.*

⁹ Bilan, Y., Strielkowski, W., Karbach, R., & Mentel, G. (2017). Secure development of country and competitiveness issues: Case of Germany’s energy security. *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, 330.

¹⁰ Bielecki, J. (2002). Energy security: is the wolf at the door?. *The quarterly review of economics and finance*, 42(2), 237.

between energy producers and consumers. Generally speaking, it implies that prices are based on costs and are set by market dynamics.

Other authors discuss energy security in terms of the four A concepts: availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability.¹¹ The concept of the four As has become a foundational framework in contemporary energy security studies. Initially, the focus was primarily on two aspects: availability and affordability. Over time, accessibility and acceptability were incorporated into the broader discourse on energy security. The full framework of the four As seems to have been adapted from other fields, such as education,¹² healthcare, and human rights, where similar models were used.

However, in the context of energy security, the four As describe characteristics of energy systems rather than human values. While they are certainly connected to political, economic, and social priorities, the literature that draws on the four As framework does not explore these connections. This is more than just a formal oversight – it represents a significant gap, because without identifying the values that need protection and their relationship to energy systems, it becomes difficult to address the critical policy question: Which energy security systems should be protected? This issue is crucial for advancing energy security studies beyond the foundational insights of the last century. Earlier studies on energy security were based on a clear, albeit implicit, link between national values like political independence and territorial integrity and specific energy systems.

The four as also do not specifically address the threats to energy security. Public service policies, including those for energy, typically focus on achieving desired standards, such as expanding access to energy or healthcare, or on maintaining these standards through the most effective methods, like unbundling electricity generation and transmission to boost competitiveness. In contrast, energy security policies focus on safeguarding already established standards. Consequently, energy security concerns are largely driven by experiences of disruptions and perceptions of risks. For instance, classic energy security studies did not arise from the growth and evolution of energy systems but from disruptions to existing systems.

Recently, some authors have proposed insights regarding different aspects of the energy security concept, highlighting the low vulnerability of vital energy systems.¹³ This approach paves the way for the detailed exploration of vulnerabilities as a combination of exposure to risks and resilience and for insights into the links between vital energy systems and critical social functions.

The International Energy Agency proposed that energy security be defined as “reliable and affordable access to all fuels and energy sources.”¹⁴ Thus, energy security is understood as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. The International Energy Agency emphasizes two key dimensions of energy security:

1. Long-term Energy Security: This involves timely investments to supply energy in line with economic developments and environmental needs. It focuses on the sustainability of energy supply over an extended period, ensuring that the energy system can evolve to meet future demands.

¹¹ Cherp, A., & Jewell, J. (2014). The concept of energy security: Beyond the four As. *Energy policy*, 75.

¹² Pranevičienė, B., & Pūraitė, A. (2010). Right to education in international legal documents. *Jurisprudencija*, 121(3).

¹³ Jewell, J., Cherp, A., & Riahi, K. (2014). Energy security under de-carbonization scenarios: An assessment framework and evaluation under different technology and policy choices. *Energy Policy*, 65, 745.

¹⁴ International Energy Agency: Energy security - Reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources, Energy security – Topics – IEA (2022), available from : <https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-security>, accessed 6 August 2024.

2. **Short-term Energy Security:** This aspect addresses the ability of the energy system to react promptly to sudden changes in the supply-demand balance, such as disruptions caused by natural disasters, geopolitical conflicts, or market fluctuations.¹⁵

The International Energy Agency stresses that energy security is a dynamic concept, constantly evolving in response to changes in the energy landscape, technological advancements, and shifts in global and regional geopolitics.

The World Energy Council introduced the concept of the “energy trilemma,”¹⁶ which refers to the challenge of balancing three critical and often competing objectives in energy policy and strategy:

1. **Energy Security:** Ensuring a reliable and stable supply of energy to meet current and future demands. This involves minimizing risks of supply disruptions, whether due to geopolitical tensions, natural disasters, or other factors.

2. **Energy Equity:** Providing affordable and accessible energy for all, ensuring that everyone has access to the energy needed for basic needs, economic activities, and social development. This aspect emphasizes the importance of fairness and inclusivity in energy access.

3. **Environmental Sustainability:** Reducing the environmental impact of energy production and consumption, particularly in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. This involves transitioning to cleaner, renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency to mitigate climate change and preserve natural ecosystems.

Balancing these three elements is challenging because actions taken to improve one aspect can often negatively impact the others. For example, prioritizing energy security by relying heavily on fossil fuels may compromise environmental sustainability, while focusing on sustainability might increase costs and impact energy equity. The “energy trilemma” thus represents the complex trade-offs and decision-making required to achieve a balanced energy strategy that addresses all three objectives.

The World Energy Council has used the energy trilemma framework extensively in its reports and assessments to evaluate and guide national and global energy policies.^{17, 18, 19, 20, 21} The World Energy Trilemma Index has been prepared annually since 2010 by the World Energy Council, and has become a widely recognized tool in the energy sector for understanding and addressing the trade-offs and synergies among these three critical objectives.

When the World Energy Trilemma framework was first devised some 15 years ago, energy security was focused on concerns about supply-side shocks, access to scarce resources, strategic reserves, energy efficiency, and exposure to commodity prices. The concept of energy security now extends to a variety of new challenges, including the prospect of demand-driven

¹⁵ International Energy Agency: Energy security - Reliable, affordable access to all fuels and energy sources, Energy security – Topics – IEA (2022), available from : <https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-security>, accessed 6 August 2024

¹⁶ The Dilemma over the Trilemma, World Energy Council, available from: <https://www.worldenergy.org/news-views/entry/the-dilemma-over-the-trilemma>, accessed 6 August 2024.

¹⁷ World Energy Trilemma Report 2024: Evolving with Resilience and Justice, (https://www.worldenergy.org/assets/downloads/World_Energy_Trilemma_2024_Full_Report.pdf?v=1721938251); accessed 6 August 2024.

¹⁸ World Energy Trilemma Index: 2022 Report, The World Energy Council, available from: <https://www.worldenergy.org/publications/entry/world-energy-trilemma-index-2022>, accessed 6 August 2024.

¹⁹ World Energy Trilemma Index: 2021 Report, The World Energy Council, available from: <https://www.worldenergy.org/publications/entry/world-energy-trilemma-index-2021>, accessed 6 August 2024.

²⁰ World Energy Trilemma Index: 2020 Report, The World Energy Council available from: <https://www.worldenergy.org/publications/entry/world-energy-trilemma-index-2020>, accessed 7 August 2024.

²¹ World Energy Trilemma Index: 2019 Report The World Energy Council, available from: <https://www.worldenergy.org/publications/entry/world-energy-trilemma-index-2019>, accessed 7 August 2024.

energy shocks, exemplified by Europe's decision to move away from Russian gas imports in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The new world of disruption-as-usual includes extreme weather events and issues beyond traditional oil and gas dependencies, such as data and technologies, critical minerals and metals, and new kinds of asymmetric threats to both physical and digital infrastructures.

Key issues of energy security in the EU and Lithuania

Countries have varying energy security goals based on their position in the energy market: producer and exporter nations focus on securing stable demand for their resources; consumer nations typically prioritize diversifying their energy sources to reduce dependence and enhance security; and transit states seek to capitalize on their strategic role as intermediaries, linking producers and exporters with their markets.²² For consumer and transit countries, ensuring a stable supply of energy is crucial, while for producer and exporter countries, securing consistent demand is likely just as vital as maintaining a reliable supply.²³

When it comes to European and Lithuanian energy security, it is important to recognize that their distinct characteristics are shaped by the geographic, political, and economic context. Dependence on external energy supplies should be stressed in terms of European and Lithuanian energy security.

Europe heavily relies on imported energy, particularly natural gas and oil, from outside the continent. Russia has historically been a major supplier, making Europe vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions. In 2021, the EU imported over 40% of its natural gas, 27% of its oil, and 46% of its coal from Russia, highlighting a critical reliance on a single supplier for energy needs.²⁴ This dependence has prompted strategic shifts, especially after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, which further exposed the risks of such reliance. "Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and its weaponisation of gas supplies have provoked an unprecedented energy crisis for the European Union. They have caused a sharp rise in energy prices and brought hardship for Europeans."²⁵ The EU has since implemented measures under the REPowerEU plan²⁶ to reduce its dependency on Russian fossil fuels, aiming for complete independence well before the end of the decade. This includes diversifying gas supplies, increasing LNG imports, and accelerating the transition to renewable energy sources.

The energy security of Europe and Lithuania is deeply intertwined with geopolitical issues, particularly with regard to Russia. The European response to crises such as the Russia-Ukraine war highlights the continent's vulnerability and the importance of diversifying energy sources and enhancing resilience against potential supply shocks. Following the invasion of Ukraine, European nations, heavily reliant on Russian oil and gas, responded by using less gas, securing extra supply at higher prices, temporarily increasing coal-fueled power generation, introducing binding EU-wide targets to fill gas storage, and bringing online record amounts of

²² Luft, G., & Korin, A. (2009). Energy security: In the eyes of the beholder. *Energy security challenges for the 21st century: A reference handbook*, 6.

²³ Johansson, B. (2013). A broadened typology on energy and security. *Energy*, 53.

²⁴ In focus: Reducing the EU's dependence on imported fossil fuels, European Commission, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-reducing-eus-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels-2022-04-20_en, accessed 6 August 2024.

²⁵ EU Action to address the energy crisis, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/eu-action-address-energy-crisis_en, accessed 6 August 2024.

²⁶ The REPowerEU plan, European Commission, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en, accessed 6 August 2024.

renewable energy, as well as introducing obligatory energy-saving measures. While the spike in energy prices led to a cost-of-living crisis in many parts of Europe and other parts of the world, Europe's interconnected electricity markets ensured secure electricity supplies. A combination of demand-side measures, along with actions to quickly secure liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies, resulted in Europe securing 95% gas storage by Q4 2022.²⁷

The Russia-Ukraine war has intensified the focus on gas storage, while the surge in renewable energy adoption necessitates expanded storage capacity to synchronize generation with demand, both in the short term and for seasonal shifts. This intricate balancing act requires grid investment and digitalization as well as new measurements and indicators of system stability. The integration of diverse energy sources, which requires large-scale, adaptable, and integrated energy storage, underscores the significance of policies promoting advanced grid infrastructure and smart technologies to safeguard system stability. Electricity market reforms, while seen primarily as responses to the need for energy equity, are also introducing time-based tariffs to support the balancing act for grid reliability.

Overall, the European energy security is defined by the continent's efforts to balance the need for reliable, affordable energy with the imperative to reduce carbon emissions and the challenges posed by geopolitical dependencies.

As regards Lithuania's energy security peculiarities, it is noted that in addition to the energy security threats common to the EU as a whole, Lithuania has specific challenges in this area.

Since 1983, when the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant and the Kruonis pumped storage power plant started operating in Lithuania, Lithuania has become a member of the so-called BRELL system,²⁸ named after the first letters of the names of the participating countries: Belarus, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

When the Baltic States regained their independence in 1990, they also took over the electricity infrastructure in their territories. However, the management of this infrastructure continued to be run from Moscow. As the Baltic States sought EU and NATO membership, it was important for Russia to maintain their dependence, at least in the energy sector. This led to the BRELL Treaty, which provided for a common management structure and working regulations for the five participating countries' energy networks.

From 1990 to 2001, the Lithuanian electricity sector, although de facto integrated into the Russian energy system, was formally legally independent. Under the BRELL Treaty, which was signed in 2001, it became not only technically, but also legally obliged to comply with the decisions of the Russian dispatch center in Moscow.²⁹ The BRELL agreement set up technical rules defining the participation in the transmission system, and agreement is automatically renewed every year absent a notice of withdrawal from one of the parties by August, six months before expiration.

One of the key strategic objectives in the energy sector of Lithuania is the synchronization of Lithuania's electricity grid with that of continental Europe, disconnecting it from the Russian

²⁷ World Energy Trilemma Report 2024: Evolving with Resilience and Justice, available from: https://www.worldenergy.org/assets/downloads/World_Energy_Trilemma_2024_Full_Report.pdf?v=1721938251, accessed 6 August 2024.

²⁸ Sekmokas, A, Politinė BRELL sutartis (2020), available from: https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pozicija/679/1196957/arvydas-sekmokas-politine-brellsutartis?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwzva1BhD3ARIsADQuPnXytpBF44rP6HMOpBa31r1-lr_AncRRfV83eiOsv7aiwHibBh8PAFkaAlh1EALw_wcB, accessed 1 August 2024.

²⁹ Juozaitis, J, Baltic States' Synchronisation with Continental European Network: Navigating the Hybrid Threat Landscape, NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence Report (2021), available from: <https://www.ensecce.org/publications/baltic-states-synchronisation-with-continental-european-network-navigating-the-hybrid-threat-landscape/>, accessed 6 August 2024.

and Belarusian electricity systems (the BRELL ring). This project would ensure greater energy security and stability and reduce geopolitical dependence.

The first steps towards independence from BRELL were taken in Lithuania in 2007, when the Baltic countries adopted a strategic project to connect to the Continental European grid. In June 2018, guidelines for the synchronization of the national electricity grids with the European grid were signed between the Baltic States and the European Commission (EC) and Poland.³⁰



Figure 1. The BRELL power ring
Source: Kauno diena, 2022³¹

Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia planned to disconnect from the Russian BRELL system in 2025, because BRELL has repeatedly become a tool of Moscow's political power throughout its history. However, in 2022, in response to rising geopolitical risks in the region, Lithuania accelerated its efforts to disconnect its electricity network from the BRELL system and urged Latvia and Estonia to advance their synchronization timelines. Although Latvia and Estonia declined Lithuania's proposed deadline of the first half of 2024, a compromise was reached to complete the project by February 2024.³²

In 2014, the energy situation changed with the construction of electricity interconnections to Sweden and Poland. Lithuania had the opportunity to withdraw from the Russian electricity

³⁰ Political Roadmap on the synchronisation of the Baltic States1 electricity networks with the Continental European Network via Poland, available from: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-10/c_2018_4050_en_annexe_acte_autonome_nlw2_p_v2_0.pdf, accessed 12 August 2024.

³¹ Matutis, V, Baltijos jūra išlaisvino nuo priklausomybės. Kauno diena, (2022), available from: <https://m.kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/klaipeda/miesto-pulsas/baltijos-jura-islaisvino-nuo-priklausomybes-1085645>, accessed 10 August 2024.

³² Baltijos šalys oficialiai pranešė apie pasitraukimą iš Rusijos elektros sistemos, Verslo žinios (2024), available from: <https://www.vz.lt/pramone/energetika/2024/07/16/baltijos-saliu-operatoriai-rengiasi-pranesti-apie-pasitraukima-is-brell>, accessed 20 July 2024.

system and synchronize with continental Europe. At the same time, commercial opportunities were created, both for importing and exporting electricity from the EU.

On 22 April 2023, Lithuania conducted an isolated system test and temporarily disconnected from BRELL.³³ After the successful test, Lithuania put pressure on Latvia and Estonia to accelerate synchronization with the continental European grid.

Baltic desynchronization from the IPS/UPS system and synchronization with the Continental Europe Network (CEN) have been considered a strategic priority for EU energy policy since 2013, leading to the inclusion of some of the necessary grid infrastructure reinforcements into the list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) eligible for EU funding.³⁴ “The desynchronisation of the Baltic States’ electricity grid from these systems and the synchronisation with the continental European network (CEN) is an essential political priority for the achievement of the Energy Union.”³⁵ The relevant grid reinforcements were included in the third EU list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) adopted by the Commission on 23 November 2017.³⁶ PCIs are intended to help the EU achieve its energy policy and climate objectives: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for all citizens.

The European Commission is actively working to ensure significant advancements in the synchronization process, providing support to the Baltic States to fulfill this strategic goal. It focuses on rolling out critical energy projects that will connect these states more closely with European grids, thereby resolving the issues contributing to the energy isolation in this region. This goal was once again stated by the European Commission on 23 November 2017 in its Communication “on strengthening Europe’s energy networks.”³⁷

It should be noted that the energy security of Europe and Lithuania is not only related to the production, supply, and distribution of electricity, but also to the sources and routes of gas supply. “A key part of ensuring secure and affordable supplies of energy to Europeans involves diversifying supply routes. This includes identifying and building new routes that decrease the dependence of European Union countries on a single supplier of natural gas and other energy resources.”³⁸

Although Lithuania has less than 100 kilometers of sea frontage, this area has more energy independence than the rest of the country thanks to the Būtingė terminal on the Baltic Sea. The Būtingė oil terminal, with a buoy at sea, was launched at the beginning of Lithuania’s independence. Construction was long and difficult, but time has shown that it was worth it.

³³ Po istorinio bandymo: rusai šantažo kortos nebeturi, bet yra kita problema, 15min (2023), available from: <https://www.15min.lt/verslas/naujiena/energetika/po-istorinio-bandymo-rusai-santazo-kortos-nebeturi-bet-yra-kita-problema-664-2043100>, accessed 16 July 2024.

³⁴ European solidarity on Energy: Synchronization of the Baltic States’ electricity network with the European system strengthens security of supply” (2018), available from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/de/MEMO_18_4285, accessed 16 July 2024.

³⁵ European solidarity on Energy: Synchronisation of the Baltic States’ electricity network with the European system strengthens security of supply, European Commission, available from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_4284, accessed 8 August 2024.

³⁶ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2018/540 of 23 November 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the Union list of projects of common interest, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R0540>, accessed 6 August 2024.

³⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Communication on strengthening Europe’s energy networks, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:718:FIN>, accessed 10 August 2024.

³⁸ Diversification of gas supply sources and routes, European Commission, available from: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-security/diversification-gas-supply-sources-and-routes_en, accessed 6 August 2024.

Nothing much has changed in Western Europe's relations with Russia over the decades. In recent years, the Russians have been explaining that there are technical problems with the Nord Stream 1 pipeline in connection with the supply of gas to Germany. Lithuania has built the Būtingė oil terminal with a buoy at sea, and can successfully ship oil from anywhere in the world to the refinery near Mažeikiai.

Another symbol of Lithuania's independence from Russia is the liquefied natural gas terminal in Klaipėda. Like the Būtingė oil terminal, it was built over a long period of time, with much debate in both Klaipėda and Vilnius. The location of the terminal has its drawbacks, because it is not at the front of the port – not in front of the port gates, as is usual in many countries – but at the very end of the port.

There have been many suggestions that ships going to the Klaipėda LNG terminal will restrict shipping and create additional obstacles. Although the Klaipėda LNG terminal has been operating at full capacity for some time now, there have been no major obstacles to the passage of gas carriers through the port. The importance of the Klaipėda LNG terminal has become particularly apparent in this period of Russia's war in Ukraine.

In summary, the strategic objectives of both Europe and Lithuania in the energy sector are to increase energy independence. Lithuania is actively seeking to reduce its dependence on imported energy, especially from Russia. Strategic projects implemented in recent years, such as the LNG terminal in Klaipėda and electricity interconnections with Sweden (NordBalt) and Poland (LitPol Link), have helped to diversify the country's sources of energy supply and to increase energy independence.

The Harmony Link electricity cable across the Baltic Sea from Poland to Lithuania still needs to be built to enable the Baltic countries to move away from their last remnant of energy dependence on Russia. This would create a new Baltic electricity ring through Poland to Western Europe.

The Baltic Sea route needed for this cable has already been explored. The Harmony Link cable will run from the Zarnowiec electricity substation in Poland to Šventoji, where the line will then run overland to Darbėnai. A 330 kV electricity switching station will be installed there. It will be connected via Bitėnai to the Kruonis Hydroelectric Power Plant, Klaipėda and Latvia's Grobin.³⁹

The Darbėnai electricity distribution station will also be connected to wind farms planned for the Baltic Sea in the future. This would essentially mean that Lithuania's electricity supply, which for decades has been based at the Ignalina nuclear power plant, will move to the Baltic Sea when it is closed.

The working documents for the construction of the electricity switchyard in Darbėnai are currently being finalised. "Litgrid, which is carrying out the project together with the Poles, has launched a tender for the expert examination of the technical documents for the construction of the Darbėnai switchyard."⁴⁰

Given the geopolitical situation, in particular Russian aggression in Ukraine, Lithuania continuously strives to increase its energy resilience and preparedness for potential supply disruptions. This includes not only strengthening infrastructure, but also stockpiling strategic energy resources and international cooperation with EU partners.

³⁹ Pryšmantas V., Polish-Lithuanian power cable to be built alongside Rail Baltica tracks – minister, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/2159251/polish-lithuanian-power-cable-to-be-built-alongside-rail-baltica-tracks-minister>, accessed 6 August 2024.

⁴⁰ Litgrid: Darbėnuose pradedama statyti 330 kV skirstykla, <https://www.delfi.lt/verslas/energetika/litgrid-darbenuose-pradedama-statyti-330-kv-skirstykla-93650643>, accessed 6 August 2024.

An overview of EU energy security policy

In May 2007, the European Council developed a coordinated energy and environment policy, which stressed the challenges in energy sector:

“Energy is essential for Europe to function. But the days of cheap energy for Europe seem to be over. The challenges of climate change, increasing import dependence and higher energy prices are faced by all European Union members. Moreover the interdependence of European Union Member States in energy, as in many other areas, is increasing – a power failure in one country has immediate effects in others. Europe needs to act now, together, to deliver sustainable, secure and competitive energy. In doing so the European Union would return to its roots. In 1952 with the Coal and Steel Treaty and 1957 with the Euratom Treaty, the founding Member States saw the need for a common approach to energy. Energy markets and geopolitical considerations have changed significantly since then. But the need for European Union action is stronger than ever. Without this, the European Union’s objectives in other areas, including the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and the Millennium Development Goals, will also be more difficult to achieve. A new European Energy Policy needs to be ambitious, competitive and long-term – and to the benefit of all Europeans.”⁴¹

In 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon⁴² introduced a new legal basis for shared competencies in the field of energy and climate. Since then, the EU has been entitled to take measures to ensure the security of energy supplies by diversifying routes and suppliers (particularly given the historically high dependence on Russia). This action also aims to reduce market dominance and supplier concentration and keep energy affordable for European consumers by reforming, liberalizing and integrating gas and electricity markets. The EU’s understanding of energy security is primarily supply-centered and quintessentially market-orientated. Along with energy supply reliability and affordability, environmental sustainability has been more recently added as a third pillar, which is also in line with global trends.

In 2014, the EU Energy Security Strategy was issued.⁴³ This strategy was developed in response to the Ukraine crisis and aims to reduce dependence on external energy suppliers, diversify energy sources, and increase energy efficiency across the EU. The reasons behind the Energy Security Strategy were as follows:

“The EU imports 53% of the energy it consumes. Energy import dependency relates to crude oil (almost 90%), to natural gas (66%), and to a lesser extent to solid fuels (42%) as well as nuclear fuel (40%). Energy security of supply concerns every Member State, even if some are more vulnerable than others. This is valid in particular for less integrated and connected regions such as the Baltic and Eastern Europe. The most pressing energy security of supply issue is the strong dependence from a single external supplier. This is particularly true for gas, but also applies to electricity: Six Member States depend from Russia as single external supplier for their entire gas imports and three of them use natural gas for more than a quarter of their total energy needs. In 2013 energy supplies from Russia accounted for 39% of EU natural gas imports or 27% of EU gas consumption; Russia exported 71 % of its gas to Europe with the

⁴¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Council and the European Parliament: An Energy Policy for Europe, 2007, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0001:FIN:EN:PDF>, accessed 6 August 2024.

⁴² Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12007L%2FTXT>, accessed 6 August 2024.

⁴³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council European Energy Security Strategy, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52014DC0330>, accessed 6 August 2024.

largest volumes to Germany and Italy; for electricity, three Member States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) are dependent on one external operator for the operation and balancing of their electricity network.”⁴⁴

The 2015 Energy Union Package is the most comprehensive attempt to define objectives and an instrument for a holistic approach to energy security.⁴⁵ It asserts that the objective of a resilient Energy Union, with a strong emphasis on ambitious climate policy, is to provide EU consumers, including households and businesses, with energy that is secure, sustainable, competitive, and affordable.⁴⁶ The core of the EU’s energy policy is built on a triangle of supply security (reliability), sustainability (climate), and competitiveness (affordability), with the EU viewing these elements as mutually reinforcing. However, by treating all these goals as equally important, the EU has struggled to set clear priorities and effectively address the trade-off between climate objectives and supply security.

In 2019, the EU revamped its energy policy framework to facilitate the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner energy sources, with the specific aim of meeting its commitments under the Paris Agreement⁴⁷ to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.⁴⁸ The European Green Deal adopted by the European Commission in 2019 must be mentioned here.⁴⁹ While primarily focused on sustainability, the Green Deal also includes measures that enhance energy security by promoting renewable energy, reducing dependency on fossil fuels, and improving energy efficiency.

In 2019, Regulation 2019/941 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on risk-preparedness in the electricity sector and repealing Directive 2005/89/EC⁵⁰ was adopted with the aim of laying “down rules for cooperation between Member States with a view to preventing, preparing for, and managing electricity crises in a spirit of solidarity and transparency and in full regard for the requirements of a competitive internal market for electricity”⁵¹.

Recent years have seen significant changes driven by EU energy policy, marked by a substantial reduction in the use of the most polluting fuels as consumption has increasingly shifted toward natural gas and renewables. Although the EU’s renewable energy production has

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Strambo, C., & Nilsson, M. (2018). The Energy Union: a coherent policy package?. In *Handbook of the International Political Economy of Energy and Natural Resources*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁴⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2015:80:FIN>, accessed 6 August 2024.

⁴⁷ The Paris agreement, United Nations, available from: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>, accessed 10 August 2024.

⁴⁸ Clean energy for all Europeans package, European Commission, available from: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package_en, accessed 12 August 2024.

⁴⁹ The European Green Deal, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en, accessed 7 July 2024.

⁵⁰ Regulation (EU) 2019/941 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on risk-preparedness in the electricity sector and repealing Directive 2005/89/EC, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/941/oj>, accessed 16 July 2024.

⁵¹ Regulation - 2019/941 - EN - EUR-Lex. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.158.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2019:158:TOC

grown significantly, gas production has decreased, resulting in a greater dependence on gas imports.⁵²

The sharp rise in energy prices and heightened volatility in recent years have already sparked calls to reduce our reliance on energy imports. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has intensified this discussion, leading to significant strategic policy shifts within the EU.

In 2021, the EU sourced over 40% of its natural gas, 27% of its oil, and 46% of its coal from Russia. Energy imports constituted 62% of the EU's total imports from Russia, amounting to €99 billion. Although this marks a significant decrease from 2011, when energy accounted for nearly 77% of EU imports from Russia (valued at €148 billion), the EU is intensifying efforts to reduce its reliance on Russian energy.⁵³

To enhance energy security, Europe has focused on diversifying its energy sources and supply routes⁵⁴: this includes increasing imports from different countries, investing in liquefied natural gas (LNG) infrastructure, and developing renewable energy sources to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

In 2022, the European Commission introduced the REPowerEU plan,⁵⁵ which outlines strategies to drastically cut Russian gas imports from the 2021 level of 155 billion cubic meters (bcm) by the end of the year, and to achieve full independence from Russian fossil fuels well before the end of the decade. The plan focuses on diversifying energy supplies, reducing demand, and significantly increasing the production of renewable energy within the EU.⁵⁶

To summarize, the EU has developed a comprehensive energy security policy focused on ensuring stable, sustainable, and affordable energy supply for its member states. The main aspects of the EU's energy security policy are:

1. Diversification of energy sources and supply routes, which means the reducing of dependence on a single supplier or route by diversifying its energy sources and supply routes.
2. Integration of energy markets,⁵⁷ which means the creation an integrated and interconnected energy market among its Member States. This integration enhances resilience by allowing for the free flow of energy across borders, ensuring that no single country is overly dependent on one supply source.
3. Transition to renewable energy, which means reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels and enhancing energy independence.
4. Energy efficiency initiatives, which means reducing energy consumption through efficiency measures and lowering overall demand for energy, which in turn enhances security by reducing the need for imports.
5. Preparedness and resilience, which means the implementation of EU frameworks like the Security of Gas Supply Regulation to ensure that Member States are prepared to manage

⁵² In focus: Reducing the EU's dependence on imported fossil fuels (2022), Brussels, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/news/focus-reducing-eus-dependence-imported-fossil-fuels-2022-04-20_en, accessed 13 July 2024.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Diversification of gas supply sources and routes, European Commission, available from: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-security/diversification-gas-supply-sources-and-routes_en, accessed 10 July 2024.

⁵⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions REPowerEU Plan, available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A230%3AFIN&qid=1653033742483>, accessed August 2024.

⁵⁶ REPowerEU, Affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe, European commission, available from: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en, accessed August 2024.

⁵⁷ Electricity market design, European Commission, available from: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/electricity-market-design_en, accessed 10 July 2024.

energy supply disruptions. This regulation requires actions such as maintaining minimum gas storage levels and promoting regional cooperation to effectively address crises.

Conclusions

Energy security remains a fundamental issue in energy policy discussions, characterized by a wide range of definitions and interpretations that reflect the complex and dynamic nature of the concept. The lack of consensus among scholars and policymakers highlights the multifaceted challenges of energy security, which is influenced by diverse energy systems, economic conditions, and political environments across the globe.

Recent literature emphasizes the evolving understanding of energy security, incorporating broader dimensions such as environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and energy equity. These new perspectives underscore the interconnectedness of energy security with other critical issues like climate change, energy poverty, and geopolitical stability.

The concept of energy security has expanded beyond traditional concerns about the uninterrupted supply of energy at reasonable prices to include considerations of resilience, adaptability, and the ability to manage risks and vulnerabilities in an increasingly complex global energy landscape. This shift is evident in frameworks like the “four As” of energy security – availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability – as well as the “energy trilemma,” which balances energy security, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Energy security in Europe and Lithuania is heavily influenced by geographic, political, and economic factors. Europe’s reliance on external energy supplies, particularly from Russia, has exposed vulnerabilities, prompting strategic shifts. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine highlighted the risks associated with dependence on a single supplier and accelerated efforts to diversify energy sources and reduce reliance on Russian fossil fuels through initiatives like the REPowerEU plan.

Europe’s response to recent energy crises, including the surge in renewable energy adoption and increased energy storage capacities, underscores the need for advanced grid infrastructure and smart technologies. The interconnected nature of European electricity markets has helped secure supplies, but ongoing efforts are needed to balance energy security with environmental goals and geopolitical challenges.

Lithuania has made significant strides towards energy independence, notably by seeking to disconnect from the BRELL energy ring and synchronize its electricity grid with continental Europe. Projects like the Klaipėda LNG terminal and electricity interconnections with Sweden and Poland have diversified Lithuania’s energy sources and reduced its dependency on Russian energy. The planned Harmony Link cable represents a further step towards reducing energy reliance on Russia and integrating the Baltic States into the European energy network.

Overall, both Europe and Lithuania are actively pursuing strategies to enhance energy security, reduce dependence on specific suppliers, and integrate more diverse and sustainable energy sources. These efforts reflect a broader trend towards achieving greater energy resilience in response to evolving geopolitical and economic challenges.

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PROBLEMS OF GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE CONDITIONS OF ARMED CONFLICTS

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Abstract. *This article is devoted to the study of the role of gender equality in the context of national security, taking into account modern world trends. We investigate how the implementation of equal opportunities for all gender groups can affect the stability and security of society. Analysis of the impact of gender equality on national security covers various spheres of life – from politics and economics to peacekeeping and the fight against terrorism. Theoretical approaches to defining the essence of the concept of “national security”, which is considered by scientists as a multi-level system of dependencies of various kinds, which are at different levels of perception, have been studied, and the author’s definition of the essence of the concept has been provided. In addition, gender gaps in security and defense are addressed, highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive leadership in peacekeeping missions. It is emphasized that in order to achieve gender equality, it is necessary not only to increase the representation of women, but also to create conditions so that they can effectively perform their duties and overcome possible discrimination. The role of gender-sensitive leadership in peacekeeping missions has been established and it is stated that increasing the number of women in peace-management operations contributes to the fight against the patriarchal environment, which is hostile to the presence of women in such operations. It was established that insufficient consideration of gender aspects in the strategies, policies and procedures of the security and defense sector, gender imbalance at the level of decision-making, professional gender segregation, the infrastructure of the sector does not fully meet the needs of women, the procurement and provision of equipment and uniforms does not take into account gender aspects, Gender challenge have been found, in particular the partial inconsistency of the administrative and economic working conditions of male service members and female service members, as well as recommendations for overcoming gender problems and gaps have been developed. The possibility of reducing conflicts through the involvement of women in decision-making processes, the role of women’s peace initiatives in reducing violence have been analyzed. Proposals were made to improve the regulatory framework of the security and defense sector to ensure gender equality and eliminate differences in the status positions of women and men – military personnel. The impact of stereotypes and inequality on radicalization and terrorism is also explored. Overall, the article highlights the importance of promoting gender equality as a key factor in achieving national security and stability in today’s geopolitical context.*

Keywords: *gender equality, national security, economy, gender-sensitive leadership, peacekeeping missions, Ukraine, UN, security, defense.*

Introduction.

The modern world is experiencing transformations on an unprecedented scale that endanger the national stability and security of the country. The wars of recent decades have

strengthened the awareness of susceptibility in military conflicts. Civilians in every major conflict regularly suffer and are targeted as a form of insidious warfare. Women did not escape this attack. In fact, in many conflicts they become a particular target of attack as the adversary tries to demoralize the other side. At the same time, women hardly participate in political negotiations aimed at ending conflicts. They are also hardly involved in numerous mediation initiatives. As a result, special attention to women's issues is often forgotten in the context of peace settlement, which slows down the processes of reconstruction and reconciliation.

Using the latest research, statistics and examples from different countries, our aim is to reveal the importance of gender equality as a key factor for national security. A focus on gender equality has a significant impact on every aspect of social life, from conflict prevention to sustainable development.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.

More generally, the concept of national security is related to the ability of a state to maintain its independent identity and functional integrity against forces it considers hostile (Holmes, 2015, Buzan, 2003). Kosmeider, (2021) provides an even broader view of national security, stating that national security can be understood as a field of knowledge that not only explains the mechanisms of governance to ensure the order and stability of human communities, but also as the art and science of effective survival in time and space. Therefore, in this context, it is important to emphasize the importance of the above-mentioned objective and subjective security. Janushauskene et al. (2017) highlighted several variations in the analysis of possible variants of objective and subjective security relations. The first scenario is a situation where objective and subjective safety intersect, and in both cases, it is safe: a person is and feels safe. The second scenario is a situation where objective and subjective safety do not overlap: objectively it is not safe, but the person feels safe. The third scenario is a situation when objective and subjective safety do not overlap, but it is the opposite of the previous one: objectively it is safe, but the person does not feel safe. The fourth scenario is a situation where objective and subjective safety overlap, and in both cases, it is not safe: the lack of safety is objective, and the person does not feel safe. This is confirmed by Bansik (2018), who argues that security becomes dependent on the subject matter, the perception of threats, the protected values and the measures used to ensure it. When it comes to the concept of security and its impact on society, we inevitably face the negative aspect – threats (Bansik, 2018) that arise for everyone both in the internal and external environment. Notwithstanding, the threat ceases to be associated only with war. Threat and security perceptions cover a much wider range of factors: natural disasters, virus outbreaks, criminal activity, cyber-attacks, health, personal safety, social security, standard of living, etc. In other words, security perception is related to citizens' feelings about the risks associated with security incidents and the extent of their consequences (Chaparro, 2021). Such experiences form an individual's attitude and behavior - a respond to certain situations.

Taking into account the fact that these reactions, behavior or perception of the situation can be completely different for each person and relate to real or imagined threats, the research in this article focuses on the analysis of subjective threat perception. Subjective security researchers note that perceptions of security threats are often determined by personal experiences of everyday life (Bates and Lindt, 2011,): social protection systems provided by family, community, and the welfare state; experience with a range of socio-economic risks, including lack of income and wealth, educational attainment and employment (Ingleheart and Norris, 2012), as well as evaluations of criteria such as government effectiveness, trust in

government and individual security (Ilinykh et al. 2020). According to Wills-Herrera et al. (2011), the perception of danger for a person manifests itself in the form of fears of losing control over one's life, losing property, losing social ties or even life.

Scientists Cherep A. V., Kaliuzhna Yu. V., Cherep O. G., Voronkova V. G. (2022) investigated the role of gender, race and age in corporate social responsibility values of business. Socially responsible business creates tangible and intangible benefits for society, thus influencing GDP, and thus macroeconomic and socio-economic stability. Therefore, the study of gender equality issues is extremely relevant and timely.

The Research Scope is to consider the importance of gender equality as a key factor in ensuring national security and stability. By analyzing aspects of the impact of gender equality on different spheres of society, the article aims to highlight how equal access to opportunities and resources for all gender groups contributes to the improvement of national security and stability.

To achieve the goal, the following tasks are set:

- consider existing challenges related to gender inequality in various aspects of society, such as politics, economy, education, and others, and identify how these inequalities can affect national security;
- reveal the positive impact of gender equality on peacemaking and conflict studies;
- highlight the role of women's leadership and participation in decision-making.

The Target of the Research is the process of gender equality and its impact on national security.

The Research Question is the relationship between gender equality and national security, including the impact of equal access to opportunities and resources for different gender groups on the resilience and security of society.

Statement of Basic Materials.

The concept of "national security" has several aspects and dimensions, the difference between which is revealed in the different approaches from which this subject matter is considered. Even in the availability of certain general agreements regarding the methodology and worldview system, differences in the understanding of the essence and content of national security immediately become visible among specialists from various fields, such as lawyers, military, economists, political scientists and others.

In general, the essence of national security is multi-level and expresses a complex hierarchical structure of reality, a system of mediated dependencies of various kinds and orders, which are at different levels of perception of this concept. That is, national security could be considered both at the ordinary, everyday level of reflection of this phenomenon, and at the theoretical level (Antonov, 2017).

The concept of "national security" was used for the first time at the state level in 1904 in the message of the then US President Theodore Roosevelt to the US Congress, in which he justified the accession of the Panama Canal Zone in the interests of national security. Since then, national security has become the object of research in the field of political science, and later, when this term moved from political usage to the legal sphere, and legal science (Kormych, 2004).

There are quite a few approaches to understanding "national security" and they all differ to some extent (Table 1). In most scientific papers, "national security" is understood as the protection of the vital interests of the individual, society, and the state from external and internal

threats. And the interests of “national security” mean the totality of the security subject’s needs (Kadebska and Lopokha).

Table 1. Approaches to Defining the Concept of “National Security”

Author	Definition
Lipkan V. A.	National security is a kind of sphere of existence of a person, nation, state, culture, traditions, customs, resources, which not only strongly connects people with each other, but also connects them with historical heritage and the environment (Lipkan.yu 2008).
Vlasyuk O. S.	National security of Ukraine is a way of self-preservation of the Ukrainian people, which has reached the level of organization in the form of an independent state. This method enables its free existence and self-development, reliable protection against external and internal threats. The author defines the national security of Ukraine as a system of state-legal and social guarantees of the consistency of life and development of the Ukrainian people in general and each citizen in particular, the protection of their core values and legitimate interests, sources of spiritual and material development from possible real and potential, internal and external threats (Vlasyuk, 2016).
Blystiv T. I., Kolesnyk V. T., Pryhunov P. Ya., Karpova K. V.	It is said that the national security of Ukraine should be considered as a process, and the system of ensuring national security should be considered as providing this process. As a consequence, national security should be defined not as a state, but as a dynamic component of state development (Blystiv et al., 2015).
Cherep A.V., Cherep O. H.	The existing ideology of national security is based on counteracting the system of available threats, which is extremely relevant for Ukraine within the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. National security can characterize a comprehensive, complete system of viability of the entire object as a whole and can ensure the development and security of all its constituent parts (2022)

Source: compiled by the authors

There are many approaches to understanding national security, and they all differ to some extent.

At the legislative level in Ukraine, certain aspects of national security were first enshrined in the Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine (Chuyko, 2008). In the Law of Ukraine “On the National Security of Ukraine” of June 21, 20018 No. 2469-VIII, the concept of “national security of Ukraine” is defined by the legislator as the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional system and other national interests of Ukraine from real and potential threats (On the National security of Ukraine).

Having studied the legal framework and the viewpoints of scientists, we consider it expedient to further consider national security as a state of security and protection of the country from external and internal threats, which guarantees the preservation and strengthening of interests, values, territorial integrity and sovereignty. National security takes into account strategies aimed at preventing, responding to and overcoming various types of threats, such as military aggression, terrorism, cyber threats, economic risks and other factors that affect the stability and security of the country.

Furthermore, national security involves preserving the rights and freedoms of citizens: personal, economic, social and medical, cultural and identity security. In general, national security for citizens consists in creating conditions where a person can feel comfortable, safe and able to develop in various aspects of his life.

The Role of Gender-sensitive Leadership in Peacekeeping Missions

The relationship between gender and national security reveals a field of research that examines the impact of gender and sexual identity on a state's national security. For example, women and men may experience different types of discrimination and violence because of their gender, which in turn endangers human security and causes physical, psychological and social consequences.

Historically, women have been underrepresented in politics, defense and peacekeeping missions, but now attention to their contributions is growing. The participation of women in the development of security strategies can lead to a more comprehensive and effective response to threats.

A gender-sensitive approach involves taking into account gender characteristics and needs in the development of security strategies. It emphasizes the importance of gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation of security measures.

In peacekeeping missions, gender equality plays an important role in maintaining stability and improving conditions for peaceful life. International organizations emphasize the importance of including women in peacekeeping missions.

As noted in the UN strategy for achieving gender equality, many factors prevent the achievement of this equality, including the lack of sustained political will and accountability, the lack of necessary measures and enabling conditions for reforms, and resistance from key actors. Gender-sensitive leadership focuses on some of these barriers, including the roles and perceptions of key stakeholders and leaders. Gender-sensitive leadership goes beyond efforts aimed only at increasing the representation of women in peacekeeping operations. These efforts are often based on assumptions about women's innate abilities, without paying due attention to how to ensure that they can effectively fulfill their responsibilities and overcome the possible discrimination they may face. Recent research has shown that simply increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations has little effect on countering a patriarchal environment that can be hostile to the presence of women (Nagel et al., 2021). In this environment, women peacekeepers, soldiers and police continue to report problems such as lack of career advancement, taboos and stigmatization (Kumalo et al., 2021).

Gender-sensitive leadership in the context of peacekeeping plays a key role in ensuring national security in the following ways:

- elimination of gender inequalities in the military environment, namely ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in military service and removing restrictions on career growth;
- support for women peacekeepers in conflict zones, namely providing access to some resources, psychological support and protection from violence;
- protection of the rights of women and vulnerable groups;
- implementation of gender-sensitive women's programs and projects aimed at improving gender equality and protecting rights in the field of security.

Gender-sensitive leadership can also counter the negative perception of gender parity strategies that exists in security. Some practitioners in this field criticize such strategies because of the increased risk to women peacekeepers and the possible threat of reduced operational effectiveness if gender equality is emphasized over operational tasks (Gordon et al., 2021). This is partly due to the belief that women hold opportunities based on their gender rather than their skills and qualifications. However, there is evidence that women peacekeepers are not always properly trained or held accountable for roles that match their experience and expertise. For example, there is a widespread belief that women peacekeepers carry with them natural

“feminine” qualities, which may lead to them being assigned to gender-related or protection-related work, even if they do not have relevant experience in these areas. When leaders understand how such gender biases and exposures affect peacekeeping, they can proactively challenge these views. Additionally, gender-sensitive leadership can help reduce the burden of being “gendered” for some women. Women peacekeepers constantly point to the fact that they have to carry a double burden, after which they are perceived as the physical embodiment of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping. Gender-sensitive leadership can challenge the notion that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of gender equality coordinators and consultants, and not of all staff (Wilén, 2020).

Gender Gaps in Security and Defense and Measures to Overcome Them

In the field of security, there is a significant disparity between men and women, which is reflected in aspects of this field, especially in the representation of women in senior positions. This has a negative impact on the day-to-day work of institutions responsible for security, their reputation before the public, the level of trust of citizens and the status of women working in this field. Regardless of significant changes in the legislative framework of the security and defense, sphere, such as expanding the list of military positions to which women can be appointed and giving girls the opportunity to receive education in military lyceums, there exist significant differences in the status of military personnel depending on their gender (Ivanina and others, 2020). Table 2 shows gender problems and recommendations for overcoming them.

Table 2. Gender Problems and Recommendations for Overcoming Them

Gender problems/gaps	Recommendations for overcoming gender problems and gaps
Insufficient level of gender sensitivity of security and defense strategies, policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Integrate gender aspects into security and defense reform measures. – Develop a strategy for implementing gender equality in the security and defense sector and a mechanism for its implementation. – Improve the legal framework of the security and defense sector to ensure gender equality and eliminate differences in the status positions of women and men military personnel.
Gender imbalance at the decision-making level. At the end of 2020, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) consisted of 18 people, including 2 women. 100% of the staff of the National Security Service of Ukraine are men. During the period of its operation, 14 people, including 1 woman, held the position of Secretary of the Council. (Composition of the National Security and Defense Council in Ukraine).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Include gender issues in various educational programs at military educational institutions. – Inform decision-makers about gender equality through training and coaching according to leadership programs. – Include issues related to ensuring gender equality in the list of job duties of managers at various levels in the field of security and defense.
Professional gender segregation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eliminate obstacles to the hiring and promotion of persons of the underrepresented gender. – Develop measures to ensure balance between work and private life.
The infrastructure of the industry does not fully meet the needs of women; procurement, provision of inventory and uniforms do not take into account gender aspects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure accessibility and convenience of industry infrastructure in accordance with the needs of women and men. – Create/equip separate and safe utility and sanitary premises (rooms for storing personal belongings,

<p>For servicewoman, there is a partial discrepancy in the administrative and economic working conditions – not all military units and forces are properly equipped for the high-quality performance of service and combat tasks by servicewoman, namely: there are no separate and safe utility and sanitary premises.</p>	<p>changing rooms, washing rooms, shower rooms, separate toilets, etc.). – Conduct a review and gender analysis of the legal framework for procurement, provision of uniforms and inventory in the field of security and defense.</p>
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Source: Guide to Gender-responsive Approach in Selected Areas (Ivanina et al., 2020). [T. Ivanina, O. Kiselyova, M. Kolodiy and others. Guide to the Application of a Gender-oriented Approach in Certain Sectors – Kyiv: Vivario, 2020. – p. 48]

As can be seen from the above, gender-sensitive leadership in peacekeeping missions plays a key role in ensuring the success and effectiveness of such missions. It helps overcome many of the barriers to achieving gender equality, including the lack of political will, accountability and lack of necessary action for reform. Gender-sensitive leadership focuses on the roles and perceptions of key actors in peacekeeping operations, going beyond conventional strategies to increase women’s representation.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, for gender-sensitive leadership to succeed, it is not enough to simply increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions. It is important to consider how to ensure that women can effectively perform their duties and overcome possible discrimination.

Conclusions

In summary, on the basis of the above, we can state that national security has a multi-level character and represents a hierarchical system of mediated dependencies at different levels of perception. The essence of national security includes the protection of the vital interests of the individual, society and the state from external and internal threats.

Gender-sensitive leadership in peacekeeping missions is key to achieving gender equality in national security. It is aimed at overcoming many barriers that prevent the implementation of gender strategies.

In addition, it must be taken into account that simply increasing the number of women in peacekeeping missions is not enough to achieve gender equality. To be successful, it is important to create such conditions that will contribute to the effective performance of one’s duties.

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ŽMONIŲ SU NEGALIA SOCIALINĖS IR DARBO ĮTRAUKTIES MOKSLINIŲ TYRIMŲ DINAMIKA: LITERATŪROS ANALIZĖ

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Anotacija. *Žmonių su negalia socialinės įtraukties potenciali vertė pastaruosiu metu visuomenei tampa vis geriau suvokiama. Tampa suprantama, kad negalia nėra socialinės izoliacijos nuosprendis savaime, bet aplinkos, tame tarpe ir organizacijose, prieinamumo klausimas. Straipsnyje apžvelgiamos žmonių su negalia socialinės įtraukties ir darbo bei karjeros įtraukties mokslinių tyrimų sankirtos. Remiantis VOSviewer programa, analizuojami straipsniai publikuoti pasaulyje per pastaruosius trisdešimt metų, referuojami tarptautinėje duomenų bazėje Web of Science.*

Pagrindinės sąvokos: *žmonės su negalia; socialinė įtrauktis; darbo įtrauktis; karjera; aplinkos prieinamumas.*

Įvadas

Socialinė įtrauktis yra ypač svarbi žmonėms su negalia. Tai yra vartai į prasmės ir galimybių neįgaliesiems kūrimą, pripažįstant juos neatsiejamais ir potencialiais žmogiškaisiais ištekliais bei atsakinga visuomenės dalimi (Khalid, Ashraf, ir Aleem 2022; Boland ir Guerin 2022). Socialinė įtrauktis moksliniuose darbuose analizuojama įvairiais aspektais. Vienas jų - tai socialinė įtrauktis kaip galimybė bendrauti, kurti socialinius ryšius ir juos palaikyti. Moksliniais tyrimais nustatyta, jog socialiniai santykiai, asmeninis saugumas nurodomi kaip didžiausi iššūkiai, su kuriais susiduria neįgalieji (Suich ir Schneider 2022; Yoon 2023). Moksliniai duomenys patvirtina, jog neįgaliųjų savęs vertinimas, kaip subjektyvus reiškinys, taip pat yra neatsiejamasis socialinės įtraukties komponentas (Spirto ir Gilligan 2022).

Kita negalios ir socialinės įtraukties sąsaja stebima karjeros srityje. Neįgaliųjų lyderystė darbo vietoje gali kurti didelę emocinę vertę bendruomenei, kurioje dirba neįgalieji (M. Santuzzi, Martinez, ir Keating 2022; Bezyak ir kt. 2020). Ekonominė įtrauktis vertė taip pat vis dažniau tampa mokslinių tyrimų objektu. Supratimas apie prieinamos ir įtraukios visuomenės ekonominės naudos dydį gali būti labai naudingas, nes jis suteikia informacijos apie pastangų, tokių kaip teisės aktai, politika, programos ir praktika, skirtų neįgaliųjų prieinamumui ir įtraukčiai gerinti, naudą (Tompa ir kt. 2022; Ledbetter 2021; Campbell 2021). Tai, kad neįgaliųjų lyderystė, verslumas ir galimybė įsitraukti į darbo rinką yra svarbi tiek ekonominiu, tiek psichosocialiniu požiūriu, patvirtina moksliniai tyrimai. Visgi esama duomenų, jog neįgaliųjų įtrauktis ir įgalinimas darbo rinkoje gali kelti iššūkių tiek pačiam neįgaliajam, tiek ir jį supančiai aplinkai (Sampana ir De La Cruz 2020; Lindsay ir kt. 2019).

Taigi negalios nulemti socialinės įtraukties iššūkiai jau yra tyrinėjami, tačiau vis dar pritrūkta tyrimų, apjungiančių negalios, socialinės įtraukties ir karjeros sritis. Todėl šis tyrimas

papildys nuolat gausėjančią socialinės įtraukties tyrimų bazę naujomis įžvalgomis ir išplės tyrimo lauką.

Straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti mokslinių tyrimų žmonių su negalia socialinės įtraukties tematikoje, išryškinant darbo įtraukties aspektą.

Pirmame tyrimo etape mokslinių publikacijų duomenų bazėje Web of Science buvo sukauptas duomenynas analizei – atrinkti straipsniai, kurių pavadinime ir raktažodžiuose buvo terminai nurodantys į negalią turinčių žmonių socialinę įtrauktį („Disabled”+“social inclusion”). Atrenkant šaltinius nebuvo pasirinktas filtras straipsnių leidimo metams. Į tyrimą buvo įtraukta socialinių bei sveikatos mokslų kategorijos. Tokiu būdu į duomenų rinkinį pakliuvo 5728 mokslo straipsniai. Visi pasirinkti straipsniai anglų kalba. Antrame etape surinkti duomenys buvo analizuojami VOSviewer programa, atliekant informacijos pjūvius pagal publikuotų tyrimų sritis, tematikas, labiausiai cituojamus autorius ir publikacijų skaičių lyginant leidimo metus.

Antroji tyrimo dalis buvo mokslinių publikacijų duomenų bazėje Web of Science atrasti straipsnius, kuriuose buvo minima negalią turinčių žmonių karjera (“Disability”+“career”). Atrenkant šaltinius nebuvo pasirinktas laikotarpio filtras straipsnių leidimo metams. Tokiu būdu į duomenų rinkinį pakliuvo 803 mokslo straipsniai, kurių išleidimo laikotarpis – 1991m. – 2023m. Į tyrimą buvo įtraukta socialinių mokslų kategorija. Pasirinkti straipsniai anglų kalba. Antrame etape surinkti duomenys buvo analizuojami VOSviewer programa, atliekant informacijos pjūvius pagal publikuotų tyrimų sritis, tematikas, labiausiai cituojamus autorius ir publikacijų skaičių lyginant leidimo metus.

Socialinė įtrauktis kaip kompleksinis fenomenas

Socialinės įtraukties kryptis ir priemonės nustato **socialinė politika**. Socialinė politika ir užimtumas nurodomi kaip vieni iš Europos Sąjungos prioritetų. Tarp Europos Parlamento nurodomų socialinės politikos kryptių minima ir įtrauki darbo rinka („*Socialinė Europa: kokia yra ES socialinė politika?*“ 2023). Socialinė politika plati ir daugialypė kryptis, apimanti platų socialinių iššūkių ir galimybių spektrą. Šios politinės sistemos tyrinėjimai Lietuvoje jau pradami, keliami probleminiai klausimai: požiūrio į socialinės įtraukties politiką, socialinio teisingumo iššūkiai ir kt. (*Poviliūnas 2017; Guogis ir Svirbutaitė-Krutkienė 2020*).

Neįgaliųjų teisių konvencijoje teigiama, jog „*neįgaliesiems turėtų būti suteikta galimybė aktyviai dalyvauti sprendimų dėl politikos kryptių ir programų <...> priėmimo procesuose*“ (*Ministro Pirmininko tarnybos ir Organizacinių reikalų valdyba 2009*). Neįgaliųjų įgalinimas taip pat minimas ir moksliniuose šaltiniuose, taip atskleidžiant neįgaliųjų socialinės įtraukties aspektą – sąlygų, tinkamų neįgaliesiems būti kuo mažiau priklausomiems nuo aplinkinių, sudarymą (*Anderson ir Bigby 2017; Esteban ir kt. 2023*). Visgi autorių, rašiusių neįgaliųjų socialinės įtraukties temomis, analizė rodo, jog naujausi tyrinėjimai atskleidžia opias problemas socialinės politikos srityje (*Banks ir kt. 2023*) bei neįgaliųjų atskirtį karjeros srityje, kuris lemia žemus socialinės įtraukties rodiklius (*Hunt ir kt. 2022*). Negalia taip pat tampa diskriminacijos veiksniu, kuris lemia didelę neįgalaus asmens priklausomybę nuo socialinės politikos (*Kittay 2021; Norstedt ir Germundsson 2022; Merfeldaitė, Sabaliauskienė, ir Gardziulevičienė 2022*).

Šalia socialinės apsaugos poreikio, pokyčio neįgaliųjų įgalinimo link minėtina ir **ekonominė** neįgaliųjų padėtis. Neįgaliųjų teisių konvencijos preambulėje nurodoma, kad šalis, pasirašiusios šią konvenciją, pritaria, jog: „visapusiško neįgaliųjų dalyvavimo skatinimas leis sustiprinti jų priklausymo visuomenei pojūtį ir labai paskatins didelę žmogiškojo, socialinio ir ekonominio visuomenės vystymosi pažangą bei skurdo panaikinimą“ (Ministro Pirmininko

tarnybos ir Organizacinių reikalų valdyba 2009). Visgi moksliniuose tyrimuose negalia nurodoma kaip veiksnys, kuris lemia mažesnę ekonominę naudą neįgaliajam, lyginant dirbantį neįgalų asmenį su darbuotoju, neturinčiu negalios (Calderón-Milán, Calderón-Milán, ir Barba-Sánchez 2020). Pagrindinėmis prastų ekonominių rodiklių negalios srityje priežastimis tampa finansinio raštingumo trūkumas, aukštas nedarbo lygis (Jiya ir kt. 2022), nepatenkinamas papildomų išlaidų, susijusių su negalia, poreikis (Mont 2023), lanksčių darbo modelių taikymo trūkumas (Friso ir Caldin 2014). Taigi neįgalųjų ekonominė padėtis gali būti nulemta šalies socialinės politikos sprendimų, su socialine įtrauktimi susijusių veiksnių, tokių kaip įtrauktis į darbo rinką, finansinio saugumo užtikrinimas ir pan.

Neįgalųjų švietimas – kita socialinės įtraukties tema. Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija yra parengusi Aukštojo mokslo socialinės dimensijos 2023–2026 metų plėtros prioritetus, kuriuose numatoma didinti aukštojo mokslo prieinamumą (Seimo Neįgalųjų teisių komisija 2023). Neįgalųjų įtrauktis aukštojo mokslo kontekste apima: poveikį švietimui, priklausomybę nuo bendraamžių, konsultacijas ir paramos paiešką, pagalbos, rekomendacijų ir paramos teikimą (Brewer, Urwin, ir Witham 2023). Aukštojo mokslo srityje neįgalųjų patiriamos problemos, kurios pagrindžiamos moksliniais tyrimais, gali būti skirstomos į sisteminės problemas, socialines ir požiūrio problemas. Su nepalankia studijų sistema neįgaliesiems siejama neprieinama fizinė infrastruktūra (Rath 2022), prastas paramos tęstinumas, įgalinančių įrankių trūkumas (Adefila ir kt. 2020), neįgalių studentų ir jų šeimų informuotumo, nuotolinio mokymosi galimybių sudarymo problemos (Malinovskiy, Shibanova, ir Movkebayeva 2023). Socialinis įsitraukimas, kaip reikšmingas socialinės įtraukties komponentas, iššūkių kelia dėl: neįgalumo suvokimo trūkumo, bendraamžių ir darbuotojų požiūrio, kuris neigiamai veikia studentų vertės jausmą, gebėjimą palaikyti draugystę ir ugdyti priklausymo jausmą (Rath 2022). Negalią turintys studentai išreiškia nesantys priimti į akademinę bendruomenę (Olsen ir kt. 2020), o dėstytojų požiūrio į neįgalius studentus požiūrio tyrimai taip pat rodo apsinkintą priėmimą. Dėstytojų nerimas negalios klausimais apima susijaudinimą dėl savo pačių patirties negalios srityje, nerimą dėl mokymosi poreikių (Shaw 2023). Lietuvoje situacija panaši: Neįgalųjų teisių komisijos pirmininkė Monika Ošmianskienė (2023) savo pranešime išskiria aplinkos pritaikymo asmenims su judėjimo negalia ypatumus, pažymint kultūros paveldo statusą turinčius pastatus. Kita Lietuvoje pradėta spręsti problema – baigiamojo darbo apgynimo (pateikimo) pritaikymas. Pažymimas ir mokymosi programų pritaikymo poreikis Lietuvos aukštosiose mokyklose (Seimo Neįgalųjų teisių komisija 2023).

Lietuvoje, siekiant neįgalųjų įtraukties į darbo rinką, užimtumo tarnyba padeda neįgaliesiems įsidarbinti ir įsitvirtinti darbo vietoje. Deja, kaip ir kitose šalyse (*Virginia Barba-Sánchez, Pilar Ortíz-García, ir Ángel Olaz-Capitán 2019*), Lietuvos statistika atskleidžia ne itin įtraukias neįgalųjų darbo pozicijas. Lietuvos Užimtumo tarnybos duomenimis, 2022 m. I pusmetį užimtumas suteiktas 5,7 tūkst. asmenų. Tuo tarpu Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos duomenimis, 2022 m. pabaigoje Lietuvoje gyveno apie 223 tūkstančių asmenų su negalia („Statistika“, s.a.). Prastas karjeros perspektyvas negalią turintiems asmenims patvirtina ne tik statistiniai duomenys, bet ir moksliniai šaltiniai (*Rudžinskienė ir Rudokaitė 2014; Raquel Vaquero-Cristóbal ir kt. 2023*).

Darnaus vystymosi darbotvarkėje (*Jungtinės Tautos 2015*) pabrėžiama įtraukios visuomenės reikšmė. Numatyta dėti ypatingas pastangas, kad iki 2030 m. būtų sukurtos sąlygos deramam darbui visiems, atsižvelgiant į skirtingą gebėjimų lygį. Atskiru, 20 deklaratijos punkto 8.5. skirsniu pabrėžiamas užimtumas ir deramas darbas bei atlygis visoms moterims ir vyrams, įskaitant žmones su negalia (*Europos audito rūmai 2023*). Vis dėlto karjeros siekiantiems neįgaliesiems gali tekti įveikti daugybę asmeninių, socialinių ir politinių kliūčių,

kurios tiriamos įvairių šalių kontekste (*Dong ir kt. 2023; Wu ir kt. 2023*). Apibendrinant mokslinius tyrimus neįgaliųjų karjeros srityje galima išskirti sėkmingą neįgaliųjų karjerą stabdančius veiksnius, tokius kaip: sveikatos sunkumai, kuriuos lemia pati negalia (*Brehmer ir kt. 2023*); iššūkiai, susiję su įtraukios socialinės politikos trikdžiais (*Sang, Calvard, ir Remnant 2022*) bei kliūtys, susijusios su neįgaliųjų subjektyviu savęs ir savo negalios suvokimu (*Poujol ir Scelles 2021*). Kai kurie autoriai mini ir aplinkos veiksnių reikšmę – šeimos, visuomenės požiūrį, empatiją, socialinę aplinką (*Ana Belén Fernández Casado ir Piedad Miñarro Casau 2019; Byrd ir Zhang 2023*), darbo aplinkos veiksnius (*Gupta ir Priyadarshi 2020*). Tad mokslininkų išskiriamos neįgaliųjų karjeros galimybes stabdančios kliūtys gali būti skirstomos į kategorijas: tai objektyvūs sunkumai (finansiniai, techniniai bei technologiniai sprendimai ir kt.), psichologinės kliūtys (savivertės problemos, reikiamos psichologinės pagalbos stygius ir pan.) bei socialiniai rodikliai (apimantys tiek artimosios socialinės aplinkos įtaką, tiek ir visuomenės kuriamą socialinės įtraukties politiką).

Karjeros srityje patiriami iššūkiai tampa nuoroda į tai, kad viena socialinės įtraukties sudedamųjų dalių – **prieinamumas** – taip pat kelia iššūkių. Prieinamumo problemos gali būti stebimos darbo aplinkoje. Neįgaliųjų karjeros kontekste prieinamumas apima komunikacijos, bendravimo, kasdienės darbo rutinos bei jutiminės aplinkos pritaikymo poreikį (Waisman-Nitzan, Gal, ir Schreuer 2021), fizinės aplinkos pritaikymą (Dong, Hespe, ir Monagas 2022), transporto pritaikymo, nediskriminuojančios, pagarbios aplinkos kūrimo būtinybę (Lindsay, Cagliostro, ir kt. 2021), darbo pokalbio proceso, grafikų, darbo turinio lankstumą, galimybes derinti darbą darbo vietoje ir nuotoliniu būdu (Lindsay, Osten, ir kt. 2021). Bendri švietimo prieinamumo komponentai yra lengvai skaitoma ir suprantama informacija, kuri lemia neįgaliųjų savarankiškumą švietimo srityje (Inclusion Europe, s.a.). Riboto prieinamumo priežastys gali būti paaiškinamos ribotu specialistų ir visuomenės supratimu apie tam tikros negalios ypatumus (Malcolm, M. 2022), mokymų negalios tema trūkumu darbo vietose (Lindsay, Osten, ir kt. 2021), miestų pritaikymo (Pineda ir Corburn 2020) ir skaitmeninės aplinkos pritaikymo problemomis (Botelho 2021).

Aplinkos neprieinamumas daro poveikį asmens nepriklausomybei ir **orumui** (Malcolm, M. 2022). Nors Neįgaliųjų teisių konvencijoje nurodyti bendrieji principai apima pagarbą prigimtiniam orumui, nediskriminavimo ir prieinamumo principus (Ministro Pirmininko tarnybos ir Organizacinių reikalų valdyba 2009), visgi moksliniai tyrimai rodo, kad diskriminacija darbo vietoje vis dar gaji. Neįgalieji dėl diskriminacijos ir menko prieinamumo neretai slepia savo negalią. Negalios atskleidimo iššūkiai jungia diskriminacijos pojūtį su karjeros galimybėmis (Lindsay, Osten, ir kt. 2021), rodo stigmos ir diskriminacijos baimę, neigiamą praeities atskleidimo patirtį (Lindsay ir kt. 2019). Diskriminuojantis požiūris atskleidžiamas ne tik neįgalių asmenų subjektyviuose savęs vertinimuose, bet ir darbdavių apklausose (Østerud 2023; Bjørnshagen ir Ugreninov 2021).

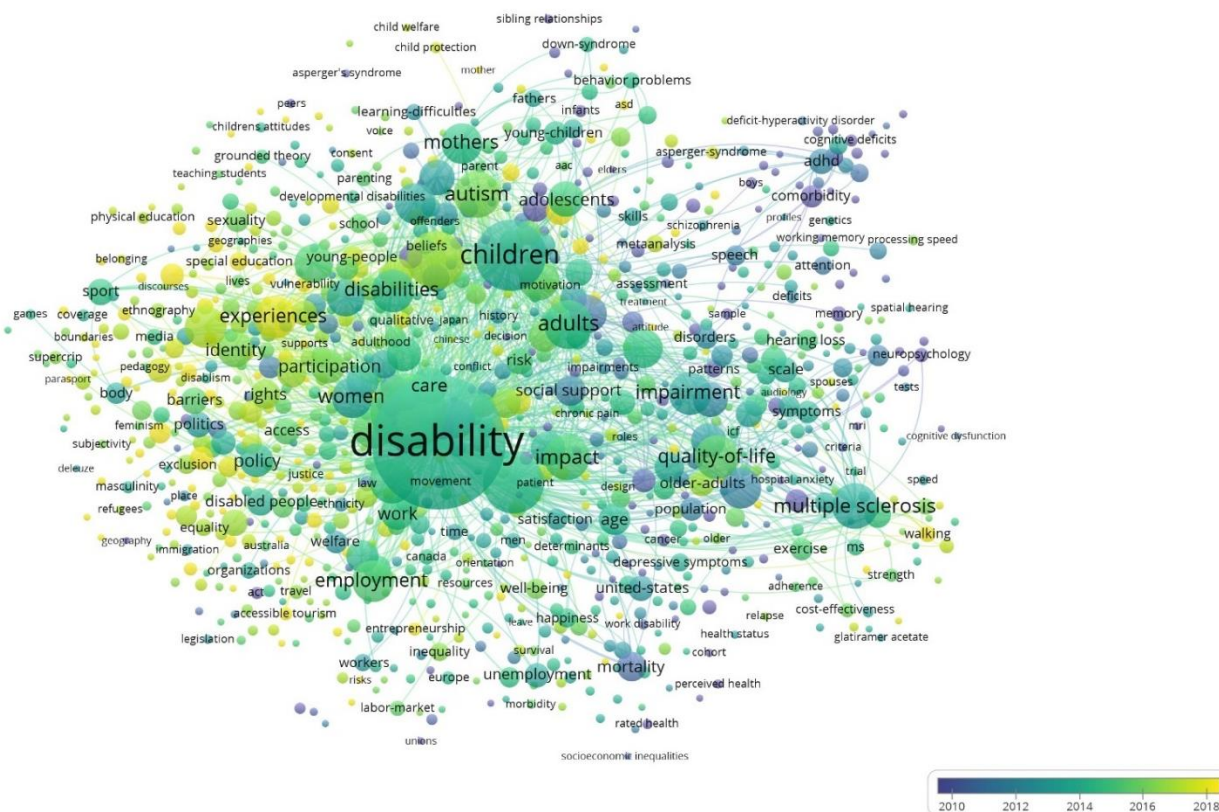
Socialinė neįgaliųjų gerovė, kuri yra svarbus socialinės įtraukties komponentas, gali būti apibūdinama kaip **dalyvavimo** bendruomenėje sistema (Carnemolla, Robinson, ir Lay 2021). Socialinės įtraukties rezultatus jaunų neįgaliųjų tikslinėje grupėje pagerina dviejų pagrindinių gyvenimo kokybės sričių – tarpasmeninių santykių ir bendruomenės dalyvavimo – rezultatų įvertinimas (Louw, Kirkpatrick, ir Leader 2020). Bendruomeniškumas, kaip socialinės įtraukties veiksnys reiškia „tarpasmeninį žmonių ryšį, grindžiamą pagarba, pasitikėjimu, darna ir atsakomybe, rūpinimusi ir tarpusavio įsipareigojimu“ (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas 2023). Neįgaliųjų socialinės įtraukties ir gyvenimo kokybės sąsajas tiriantys mokslininkai pabrėžia galimybę mėgstamos veiklos metu ugdyti savarankiškumo įgūdžius, gerinti savivertę ir pasitenkinimą savo gyvenimu (Doistua, Lazcano, ir Madariaga 2020; Condie 2021). Socialinė įtrauktis per dalyvavimo prizmę jau tiriama apimant keletą straipsnyje aptartų komponentų.

Neįgaliųjų karjeros, tobulėjimo ir priklausymo bendruomenei ryšiai galimi kuriant socialines iniciatyvas, tokias kaip socialinis ūkininkavimas (Borgi, M. ir kt. 2020), gerinant bendravimo gebėjimus ir keliant neįgaliųjų raštingumo lygį (Latteck ir Bruland 2020).

Kita su neįgaliųjų socialine įtrauktimi susijusi probleminė sritis – vis dar nepakankamas socialinės įtraukties **ištyrimas** neįgaliųjų srityje. Anot O'Brien (2022), ši problema gali būti sprendžiama išplečiant tyrimų parametrus visose negalios mokslinių tyrimų formose, kuriant įtrauktųjų mokslinių tyrimų, kaip finansuojamo modelio, palaikymo sistemas. Autorius taip pat pažymi, kad į tyrimų kūrimą derėtų įtraukti pačius neįgaliuosius (O'Brien ir kt. 2022). Teigiama, kad neįgalieji patys gali imtis iniciatyvos mokslinio ištyrimo srityje. Iš socialinės politikos perspektyvos, valstybės į neįgaliųjų dalyvavimą visuomenėje žvelgia teigiamai, atverdamos galimybes gauti mokslinių tyrimų dotacijas, steigiamųjų fondų lėšas (Goggin ir kt. 2019). Neįgaliųjų karjeros srityje taip pat stinga dėmesio organizacinės kultūros ir darbo vietos politikos tyrimams (Gould ir kt. 2020).

Aptarti socialinės įtraukties komponentai nurodyti ir Tvarios Europos dokumente: „visuomenės aktyvumas ir dalyvaujamoji politika, <...> socialinė gerovė (pvz., mokesčių, socialinės apsaugos ir socialinės įtraukties sistemos, darbo rinkos politika, <...> išsilavinimas, geri įgūdžiai ir mokymasis visą gyvenimą), transportas ir skaitmeninis prieinamumas.“(Europos Komisija 2019). Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis gali būti stiprinama keičiant įsisenėjusias kultūrinės nuostatas (Zorzi ir Strods 2020), daugiau dėmesio skiriant švietimo sistemos pokyčiams (Aylward ir Mitten 2022), gerinant ekonominius rodiklius (Jiya ir kt. 2022), sprendžiant neįgaliųjų individualias ir su darbo aplinka susijusias problemas (Bury ir kt. 2021) ir stiprinant socialinės įtraukties politiką (Berghs ir kt. 2019).

Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis ir karjera – publikacijų analizė



1 pav. Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis

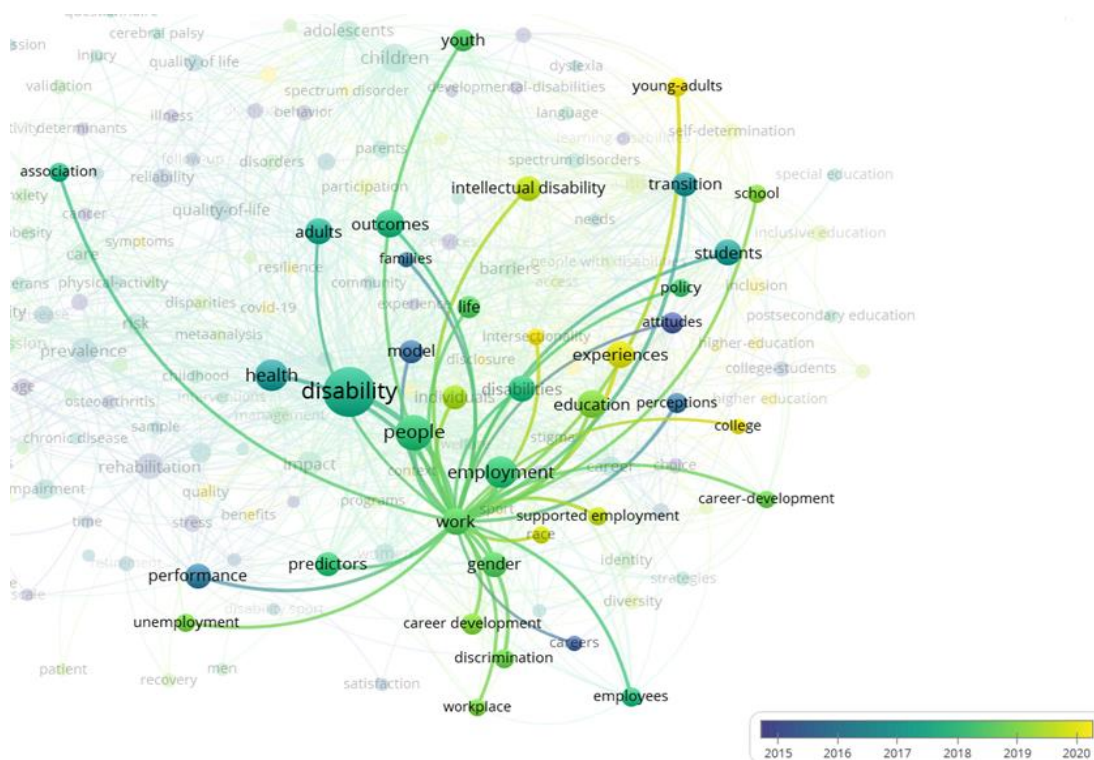
Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis („Disabled“+„social inclusion“, 4 pav.) pagal autorius (mažiausias autoriaus straipsnių skaičius 2). Analizuojant autorių publikacijų pasiskirstymą pagal metus, pastebima, jog naujausius tyrimus neįgaliųjų socialinės įtraukties tema atliko mokslininkas G. Andersson. Su daugiau nei 88 tūkstančiais mokslinių šaltinių siejamas Gerhard Andersson dar 2008 metais pradėjęs tirti psichikos sutrikimus ir kognityvinės – elgesio terapijos poveikį šiems sutrikimams, vėliau savo mokslinis tyrimus išplėtė į tėvų, mokytojų situacijos tyrimus negalios akivaizdoje. Labiausiai cituojami autoriaus straipsniai susiję su suaugusiųjų depresija. Socialinės įtraukties momentas šiuose straipsniuose susijęs su galimybėmis padėti depresija sergantiems asmenims (Andersson ir Cuijpers 2009; Cuijpers ir kt. 2008).

Ilgametė mokslinė patirtis G. Andersson sieja ir su naujesniais tyrėjais – su E. Heffernan bei Dm. Baguley, kurie itin daug dėmesio savo tyrimuose skiria pagalbos galimybėms įvairių sutrikimų turintiems asmenims ir sutrikimų įtakai gyvenimo kokybei. Eithne Heffernan, kaip ir didesnę mokslinę patirtį turintis G. Andersson, negalios ir socialinės įtraukties ryšius tyrė per elgsenos keitimo patirtis. Labiausiai cituojami autorės straipsniai tiria socialinio elgesio ir klausos sutrikimų ryšius (Heffernan ir kt. 2016; Coulson ir kt. 2016). Viename labiausiai cituojamų David Baguley straipsnių buvo patvirtintas teigiamas ryšys tarp kognityvinės elgesio terapijos ir gyvenimo kokybės (Cima ir kt. 2012). Galima teigti, jog šis autorių tinklas – vieningai tiria kognityvinės elgesio terapijos poveikį įvairių sutrikimų bei negalių turintiems asmenims. Naujausiais duomenimis, Eithne Heffernan bei David Baguley savo tyrimų lauką kasmet papildė vis gausesniais tyrimų mastais, tuo tarpu Gerhard Andersson tyrimų skaičius 2023 metais, lyginant su ankstesniais (2021-2022) metais, sumažėjo.

Kita naujausių autorių grupė – Lg. Kalb, Jm. Kramer, daugiau dėmesio skiria intelekto negalią turinčių asmenų situacijos tyrimams. Luther Gregory Kalb, itin aktyviai mokslinėje srityje pasižymintis nuo 2021 metų, atliko nemažai psichosocialinės krypties tyrimų autizmo bei psichinės sveikatos srityse. Viename naujausių savo tyrimų autorius nurodo socialinės įtraukties iššūkius hospitalizavimo kontekste. Teigiama, jog pasitelkiant sėkmingą intervencijos planą asmenims su intelekto sutrikimais (tai apima informavimą, konsultavimą, priėmimą/ įvertinimą, 24 val. reagavimą į krizes), padidės pagalbos prieinamumo galimybės (Kalb ir kt. 2023). Jessica M. Kramer, daugiau nei pusę savo straipsnių parašiusi jau po 2019 metų, negalios ir socialinės įtraukties ryšius tiria per vaikų ir jaunimo dalyvavimą.

Tuo tarpu ankstesni mokslininkai – M. Granlund, O. Almodayfer, E. de Schipper – prisidėjo prie negalios tyrimų, savo darbuose tirdami ne tik platų negalios fenomeną, bet ir atskiras negalios rūšis ir praktinius gyvenimo su negalia aspektus. Labiausiai cituojamas Mats Granlund straipsnis išskiria prasmingo dalyvavimo svarbą negalios kontekste. Tyrimo išvados leidžia daryti prielaidą, jog neįgaliųjų dalyvavimas nėra vien aplinkos pritaikymo pasekmė. Pats dalyvavimas turi tapti atskaitos tašku teigiamų socialinių pokyčių link (Imms ir kt. 2017). O. Almodayfer, E. de Schipper – mokslininkai, kurių indėlis į tiriamą mokslinę bazę mažesnis, tačiau atliepia negalios tipo, vertinimo ir socialinių intervencijų tyrimo poreikius.

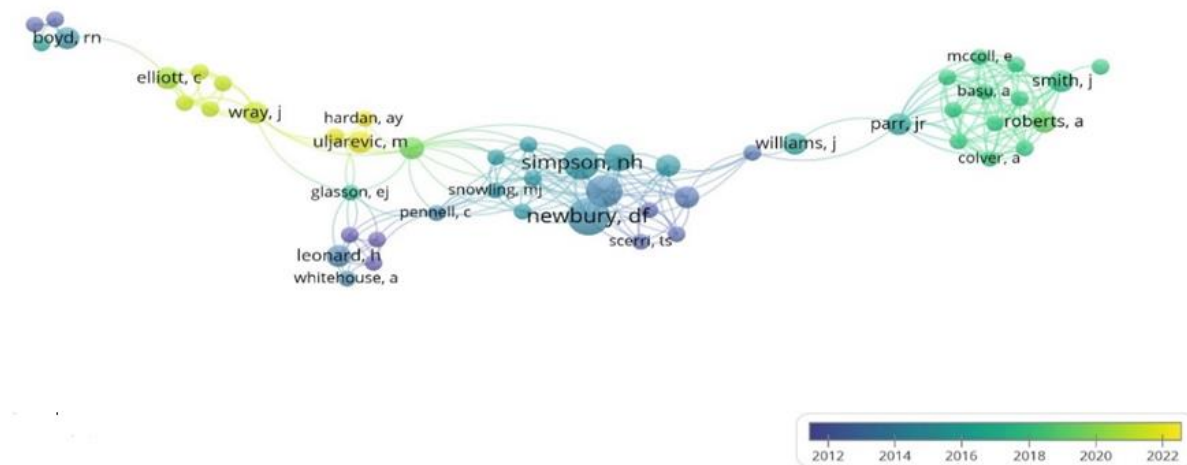
Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis ir karjera („Disability“+„career“) pagal raktinius žodžius (mažiausiai sutampančių raktažodžių – 7):



7 pav. Darbas

Raktažodis darbas jau kurį laiką siejamas su negalia, sveikata, pasirodymu, požiūriu, modeliu, tikslais (7 pav.). Šioje diagramoje pastebimos socialinės aplinkos svarba: minima šeimos, asociacijos, mokyklos ir darbo sąveika; sociologijos ir darbo ryšys: diskriminacija, amžius, lytis, rasė; vadybiniai darbo aspektai: įdarbinimas, karjeros plėtojimas, pagalba įsidarbinant. Iš negalios perspektyvos su darbu moksliniais duomenimis siejama tik intelekto negalia.

Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis ir karjera (8 pav.) pagal autorius ir leidinių leidimo metus (mažiausias autoriaus leidinių skaičius – 2 straipsniai):



8 pav. Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis ir karjera pagal autorius

2012 – 2016 metais aktyviausiai neįgaliųjų karjeros srityje tyrinėję autoriai: Andrew J.O. Whitehouse, Helen Leonard – abu mokslininkai, išleidę po daugiau nei 20 tūkstančių publikacijų, didžiausio citavimo indekso sulaukė sveikatos mokslų srityje (Leonard ir Wen 2002; ADHD Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium (PGC) ir kt. 2019), taip pat atlikę reikšmingų tyrimų socialinėje srityje, tiriant negalios įtaką šeimos bendruomenei (Mulroy ir kt. 2008), užimtumo ir agresijos ryšį (Moore ir kt. 2015). Beje, pastarasis tyrimas susijęs ir su neįgaliųjų karjera, mat tyrimo metu paaiškėjo, jog agresija, nepriklausomai nuo to, ar asmuo tapo auka, ar buvo smurtautojas, padidina riziką nebaigti mokyklos, neįgauti išsilavinimo ir taip griaua kelius į sėkmingą karjerą. Tuo pačiu laikotarpiu Df. Newbury, tyrinėjusi kalbos, mokymosi, motorikos sutrikimus, Nh. Simpson, H. Leonard ir kt., daugiau dėmesio skyrė sutrikimų ir sveikatos sąsajoms. Visgi šių autorių publikacijų skaičiai varijuoja ne tūkstančiais, o dešimtimis, o reikšmingų tyrimų karjeros srityje nestebima.

Diagramoje pažymėtų autorių grupė: Jeremy R. Parr, Marc Woodbury - Smith laikotarpiu nuo 2016 iki 2020 metų, savo darbais tyrė prieinamumo galimybes neįgaliesiems naudotis sveikatos priežiūros paslaugomis, įgauti daugiau savarankiškumo. Tuo tarpu čia ryški ir vadybinė prieinamumo pusė – straipsniuose pažymimas laiko planavimo, bendravimo struktūros numatymas, teisingas žmogiškųjų išteklių ir pagalbos paskirstymas (Mason ir kt. 2021; 2019). Allan Colver, nuo 2018 iki pat 2023 kasmet išleidžiantis po daugiau nei 8 šimtus publikacijų, dėmesį skiria negalios ir gyvenimo kokybės sąsajoms, dalyvavimo svarbai (Sellier ir kt. 2016).

Naujausi šios srities tyrėjai, M. Uljarevic, Ay. Hardan nemažai dėmesio skiria naujų vertinimo įrankių kūrimui (kasdienio gyvenimo įgūdžių skalė (Uljarević, Spackman, ir kt. 2023), autizmo simptomatologijos matavimo priemonės (Frazier, Whitehouse, ir kt. 2023; Frazier, Dimitropoulos, ir kt. 2023), vykdomųjų funkcijų skalė (Uljarević, Cai, ir kt. 2023) ir kt.). Šių mokslininkų, kurių mokslinės veiklos rezultatai kasmet auga, lauke atsiranda ir tiesiogiai su neįgaliųjų karjera susijusių tyrimų. Autizmą turinčių asmenų įdarbinimo problemas tiriantys mokslininkai atskleidžia ne tik praktinius iššūkius, su kuriais susiduria darbo ieškantys asmenys, bet ir nepakankamą šios srities mokslinį ištyrimą. Tyrėjų išvadose teigiama, kad būtų tikslinga ištirti užimtumo rezultatus asmeniui, šeimos sistemai, bendradarbiams ir darbdaviui, taip pat individualių skirtumų poveikį rezultatams (Hedley ir kt. 2017).

Išvados

Neįgaliųjų socialinė įtrauktis – siekiamybė, kurią gina teisės aktai. Visgi neįgalieji, mokslinių tyrimų metu išreiškia neigiamas patirtis socialinės įtraukties ir karjeros tema. Neįgaliųjų karjeros galimybes stabdančios kliūtys gali būti skirstomos į kategorijas: tai objektyvūs sunkumai (finansiniai, techniniai bei technologiniai sprendimai ir kt.), psichologinės kliūtys (savivertės problemos, reikiamos psichologinės pagalbos stygius ir pan.) bei socialiniai rodikliai (apimantys tiek artimosios socialinės aplinkos įtaką, tiek ir visuomenės kuriamą socialinės įtraukties politiką).

Empirinėje dalyje neįgaliųjų socialinės įtraukties tema buvo atrinkti 5728 mokslo straipsniai. Surinktų duomenų analizė vyko atliekant informacijos pjūvius pagal publikuotų tyrimų sritis, tematikas, labiausiai cituojamus autorius ir publikacijų skaičių lyginant leidimo metus. Paaiškėjo, kad su socialine įtrauktimi iki 2016 metų atliktuose tyrimuose labiau akcentuoti medicininiai negalios aspektai. Tarp 2016 ir 2018 metų išryškėja dalyvumo ir švietimo dimensija, o naujausi tyrimai, atlikti nuo 2018 metų, labiau akcentuoja pažinimo galimybes bei socialinės politikos momentus.

Iš 803 mokslo straipsnių neįgaliųjų karjeros srityje, išryškėjo karjeros tyrimų skirtumai pagal tyrimų laikotarpius. Karjera ankstesniuose tyrimuose (2015 – 2017) buvo labiau siejama su žmogaus raida, 2017 – 2019 metų periode vadybos srityje. Naujausi duomenys, datuojami nuo 2019 metų labiau krypsta psichosocialinių bei švietimo mokslų pusėn. Visgi analizuojant neįgaliųjų karjerą pagal daugiausiai šioje srityje nagrinėjančius autorius, paaiškėjo, jog autorių publikacijų skaičiai varijuoja ne tūkstančiais, o dešimtimis, o reikšmingų tyrimų karjeros srityje nestebima.

Neįgaliųjų psichosocialinė padėtis kelia mokslininkų susidomėjimą, daugėja su neįgaliųjų švietimu ir socialine politika susijusių mokslinių tyrimų. Visgi neįgaliųjų karjeros tyrimų bei karjeros, kaip socialinės įtraukties galimybės tyrimų pritrūksta.

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DYNAMICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE SOCIAL AND LABOR INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: LITERATURE ANALYSIS

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Summary

Recent developments have highlighted the significant value of social inclusion for individuals with disabilities. It is becoming evident that disability does not necessarily result in social isolation; rather, it is an issue of accessibility within the environment, including in organisational settings. This paper examines the intersections between research on the social inclusion of people with disabilities and research on work and career inclusion. Using the VOSviewer software, articles published worldwide over the last thirty years are analysed and referenced in the Web of Science database.

Social inclusion of people with disabilities is a legal obligation. However, people with disabilities still have more negative than positive experiences in real life, both in terms of social inclusion and in terms of work inclusion and career opportunities. The barriers to career opportunities for people with disabilities consist of objective difficulties, psychological barriers and social challenges, the most significant of which is the effectiveness of social inclusion policies.

Our research on social inclusion, labour inclusion and careers of people with disabilities revealed that, until 2016, studies tended to focus more on the medical aspects of disability. Between 2016 and 2018, the participation and education dimensions became more prominent, and more recent studies from 2018 onwards are more likely to focus on the social policy aspects.

The analysis of publications revealed that career issues for people with disabilities from 2015 to 2017 were predominantly linked to human development, with management aspects only beginning to be addressed from 2017 to 2019. Following 2019, there has been a notable shift in researchers' focus towards coping with psychosocial challenges through environmental and educational accessibility measures. However, when analysing the number of researchers working on the careers of people with disabilities, the number of studies varies by tens rather than thousands, which does not provide any insight into the realities of work inclusion and careers of people with disabilities. Thus, the share of research on the inclusion of people with disabilities in work and careers in social inclusion research is extremely low, and this part of the human resource remains poorly understood and therefore poorly enabled.

Keywords: *people with disabilities; social inclusion; work inclusion; careers; environmental accessibility.*

RESPONSE TO HYBRID THREATS: POLICIES, CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES

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Abstract. *In a changing security environment in Europe, hybrid threats have become a major challenge that requires a comprehensive and adaptive response. Hybrid threats include conventional and unconventional approaches, such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, conspiracy theories, economic coercion, and external warfare, to undermine security, stability and democratic institutions in the region.*

Disinformation campaigns or conspiracy theories can be constructed for strategic purposes (for example: to inform or warn others) in order to manipulate, provoke and target specific people or groups for financial or political reasons. Especially in less democratic countries, the purpose of conspiracy theory is to create a feeling that there is a gap between those citizens who feel excluded from decision making or feel powerless of their choices, while decreasing their intention to be included into the political process of voting. However, on the other hand, conspiracy theory can be used as a tactic for politicians, too. A great example is a example of Hungary, where politicians were using the Great Replacement conspiracy theory against refugees and EU policies mobilizing Hungarians to achieve his political goals.

The changing nature of hybrid threats poses complex challenges to European security, as they blur the boundaries between military and non-military action, state and non-state actors, and the physical and virtual spheres.

This article analyses the possible response to hybrid threats, introducing the main actors, under discussions true the policies, concepts and strategic approaches, main focusing on the case of Europe. The article reviews different theories, discussing key concepts and possible cooperation frameworks and the analysis of the legal regulation.

Keywords: *security, hybrid threats, conspiracy theories.*

Introduction

The global security environment is becoming more contested, complex and interconnected. As armed conflicts and civil wars re-emerge even on the EU's neighbourhood, new and unconventional security threats have emerged or grown stronger, including cyber-attacks, hybrid threats, terrorism, disinformation, conspiracy theories, climate change or artificial intelligence. In an increasingly interconnected world, Europe's security starts abroad. (EEAS, 2023).

There is a strong link between what happens outside of the EU's borders and security within Europe. In a rapidly changing world, security challenges have become more complex, multidimensional. When it comes to security, the interests of all Member States are inseparably linked. The EU made security a priority in its Global Strategy and has been working over the past years to create the conditions for Member States to collaborate more closely with each other on security and defence. (EEAS, 2023).

In other words, hybrid threats, disinformation, conspiracy theories and attacks are coordinated actions that exploit the thresholds of detection and attribution designed to further

strategic goals by deliberately targeting vulnerabilities. They cover a broad spectrum of techniques used by malign actors to compromise security, undermine decision-making processes and destabilise democratic institutions. (Lisboa, 2023).

As highlighted by recent example, such as the weaponisation of migration at the Belarusian border, hybrid threats are often hard to pin down and deliberately target states' vulnerabilities. Thus, EU Policy creating common recommendations to improve the attribution of hybrid attacks and to develop a coordinated strategy for addressing critical vulnerabilities across the European Union. This key to making states more capable to withstand and recover from shocks.

The COVID-19 crisis has also reshaped our notion of safety and security threats and corresponding policies. It has highlighted the need to guarantee security both in the physical and digital environments. It has underlined the importance of open strategic autonomy for our supply chains in terms of critical products, services, infrastructures and technologies. It has reinforced the need to engage every sector and every individual in a common effort to ensure that the EU is more prepared and resilient in the first place and has better tools to respond when needed.

Citizens cannot be protected only through Member States acting on their own. Building on our strengths to work together has never been more essential.

The work must also go beyond the EU's boundaries. Protecting the Union and its citizens is no longer only about ensuring security within the EU borders, but also about addressing the external dimension of security. (European Commission 2020, p. 2-3).

Our daily lives depend on a wide variety of services – such as energy, transport, and finance, as well as health. These rely on both physical and digital infrastructure, adding to the vulnerability and the potential for disruption. During the COVID-19 pandemic, new technologies have kept many businesses and public services running, whether keeping us connected through remote working or maintaining the logistics of supply chains. But this has also opened the door to an extraordinary increase in malicious attacks, attempting to capitalise on the disruption of the pandemic and the shift to digital home working for criminal purposes. (European Commission 2020, p. 3-4).

The COVID-19 crisis has also underlined how social divisions and uncertainties create a security vulnerability. This increases the potential for more sophisticated and hybrid attacks by state and non-state actors, with vulnerabilities exploited through a mix of cyber-attacks, damage to critical infrastructure, conspiracy theories, disinformation campaigns, and radicalisation of the political narrative.

The aim of the present article will analyse the policy, concept and strategies of possible response to hybrid threats. The scientific literature and legal acts analytical methods were used to develop the topic and provide conclusions.

Hybrid threats concepts in EU policy

While definitions of hybrid threats vary and need to remain flexible to respond to their evolving nature, the concept aims to capture the mixture of coercive and subversive activity, conventional and unconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological), which can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare. There is usually an emphasis on exploiting the vulnerabilities of the target and on generating ambiguity to hinder decision-making processes. Massive disinformation campaigns, conspiracy theories, using

social media to control the political narrative or to radicalise, recruit and direct proxy actors can be vehicles for hybrid threats.

This a particular problem with the EU's use of hybrid threat terminology is the way it fails to distinguish between different forms of hybrid threats, thereby making it difficult for policymakers to delineate institutional responsibilities and formulate more targeted countermeasures. Hence, the EU now needs to address some of these conceptual challenges involved with the mapping of hybrid threats. One specific question concerns the need to systematise terminology. EU hybrid threat analysis needs to solve the problem of creating analytic differentiation in order to facilitate the identification of empirical variation between different hybrid threat types. (Wigell, Mikkola, Juntunen, 2021).

There is no legally bounding definition on hybrid threats in the EU, but good common understanding: „Hybrid threats refer to a wide range of methods or activities used by hostile state or non-state actors in a coordinated manner in order to target the vulnerabilities of democratic states and institutions, while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare. Some examples include cyber-attacks, election interference and disinformation campaigns, including on social media.” (Council Press Release 2019).

Insofar as countering hybrid threats relates to national security and defence and the maintenance of law and order, the primary responsibility lies with Member States, as most national vulnerabilities are country-specific. However, many EU Member States face common threats, which can also target cross-border networks or infrastructures. Such threats can be addressed more effectively with a coordinated response at EU level by using EU policies and instruments, to build on European solidarity, mutual assistance and the full potential of the Lisbon Treaty.

Joint Communication (European Commission 2016) aims to facilitate a holistic approach that will enable the EU, in coordination with Member States, to specifically counter threats of a hybrid nature by creating synergies between all relevant instruments and fostering close cooperation between all relevant actors¹. The proposed response focuses on the following elements:

- ✓ improving awareness (“It is essential that the EU, in coordination with its Member States, has a sufficient level of situational awareness to identify any change in the security environment related to hybrid activity caused by State and/or non-state actors. To effectively counter hybrid threats, it is important to improve information exchange and promote relevant intelligence-sharing across sectors and between the European Union, its Member States and partners”),
- ✓ building resilience (Resilience is the capacity to withstand stress and recover, strengthened from challenges. To effectively counter hybrid threats, the potential vulnerabilities of key infrastructures, supply chains and society must be addressed. By drawing on the EU instruments and policies, infrastructure at the EU level can become more resilient.),
- ✓ preventing (Analyse relevant indicators to prevent and respond to hybrid threats and inform EU decision-makers.),
- ✓ responding to crisis and recovering (A rapid response to events triggered by hybrid threats is essential. When preparing their forces, Member States are encouraged to take potential hybrid threats into account. To be prepared to take decisions swiftly and

¹ Possible legislative proposals will be subject to Commission better regulation requirements, in line with Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines, SWD(2015) 111

effectively in case of a hybrid attack, Member States need to hold regular exercises, at working and political level, to test national and multinational decision-making ability).

Member States are predominantly responsible to respond to hybrid threats by enhancing their resilience, and detecting, preventing and responding to hybrid threats. The Commission plays an important role in providing coordinated responses at EU level in cases where many EU Member States face common threats, which can also target cross-border networks or infrastructures. The EU complements national efforts with policy initiatives, best practices, and facilitating coordination among Member States.

The main pillars of the EU response are: enhancing situational awareness, boosting resilience in all critical sectors, providing for an adequate response and recovery in case of crisis and cooperation with like-minded countries and organisations, incl. the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The European Commission coordinates and develops policy initiatives on several key issues within its competences e.g. protection of critical infrastructure, cybersecurity measures, tackling (online) disinformation, securing free and fair elections, etc.

Since 2016, the Commission together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy has set up a broad array of measures to counter hybrid threats in a substantial number of policy areas through the 2016 *Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats – a European Union response* and the 2018 *Joint Communication on Increasing Resilience and Bolstering Capabilities to Address Hybrid Threats*. In addition, the 2020 *EU Security Union Strategy* announced a new approach based on mainstreaming hybrid threats considerations into all policy initiatives.

The aim of hybrid threat activity is to constrain the freedom of manoeuvre of democracies in order to discredit its model compared to authoritarian regimes. Therefore, the aim and intent of the hostile actor is to:

- undermine and harm the integrity and functioning of democracies, by targeting vulnerabilities of different domains, creating new vulnerabilities through interference activity, exploiting any seams, creating maximum ambiguity and undermining trust of citizens in democratic institutions;
- change the decision-making processes, by blurring situational awareness, exploiting gaps in information flows, intimidating individuals and creating fear factors in target societies;
- create cascading effects by using a tailor-made combination from the 13 domains of the conceptual model to challenge and overload even the best-prepared systems. This can result in unpredicted consequences (European Commission and, 2023).

Insofar as countering hybrid threats relates to national security and defence, the primary responsibility lies with Member States, as most national vulnerabilities are country-specific. However, many Member States face common threats that can be more effectively addressed at the EU level. The EU can be used as a platform to boost national efforts and, through its regulatory capacity, establish common benchmarks that can help raise the level of protection and resilience across the EU. That's why the EU can play an important role in improving our collective situational awareness, in building Member States' resilience to hybrid threats, and in preventing, responding to and recovering from crisis.

One key aspect of the EU's response to hybrid threats is the establishment of the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell, a platform for information sharing and coordination among member states

to identify and respond to hybrid threats effectively. This framework enables swift and coordinated action in the face of multifaceted challenges. (European Commission, 2019).

The EU has also prioritized strategic communication and public diplomacy as essential tools in countering disinformation and propaganda campaigns that often accompany hybrid threats. By enhancing its communication strategies and promoting transparency, the EU aims to build societal resilience against manipulation and misinformation. (European Commission, 2019).

In response to major geopolitical shifts at work and an increasingly degraded security environment, the EU adopted an ambitious action plan to strengthen its security and defence policy by 2030. The Strategic Compass is the result of work started in 2020 among the institutions and Member States, and is based on a common analysis of the threats and vulnerabilities that Europeans are faced with collectively. This unprecedented exercise in the history of the EU contributed to the emergence of a common strategic culture and the strengthening of cohesion among Europeans in the field of defence and security, as war returns to the European continent. Based on this common interpretation of security environment, the Compass establishes the major strategic guidelines and new European initiatives to be implemented in order to enable Europeans to defend their interests and their freedom of action wherever necessary: in seas and oceans, airspace, outer space, cyber space, and the information space. (EEAS, 2024).

The Compass covers all aspects of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CDSP), and is based on four pillars:

- ✓ *Act* (Strengthening the EU's capacity for action in an increasingly brutal and unpredictable world.)
- ✓ *Secure* (Strengthening the ability to protect common strategic spaces and defend the values, rules and principles that the EU upholds.)
- ✓ *Invest* (Involves enhancing technological sovereignty by improving defence capabilities.)
- ✓ *Partner* (Strengthen the EU's position as an international partner.) (EEAS, 2024).

Main elements of the Joint Framework

The Joint Framework offers a comprehensive approach to improve the common response to the challenges posed by hybrid threats to Member States, citizens and the collective security of Europe. It brings together all relevant actors, policies and instruments to both counter and mitigate the impact of hybrid threats in a more coordinated manner. In particular, it builds on the European Agenda on Security adopted by the Commission in April 2015, as well as on sectorial strategies such as EU Cyber Security Strategy, the Energy Security Strategy and the European Union Maritime Security Strategy. Together with the upcoming European Union Global Strategy for foreign and security policy and the Defence Action Plan, and ongoing work on capacity building in support of security and development (CBSD) in third countries, the Joint Framework is part of the strategy of the Commission and the High Representative to increase the EU's capacity as a security provider.

The EU counter-hybrid threats policy is based on four lines of action: situational awareness; resilience, response and cooperation (Figure 1).



Figure 1. EU counter-hybrid threats policy – actions

Source: *Countering Hybrid Threats* (2022), (https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03-28-countering-Hybrid-Threats_NewLayout.pdf)

Conclusions

Hybrid threats is a complex phenomenon and therefore the action to combat is difficult. Without a holistic approach that must cover all essential aspects of hybrid threats, it is difficult for actionable structures and dedicated capabilities to ensure a tailored response.

Therefore, in order to counter hybrid threats in a changing security environment in Europe, it is essential that policymakers, security experts and stakeholders strengthen cooperation, information sharing and coordination at national, regional and international level. The European Union plays a key role in developing policies, concepts and capabilities to counter hybrid threats, with a focus on resilience, deterrence and response mechanisms.

In addition, building the resilience of critical infrastructures, strengthening cybersecurity tools, strengthening strategic communication and public diplomacy, and investing in defence capabilities are key components of the EU's approach to countering hybrid threats. By adapting to a dynamic security environment and leveraging innovative technologies and strategies, Europe can effectively mitigate the impact of hybrid threats and ensure its security and stability in the face of changing challenges.

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THE IMPACT OF HIGH IMMIGRATION IN LITHUANIA: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND UNDERSTANDING CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract. *The maxim "too much of a good thing can turn sour" holds significant relevance across diverse aspects of life, indicating that exceeding optimal thresholds may result in negative outcomes if not carefully regulated. This principle can be observed in the context of immigration rates in Lithuania, an Eastern European country experiencing significant influxes of foreign nationals. Immigration, defined as the movement of individuals into a country for specific purposes, can lead to adverse consequences when unregulated, such as overcrowding, strained social amenities, increased costs due to heightened demand, and potential rises in crime rates.*

Lithuania has welcomed foreigners for work, business, research, studies, and other purposes. Additionally, the unstable situation in Ukraine has prompted the Lithuanian government to extend support to Ukrainian citizens, offering incentives such as subsidized education and various forms of assistance. However, the generous immigration policies have faced challenges. The Migration Department, under the Ministry of Interior, recently announced impending stricter immigration laws due to identified irregularities, including instances of fraudulent marriages with Lithuanian citizens. Moreover, the increased cost of amenities, food prices, and housing has raised concerns about the sustainability of current immigration levels.

This research focuses on examining the immigration and emigration rates in Lithuania and their economic impact over a decade (2013-2022). The study will involve sourcing data from official websites, conducting statistical analyses, and drawing insights from the analyzed data. The goal is to postulate findings, offer recommendations, and draw conclusions on the relationship between immigration rates and economic outcomes in Lithuania..

Keywords: *immigration, emigration, migration, cost of living.*

Introduction

Tataru (2020) defined migration as the crossing of an administrative unit's border for a certain minimum period of time. This category includes: refugee migration, economic migration, as well as the migration of people who move for other purposes or under the influence of other factors, such as family reunification. This movement can be perceived from two angles; crossing into and out of a particular nation. The process of entering into a nation from another can be described as immigration while that of leaving a nation to another is described as emigration. The entire world today is heightened by an intense rate of migration, with people quitting their respective countries and running to others for various purposes. Some of these reasons include studies and research, safety from war and political persecution, search for greener pastures and better life, business purposes and so forth. These reasons could be grouped under various categories such as economic, social, environmental, political etc. According to Population Education (2024), there were 244 million migrants internationally in 2018, accounting for 3.3% of global population. Since the year 2000, the total number of international migrants has increased by 85 million (49%). Among the aforementioned reasons for migration, the three most purported of them all are social, economic and political. Numerous cases have been identified of people fleeing war-torn zones in the Middle East to seek refuge in some safer countries in Europe and Africa; African youths have also been spotted

undertaking journeys across dangerous tropical forests, crossing deep water bodies on their way to either Europe or America all in the quest for greener pastures to better the lives of themselves and families.

With the European Union being one of the destinations for migrants, Lithuania, an Eastern European nation automatically falls under one of the destinating zones of the migrating population. According to Lithuanian Bishops Conference (2024), the statehood of Lithuania has undergone series of challenges and battles to get to where it is today. Among these hurdles experienced by the Baltic nation is that perpetrated by the then Soviet Union. It was known as the longest most brutal, monstrous and disastrous act of deprivation of liberty and freedom meted on the Lithuanian people. Beside the Soviet occupation, Lithuania also faced invasive attacks from Russia in 1654 and Germany in 1915 and 1941 (Baltic Bike Travel, 2024). These adversities really placed the economy of the country in a bad shape, slowing down the pace of development and growth. However, due to the brave and strong willed nature of Lithuanians, they were able to revolt and resist these invasions, though with huge casualties. Their resistance paid off, leading to their imminent declaration of independence on February 1918, recognized by some of the largest empires of the world at the time. In spite of their independent achievement, they still had a lot of reparations to execute as a result of the massive destruction encountered in battle. As a result, the level of development and growth was retarded. This was also due to the fact that majority of attention was geared towards reviving the once booming country, thus requiring longer periods of recovery which could not be succumbed by many of its people. This eventually led to a massive exodus of Lithuanians into other countries in Europe, Asia and the United States. Majority of those who left were children accompanied by their parents, young and old adults, while leaving mostly the greying population back in the country. It is thus safe to say the youthful and active population massively exited the nation, leaving mostly the elderly, who are in general economically and biologically inactive. With a high percentage of such age group, there could be a shortage in terms of manpower in industries and other economic related sectors. This prompted the government to look into the situation to find quick solutions to unravel the negative consequences of shortage in labour force. One measure undertaken to unravel the situation was the acceptance of foreigners into the Lithuania, either for work, studies and other legit and lucrative purposes. The entry process of foreigners is facilitated by the migration department, who process and issue documents, granting legal entry into the territory. This has been ongoing for sometime until it is becoming a problem. Some issues in relation to immigration have been identified by the relevant authorities, pertaining to abuse of the process and use of false strategies to gain entry. As a result, the authorities have taken stringent measures to regulate the flow of people into the country and curb the demerits which may be associated with it.

This research paper is therefore focused on examining the rate of immigration into Lithuania for the past 10 years (2013-2022), examine the impact it has had on the economic, social and environmental landscape of the country. It will delve deeper by reviewing documents issued by competent authorities like the Migration department, Ministry of Foreign affairs, as well as articles related to migration in Lithuania. These information will be thoroughly analyzed to determine if the decision to accept foreigners has had a dampened or expansive effect, examine why the government is suddenly becoming strict on the admission of foreigners into the country and draw relevant conclusions from there.

The research object is the effects of high immigration in Lithuania

Research aim was centered on analyzing the socioeconomic impact of high immigration rates in Lithuania, identifying the primary challenges and consequences associated with

increased immigration. This study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how high immigration influences economic stability, social infrastructure, and public services.

From the aim, the following objectives could be derived:

1. Analyze the Socioeconomic Effects of High Immigration Rates in Lithuania

This objective aims to assess how increased immigration influences various socioeconomic factors in Lithuania, such as employment rates, housing markets, public services, and overall economic growth. The analysis will utilize quantitative data to identify trends and correlations.

2. Identify and Evaluate the Challenges Posed by High Immigration Levels

This objective focuses on identifying the specific challenges that high immigration rates present to Lithuanian society. These challenges may include strain on social amenities, infrastructure, public health systems, and potential increases in crime rates. The evaluation will involve both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of these issues.

3. Develop Policy Recommendations for Managing Immigration and Mitigating Negative Consequences

Based on the findings from the first two objectives, this objective aims to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations. These recommendations will be designed to help Lithuanian authorities manage immigration more effectively, mitigate adverse effects, and maximize the benefits of immigration for the country's socio-economic development.

Literature review

The decision to leave a particular area and move to another can be influenced by a range of factors. Some of these factors can be attractive, thus warranting immigration into the area where the immigrants will benefit from the attractiveness. Others can be repulsive such as war and political unrest, necessitating people to leave the such areas, thus emigration. The case of Lithuania is widely known, based on the series of invasions back then, which pushed a lot of the citizens to relocate to other areas. According to Audra and Vlada Stankūnienė (2013), Lithuanian population has always been characterised by high emigration rates, especially during the Soviet and pre-Soviet era. According to data from the Statistics Lithuania (based on the 2011 census), over the past 22 years (1990-2011) 728 700 people emigrated from Lithuania, the equivalent of approximately 20% of the Lithuanian population of 1990s. In addition, population losses due to migration are accelerating: from 7.5% of the resident population (at the beginning of period) in 1990-2000 to 12.9% in 2001-2011. Immigration remains low, and has only a symbolic compensatory effect. For the past decade Lithuania has had the highest negative net migration in the European Union. By net migration, it means the difference between immigration and emigration. When such a value is positive, it means that more people entered the country than those who left but if it is negative, it means more people left the country than those who entered. This situation, sometimes referred to by politicians as “evacuation”, has unfortunately not been effectively contrasted. The last decade of the 20th century (1989/90-1993) witnessed an essential turn in migration trends: due to the opening of borders and other political developments, emigration replaced immigration. The emigration of that period can be divided into two main categories: return migration/repatriation (Russians, Belarussians, the Ukrainians) and the realisation of emigration potential accumulated during the Soviet period, involving, for example, Jews leaving Lithuania and the first tentative signs of Lithuanian emigration to the be long-term/permanent, legal, and declared.

It also worth recalling that this massive exodus of people from the Lithuanian territory were mostly the active population, made up of young and old adults who constituted majority of the labour force in the country. Such moves could be attributed to economic challenges encountered during that time. Lithuanian Economic Review (2012) conceded to the idea by stating that a vast majority of emigrants were persons of working age and leaving the country to work. Thus, the main reasons behind emigration from Lithuania are economic – to depart to more attractive states in terms of employment and wages. With the start of the recent economic downturn, unfavourable economic development prospects, poor wage rise possibilities and an increasing rate of unemployment in Lithuania might have influenced the decision to emigrate. Besides economic reasons to emigrate, institutional factors, cultural compatibility and a favourable geographical situation are also important. Among the most important institutional factors allowing the citizens of the Republic of

Lithuania to emigrate from the country is the right of free movement of labour force in the EU states. After Lithuania joined the EU in 2004, three EU old member states – the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden – did not apply temporary labour market protection measures restricting this right. Other EU old member states were concerned that the flow of relatively cheap labour force from the Central and Eastern Europe would worsen possibilities of local inhabitants to be employed. Thus, in order to protect their labour markets, these countries set temporary restrictions for new EU countries that joined the EU in 2004. Finland, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Greece, Netherlands and Luxembourg abandoned these restrictions in 2006–2007, France, Belgium and Denmark – in 2008–2009, while Austria and Germany applied the

longest transitional period until May 2011. These economic and institutional factors determined the fact that the largest number of Lithuania's citizens live and work in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Declared emigration data announced by Statistics Lithuania at the end of 2011 suggest that from 2004 92.1 thousand Lithuania's citizens departed to the United Kingdom and 29.4 thousand – to Ireland. Among the other EU member states where the number of immigrants from Lithuania is the largest, are Germany and Spain – the countries which opened their labour markets later. In the period 2004–2011, 15.8 thousand and 10.9 thousand respectively of Lithuania's citizens emigrated to these states. As concerns other Western Europe countries, the largest flow of emigrating Lithuania's citizens was to Norway – in the period 2004–2011, 10.5 thousand persons from Lithuania departed to this country. Persons who departed to these five countries in 2004–2011 made up more than two-thirds from the total number of persons who declared emigration. In the period 2004–2011, the total of 233.2 thousand Lithuania's citizens emigrated to foreign states, the majority of them emigrated in 2009–2011. A part of persons who declared emigration in 2010–2011 had emigrated from Lithuania in earlier years but declared their departure after announcing the information that persons who did not declare their departure would be required to pay mandatory health insurance contributions on their own. Kasnauskiene and Vebraite (2014) were more concerned about the demographic consequences of high emigration. On the volume 2 of their publication, they emphasized on the rapid ageing population and how it constitutes a shortage in shortage of labour force in the future, which will have a negative impact on the country's economy. They further narrated their arguments on the basis of biological reproduction, stating that low fertility level, huge flows of emigration and population ageing are the kedemographic forces having negative impact on country's economic development in the long run. This is especially relevant for Lithuania, the country with one of the most rapidly ageing populations in European Union. Analysis of Lithuania's demographic data shows a progressive process of population ageing and the necessity of overcoming its consequences. Since the restoration of independence total fertility rate has dropped from 2.03 in 1990 to below-replacement fertility level of 1.23 in 2002.

There has been a recovery of fertility over the past decade and total fertility rate reached 1.6 in 2012 (Statistics Lithuania, 2014). Also, with increasing quality of life the average life expectancy has raised from 71.46 to 73.98 years, respectively. During the 23 year period of time the median age of population - with half the population older and half younger - has increased by ten years, that is from 32 to 42 (OECD Survey, 2016). The share of people over 65 years old in Lithuania is currently 18%, it is expected to be 31.2% by 2060 (European Commission, 2012). It is also widely recognized, that because of continuing ageing process and current extent of emigration, a shortage of skilled workers can be expected in the future, slowing down the development of country's economy and further social development of the society.

Thus existing literatures have proven the series of massive exodus of Lithuanians to other countries, caused by various factors such as economic, political and social, leaving the economy of the country drained with mostly the elderly population. This situation led to the government opening its borders for foreigners to infiltrate the economy and revive the dormancy created by the those who left. Immigrants have since been coming for various purposes such as to further their education, work, research etc. However, the government, through the migration department has recently imposed strict measures on aliens planning to and already in Lithuania, constricting certain measures associated with granting of permits to live in the country. This will thus require an examination of data from various Lithuanian government portals to ascertain the impact the inflow immigrants has had between 2014 to 2024, and to examine the reason behind the strictness towards them. This will be examine in the methodological section of this research work, as will be seen.

Research methodology

The coming of people into a country could be accompanied with either positive or negative consequences or a combination of both. The ability to regulate such consequences for a greater good lies in the capacity of regulatory authorities to determine who is fit and qualified to stay in their country or not. This part of the research will highlight data and their sources, relating to the frequency of immigrants within the dedicated time range.

Data Collection Method: The main source of data on the immigration situation will be from official government portals responsible for such data. In Lithuania, data was extracted from Migracija, Oficialiosios Statistikos Portalas and from relevant authors. According to European Migration Network (2016), the number of residents in Lithuania around 1990 dropped by 808 thousands people, constituting about 22% drop in the entire population. About 275 thousands of this figure was attributed to natural causes like death while the rest was due to emigration. It should also be noted that as time went on, this number rose consistently, thus creating a need for an urgent action to address the population imbalance.

When Lithuania eventually became part of the European Union, one of the first working steps was to open its borders for foreign nationals to come in. According to data from official statistics portal (2023), the following table displays more:

Table 1. Display of immigrants and returned migrants to Lithuania within 2013 and 2022 (Compiled by author according to data from Official Statistics Portal)

YEARS	NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS	NUMBER OF RETURNED MIGRANTS
2013	22011	19000
2014	24294	19500
2015	22130	18400
2016	20162	14200
2017	20368	10200
2018	28914	16600
2019	40067	20400
2020	43096	20800
2021	44858	23700
2022	87367	20700
TOTAL	353267	183500

As displayed on the table, it shows the rate of in flow of people into Lithuania gained momentum as the nation’s invite went out. The data reveals a positive trend between the growing years and number of immigrants, implying as the years went by, more people entered the country. Another important aspect to note here is that part of this immigration numbers were actually Lithuanians returning home. According to Renkuosi Lietuva (2024), this is termed returned migration and it constituted the largest share of immigrants returning to Lithuania. One look at the data, one can spot how it reflects a U-shaped form, indicating that the number of returning Lithuanians was high at the beginning, dropped at some point and rose again.

Ethical Considerations

The data extracted from the above government portals are publicly available for anyone to use for legit purposes like research, or understanding the migration situation of the economy of Lithuania. The data collected will solely be used for analytical purposes to best understand the impact immigration has on Lithuania.

Limitations

The data collected are slightly old and may not actually reflect the exact and current migration status of Lithuania. This is also due to the fact updated data on the migration for up to the current year of 2024 were not available at the time of writing this article. However, general view demonstrates increase in the immigration rate.

Analysis of results

The integration of the Republic of Lithuania into the European Union in 2004 paved the way for the nation to be exposed to various cultures through the opening of its portals for immigrants. As already displayed on table 1, the nation received a total of 353 thousand immigrants and 183 thousand returned migrants between 2013 and 2022. The table equally displays a direct relationship between the growing years and number of immigrants per year, indicating that as the years went by, more people entered the country. This relationship can also be well represented on the chart below:

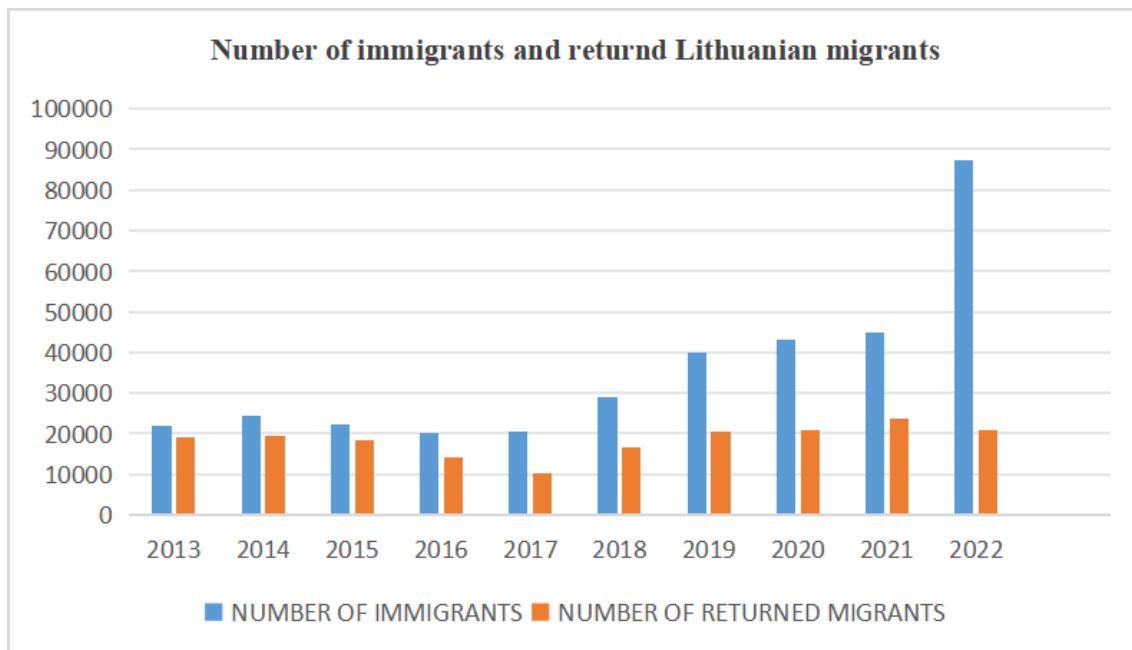


Fig. 1. Graphical representation of immigration and returned migration to Lithuania between 2013 and 2022

From the chart above, the horizontal axis depicts the years while the vertical axis shows the immigrant values. As time went on, more persons have been entering the nation of Lithuania for one reason or another. This positive trend may equally suggest the level of attractiveness of the nation that pulled a lot of people just within this limited period of time. The chart equally reveals that 2022 was the year with the most number of immigrants within this range, and information from grapevine reveals that this it has risen far above this figure since then. Also mentioned was the fact that a huge number of the immigrants were made of Lithuanians whom had fled the country sometime ago to settle in other countries. The number was highest in 2021 and lowest in 2017. Thus within this span of four years, the returning migrants was more than doubled, indicating positive signalling turnouts which must have pulled them from different part of the world to go back home. Here are three prime reasons of their return back to Lithuania: Cultural and Social Factors:

- **Family and Community Ties:** Strong family connections and a sense of community often draw Lithuanians back home. This is something which they missed all the while living abroad. Also, a desire to reconnect with their cultural heritage and national identity can be a strong motivator.

Negative Experiences Abroad:

- This could be associated with economic challenges such economic difficulties, job insecurity, and high living costs in host countries which prompted most to think of home as an optimal option. Discrimination and Integration Issues were also a part of the setbacks, including discrimination and social isolation, thus prompting the return.

Political Stability and EU Membership:

- **Political Environment:** The era of political instability and rivalry had long ended, offering a peaceful and serene atmosphere, coupled with Lithuania's membership in the European Union, offered a sense of security and numerous benefits. Also, the Freedom of Movement in the EU membership facilitated easier mobility for Lithuanians, allowing them to return home without facing significant bureaucratic hurdles.

Aside the returning Lithuanians, there was also the inflow of people from other EU and non EU countries. The chart below presents more

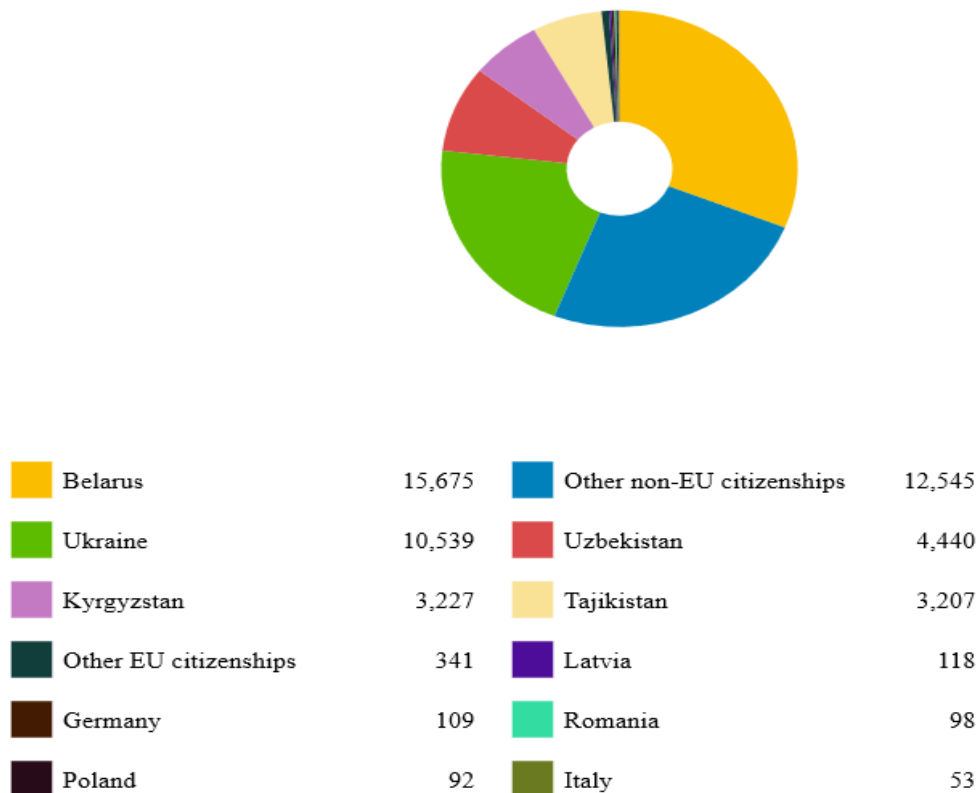


Fig. 2. Display of immigrants by nationality
 (Extracted from European Migration Network, 2024.)

The pie chart and accompanying data table provide a comprehensive overview of the distribution of immigrants to a particular region from various countries. Below is a summarized analysis and presentation of this information:

Belarus: Represents the largest segment of the immigrant population according to the figures.

Other Non-EU Citizenships: Collectively, they constitute a significant portion of the immigrant population, indicating a diverse influx from non-EU countries.

Ukraine: Due to the unrest occurring in their country, most of the citizens relocated into different parts of Europe and America. In Lithuania, they constitute a substantial contributor to the immigrant population, reflecting regional geopolitical influences.

Uzbekistan: Moderate contribution to the immigrant population.

Kyrgyzstan: Notable presence in the immigrant demographic.

Tajikistan: Similar to Kyrgyzstan in terms of immigrant numbers.

Other EU Citizenships: Smaller segment, indicating less movement from within the EU.

Latvia: Minor portion of the immigrant population.

Germany: Slightly less than Latvia, showing limited immigration from this major EU country.

Romania: Marginally smaller than Germany's contribution.

Poland: Comparable to Romania, indicating minimal migration.

Italy: The smallest segment of the immigrant population.

From this analysis, the largest segment is from Belarus, followed by other non-EU countries and Ukraine. Smaller segments include immigrants from various EU countries and other specific non-EU countries like Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The entry of people from different economies will obviously be met with mixed outcomes, leading to deciphering the consequences of the immigration:

Positive Effects of Immigration on Lithuania's Economy

Labor Market Contribution:

1. Filling Labor Shortages: Immigrants often fill critical labor gaps, especially in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and healthcare. This can be applicable in scenarios where there were shortage of active population to engage into these professions, thus necessitating the in flow of foreign nationals to occupy the positions. For example, companies like Majorel UAB, Dexcom UAB are huge employers of foreign nationals in Lithuania

2. Diverse Skill Sets: Immigrants bring diverse skills and expertise, enhancing productivity and innovation in various industries.

Economic Growth:

1. Increased Consumption: Immigrants contribute to higher demand for goods and services, stimulating economic growth. Consumers generally constitute the market for goods and services. The market situation becomes even more intensified when the purchasing power of the consumers, determined by their income levels and propensity to spend.

2. Entrepreneurship: Many immigrants start their own businesses, creating jobs and contributing to the economy. There have been establishment of shops owned by African nationals such as Afronan Shop in Kaunas, African food market in Vilnius, MB Garam Masala, an Indian shop in Kaunas etc.

Demographic Balance:

1. Counteracting Population Decline: Immigration helps mitigate the effects of Lithuania's declining birth rate and aging population.

2. Workforce Sustainability: A steady influx of working-age immigrants supports the sustainability of the workforce and social security systems.

Cultural Enrichment:

1. Innovation and Creativity: Cultural diversity can lead to greater innovation and creativity in business practices and product development.

2. Tourism Boost: A diverse population can make Lithuania more attractive to tourists, further boosting the economy.

Negative Effects of Immigration on Lithuania's Economy

Strain on Public Services:

1. Healthcare and Education: Increased demand for healthcare and educational services can strain public resources.

2. Social Services: A higher number of immigrants may require additional social services, increasing public expenditure. The case might be worst if majority of the immigrants do not fall within the working age group, implying that they may not be liable to contribute to the economy through taxes from jobs or other economic activities. This may render the budget of the government to a deficit.

Infrastructure Challenges:

1. Housing Shortages: High immigration rates can lead to housing shortages and increased rental prices. This could be possible if adequate regulation is not enforced on the rate of entry of foreign nationals into the Lithuanian territory.

2. Transportation: Increased population density can strain transportation systems and other infrastructure. Effects could be congestion, pollution and their accompanying diminishing effects on welfare of the society.

Labor Market Pressures:

1. Wage Suppression: In some sectors, an oversupply of labor can lead to wage suppression, potentially affecting local workers. Generally, when the supply of labour towards a specific profession is higher than its demand, the pressure on wage rate drops. Human Resource department of companies often take advantage of such situations to bargain the lowest pay due to an overflow of labour, leading to low quality of life.

2. Job Competition: Native workers may face increased competition for jobs, particularly in low-skilled sectors.

Social Integration:

1. Cultural Tensions: Rapid demographic changes can lead to cultural tensions and challenges in social integration. A good example could be an outright unwillingness and refusal for foreigners to integrate into the society by taking part of in cultural events like language learning, something which will be hasten the integration process.

2. Xenophobia: Negative perceptions and xenophobia can rise, potentially leading to social unrest and decreased social cohesion.

Economic Dependency:

1. Remittances: A significant portion of immigrant earnings may be sent back to their home countries as remittances, reducing the economic benefits retained within Lithuania.

2. Dependency on Low-Skilled Labor: Over-reliance on low-skilled immigrant labor can hinder investment in automation and upskilling of the native workforce.

Conclusion

The influx of foreign nationals into Lithuania has resulted in a range of social and economic outcomes. One significant economic challenge previously faced by the nation was a labor shortage caused by the mass emigration of Lithuanians. The arrival of foreign workers has partially mitigated this issue by filling gaps in the labor force, as these individuals have been hired and trained to assume various roles, thereby maintaining economic activity levels. However, this in flow has also generated mixed feelings among the native population, who may perceive that foreigners are being favored over them. This perception could potentially lead to social tensions and xenophobia if not properly managed. It is crucial to address these concerns through inclusive policies and community engagement to foster a harmonious and productive economy.

While immigration has introduced numerous benefits, it has also presented certain challenges. One significant issue is the support provided to economically inactive migrants, whom the Lithuanian government assists with monthly stipends for food, clothing, and other needs. If these support measures are not carefully reviewed and addressed, they could lead to an increase in government expenditure without a corresponding rise in revenue, given the economic inactivity of this demographic. Additionally, there is a potential for increased anti-immigration sentiments among local citizens who may feel neglected, perceiving that substantial resources and attention are being directed toward immigrants at the expense of their own development needs.

The Migration Department in Lithuania has demonstrated a proactive approach in ensuring strict adherence to legal entry and residency regulations in the Republic of Lithuania. This involves clearly outlining the necessary procedures for foreigners, specifying required

documents, and providing information on the processing times for applications. Furthermore, the department regularly updates its website with changes to immigration laws, including their effective dates and the affected parties. These updates help keep both current and prospective immigrants well-informed about their obligations and the legal framework. The analysis conducted in this research has led to the development of several recommendations aimed at mitigating the negative externalities associated with immigration. These recommendations are detailed in the concluding section of this study.

Recommendations

Implement Balanced Immigration Policies:

One way to ensure equilibrium is attained in the economy is to develop and enforce balanced immigration policies that regulate the flow of immigrants while addressing labor market needs and demographic challenges. This includes setting quotas based on economic requirements and ensuring legal pathways for immigrants. Balanced immigration policies can help manage the number of immigrants entering the country, aligning it with Lithuania's economic and social capacities. Such policies can prevent labor market oversaturation and ensure that immigration contributes positively to economic growth and demographic sustainability. By tailoring immigration levels to the country's needs, Lithuania can maximize the benefits of immigration while minimizing potential negative impacts.

Enhance Integration Programs

Another measure may involve developing comprehensive integration programs that provide language courses, cultural orientation, and job placement services to help immigrants assimilate more smoothly into Lithuanian society. Such programs can mitigate social tensions and improve the economic contributions of immigrants by ensuring they are well-prepared to participate fully in the workforce and community life. Considering that a huge chunk of the immigrants enter the country as students, it will be imperative to implement Lithuanian language course a University requirement, thus enabling all students to actively participate and learn how to speak, read and understand Lithuanian language. It will also facilitate the process of getting jobs or internships, most of which will emphasize on Lithuanian language as a prerequisite for employment. This can lead to increased productivity and social cohesion, benefiting both immigrants and native Lithuanians.

Invest in Infrastructure and Public Services:

The authorities could also allocate funds to expand and upgrade infrastructure and public services, including healthcare, education, housing, and transportation, to accommodate the growing population due to high immigration rates. Enhanced infrastructure and services can prevent the strain caused by an increasing population, ensuring that all residents, including immigrants, have access to necessary resources. This proactive approach can improve overall living standards and prevent potential issues such as overcrowding and resource shortages. Likewise, incomes will also be raised through rental fees paid by the occupants, thus helping to restore the huge deficit incurred in establishing the houses and other facilities

Summary

This research investigates the multifaceted impact of high immigration rates in Lithuania, focusing on both the challenges and the opportunities that arise. The study highlights significant positive contributions, such as addressing labor shortages, enhancing cultural diversity, and stimulating economic growth through increased consumer demand and workforce diversity.

However, it also identifies critical challenges, including strain on public services, housing shortages, and social integration issues. To address these challenges, the research recommends implementing comprehensive integration programs, investing in infrastructure and public services, and developing balanced immigration policies. These measures aim to optimize the benefits of immigration while mitigating its adverse effects. By understanding and addressing these dynamics, Lithuania can leverage immigration to support sustainable economic development and social cohesion.

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TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBER PUBLIC SECURITY: SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH

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Abstract. *Liberal public security is the internal security of the country formed in the interaction of the state and society, based on the requirements of the rule of law and the protection of human rights. The necessary conditions for the establishment of liberal public security are the political regime of liberal democracy and the corresponding dispositive legal regulation. However, these prerequisites are not sufficient, as societal groups must engage in the creation of liberal public security. This creative interaction between state institutions and society groups takes place when the liberalization of classic institutions of social behavior and the self-creation of civil society organizations take place in parallel. In this process, members of society are "liberated from the shackles of morality and religion". This enabled the liberal democratic state to transform law into a modern tool of political power. The separation of law from morality and customs ultimately leads to its actual disappearance in the consciousness of many citizens.*

21st century at the beginning, globalization processes intervened in the process of liberalizing democracy and creating a civil society. The growth of the economic, political and socio-cultural bonding of states and the expansion of cross-border migration of natural and legal persons led to multi-faceted processes of globalization. In their context, the changes in the structure of liberal democratic society and the recovery of dictatorial regimes after the end of the Cold War took place. The establishment of moral relativism led to new social consequences: the individualistic expression of the freedom of physical and legal persons spread, instrumental thinking was formed, the field of politics narrowed to situational politics. Globalization processes lead to growing opportunities for dictatorships to destabilize liberal legal systems. This, in turn, encourages a trend of increasing state control and shrinking liberal public security.

Keywords: *security, liberal public security, liberal democracy, globalization, civil and open society.*

Introduction

The results of the elections of various levels of political power in different Western societies in 2024 demonstrated the turning of a significant part of their people groups to the necessary changes in their national politics. This reflects the sensitivity of societies to the increasing unpredictability of their life chances. This unpredictability is caused by increasingly prevalent changes in the planet's climate and the militant multipolar policy of the major geopolitical entities. The latter constantly creates an unstable geopolitical context in which most small and medium-sized liberal democratic states are forced to react quickly to emerging opportunities and threats. This is how a situational national policy is formed, which cannot stabilize the optimistic creation of a social perspective. The consciousness of liberal democratic societies is not yet ready for this unpredictability of national politics.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that the same question of public security was raised in all liberal democratic societies: which national political force can guarantee the real possibilities of satisfying basic human needs and the predictability of their presence. This general issue is also conditioned by the increasing sensitivity of societies to the growing wealth inequality between the centers and the periphery. This can be seen in the periphery of any liberal democracy, as the development of business and public services is increasingly concentrated in large centers. The established growth vector of the wealth inequality between the centers and

the periphery forces young people to migrate to the centers, and this process causes new challenges not only in the peripheries, but also in the centers. High wealth inequality and migration within the country inevitably actualizes public security to the fore. According to Jason Stanley, "The End of US Democracy Was All Too Predictable" (The End of US Democracy Was All Too Predictable by Jason Stanley - Project Syndicate). Although the author's statement about the "end of US democracy" is too harsh, the insights reveal why the victory of the former president could have been predicted. It was not by chance that US President-elect D. Trump repeatedly emphasized during the election process that he would restore social order.

The formation of situational politics in liberal democratic societies is conditioned not only by the aggressive competition of geopolitical entities, which has turned into a coalition struggle of dictatorship states against democracies (Applebaum, 2024)), but also by the socio-cultural vulnerability of the security of liberal democracy (Šlapkauskas, 2024). Both groups of factors are intertwined in the global crisis, and therefore, from a sociocultural point of view, it can be assumed that the nature of liberal public security will inevitably change in the near future. The sociocultural approach to security is defined in these scientific publications (Šlapkauskas, 2021, p. 157-159; 2022, p. 26-28).

The object of research is the changes in liberal democratic societies and their public security. The purpose of the research is to reveal the trends of the further development of liberal public security based on a socio-cultural point of view. Research methods: the research is based on document analysis and modeling of society's social development.

Liberal public security and its social limits

Security is a state of protection, self-protection against dangers, and confidence in one's knowledge. This threefold interpretation of the meaning of security is due to the fact that security itself expresses a relationship in which there are no threats to the participants in the relationship. There can be variety of relations: the person themselves with themselves, with other people, with and between their groups, with the objects of nature, with work and its tools, and with God. The reasons for the occurrence of threats may also be due to: 1) subjective reasons - for example, the subjective interpretation of the behavior of the relationship participant(s) as posing a threat; 2) the emergence and functioning of objective threats - for example, those independent of the will of the participants in the relationship; or 3) mixed relationships - for example, those arising from subjective desire to control threats, thus generating new threats. Security therefore includes objective security, a sense of security (subjective security), and confidence in security (lack of doubt) (Šlapkauskas, 2022, p. 30).

Public security is such mutual relations between state institutions and public groups and their organizations that do not pose threats to the individual and law and order. Most of the threats to the individual, - writes B. Buzan, - arise from the fact that people live in a socio-cultural environment that generates inevitable social, economic and political pressure (Buzan, 1997. p. 71). Four types of social threats are usually distinguished: physical threats (pain, injury, death), economic threats (possession or destruction of property, deprivation of opportunities for employment or use of resources), threats to rights (imprisonment, denial of human rights) and threats to status (public humiliation). These types of threats usually occur not one at a time, but several at once.

The nature of public security of any society is formed in the conditions of the political-legal regime prevailing in the country. In the conditions of the dictatorship, imperative legal regulation prevails, based on the provision "everything forbidden, which is not allowed by law".

This means that the behavior of members of society and the expression of freedom are totally controlled by special state institutions. Most of the members of the society usually adapt to live in a political regime that restricts their freedom and strictly controls them. As a result, an outwardly deceptive appearance of calm public security is established, whose unpredictable changes can be suddenly triggered by any political incidents that have occurred.

Liberal public security is the internal security of the country formed in the interaction of the state and society, based on the requirements of the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In the conditions of liberal democracy, a prevails dispositive legal regulation: everything is allowed that is not prohibited by the protection of human rights and laws. Public order is created on the basis of the protection of human rights and freedoms, which must guarantee public security. This means that the freedom of natural and legal persons is limited by the requirement not to violate human rights and laws. Compliance with this requirement is monitored by institutional and social controls. The purpose of these controls is to prevent threats to human rights and freedoms. Under the conditions of a liberal democracy, a liberal public security is formed, the stability of which allows predicting possible reactions of social groups to political and economic changes in the development of the state.

Liberal public security develops in the country when the process of creation and functioning of liberal democracy provides: 1) all members of society the protection of human rights and opportunities to satisfy their basic interests; 2) when external and internal threats arising from other states are not directed at this process. Then, in the socio-cultural development of society, such relationships of people, the effects of their interactions and activities prevail, which guarantee the peaceful realization of the basic needs of a person and his social development. This kind of socio-cultural development is illustrated by the 20th century. The "quiet revolution" that took place in the Western world in the second half: 1) shifted from a strong focus on material values and physical security to a greater concern for the quality of life; 2) the political skills of societies expanded, allowing them to play a more important role in making important political decisions (Inglehart, 2016). In the process of the "Quiet Revolution", the concept of quality of life was linked to the pacifist cultivation of peace, which became an important part of the social way of life.

It is very important to emphasize that in the context of the development of liberal public security, a new political orientation of members of society towards the absolutization of freedom and the creation of an open society, based on economic competition under market conditions, is being formed. This political orientation of society corresponds to the basic postulates of modern liberalism and functioned particularly successfully after the end of the Cold War until the advent of the era of globalization. This ensured the pacifist nature of the further development of liberal public security, the establishment of which gradually limited the socio-cultural preparation of societies by military means to ensure the protection of national security.

Features of the formation of liberal public security before globalization

The formal basis for the formation of liberal public order and the security it generates is the preparation of a liberal democratic constitution and its legalization. The country's political community legitimizes the main law of the country through a referendum, which defines human rights and freedoms, the conditions for the formation of state management institutions, the rights and duties of officials, and their political and legal responsibilities. The Constitution is promulgated publicly, and this basic law of society is a legal act of direct implementation. Legal principles and norms declared by the Constitution must be observed and implemented by all

legal subjects of the country. The behavior of all members of society – natural and legal persons – is further modeled by legal principles and norms that correspond to the spirit of liberalism and are adopted democratically. All legal acts are publicly announced so that members of the public can familiarize themselves with them. They cannot go against the country's constitution.

Liberalization of democracy

A formal legal basis is not sufficient for the creation of liberal public order and the security it generates, because at the beginning of this process, all subjects of legal relations do not have the necessary competence and practical experience. Therefore, the development of the practice of implementation of the principles of the rule of law and the protection of human rights is a long-term process in which the democratic decisions of management and human relations are liberalized.

Liberalization of democracy is limited by the structure of the society that was formed earlier. It is the structure of society, the elements of which - social institutions, social groups, social organizations and forms of social action - are linked by mutual relations. Although specific societies are unique, they are characterized by social institutions of the same nature, which not only structure the society, but also connect other elements of the social structure with each other. From the point of view of human existence and forms of action, five institutions of social organization are usually distinguished - family, school, church, workplace, state. These social institutions are interconnected by the institutions of social behavior - morality, religion and law. Institutions of social behavior regulate the behavior and functioning of individuals, their groups and organizations. It is on the basis of morality, religion and law as social institutions that the social and personal connections and relationships of individuals are formed. These social institutions are linked by their normative nature.

The main function of the social structure is to constantly "control" the creation of reality in such a way as to ensure the regularity and predictability of the social behavior of individuals and their groups, the continuity of society's social security and social existence. It is implemented on the basis of the social nurturing of institutions of social behavior - morality, religion and law. Thus, morality, religion and law are tools for controlling the behavior of members of society. Therefore, the liberalization of democracy means, above all, the liberalization of the institutions of social behavior. This can be achieved when the status of morality and religion is "changed" through constitutional regulation. They are legalized in the constitution as an individual option. Further creation of social reality and its control takes place only on the basis of legal acts.

The "liberation from the screws of morality and religion" of the liberal democratic society results in the decline of the role of the classical social order and its control institutions. H. Berman (1999), F. Hayek (1998), P. Berger and Th. Luckmann (1999) research allows us to say that a model of legal order of a communal nature was formed and functioned in the development of society, which is expressed by classical security control mechanisms and social institutions (Šlapkauskas, 2022, p. 28-32). Before dictatorship or liberalization processes, the legal order of society was more based on mutual control of individuals and their groups, called social control. State control institutions usually perform only general supervision of internal security. Thus, the liberalization of the role of classical institutions of social behavior influenced changes in the model of legal order and other institutions of social organization, such as family, school, church.

In the process of the liberalization of public relations and the reduction of the role of social control of society, the state needs to model such a legal order that would meet the

ideology of liberalism and ensure reliable control of the internal order. In this process, the state transforms law into an instrument of its political power to construct a liberal legal order. Law is now seen as a mere tool of the state's political power, independent of other systems of social regulation, especially the support of morality and custom. It is no longer considered that the law is effective because of its harmony with the customs of the nation. The opposite is claimed: the effectiveness of law comes from the concentration of political power. A modern legal system is understood as a special set of government power mechanisms using a rationally developed legal doctrine, which is created, interpreted and applied by specialized state legal institutions. For legislators and ordinary citizens, law becomes a purely technical regulation that often lacks a clear moral element (Cotterrell, 1997, p. 66).

It can be said that the creation of technical law in the context of the establishment of moral relativism leads to changes in the legal and moral consciousness of society: 1) members of society do not know technical law. Therefore, they do not take over the content of the new institution of legal behavior. As a result, the social significance of law decreases; 2) in the process of establishment of moral relativism, the common moral duties of the members of society disappear, but moral sensitivity does not finally disappear. On the basis of the remnants of moral sensitivity, society, especially its young generations, assimilates human rights and freedoms. Therefore, it can be stated that the general morality of society is reduced to the moral content of the expression of human rights and freedoms. The erosion of shared moral obligations leads to the contraction of social responsibility. Therefore, the expression of the negative freedom of its members without the awareness of legal responsibility takes root in society (Šlapkauskas, 2009, p. 318-319).

Without the awareness of legal responsibility, the growing scope of negative freedom of individuals destroys the relationship between the values and norms of behavior of the former common culture and forms a new mass culture that interprets life as entertainment, as a show. This new mass culture establishes a pacifist concept of life and security in the public consciousness. Therefore, it is not by chance that the subjects of this culture react sensitively to the public examination of security threats and promote the ostrich thinking: if we don't threaten anyone, then nobody threatens us either. Even after the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggressive war in Ukraine, Western liberal democratic societies are not ready to reinterpret the meaning of their social life.

Challenges of self-development of an open civil society

Ignoring the role of morality in social relations "paves the way" not only for moral pluralism, but also for the competition of democratic models. Under the conditions of the development of moral pluralism, the model of pluralistic democracy gradually takes hold. This model is based on the idea that democracy is more effective when the nation participates in governance through the competing interests of individual groups in society. According to the pluralist democracy model, democracy is a system in which many organizations operate independently of government and in pursuit of own interests pressurize and even challenge it for to government (Janda, Berry, Goldman, 2004, pp. 16-24).

Thus, the pluralist theory of democracy focuses attention on organized groups and puts forward a new criterion for democratic governance: the government must be sensitive not to public opinion or general security, but to organized groups of citizens. This means that the construction of a liberal legal order becomes an object of interaction and possible manipulation by competing groups. Therefore, it inevitably moves away from its social purpose - to guarantee the dynamic balance of freedom and security for the majority of society members.

A liberal democratic state seeks to avoid the formation of radical pluralism. Therefore, the government promotes the formation of an open - civil society. Civil society is a form of development of an open society, expressing the organizational ability of a civil nation to peacefully control the activities of its state institutions so that they respect natural rights and at the same time guarantee the nation's internal and external security.

Currently, we know two concepts of civil society - Western and post-Hegelian (Seligman, 2004, p.24). The Western concept of civil society emphasizes the creation of open public organizations, which can be: a) a counterweight to the state's control over the protection of human rights, b) a peacemaker and arbiter between the state and other public interest groups, c) curbing the state's desire to dominate society and atomize it. Thus, the strength of open NGOs and their independence from state institutions' interference in their activities are emphasized.

The post-Hegelian concept of civil society emphasizes the contradictions of public and private, general and partial interests in society and their solution in the field of the political state. Thus, it is not the civil society, but the state that is put forward as the arbiter of conflicting social relations. Accordingly, the function of social control arising not from society but from the state is emphasized. The essence of this tradition is the inseparability of the nation state and the nation. This feature is typical of Central Eastern European societies. They are torn by an internal functional contradiction: to serve the state and to control the authorities. The essential features of the concept of civil society in Central Eastern Europe are the initiative of individuals, their active association into elite groups and, with their help, striving to enter government and self-government institutions. Therefore, we constantly monitor a large number of candidates participating in the elections to the parliament and municipal councils.

An open civil society with a Western orientation is formed when its active members of society voluntarily gather and create a non-profit organization capable of independently controlling the protection of human rights and freedoms, providing various non-commercial services to other members of society, and promoting the organizational development of social relations among members of society through various means. The increasing organization of society is the source of the growth of its social capital and power. NGOs rely on it to control the activities of state institutions and politicians, limiting the possibilities of social anarchy and anomie.

21st century at the beginning, there was a strong difference between the civil societies of Western and Central Eastern Europe. For example, in Western Europe, about 6.9 percent were employed in the non-profit sector. workforce, and counting volunteers - 10.1 percent. And in Central Europe, 1.3 percent received wages in the non-profit sector. of the total population, another 1.1 percent. works voluntarily, without remuneration. In the countries of Central Europe, the non-profit sector concentrates most of the workforce in the fields of culture, recreation and social care. In Lithuania, the public sector generates slightly more than 0.5 percent. of all jobs created in Lithuania. It should also be mentioned that in the United Kingdom, the non-profit sector generates 4.8 percent, in Germany - 3.6 percent, and in France - 3.3 percent. gross domestic product (Ilgius, 2008).

The impact of globalization on the evolution of liberal public security

Development of liberal public security in the 21st century at the beginning intertwined with the formation processes of globalization, which inevitably, for example, international migration and threats of international terrorism, changed the nature of liberal security in European democracies. The prevention of threats of international terrorism led to the

deployment of armed police officers and their constant presence in public space. They have become a necessary part of liberal public security.

The dynamically growing economic and political interdependence of states and the cross-border migration of natural and legal persons led to multi-faceted processes of globalization, the duration of which is described by the term globalization era. Currently, two periods of globalization development can be distinguished - before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The first period of development of the era of globalization is characterized by three intertwined processes: 1) the formation of the global information civilization; 2) formation of supra-national political communities and their related identities; and 3) the developmental effects of globalization. In the second period, the unification process of dictatorship countries was revealed, which is directed against the democratic countries of the world and especially against the liberal democratic states of Western civilization. During this period, S. Huntington's insights regarding future civilizational conflicts were confirmed (Huntington, 1994) and in the context of their development, the sociocultural vulnerability of the security of liberal democracy became apparent (Šlapkauskas, 2024, p. 299-314).

The formation of the era of globalization intervenes in the development of liberal public security and constantly "forces" officials to redraw its social boundaries. Therefore, when analyzing the development of liberal public security, it is necessary to distinguish two periods: 1) from 1989. (the fall of the Berlin Wall) before the COVID-19 pandemic; 2) the period after the COVID-19 pandemic. The political analysis of the first period revealed fundamental changes:

1. After the collapse of the Soviet system of totalitarianism, a wave of liberal democracy constitutions was created in Europe and the European constitutional model with control of the constitutionality of laws was established in Central Eastern European countries (Šlapkauskas, 2013, p. 28). This fundamental change encouraged the societies of European countries to believe in the power of liberal democracy and to liberalize public relations.

2. In the context of the interaction between market competition and the growth of the quality of life, the policy of promoting moral relativism and consumerism prevailed in Western societies (Taylor, 1996). In the context of its development, the military power of democratic countries was radically reduced and an instrumental approach to law and security was formed (Šlapkauskas, 2006, p. 83-90). This experience was also adopted by Central Eastern European societies.

3. In the second half of this period, most countries of the world entered a completely new stage of their development, which is characterized by globalization, IT and digitalization, and the interaction of rapid and mass movement of individuals. In the process of interaction between globalization and the mass movement of individuals, there is an "epoch shift in cultural worldview" (Tomlinson, 2002, p. 48). The interaction of these processes weakens the integrity of societies.

4. In the context of the interaction between the processes of climate change and ecological degradation and economic migration, the weakness of the power of the national political authorities to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to the challenges of new threats became apparent. As a result, the growth of society's quality of life has slowed down. Overcoming new challenges promotes changes in national politics: a) changes in the concept of political power, b) the formation of new political and economic communities and their related identities. Political power does not have to be traditionally associated with fixed borders and limited territory. It can be understood as a feature of basic democratic principles or basic democratic rights that can be rooted in self-regulating associations ranging from cities, counties,

states to nation-states, regions, and wider global networks (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perrason, 2002, p. 485).

5. At the end of this period - in 2014, the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine and, using hybrid military power, seized the Crimean Peninsula and part of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions from it. The pacifist reaction of Western societies to Russian aggression only encouraged the expansion of its military power and that of other dictatorship states.

In the second period - after the end of COVID-19, the global insecurity crisis took hold, which was especially deepened by the new phase of the aggressive war in Ukraine launched by the Russian Federation in 2022. Russia's nearly three-year war across Ukraine revealed:

1. The weakened military power of the European Union states and the political polarization taking place within their societies, which radically reduces the functionality of liberal public security.

2. In the first period of the era of globalization, the energy and economic dependence of liberal democratic countries on the resources of dictatorship countries was formed. This situation in the second period limits their political options to enable Ukraine to win the war against the Russian Federation.

3. The context of globalization is favorable for dictatorial regimes to create programs and hybrid instruments of permanent hostile influence on Western societies. Dictatorship regimes pursue long-term goals - to control and dominate the development of liberal democratic countries affected by globalization. To achieve this goal, first of all, it is necessary to destabilize the public order and security of liberal democratic societies. Deterioration of the state of public security in the society results in the increase of mistrust in their national political authority.

4. In the 21st century, autocracies rely not on a single dictator, but on complex networks of kleptocratic financial structures, surveillance technologies, and professional propagandists that operate across regimes. International condemnation and economic sanctions cannot dislodge autocrats. Therefore, Anne Applebaum and other authors urge democracies to fundamentally reorient their policies to combat a new kind of threat (Autocracy, Inc.: The Dictators Who Want to Run the World).

Social consequences of the interaction between the liberalization of democracy and globalization

The liberalization of democracy leads not only to positive changes in societies, but also to the formation of shadowy social phenomena that do not strengthen liberal public security:

1. In the consciousness of many citizens, the interaction of democratic liberalization and moral relativism changes the social role of law, because they do not have the necessary competence to know and master technical law. Different social interpretations of compliance with the same legal norms circulate in the groups of society. Legal pluralism and conspiracy theories are formed on this basis, the spread of which is encouraged by dictatorships in Western societies through their purposeful actions. The latter process in particular poses new threats to the functionality of liberal public security. States, seeking to create law as an effective and independent instrument of public leadership and social control, end up with the opposite result: technical law is unknown to society and therefore not socially effective. Therefore, liberal democratic states face additional tasks of institutional control of the behavior of social groups.

2. In the development of the interaction between moral relativism and technical law, a consumer society and its instrumental thinking are formed - the behavior of natural and legal persons is based on the principle of reducing costs and increasing profits. This thinking aims to

justify the social value of the state's political and economic phenomena, which often contradicts the socio-cultural nature of the society.

3. The behavior of natural and legal persons "freed" from moral control is associated with the right of human self-expression. The expansion of the subjective implementation of the right of human self-expression and the limited possibilities of the state to control this process led to a change in the consciousness of the new generations: an expression of individual freedom that avoids responsibility is formed.

4. The social assessment of violations of the law and even crimes lose its moral-value dimension. This is clearly demonstrated by the results of the 2024 elections held in Western societies.

All the social consequences of the liberalization of democracy are interrelated and allow us to say that there is a weakening of the connection between citizens and their state. In the conditions of the intensification of globalization, the weakening of the connection between the state and citizens promotes migration and turns into a factor in the formation of a new society of openness. A "holey" open society is forming (Aleksandravičius, Riquier, Šlapkauskas, 2019, 14-19), which limits the self-made of civil society. The formation of a "holey society" corresponds to the concept of "liquid society" used by Z. Bauman. It is a new form of open society, which is taking shape in the context of the intensification of the development of globalization and poses new challenges to the vitality of the liberal democratic state.

The concept of an open society was first used by the French philosopher Henri Bergson in his work "The Two Sources of Morality and Religion". He defined an open society optimistically - as the unfolding of human spiritual capacities, coinciding with the cultivation of cultural diversity. According to Bergson, humanity will simply have to transition to a state of open society to avoid global problems arising from technological progress that could destroy it. The French philosopher predicted the activation of the spiritual capacities hidden in humanity, as the global danger matures, and the self-preservation instinct responds to it. Activating spiritual capacities will mean empathy, which, by the way, is able to use technological means and thus neutralize their destructive effects (Aleksandravičius, 2017).

However, there is also a non-optimistic concept of an open society created by K. R. Popper. He explained that the term open society emphasizes the general direction of society's development - the creation of a more humane civilization, gradually overcoming various taboos related to the closedness of a particular society. "Our Western civilization was started by the Greeks. <...> they were the first to move from tribalism to humanism (Popper, 1998, p. 178). A society freed from its tribal nature (closedness) can be formed as an open society, if its members recognize a rational personal responsibility. Therefore, Popper emphasizes that "a magical, tribal or collectivist society <...> is called a closed society, and a society in which the individuals living have to make personal decisions - an open society" (Popper, 1998, p. 179). Thus, an open society is a society that has lost its closedness, and this loss and the formation of personal responsibility are essential signs of its difference from a closed society.

The formation and development of an open society is based on the initiative of individuals, their desire to communicate with unknown other people in the name of satisfying their interests and the ability to take personal responsibility. In this process of wide coverage, the rules of social behavior and the practice of observing them must inevitably soften. In other words, there must be a dynamic balance between the openness of society and the rules of social behavior, enabling the expansion of openness itself and limiting the resistance of radical social connections.

According to H. Bergson, "closed-open" society corresponds to its "closed-open" morality and "static-dynamic" religion (Bergson H., 2008). These types of dichotomies are not

only related, but also correspond to different types of rules of social behavior. The imperative of rules of social behavior softens in the process of forming an open society. This means that in the process of the expansion of an open society, natural rights must increasingly prevail as a mandatory minimum social morality. Therefore, a dynamic balance of dispositive and imperative models of social behavior is now being formed on the basis of the legal protection of human rights and freedoms. This process of legal technique is increasingly controlled by lawyers rather than politicians or ordinary members of society, who previously based the imperatives of social behavior on values and norms of a moral and religious nature. Most members of an open society do not acquire the necessary legal competence, so the normative aspect of social control inevitably "shrinks" and the institutional aspect of control expands.

In these processes, it is increasingly noticeable that the social morality generated by the protection of human rights and freedoms is not enough to create strong social ties. On the contrary, there is a weakening of social ties and a strengthening of depersonalization. These processes change the understanding of society itself as a sociocultural phenomenon and remind us of K. Popper's insight: when an open society loses its organic character, it can gradually turn into an abstract or depersonalized society (Popper, 1998, p. 180). Therefore, this process of depersonalization of societies leads to the rising concern of citizen groups to protect their identities and political opposition to the deepening of openness.

The tendency to oppose the deepening of public openness is noticeable in the societies of the EU and other countries of the world. The tension of civilization is especially felt during the stages of social change. According to Popper, "it is a tension caused by the great effort that life in an open and partly abstract society requires of us; I mean the effort to rationalize our behavior, refrain from satisfying at least some of our social-emotional needs, control our behavior, and take responsibility. <...> this is the price we have to pay for every step forward in knowledge, intelligence, cooperation, mutual assistance; in the end, it is the price ... that we have to pay for being human" (1998, p. 182).

Especially in the development of IT, the conflict between the possibilities of self-expression of individuals and the general culture of their implementation became apparent. For example, under the influence of these processes, social relationships based on ephemerality and anonymity are formed and the social behavior that expresses them is not associated with the belief of individuals in following common behavioral norms and values. In other words, under the influence of the mentioned processes, a new wave of civilizational tension arose, which is a sign of the crisis of the development of an open society.

The crisis in the development of an open society signals profound changes in the social structure. Although the social structure of the modern open society is very complex, its relative weakness in liberal democracies is determined by the functional weakening of institutions of social behavior. It is the socio-cultural condition of compliance with general rules of behavior that "reports" whether the social structure sufficiently connects the great variety of social groups, organizations and their forms of operation in such a way that an open society can still be described as a relatively integral whole, as a system. In other words, the normative power of society's social behavior is based on the belief of individuals to adhere to common behavioral norms and values. If this belief is not strong or even disappears, then the development of an open society enters a crisis, which can only be overcome by additional strengthening of civil society. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became particularly clear that some members of Lithuanian society do not believe in and even fight against vaccination, do not believe in scientific achievements, and in the service of government institutions for the welfare of the country. There is clearly a noticeable weakening of the belief in following general rules of conduct.

Society is the subject of the development of its own openness, because the intensity of the civilizational process "depends to a large extent on the participants of the social process: on their culture of thinking and interaction, on their ability to realize that human knowledge and actions are characterized by fallibility (Grigas R., 2007, p. 35 -36). On the other hand, the development of its openness is also determined by the interactions of external and internal circumstances. This interaction can also "create" such a socio-cultural context of society's existence and development (the context of progress, stagnation or regression can prevail), the impact of which on the development of society's openness often does not depend on the thinking and activities of individuals.

Observations of real sociocultural phenomena and processes reveal that there are still many elements of a closed society in social life, such as maintaining kinship ties, local and relational communities, publicly speaking about common dangers and overcoming them with joint efforts. But on the other hand, it is also increasingly noticeable that the phenomena of depersonalization of social relations, such as the lack of social empathy, promotes economic migration. The phenomena of depersonalization are strengthened when the modern openness of society is formed spontaneously - without the mutual commitment of the state and civil society. In particular, the socio-cultural expression of indifference in a civically weak society causes not only emigration, but also promotes the formation of a "hollow identity" (P. Aleksandravičius, 2019) or a hollow democracy (Mair, 2013).

Thus, after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued aggressive war of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, the social effects of the interaction between the liberalization of democracy and globalization that have become evident allow us to say that a socio-cultural crisis of liberal democratic societies has formed. The essential external symptom of this crisis is the downward trend of liberal public security. In the context of its development, the state's institutional control will continue to expand and the need to consciously shape society's sociocultural approach to national, public and personal security will increase.

Conclusions

Liberal public security prior to globalization is formed by the state apparatus liberalizing democracy and institutions of social behavior of society. In the process of liberalization of institutions of social behavior of society, social control weakens and changes in institutions of social organization become stronger.

In the process of liberalizing public relations and reducing the role of public social control, the state "liberates" law from moral support and turns it into a tool of its political power. Legal acts of a technical nature are taking effect.

The creation of technical law in the context of moral relativism leads to changes in the legal and moral consciousness of society: 1) members of society do not know technical law and therefore do not adopt the content of the new institution of legal behavior; 2) the general moral duties of society members "shrink" to the requirement to respect human rights and freedoms. The erosion of shared moral obligations leads to the contraction of social responsibility. The expression of negative freedom without the awareness of legal responsibility takes root in society.

The social consequences of the interaction between the liberalization of democracy and globalization allow us to state the socio-cultural crisis of the societies of liberal democracy, the essential external sign of which is the tendency of the decline of liberal public security. In the context of its development, the state's institutional control will inevitably expand and the need

to shape society's sociocultural approach to national, public and personal security will inevitably expand.

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COUNTERING HYBRID THREATS: PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

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Abstract. *Countering hybrid threats is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Europe, like other regions, has been actively working to develop strategies and take steps to counter hybrid threats. General measures and priorities framework for countering hybrid threats may vary from one country to another based on their unique circumstances and vulnerabilities. Moreover, the evolving nature of hybrid threats requires a continuous reassessment of strategies and the ability to adapt to new challenges as they arise.*

This scientific article aim is to analyze the hybrid threats influence to European Union's security environment and identify problematical aspects of countering hybrid threats. In order to achieve these goals, there will be analyzed international documents and scientific articles defining the concept of hybrid threat and general steps and measures that European countries and institutions have been considering and implementing to counter hybrid threats, the scale of the problem and possible solutions are reviewed in this research paper.

Keywords: *hybrid threats, the influence of hybrid threats, European Union's security environment, countering hybrid threats.*

Introduction

Europe faces growing and increasingly complex security challenges. Hybrid threats have become an integral part of our security challenges: war has returned to Europe, instability is growing in Europe's neighbouring regions, attempts to manipulate election results are emerging and democracies are increasingly portrayed as weak governance systems. The ability to spread disinformation quickly and widely through social media further increases the potential impact of hybrid threats. Furthermore, our increasing reliance on information technology tools for everyday work, banking, healthcare management, as well as elections and governance means that every European, Member State and business is at risk of being exposed to hybrid threats (*Jungwirth et.al, 2023*).

Hybrid threat actors are typically characterized by their desire to 1) undermine the integrity and functioning of democracies and undermine citizens' trust in democratic institutions; 2) manipulate established decision-making processes by blurring situational awareness, exploiting gaps in information flows, intimidating individuals and creating fear in target communities; 3) maximize impact by creating a cascading effect, in particular by tailoring attacks, combining elements from specific domains to overload even the best-prepared systems with unpredictable, negative consequences (*Jungwirth et.al, 2023*).

In the light of the above, this article analyzes the definitions of the hybrid threat and hybrid warfare, the importance of the influence of hybrid threats and European Union's security environment, as well as the problematic aspects of this regulation. The third part of the article analyzes general steps and measures that European countries and institutions have been considering and implementing to counter hybrid threats.

The relevance of this scientific article is associated with ensuring the implementation of the requirements for European Union's security environment and identifying the nature of the

problematical aspects of general steps that European countries and institutions have been considering and implementing to counter hybrid threats.

The purpose of this scientific article is to analyze the hybrid threats influence to European Union's security environment and identify problematical aspects of countering hybrid threats. In order to achieve these goals, there will be analyzed international documents and scientific articles defining the concepts of hybrid threat and general steps and measures that European countries and institutions have been considering and implementing to counter hybrid threats, the scale of the problem and possible solutions are reviewed in this research paper.

The subject of the scientific article is problematical aspects of countering hybrid threats.

The following theoretical and empirical methods are used in the scientific article: the method of comparative analysis, logical - analytical and systematic analysis. The comparative analysis method was used to compare the concepts of hybrid threat and hybrid warfare. The logical-analytical method analyzes the importance of countering hybrid threats to European Union's security environment. Logical-analytical and systematic analysis methods are used to reveal the problematical aspects of international agreements and scientific doctrine, summarize the scientific article, reveal the main problem, and formulate conclusions.

The importance of the influence of hybrid threats

Hybrid threats refer to a complex blend of conventional and non-conventional tactics employed by state and non-state actors to undermine the security, stability, and interests of targeted entities. Hybrid action is characterized by ambiguity as hybrid actors blur the usual borders of international politics and operate in the interfaces between external and internal, legal and illegal, peace and war. The ambiguity is created by combining conventional and unconventional means – disinformation and interference in political debate or elections, critical infrastructure disturbances or attacks, cyber operations, different forms of criminal activities and, finally, an asymmetric use of military means and warfare (NATO. Countering hybrid threats, 2024).

„Hybrid Threats is a broad overarching concept that includes many types of activity: interference, influence, operations, campaigns and warfare/war. All of these activities can be seen as unwelcome interventions of one sort or another to a country's internal space. We need to keep in mind that the term Hybrid Threats is a Western concept used to discuss a security dilemma that states face that either has a democratic state system or are in the democratization phase“ (Giannopoulos et.al, 2020). Hybrid threats revolve around ideas like asymmetry, polymorphism, inequality, unaccountability, escalation, adaptability, multidimensionality, insidiousness, undetectability, gradualism, offensiveness, concealment, secrecy, ambiguity, opportunism, indeterminacy, disruption, manipulation, distortion, denial, ungovernability, misinformation, unlawfulness, usurpation, and amorality, etc. (Council of Europe, 2018). The concepts of hybrid threats and hybrid warfare are not synonymous but related.

Hybrid warfare is a broader concept that encompasses the strategic use of hybrid threats as part of a comprehensive military strategy. It typically involves the integration of multiple dimensions of conflict (e.g., political, military, informational) to destabilize an opponent and achieve specific aims, often without triggering a full-scale war (Caliskan, 2019).

It is important that the elements of hybrid warfare are implemented through hybrid threats. Their manifestations are shown in Table1. Hybrid threats.

Table 1. Hybrid threats

<p>Hybrid warfare elements are implemented through these hybrid threats:</p>	Absence of a clear hierarchy and structure of the enemy
	Propaganda and disinformation, manipulation of mass media
	Cyber attacks
	Espionage
	Psychological attacks
	Subversive activities
	Employment of culture, languages and religion by emphasizing differences
	Energy policy
	Influencing elections and political process
	Employment of criminal groups and organized crime
	Military pressure
	Coordinated activity of special forces, proxy groups, mercenaries, guerillas; combined and coordinated employment of overt and covert military paramilitary and civilian means
	Employment of means of economic, financial, social pressure and asymmetric tactics
	Actions to exploit the vulnerability of a country or region in order to influence or destabilize the enemy, hinder decision making and thus achieve the set tasks
	All forms of fighting are integrated into one battlefield and take place simultaneously
	Creation of equivocation, ambiguity
	Avoidance of an open conflict when the aggressor is clearly identifiable
	Achievement of objectives by avoiding the declaration of war, attracting the least attention of the international community, reducing conflict costs to the maximum
Nuclear blackmail that might be used having started a hybrid assault and achieved certain results in deterring the enemy from attempted active actions	
Propaganda and disinformation, manipulation of mass media	

Source: Bajarūnas, Keršanskas, 2018

The intensifying conflict of values between the West and authoritarian states undermines international norms and institutions and turns open Western societies into targets of comprehensive hybrid action. A conflict of values that extends to the domestic sphere of Western societies increases polarization and disunity within and among Western actors, making them more vulnerable to external interference. Recent developments in modern technology and an increasingly complex information environment provide powerful instruments for hybrid actors if not adequately countered by the Western community (*Aukia, Kubica, 2023*).

The focus is on the behaviours, activities and tools how hostile state actors use influence tools in ways attempting to subvert democracy, sow instability, or curtail the sovereignty of other nations and the independence of institutions. These threats often combine elements such as cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, economic coercion, proxy warfare, and more. The

influence of hybrid threats can be profound and far-reaching, affecting internal security, the economy, and international relations in various ways (*Giannopoulos et.al, 2020*).

Evidence of constant cyber-attacks, disinformation campaigns, interference in democratic processes and the mobilization of migrants at the external borders of the European Union have seriously damaged EU-Russia relations. Hybrid attacks blur the lines between war and peace. They exploit the opportunities of an interconnected and globalised world to weaken the enemy without wasting resources on the conventional battlefield (*Bargués, P., Bourekba M., Colomina, 2022*).

The importance of countering hybrid threats: European Union's security environment

Countering hybrid threats is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Europe, like other regions, has been actively working to develop strategies and take steps to counter hybrid threats. General measures and priorities framework for countering hybrid threats may vary from one country to another based on their unique circumstances and vulnerabilities. Moreover, the evolving nature of hybrid threats requires a continuous reassessment of strategies and the ability to adapt to new challenges as they arise. Governments and international organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of countering hybrid threats through a combination of diplomatic, economic, informational, and military measures. This requires cooperation between nations, the development of resilient societal structures, investment in cybersecurity and intelligence capabilities, and a comprehensive approach to managing both conventional and unconventional threats (*Jungwirth et al, 2023*).

It's worth noting that the impact of hybrid threats can vary depending on the specific circumstances, the actors involved, and the targeted country's vulnerabilities and resilience. As tactics evolve and new technologies emerge, understanding and addressing these threats will remain an ongoing challenge for policymakers and security experts. When it comes to understanding the different dimensions, activities, domains, tools, goals and nature of actors, the role of intelligence is essential to achieve a proper understanding of the situation, which in turn enables an ecosystem-based approach. All critical areas are addressed synergistically to build sufficient resilience. Countering hybrid threats relies on four distinct elements – understanding (situational awareness), resilience, deterrence and cooperation- which relate to the stages of hybrid actor activity (*EU, Countering hybrid threats, 2024*):

1. *Understanding hybrid threats* means recognizing their nature, objectives, and methods. Hybrid threats are often ambiguous, involving both state and non-state actors, with tactics that blend conventional warfare, cyberattacks, disinformation, economic pressure, and social manipulation.

2. *Building resilience* requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach that focuses on addressing identified vulnerabilities. Resilience refers to a society's or system's ability to absorb, adapt to, and recover from hybrid threats. Strengthening resilience means minimizing vulnerabilities in critical sectors such as energy, communications, finance, and public institutions (*Jungwirth, 2023*).

3. *Deterrence* aims to prevent hybrid threats from being executed by increasing the costs for potential aggressors and reducing their incentives to engage in hybrid warfare. The EU Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox is an example of deterrence in practice. It allows the EU to impose diplomatic measures, including sanctions, on entities responsible for cyberattacks, thus increasing the potential costs for attackers and deterring future attacks (*The Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox, 2024*).

4. *Cooperation* involves working together at the national, regional, and international levels to counter hybrid threats. No single country can effectively combat hybrid threats alone, as they often cross borders and involve multiple actors (*EU, Countering hybrid threats, 2024*).

It is also important to understand that all EU countries must be prepared to deal with these threats, as one unprepared country remains vulnerable the whole block. In this regard, continuous lessons learned and established processes, technical solutions and innovations are vital to strengthen all three aspects.

An analysis of the complex challenges facing the EU and NATO encouraged both organizations to create a comprehensive approach that combines all the important things actors and means available: military forces, diplomacy, humanitarian aid, political processes, economic development and technology. Countering hybrid threats aims to acquire a new ones understanding of such threats and innovative leveraging existing opportunities, many of which are how economic development, anti-corruption or poverty eradication - live in non-military governmental and intergovernmental institutions agencies, the private sector and international non-governmental organizations (*EU, Countering hybrid threats, 2024*).

The EU approach to hybrid threats is set out in the 2016 Joint Framework (European Commission, 2016) and the 2018 Joint Communication on bolstering hybrid resilience (European Commission, 2018). The responsibility for combating hybrid threats rests primarily with Member States – due to the fundamental links with national security and defence policy, some vulnerabilities are common to all Member States, and some threats spread cross-border, for example, targeting cross-border networks or infrastructure. The Commission develop an EU approach to hybrid threats that seamlessly integrates external and internal dimensions and combines national and EU-wide dimensions. This covers the full range of activities, from early detection, analysis, awareness, resilience building and prevention to crisis response and consequence management (*European Commission, 2020*).

However, many Member States face common threats that can be more effectively addressed at the EU level. The EU can be used as a platform to strengthen national efforts and, through its regulatory capacity, to establish common guidelines that can help increase the level of protection and resilience worldwide EU. This is why the EU can play an important role in improving our collective situational awareness strengthening Member States' resilience to hybrid threats and prevention, response and recovery from the crisis. In addition to enhanced implementation, in the face of ever-evolving hybrid threats, special attention will be paid to incorporating hybrid considerations into policy-making, keeping up with dynamic changes and ensuring that no potentially important initiative is overlooked (*European Commission, 2016*).

Hybrid threats have manifested in EU politics in the last decade and has led to dramatic changes in the security environment of the European Union and the need for the Union to adapt accordingly. „The 2015 Council Conclusions on Common Security and Defence Policy called for a ‘joint framework with actionable proposals to help counter hybrid threats and foster the resilience of the EU and Member States, as well as partners’ (*Council of the European Union, 2015*). The ‘Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats’ (*European Commission, 2016*) was published a year later, bringing hybrid threats to the focus of policymaking, and proposing 22 actions to counter hybrid threats, most of which recognised resilience as a key element. This framework was followed by the communication on ‘Increasing resilience and bolstering capabilities to address hybrid threats’ in which the importance of building resilience to counter hybrid threats was reiterated and expanded to sectors such as CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents) and cyber threats (*European Commission, 2016; Hybrid threats: a comprehensive resilience ecosystem, 2023*).

In accordance with the 2019 Council conclusion (*Council of the European Union, 2019*), about 200 measures were noted in the Joint Staff Working Document Mapping of measures related to enhancing resilience and countering hybrid threats was published in 2020 (*European Commission, 2020e*). The main focus is on the relevance and interconnection between the two fields – resilience and hybrid threats – and the efforts made by EU institutions to reinforce them during the last years.

Countering hybrid threats that aim to weaken social cohesion and undermine trust in institutions, as well as enhancing EU resilience are an important element of the Security Union Strategy (Picture Nr. 1). Key measures include an EU approach on countering hybrid threats, from early detection, analysis, awareness, building resilience and prevention to crisis response and consequence management – mainstreaming hybrid considerations into broader policy-making. The Commission and the High Representative will continue to jointly take forward this work, in close cooperation with strategic partners, notably NATO and G7. (*EU Security Union Strategy, connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem, 2020*).



Picture 1. EU Security Union Strategy

Source: *EU Security Union Strategy: connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem, 2020*.

The EU Security Union Strategy (2020–2025) replaced the 2016–2020 strategy. This updated document builds on the previous strategy but adapts to new and evolving challenges, particularly focusing on digital transformation, resilience against cyber threats, and addressing hybrid threats. Key focus areas of the 2020–2025 strategy include:

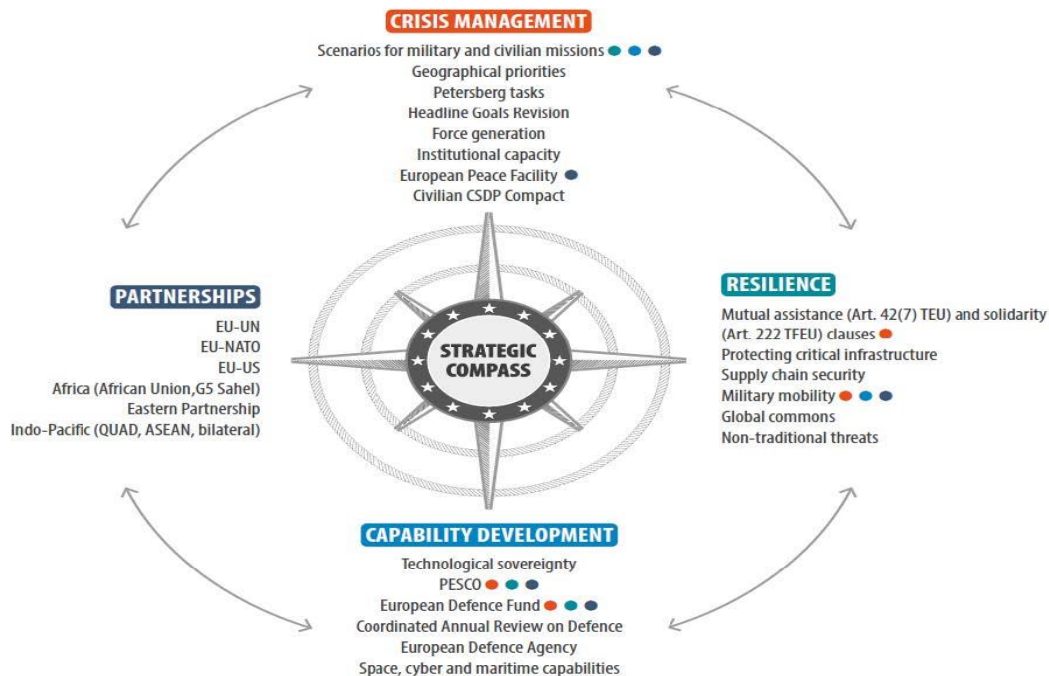
- *Cybersecurity*: stronger measures to protect against cyberattacks and safeguard digital infrastructures.
- *Countering hybrid threats*: continuing efforts to combat disinformation, foreign interference, and cyberattacks, with particular emphasis on strategic communication and public resilience.

- *Combating terrorism*: enhanced collaboration among EU member states to combat terrorism, especially through better intelligence sharing.
- *Resilience in critical sectors*: expanding protections for key sectors like health (in response to COVID-19), energy, and transportation, ensuring they can withstand both physical and cyber threats (Picture Nr. 1).

The process of developing the Strategic Compass was an important step towards strengthening the EU's crisis response capabilities. The aim was to create a modular tool for Member States that would allow them to respond collectively and individually to security threats. The introduction of the Strategic Compass was a watershed moment for the EU, allowing the bloc to defend its interests and protect its citizens in an era of increasing uncertainty (*A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 2024*).

The European Council adopted Strategic Compass in March 2022. The Compass set out an assessment of the threats and challenges the EU faces and will propose operational guidelines to enable the EU to become a security provider for its citizens. Having been conceived by the European Council, the Strategic Compass is an attempt to set the strategic vision of the Union from the top-down, while simultaneously building consensus among Member States from the bottom-up, by drawing upon their diverse perspectives to provide an instrument for coordinating their foreign policies (*Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 2024*).

In a multidimensional risk landscape that is increasingly characterised by both conventional and novel threats, no individual EU Member State has the strength nor the resources to address these threats alone. In this regard, the Strategic Compass will inform future EU policies and strategies across four work strands: act; secure; invest and partner (Picture Nr. 2).



Picture 2. Strategic Compass process and its baskets
 Source: *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 2024*.

The EU Strategic Compass and the EU Security Union Strategy (2020–2025) both focus on enhancing Europe's security, but they address different areas of concern and have distinct

approaches and objectives. EU Strategic Compass focuses on defense and military capabilities. It serves as a military and defense roadmap to strengthen the EU's ability to respond to security threats both within Europe and globally. Also it emphasizes crisis management, enhancing military readiness and strengthening global partnerships with NATO, the UN, and others partners. The EU Strategic Compass focuses on external threats improving the EU's ability to respond to global crises and prioritizes military preparedness, rapid deployment, and coordinated defense efforts. Meanwhile, EU Security Union Strategy (2020–2025) focuses on internal security and emphasizes cybersecurity, counterterrorism, combating organized crime, and resilience against hybrid threats. EU Security Union Strategy's scope is more about protecting the EU's society, institutions, and critical infrastructure from threats like cyberattacks, disinformation, and terrorism. Focuses on internal threats such as cyberattacks, disinformation, and organized crime. It emphasizes preventive measures, building resilience, and securing critical sectors.

In essence, the Strategic Compass takes a more defense-oriented and military capabilities, external focus, while the Security Union Strategy deals with internal security and resilience against threats to EU society and infrastructure. focusing on protecting the EU's society and institutions from threats like terrorism, organized crime and cyberattacks.

General steps and measures that European countries and institutions have been considering and implementing to counter hybrid threats

The European security order has changed substantially as the current fundamentals were agreed in the Helsinki Final Act 1975. Although that treaty established the mutual Recognition of Cold War blocs, the application of its principles became a more complicated matter when the balance of power between East and West dramatically question after a more than a decade. From the end of Cold War and the collapse of Warsaw Pact, NATO became the undisputed leader security organization in Europe. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has deepened Europe's already significant dependence on the United States. From today's vantage point, this can be framed as Western unity having been strengthened and NATO having rediscovered its purpose (*Moeini, Paikin, 2023*).

“Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine is interpreted differently across the alliance. The war is regarded as an existential threat by countries in the Intermarium, which hold historical grievances (and with reason) against Russian imperialism. In Western Europe, it is viewed as an attack on the European continent and community of nations, but not as an existential threat to the same degree. Rather, it is seen more as a significant geopolitical event on Europe's frontier with undesirable cascading effects, such as the flow of refugees, food and energy insecurity, or worst of all, the risk of nuclear escalation. Across the Atlantic, the invasion provides opportunities: the opportunity to weaken a historic, regional adversary, re-galvanize the “liberal international order”, renew America's “indispensable” role in the world, and ultimately to reinforce the long-held strategic ontologies of the U.S. establishment.” (*Moeini, Paikin, 2023*).

In recent years, more and more US leaders, under some public pressure, have demanded that European countries increase their military spending and pay for the security guarantees that Washington provides through NATO. But there is a certain cognitive dissonance surrounding America's call for greater burden sharing and the fact that a more independent Europe with an autonomous collective security architecture, a robust defence industry, and financial independence from Washington would indeed have responsibility for its security interests. A larger Europe with an independent strategic perspective will be a better asset and a far more

effective partner for America in addressing major security challenges in a multipolar world than a Europe which has assumed its junior partner status.

The specific measures and priorities may vary from one country to another based on their unique circumstances and weak points. Moreover, the evolving nature of hybrid threats requires a continuous reassessment of strategies and the ability to adapt to new challenges as they arise. These steps represent considerations that might influence discussions on European security architecture and a general framework for countering hybrid threats in Europe:

1. *Strengthening intelligence sharing* both among European countries and with international partners is crucial. This allows for early detection and a better understanding of hybrid threats.

2. *Establishing early warning systems* to detect and respond to hybrid threats quickly is essential. This includes monitoring information operations, cyber threats, and other unconventional tactics.

3. *Resilience Building.* Investing in societal resilience is vital. This involves educating the public to recognize disinformation, reinforcing critical infrastructure against cyber-attacks, and fostering social cohesion to resist divisive tactics. „The concept of resilience has just as many meanings as hybrid threats. Resilience is about states and societies resisting collapse under the impact of disastrous events. They have to cope and deal with such events, adapt to them, and recover from their effects in a short period of time. It is obvious that post-facto resilience is only possible if state and society are able to anticipate the potential consequences of a series of events, be it man-made, a natural disaster, or an external challenge, like a crisis or war. Consequently, resilience is contextual; it has many forms dependent upon the context. Resilience has much to do with state capacity, governance, and the cohesion and thus the support of society for its state institutions and leaders.“ (*Dunay, Roloff, 2017*).

4. *Strengthening national and regional cyber security capabilities* is paramount. This includes the development of robust cyber defense mechanisms and cyber hygiene practices. On the production side of disinformation, the European Union approved in April 2022 a new legislative package to strengthen EU’s response to disinformation: the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the Digital Services Act (DSA), that includes an updated Code of Practice on Disinformation which aims to tackle the spread of disinformation across technology platforms by making the platform owner (such as Meta, Twitter, etc.) liable for not curbing the spread of disinformation at its root (*Bargués, Bourekba, Colomina, 2022*).

5. *Effective strategic communication* is key to countering disinformation and propaganda. European countries have been working on communication strategies to counter false narratives and promote accurate information.

6. *Developing and updating legislation and regulations* to address hybrid threats, including laws related to cyber security, foreign interference, and election integrity. Given the presence of hybrid threats, a traditional rule-based approach may not be sufficient. Hybrid threats exploit the vacuum of law, but law is needed to address these same threats. This is because applicable international law is contested by both non-state and state actors using hybrid threats to achieve their goals, with one of the most recent examples of this being the actions of Russia in Ukraine. By annexing Crimea in 2014 and Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhzhia in 2022 and 2023, Russia has violated the principles of international law. Later, by artificially issuing Russian passports to residents of annexed territories of Ukraine, to a large extent, Russia created a basis to invoke its right to defend its citizens living abroad and to support these regions by declaring independence from Ukraine. Russia is the leader in using legal arguments in support of hybrid tactics. One of his favourite hybrid tactics is raising doubts about whether a certain action is legal under international law.

(*Janičatova, Mlejnková, 2021; Sanz-Caballero, 2023.*). Using democratic norms and standards against democracy itself is a weaponization of the law. The right presupposes abuse of legal proceedings as a weapon of mass disinformation. This manipulation of norms has a pernicious, despicable effect on democratic societies. A deliberate misinterpretation of law is often intended to change customary law through state practice. What makes it a hybrid threat is any malicious intent to weaken states, subvert democratic governments, annexe territories, breach previous international agreements, or maliciously access other markets, etc. (*Sanz-Caballero, 2023*).

7. *Collaborating with international partners*, including NATO and the EU, to share best practices and coordinate responses to cross borders hybrid threats. A hybrid response requires that, in the absence of a clearly identified enemy, Western governments allocate public resources to target them. It is much easier for the other side, such as Russia, to do so simply because of its authoritarian nature. The classic strengths of Western governments are openness, an institutionalized decision-making process, attention to legal constraints, and accountability through legitimately elected legislative bodies. However, it does not always help to effectively respond to hybrid threats. As we can see, the Western response, although appropriate, is for these reasons slower than the security situation requires (*Bajarūnas, Keršanskas, 2018*).

8. *Strengthening economic resilience* against economic coercion and sanctions by diversifying trade partners and investing in industries critical to national security.

9. *Public and Private Sector Engagement*. Engaging the private sector, particularly technology companies, in efforts to combat disinformation, strengthen cyber security and protect critical infrastructure. Public engagement is an important aspect: the defending country must create a more resilient society. The only way to develop societal resilience is to maintain at least some of the home-field advantage, as the aggressor will try to build up and use the surprise effect. Therefore, a long-term plan and dedication to its implementation are required. The opponent must have a strong political mandate and a long-term security concept. Achieving this requires planning, awareness raising and education. Key societal stakeholders have a common understanding of the situation, a common threat and risk assessment, planning and training processes (*Bajarūnas, Keršanskas, 2018,*).

10. *Engaging in diplomatic efforts* to address hybrid threats at the international level, including advocating for norms of behavior in cyberspace.

11. *Protection of Elections and the Political System*. More and more countries are realizing that they are losing the battle for protection of democracy without ensuring a democratic order, free choice thus it will be more difficult to protect against hybrid threats in the future.

Conclusions

Summarizing the international agreements and commitments of the member states, the concept of hybrid threats aims to encompass conventional and unconventional, military and non-military, overt and covert actions that can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives, but below the threshold of formally declaring war. Hybrid methods are used to blur the lines between war and peace and to destabilize and undermine societies.

Countering hybrid threats is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. Europe, like other regions, has been actively working to develop strategies and take steps to counter hybrid threats. Countering hybrid threats relies on four distinct elements – understanding (situational awareness), resilience, deterrence

and cooperation- which relate to the stages of hybrid actor activity. It is important to understand that all EU countries must be prepared to deal with these threats, as one unprepared country remains vulnerable the whole block. In this regard, continuous lessons learned and established processes, technical solutions and innovations are vital to strengthen all three aspects.

Specific measures and priorities may vary from country to country, taking into account their unique circumstances and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the evolving nature of hybrid threats requires a constant reassessment of strategies and the ability to adapt to new challenges as they arise. The following steps can be identified as potentially influencing the debate on the European security architecture and a common framework for countering hybrid threats in Europe: strengthening intelligence sharing, establishing early warning systems, resilience building, strengthening cyber security improvements, effective strategic communication and international cooperation, economic resilience building, public and private sector engagement, diplomatic efforts engagement, protection of elections and the political system.

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SVARSTOMOSIOS DEMOKRATIJOS ĮGYVENDINIMO GALIMYBIŲ LIETUVOJE APŽVALGA

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Anotacija. Piliečių dalyvavimo analizė, pabrėžiant jų kuriamą vertę, nėra nauja tyrimų sritis, tačiau šiuo metu, analizuojant skirtingose valstybėse kylančius iššūkius užtikrinant valdymo demokratiškumą, didinti visuomenės atsparumą bei formuojant politikas itin jautriais visuomenės klausimais, vis daugiau dėmesio skiriama ne tik aktyviam piliečių dalyvavimui politiniame rinkimų cikle ar kituose tradiciniuose dalyvavimo būdais tapusiuose dalyvavimo įrankiuose (peticijos, referendumai ir t.t.), bet ir poreikiui didinti socialinę sanglaudą juos tapusiuose dalyvavimo įrankiuose (peticijos, referendumai ir t.t.), bet ir poreikiui didinti socialinę sanglaudą juos tapusiuose dalyvavimo įrankiuose (peticijos, referendumai ir t.t.), bet ir poreikiui didinti socialinę sanglaudą juos tapusiuose dalyvavimo įrankiuose (peticijos, referendumai ir t.t.). Straipsnio tikslas – atsižvelgiant į užsienio šalių praktikas, išanalizuoti svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo galimybes ir iššūkius Lietuvoje.

Atlikto tyrimo rezultatai leido išskirti svarstomosios demokratijos privalumus: Lietuvoje įprastai pasitelkiami dalyvaujamosios demokratijos įrankiai (pvz. referendumai, peticijos ir t.t.) dažnu atveju pasiekia tik aktyviausius visuomenės narius, o svarstomosios demokratijos siūlomų piliečių įtraukimo įrankių (piliečių asamblėjos, piliečių žiuri ir kt.) siekia užtikrinti visų visuomenės narių vienodas galimybes dalyvauti klausimo sprendime bei gali pasiekti tuos asmenis, kurie dėl tam tikrų priežasčių lieka sprendimų priėmimo užribyje.

Išskirtinos sąlygos, reikalingos svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimui: pasitikėjimas valdžios institucijomis ir pasirinktu dalyvavimo modeliu; procedūrų legitimumu; grįžtamuoju ryšiu ir atsižvelgimu į svarstomosios demokratijos dalyvių priimtus sprendimus. Tam būtinas nuoseklus komunikacinis procesas, aiškus sprendžiamos problemos ir proceso tikslų formulavimas bei visos reikalingos sprendimui priimti ekspertinės informacijos pateikimas tokia forma, kuri būtų suprantama ir prieinama visiems proceso dalyviams. Atitinkamai su šiuo procesu susiję iššūkiai apima netinkamą proceso valdymą (pradedant nuo planavimo ir dalyvių atrankos etapo, baigiant priimto sprendimo įgyvendinimu).

Svarstomosios demokratijos atvejų raiška yra sparčiai didėjanti užsienio šalyse ir pasižymi: vis didėjančiu reguliarumu bei institucionalizavimu prie viešosios politikos formavimo ar (ir) įgyvendinimo institucijų; nagrinėjami atvejai yra susiję su aplinkosaugos, infrastruktūros, miestų planavimo, sveikatos ir kitomis socialiai ir (ar) politiškai jautriomis sritimis; siekiant pasiekti didesnę auditoriją, dažnai susirinkimams taikomas „nuotolinis“ būdas, tačiau prioritetas labiau teikiamas „akis į akį“; svarstomosios demokratijos dalyviams dažniausiai taikoma išlaidų kompensavimo praktika.

Lietuvoje susiduriama su iššūkiais, kurie daro poveikį visam viešojo valdymo demokratizavimui: piliečiai dažnai traktuojami kaip politiškai pasyvūs; demokratinės institucijos yra palyginti jaunos, neturi patirties ir praktinių žinių kaip įtraukti gyventojus ar ne visais atvejais suvokia jų dalyvavimo sukuriama pridėtinę vertę, tačiau aiškiai identifikuoja jų dalyvavimo užtikrinimui reikalingus papildomus laiko ir kitus išteklius. Tad šiame kontekste dėmesys turėtų būti skiriamas ne tik tinkamo dalyvavimo metodo pasirinkimui ir jo įgyvendinimui pagal numatytas procedūras, bet ir išankstinių nuostatų dėl dalyvavimo keitimui.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: demokratinis valdymas, svarstomoji demokratija, piliečių dalyvavimas, viešasis valdymas

Įvadas

Temos aktualumas ir problema. Analizuojant skirtingose Europos šalyse demokratiškos šalių patiriamą spaudimą dėl su saugumu ir stabilumu susijusių iššūkių, akcentuojama, kad juos sąlygoja tiek atskirų šalių vidaus, tiek išorės aplinka, didinanti atotrūkius tarp pačių gyventojų bei valdžios institucijų, o vyriausybių pastangos inicijuotos „iš viršaus į apačią“ kovoti su šiais iššūkiais gali lemti liberalios demokratijos stabilumo mažėjimą, gyventojų susiskaldymą ir nepasitenkinimą priimamais sprendimais (van Vark, 2021, p. 302). Tai reikalauja ieškoti naujų būdų kaip didinti socialinę sanglaudą, mažinti visuomenės poliarizaciją bei prisidėti prie demokratiškos vertybių išsaugojimo.

Šiame kontekste, piliečių dalyvavimas viešajame valdyme tiek praktiniu, tiek teoriniu lygmeniu įvardijamas kaip viena esminių viešojo valdymo modernizavimo ir institucijų veiklos tobulinimo kryptių, išskiriant jų veiklos atvirumo, skaidrumo ir kitus aspektus. Vis dėl to, viešojo valdymo demokratizavimas ir piliečių dalyvavimas viešojo sektoriaus institucijų sprendimų priėmimo yra sudėtingas procesas, sąlygojamas skirtingų lygmenų veiksmų. Tad nors tarptautinių organizacijų rekomendacijos aiškiai įvardija poreikį imtis pokyčių viešojo valdymo procesuose ir siūlo tam įvairius piliečių dalyvavimo sprendimų priėmimo būdus, būtina įvertinti, kokios piliečių dalyvavimo formos yra tinkamiausios atsižvelgiant į konkrečios šalies bei sprendžiamo klausimo kontekstą.

Šiame straipsnyje siekiama pristatyti 2023 m. Europos Tarybos patvirtintas rekomendacijas dėl svarstomosios demokratijos šalyse narėse įgyvendinimo (CM/Rec(2023)6) bei atskleisti piliečių dalyvavimo ypatumus bei iššūkius, su kuriais gali būti susiduriama svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo metu.

Tyrimo tikslas – atsižvelgiant į užsienio šalių praktikas, išanalizuoti svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo galimybes ir iššūkius Lietuvoje. ***Uždaviniai:*** (i) pristatyti svarstomosios demokratijos sampratą; (ii) apžvelgti svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimui reikalingas sąlygas ir galimus iššūkius; (iii) pristatyti, kokios svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo galimybės Lietuvoje.

Taikomi tyrimo metodai: mokslinės literatūros ir antrinių statistinių duomenų analizė, apibendrinimo ir sisteminimo metodai

Svarstomosios demokratijos samprata, demokratinio valdymo kontekste

Kaip pabrėžiama Europos Taryba (2024) „Patikimos, skaidrios ir prieinamos demokratinės institucijos nacionaliniu, regioniniu ir vietos lygmenimis yra labai svarbios kuriant demokratiškai saugią visuomenę. Demokratija ir viešasis valdymas stiprina vienas kitą ir yra būtini siekiant užkirsti kelią konfliktams, skatinti stabilumą, valdyti krizes, palengvinti ekonominę ir socialinę pažangą ir sudaryti sąlygas, palankias tvariai gerbti žmogaus teises ir teisinės valstybės principus“ atitinkamai, pastaraisiais metais ES institucijos, EBPO (*angl.* OECD) ir kitos tarptautinės organizacijos skiria didelį dėmesį rekomendacijų šalims narėms teikimui, esamos situacijos stebėsenai bei remia įvairias su demokratizacija ir atvirumu susijusias iniciatyvas nacionaliniu ir (ar) savivaldos lygmeniu (pvz. Europos tarybos inicijuotas Europos ženklas už nepriekaištingą demokratinį valdymą (*angl.* ELoGE) ir kt.).

Analizuojant esamas gerąsias demokratinio valdymo praktikas bei galimus piliečių įgalinimo dalyvauti valdyme būdus, pirmiausia išskirtina, jog piliečių įtraukimas suteikia tam tikrą lygiateisiškumą, atskaitomybę, efektyvumą ir prisideda prie viešosios politikos formulavimo, bet tradicinės atstovaujamosios institucijos iki galo neįgyvendina jokio „demokratinio idealo“ ir keliamus lūkesčius įgyvendina tam tikru laipsniu, pagal pasirinktus

dalyvavimo mechanizmus (Bandeira, Ferraro, 2017, p. 650). Vis dėl to vykstantys pokyčiai viešajame valdyme ir pačioje visuomenėje I. Blühdorn ir F. Butzlaff (2020, p. 380-381) teigimu, keičia ir tai, kaip suvokiamas politinis piliečių dalyvavimas. Jų teigimu, piliečiai įtraukiami, nes sprendimus priimančios institucijos pasinaudodamos piliečiais gali rinkti informaciją geresnei politikai formuoti, užtikrinti efektyvesnę politikos įgyvendinimą ir tinkamai reaguoti į piliečių apsisprendimą vienais ar kitais klausimais, tad institucijoms keliamas uždavinys įsivertinti atskirų piliečių įtraukimo dalyvauti valdyme būdų panaudojimą ir galimas rizikas.

Piliečių dalyvavimas gali būti skirstomas pagal jų įsitraukimą į atskiras veiklos sritis (kooprodukcija, bendrasis valdymas ir pan., ar remiantis S. R. Arnstein (1969) išskirtomis dalyvavimo pakopomis ir t.t.), tačiau siekiant identifikuoti svarstomosios demokratijos ir kitų piliečių dalyvavimo būdus, akcentuotina, jog „remiantis svarstomosios demokratijos idėja, demokratinis procesas visų pirma yra problemų, nesutarimų, išreikštų poreikių ir interesų aptarimas, kai dialogo būdu kiekvienas apsvaisto ir kritikuoja kitų pasiūlymus ir argumentus“ (Šarkutė, 2023, p. 25). Vadinasi svarstomoji demokratija pirmiausia yra nukreipta į pačių piliečių tarpusavio diskusijas ir dialogą, siekiant išgryninti bendrą visuomenės nuomonę tam tikru klausimu ar ieškant visiems tinkamo ir priimtino sprendimo, ir tik tuomet jis pateikiamas viešojo sektoriaus institucijose atsakingiems sprendimų priėmėjams. Tad analizuojant svarstomosios demokratijos sampratą bei praktines jos įgyvendinimo galimybes, labai svarbu atskirti jos ir patariamąsios demokratijos sąvokas ir skirtingus paties proceso organizavimo metodus.

Nors viešojoje erdvėje svarstomosios ir dalyvaujamosios demokratijos sąvokas galime rasti naudojamus kaip sinonimus, vis dėl to, patys piliečių ir jų atstovų įtraukimo mechanizmai skiriasi ir analizuojant piliečių įgalinimo praktikas Lietuvoje mes įprastai kalbame apie dalyvaujamąją demokratiją, pvz.: referendumai, peticijos, neformalus judėjimai, NVO veikla, gyventojų apklausos ir t. t. Tuo tarpu svarstomosios demokratijos procesuose piliečiai yra atrenkami dalyvauti atsitiktiniu būdu ir jiems svarstyti deleguojamos konkretus ir aiškiai apibrėžtas klausimas, kuris visuomenėje kelia (arba gali kelti) daug diskusijų (1 lent.).

1 lentelė. Svarstomosios ir dalyvaujamosios demokratijos charakteristikos

	Dalyvių skaičius	Dalyvavimo tipas	Dalyvių atrankos metodas
Svarstomoji demokratija	Maža, bet reprezentatyvi žmonių grupė, sudaryta siekiant gilių svarstymų	Svarstymas, reikalaujantis gerai informuotų dalyvių, kurie įvertintų įvairias perspektyvas ir pasiektų bendrą susitarimą	Demokratinė įtraukimo loterija, naudojama atsitiktinė dalyvių atranka, atsižvelgiant į egzistuojančius visuomenės sluoksnius (stratifikaciją).
Dalyvaujamoji demokratija	Didelis dalyvių skaičius, idealiu atveju visi paveikti tam tikro sprendimo, tikslas yra pasiekti kuo plačiau	Kuo didesnis įsitraukimas visų piliečių, norinčių dalyvauti.	Visi norintys gali dalyvauti, dalyvavimas nevaržomas.

Šaltinis: Česnulaitytė, 2022

Remiantis 2020 m. EBPO atliktu tyrimu, kuriame analizuoti 289 per beveik 40 pastarųjų metų įgyvendintų svarstomosios demokratijos procesų, galima teigti, jog praktikoje gali būti taikoma dvylika skirtingų svarstymų demokratijos procesų modelių, kurių pasirinkimas tiesiogiai priklauso nuo piliečių įtraukimo tikslo (1 pav.), tai yra ar siekiama sužinoti jų poziciją tam tikru klausimu, gauti rekomendacijas, ar formuoti nuolatinius patariamuosius organus. Vis

dėl to akcentuotina, jog nepaisant pasirinkto įtraukimo tipo pagrindiniai svarstomosios demokratijos principai turi atitikti šiuos kriterijus:

1. Aiškios užduoties (paprasto klausimo) grupei suformavimas, atspindint sprendimos dilemos esmę, dalyvavimo procesą ir jo tikslus.
2. Proceso metu turi būti užtikrinamas dalyvių mokymasis, suteikiant jiems visą įmanomą informaciją, kuri reikalinga nuodugniai diskusijai ir jai pasiruošti.
3. Užtikrinamas proceso dalyvių reprezentatyvumas, juos atrenkant atsitiktinės stratifikuotos atrankos būdu, atsižvelgiant į jų charakteristikas, galinčias turėti įtakos jų nuomonei/požiūriui tam tikru klausimu.
4. Dalyviams suteikiama tiek laiko, kiek jiems reikia svarstymams (priklausomai nuo pasirinkto modelio tam gali būti skirta nuo keleto dienų iki keleto mėnesių).
5. Klausimą svarstančiai grupei numatoma žymi įtaka rezultatams ir sprendimams, tai yra dalyvaujantys asmenys turi suvokti jų dalyvavimo svarbą ir į jų siūlymus/poziciją turi būti atsižvelgta.
6. Grupės nariai pradeda diskusijas nuo „tuščio puslapio ataskaitos“, kurioje (rekomenduojama mažomis grupėmis) išsamiai išvysto ir išdėsto savo siūlomas rekomendacijas (Šarkutė, 2023, p. 19).

Piliečių rekomendacijos politikos klausimais	Piliečių nuomonė politikos klausimais	Piliečių atliekamas balsavimo vertinimas	Nuolatiniai patariamieji organai
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piliečių asamblėja • Piliečių žiuri • Konsensuso konferencija • Planavimo celė 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G1000. • Piliečių taryba • Piliečių dialogas • Svarstomoji apklausa • Tarptautinis požiūris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piliečių iniciatyvos peržiūra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgiškasis modelis • Miesto observatorija

1 pav. Svarstomosios demokratijos modeliai, pagal jų tikslus

Šaltinis: EBPO, 2020, p. 35

Analizuojant svarstomosios demokratijos, kaip vienos iš prie valstybių demokratizacijos ir jų saugumo užtikrinimo prisidedančių priemonių, ypatumus paminėtina, jog A. van Varktie (2021, p. 302) teigimu žmonės, kurie jaučiasi labiau socialiai atstumti ir (ar) turi išankstines priešiškas nuostatas valdžios institucijų atžvilgiu bei „jiems trūksta stipraus prisirišimo prie normatyvinės tvarkos, socialinio aktyvumo ar socialinės pagarbos jausmo, yra labiau linkę atsiriboti nuo pagrindinės politikos“ bei yra linkę remti radikalias partijas, populizmo augimą ir kelia visuomenės poliarizacijos pavojų. Tad pats dalyvavimo procesas ir jo organizavimas pirmiausia turėtų būti orientuotas į visuomenės suskaldymo į atskiras grupes - „grynąją liaudį“ ir „korumpuotąjį elitą“ paneigimą, užtikrinant dalyvavimo lygiateisiškumą, visuomenės grupių reprezentatyvumą ir t.t.

Laikantis nuostatos, jog piliečių įgalinimas valdyme remiasi nuostata, jog jų dalyvavimas ir įtraukimas turi užtikrinti politikų ir valdžios institucijų atskaitingumą piliečiams ir reagavimą į jų pozicijas, pirmiausia turi būti užtikrintas dalyvavimo proceso ir dalyvavimo tikslo aiškumas, siekiant išvengti proceso trikdžių, nepagrįstų lūkesčių ir iš to galimai kylančių papildomų išlaidų ar konfrontacijos tarp skirtingų dalyvaujančių grupių ar asmenų (Coleman, 2014; Bryson et al., 2012). Tad vienas esminių aspektų, užtikrinant dalyvaujamojo proceso sėkmingumą – tinkamos, aiškios ir nuoseklios informacijos užtikrinimas, tiek inicijuojant

procesą ir atrenkant dalyvius, tiek paties proceso metu. Kitas labai svarbus aspektas, kurį atskleidžia svarstomojo dalyvavimo procesą įgyvendinančių šalių patirtys, jog:

1. Reikalinga iš anksto numatyti ir informuoti apie darbo proceso ir veiklų organizavimo su dalyviais elementus, pavyzdžiui iš anksto aiškiai nustatyti užmokesčio ir dalyvavimo kaštų dalyviams padengimo, dalyvių asmens duomenų apsaugos, kalbos ar kitų kultūrinių barjerų klausimus ir t.t., kas taip pat tiesiogiai gali daryti poveikį gyventojų įsitraukimui ir proceso sklandumui (PROVIDUS, 2022);

2. Būtina iš anksto numatyti, kokį poveikį tolimesniems sprendimams turės pateikta pozicija svarstomu klausimu, tai yra: ar nacionalinės (savivaldos) lygmens institucijos priims sprendimus, kurie atitiks gyventojų dalyvavusių svarstomosios demokratijos procese siūlymus; ar jų siūlymai bus tik rekomendacinio pobūdžio; ar jei jie neatitiks lūkesčio – galės būti vetuojami (Giraudet et al, 2022).

Apibendrinant šiuos aspektus, pažymėtina, jog svarstomoji demokratija, nepaisant moksliniame ir praktiniame diskurse plačiai aptarinėjamos kuriamos viešosios naudos bei įvardijama kaip piliečių įtraukimo būdas, kuris skatina atvirus komunikacinius procesus, praktikoje ji gali susidurti su tam tikrais ribotumais. Visų pirma, netinkamas proceso suplanavimas ar jo nesuvaldymas, gali sukelti neigiamas pasekmes ir duoti priešingą rezultatą – gyventojų nenorą įsitraukti ir didinti nepasitikėjimą institucijomis; antra – jei proceso metu neišsprendžiamas pateiktas klausimas arba jis neprisideda prie „geresnės“ politikos formavimo, tačiau jo metu panaudojami atitinkami ištekliai (finansiniai, žmoniškieji ir t.t.), kas gali būti traktuojama išteklių švaistymu.

Svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimui reikalingų sąlygų ir galimų įgyvendinimo iššūkių analizė

Įvairios studijos leidžia teigti, jog piliečių ir kitų suinteresuotųjų dalyvavimas valdyme prisideda prie geresnių sprendimų, skaidrumo, stiprina piliečių įsitraukimą ir pasitikėjimą viešojo sektoriaus institucijomis ir kitais būdais prisideda prie demokratijos išsaugojimo ir socialinio kapitalo šalyse formavimo. Esami valstybės ir piliečių sąveikos būdai kuria tinklines struktūras, kurios reikalauja viešojo sektoriaus institucijų pokyčių, tampant atviromis, lanksčiomis, orientuotomis į piliečių poreikius ir jų įgalinimą. Tai keičia ne tik procesų organizavimą, bet ir institucijų atstovams (darbuotojams) keliamus reikalavimus akcentuojant jų vadybinius, komunikacinius ir lyderystės gebėjimus.

Siekiant suvokti jų dalyvavimo proceso naudą ir iššūkius bei sumažinti oportunistinę elgseną viso proceso metu, R. A. Irvin ir J. Stansbury (2004) išskiria jų dalyvavimo naudą viešojo sektoriaus institucijoms ir galimą neigiamą poveikį pačiam sprendimo priėmimo procesui bei galutiniam priimtam sprendimui (2 lent.). Jų teigimu, įtraukimas į sprendimų priėmimą sudaro galimybes abiem pusėm mokytis vieniems iš kitų tiek kalbant apie konkrečias sprendžiamas programas, tiek apie mokymąsi informuoti atstovaujamas interesų grupes, ugdyti pilietiškumą ir t. t. Taip pat tai visuomenei padeda kontroliuoti sprendimo priėmimo eigą bei galutiniame rezultate - rasti sprendimus, padedančius abiems pusėms išeiti iš „aklavietės“. Visgi, nors kalbant apie piliečių dalyvavimo sprendimų priėmimo poveikį viešojo sektoriaus institucijoms ir jų veiklai nors įprastai akcentuojami teigiami įtraukimo aspektai, autoriai pabrėžia ir tai, kad viešojo sektoriaus institucijos susiduria su papildomais iššūkiais ir didesne rizika nei visuomenė įsitraukusi į šiuos procesus.

2 lentelė. Piliečių dalyvavimo poveikis viešojo sektoriaus sprendimų priėmimui

	Teigiami įtraukimo aspektai	Neigiami įtraukimo aspektai
Sprendimo priėmimo procesas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institucijos mokosi iš visuomenės ir yra mokomasi ją informuoti; • Galimybė įtikinti visuomenę, suformuoti pasitikėjimą, sumažinti susirūpinimą ar priešišumą; • Užtikrinti priimamų sprendimų teisėtumą. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laiko ir kitų kaštų didelės sąnaudos; • Gali sukelti neigiamą reakciją ir sukelti priešišumą.
Rezultatas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Išeinama iš aklavietės ir pasiekiami rezultatai; • Išvengiama bylinėjimosi kaštų; • Kokybiškesni sprendimai ir jų įgyvendinimas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprendimų priėmimo kontrolės praradimas; • Netinkamų sprendimų priėmimas, dėl politinės situacijos; • Sumažėjęs biudžetas sprendimų įgyvendinimui ir projektams.

Šaltinis: adaptuota pagal R. A. Irvin, J. Stansbury (2004, p. 56-58)

EBPO (2020) pabrėžia, jog siekiant užtikrinti demokratinį valdymą būtinos permainos, nes esamos demokratinės valdymo struktūros neveikia, ir šios permainos tiesiogiai priklauso nuo ekonominio, kultūrinio, politinio, technologinio ir aplinkosauginio konteksto. Vis dėl to apibendrinant mokslinėje literatūroje analizuojamus galimus piliečių įgalinimo dalyvauti sprendimų priėmimo iššūkius, išskirtinos keletas probleminių sričių. Visų pirma, kaip teigia M. E. Warren ir J. Gastil (2015, p. 562) apibendrinami kitų autorių darbus (Bohman 1999; Estlund 2008; Mackenzie, Warren 2012; Mansbridge, Parkinson 2012; Gauker 1991), piliečiai, dalyvaudami demokratiname valdyme, turėtų mokytis priimti pagrįstus ir apgalvotus sprendimus atsižvelgiant į tai, kaip jų interesai yra susiję su klausimais bei kaip jiems atstovaujama svarstant ir priimant sprendimus. Pagrindiniai iššūkiai autorių nuomone kyla, nes atsižvelgiant į viešojo valdymo mastą ir sudėtingumą šiuolaikinėse politikose, net ir daug dėmesio tam skiriantys piliečiai negali žinoti, kaip buvo priimta dauguma jiems įtakos turinčių kolektyvinių sprendimų.

Taip pat mokslinėje literatūroje keliamas klausimas ar visuomet jų dalyvavimas viešojo valdymo sprendimų priėmimo užtikrina demokratiją bei geresnį sprendimų priėmimą (Bandeira, Ferraro, 2017). Tai gali būti analizuojama dviem skirtingais aspektais: visų pirma, išskiriant tai, ar pasirinkti dalyvavimo mechanizmai tinkami atstovauti interesus, antra, ar dalyviai turi reikiamus gebėjimus ir žinias dalyvauti ir atstovauti interesus, trečia, ar sprendimams poveikį darantys asmenys (organizacijos) yra linkę bendradarbiauti ar konfrontuoti. Svarstomosios demokratijos kritikai teigia, jog šis dalyvavimas kelia pernelyg aukštus ir idealistinius tikslus, nes neatsižvelgia į visuomenės ir jos narių nelygybės aspektus. Jų teigimu, net jei užtikrinama lygybė įtraukiant asmenis ir sudarant jiems dalyvavimo sąlygas, neįmanoma užtikrinti, kad svarstymo metu visi turės vienodus gebėjimus išreikšti savo poziciją svarstomu klausimu ir kyla pavojus, jog vieno asmens nuomonė taps visus grupės nuomonė. Taip pat diskutuojama apie lyčių skirtumus ir ar atskiri asmenys dėl vienokių ar kitokių savo asmeninių charakteristikų nebūtų diskriminuojami šiame procese (Siu, 2017, p.120) .

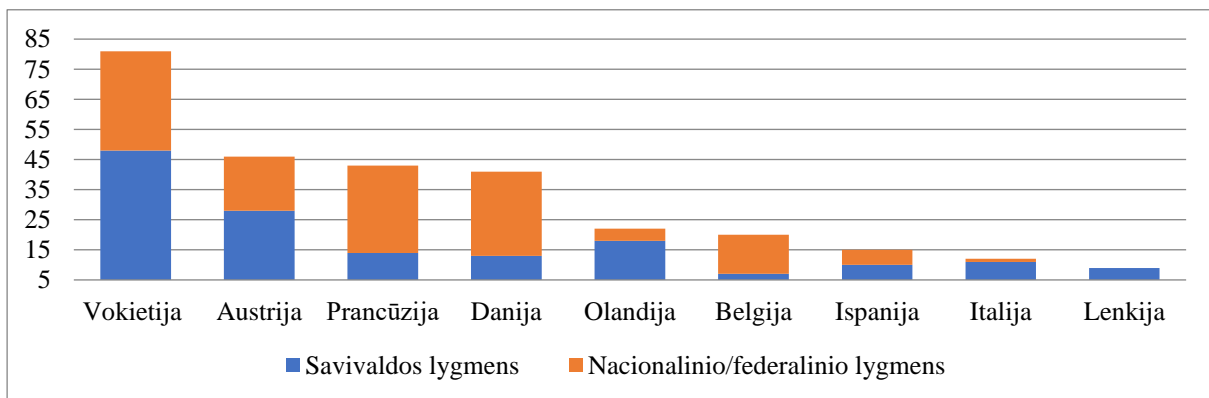
Kita vertus, su rizikomis susiduriama ir pačios institucijų ar visuomenės atstovai, nes galimai mažėja politikų ir (ar) institucijų galia savarankiškai priimti sprendimus (Lyngstad, 2010; Salamon, Toepler, 2015), tad keliamas klausimas dėl jų, kaip piliečius atstovaujančių institutų, autonomijos. M. L. Salamon ir S. Toepler (2015) nuomone, valdžios struktūros susiduria su tokiais pavojais kaip: (i) valdyme dalyvaujančių organizacijų (agentūrų) misijos iškraipymas, esant priklausomybei nuo finansavimo; (ii) biurokratizacija ar pernelyg didele

profesionalizacija, siekiant atitikti numatytus programų reikalavimus; (iii) perdėtu atstovavimo aktyvumo demonstravimu siekiant finansavimo.

B. G. Peters (2010) teigimu, šiame procese vis dėl svarbu yra proceso iniciatorių ir (ar) vykdytojų (dažniausia institucijų administracijos) vaidmuo, nes būtent nuo jų veiksmų gali tiesiogiai priklausyti galios pasiskirstymas ir sprendimų priėmimas viešajame valdyme, todėl nors svarstomojo dalyvavimo procese atsakomybė už sprendimus perkeliama piliečiams, atsakomybė už proceso organizavimą sėkmes ar nesėkmes, kurios gali įtakoti rezultatą taip pat turėtų būti vertinamos. Tad didelis dėmesys turi būti skiriamas ir instituciniam kontekstui, kuriame yra veikiamas bei vertinamas valstybės (ar savivaldybės) institucijų bei įstaigų tarnautojų pasirengimas įgyvendinti šias iniciatyvas.

Svarstomosios demokratijos taikymo užsienio šalyse apžvalga

Remiantis EBPO (2023) duomenimis, 1979-2023 m. pasaulyje buvo įgyvendinti 732 svarstomosios demokratijos procesai, iš kurių 167 įgyvendinti Japonijoje, 81 Vokietijoje ir 75 Australijoje. Analizuojant jų specifiką bei skirtingas šalių praktikas, pastebėtina, jog 63,44 proc. jų buvo įgyvendinti savivaldos lygmeniu, 33,83 proc. nacionaliniu ar federaliniu lygmeniu, o 2,73 proc. buvo tarptautiniai ar apimantys bendrus Europos Sąjungos klausimus. Analizuojant aktyviausiai svarstomąjį dalyvavimą taikančias Europos valstybes (2 pav.), matoma, jog kai kuriose šalyse (pvz. Lenkija, Italija ir Nyderlandai) šiuos įrankius naudoja būtent savivaldos lygmeniu kilusiems klausimams spręsti, tuo tarpu kitose šalyse, kuriose svarstomosios demokratijos taikymo praktikos įgyvendinamos didesne apimtimi, šie įrankiai aktyviai taikomi ir nacionaliniu lygmeniu.



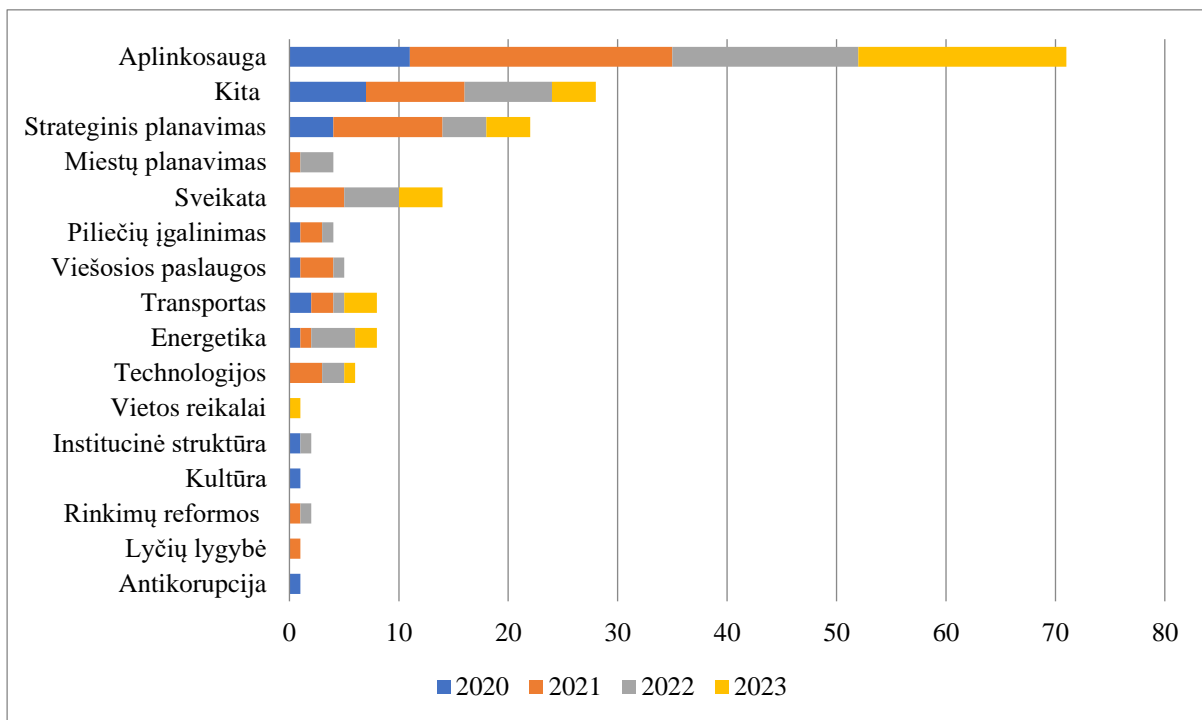
2 pav. Svarstomojo dalyvavimo įgyvendinimo nacionaliniu ir savivaldos lygmeniu praktikos

Šaltinis: Sudaryta autorių, remiantis EBPO (2023)

Svarstomosios demokratijos būdu sprendžiami klausimai susiję su aplinkosaugos, infrastruktūros, miestų planavimo, sveikatos ir kitomis socialiai ir (ar) politiškai jautriomis sritimis (3 pav.), kurios kaip atskleidžia kitų šalių pavyzdžiai, padeda išspręsti visuomenėje daug diskusijų keliančius klausimus ir rasti konsensusą. Pavyzdžiui, Paryžiaus piliečių asamblėja (100 narių) svarstė 2023 m., kaip pasirūpinti benamiais asmenimis, taip pat apie kliūtis, su kuriomis šiuo metu susiduria miestas didinant žaliąsias erdves. Lisabonos piliečių taryba (50 narių) 2022 m. svarstė, kaip padėti miestui susidoroti su klimato krize, o 2023 m. – kaip padaryti Lisaboną patogiu gyventi miestu, pagrindines viešąsias paslaugas pasiekiant per 15 minučių.

Svarstomojo dalyvavimo praktikų sprendžiant klausimus tiesiogiai susijusius su viešojo saugumo sritimi nėra daug, tačiau paminėti dviejų Japonijos miestų atvejai, kurių metu

gyventojams buvo deleguoti apsvarstyti klausimai dėl saugaus ir švaraus miesto kūrimo, taip pat Australijoje vykdyti saugaus eismo organizavimo ir naktinio gyvenimo veiklos reguliavimo (subalansuojant komercinių veiklų plėtrą bei bendruomenės saugumą ir asmeninę laisvę) svarstomosios demokratijos procesai (EBPO, 2023), kas rodo, jog gyventojai geba ne tik aktyviai įsitraukti, bet ir pateikti konstruktyvius siūlymus kaip turėtų būti keičiamas reglamentavimas ar su saugumo susijusios viešosios paslaugos (pvz. minėtu Australijos naktinio gyvenimo plėtros atveju, pateikti siūlymai apėmė ne tik sritis susijusias su gyventojų saugumo užtikrinimu, bet ir su tuo susijusius reikalingus pakeitimus alkoholio licencijavime, viešojo transporto bei medicinos paslaugų teikime ir t. t.). Vis dėl to, kaip aptarta anksčiau, nepriklausomai nuo svarstomo klausimo, pats reprezentatyvus skirtingų visuomenės grupių įtraukimas ir sprendimų galios jiems suteikimas prisideda prie pilietinės visuomenės brandos ir iš to sekančių saugumo, stabilumo ir demokratiškos vertybių valstybėse plėtros.



3 pav. Svarstomosios demokratijos būdu sprendžiami klausimai EBPO šalyse 2020-2023 m.

Šaltinis: Sudaryta autorių, remiantis EBPO (2023)

Remiantis EBPO (2023) ataskaitomis, matome, kad svarstomosios demokratijos atvejų raiška ženkliai auga nuo 2007 metų valstybėse EBPO narėse ir siekiančiose tapti narėmis. Svarstomosios demokratijos atvejai ir juos lydintys procesai įgyja vis didesnę reguliarumą ir vis dažniau yra įtvirtinami kaip nuolatos veikiančios priemonės politikos formavimo ar įgyvendinimo institucijų, t. y. institucionalizuojami (EBPO, 2021). Tai leidžia politikos formuotojams lengviau ir greičiau priimti mažiau populiarius sprendimus; didina piliečių pasitikėjimą viešąja valdžia; svarstomosios demokratijos procesą daro pigesniu; stiprina visuomenės narių gebėjimus dalyvauti demokratijos procesuose.

Pažymėtina, kad nors svarstomosios demokratijos ramsčiu tampa procesų skaitmenizavimas ir darbas nuotoliu, ypatingai, norint pasiekti platesnę dalyvių auditoriją (apklausos, konsultacijos ir t.t.), tačiau pirmenybė teikiama „gyvam“ susirinkimui. Remiantis EBPO ataskaitomis, 2022 ir 2023 m. 64 procentai svarstomosios demokratijos atvejų vyktų „akis į akį“, o tik trečdalis pasirinko mišrųjį (derinant „akis į akį“ ir „nuotolinį“) būdą (Mejia, 2023).

Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad svarstomosios demokratijos procese dalyvaujantiems asmenims dažniausiai padengiamos dalyvavimo išlaidos ar taikomos kompensacijos (pagal EBPO (2023) ataskaitą, beveik 75 proc. atvejų). Pvz. Belgijos Piliečių tarybos nariai dalyvauja savanoriškai, bet už kiekvieno posėdžio (įprastai trunkančio apie 2 valandas) lankymą gauna po 50 EUR ir padengiamos atvykimo transporto išlaidos.

Svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo galimybės Lietuvoje

Lietuvoje aktyviai taikomos įvairios iniciatyvos skirtingose viešosios politikos srityse ir vis daugiau kalbama apie tai, jog institucijų veiklos ir priimami sprendimai yra neatsiejamos nuo piliečių, NVO ir kitų suinteresuotųjų gupių įtraukimo tiek nacionaliniu, tiek savivaldos lygmeniu. Vis dėl to, atsižvelgiant į svarstomosios demokratijos sampratą ir jos procesų įgyvendinimo reikalavimus, Lietuvoje tai dar nėra įprastai taikoma praktika (pirmąjį svarstomosios demokratijos procesą pagal esamus jo reikalavimus planuojama įgyvendinti 2025 m. Vilniaus mieste). Analizuojant su tuo susijusius iššūkius, išskiriama, jog svarstomoji demokratija gali susidurti su piliečių pasyvumu, pačių institucijų nežinojimu kaip taikyti šiuos mechanizmus, nes tai naujas ir vis dar mažai žinomas metodas, reikalaujantis papildomų laiko, žmogiškųjų ir kitų sąnaudų bei pats dalyvavimo suvokimas ir jo nauda gali skirtis.

Tad praktikoje įgyvendinant svarstomąją demokratiją Lietuvoje gali būti susidurta su tokiais iššūkiais kaip mažesnis pasitikėjimas nacionalinio lygmens valdžia, institucijomis bei valstybės tarnyba nei kitose EBPO šalyse (3 lent.) bei nepasitikėjimas pačiu svarstomosios demokratijos procesu, kadangi tai naujas, mažai žinomas metodas, tad reikia laiko suprasti ir suvokti kaip priemonę daryti poveikį viešojo valdymo ar atskirų viešosios politikos sričių sprendimams.

3 lentelė. Pasitikėjimas viešuoju sektoriumi Lietuvoje

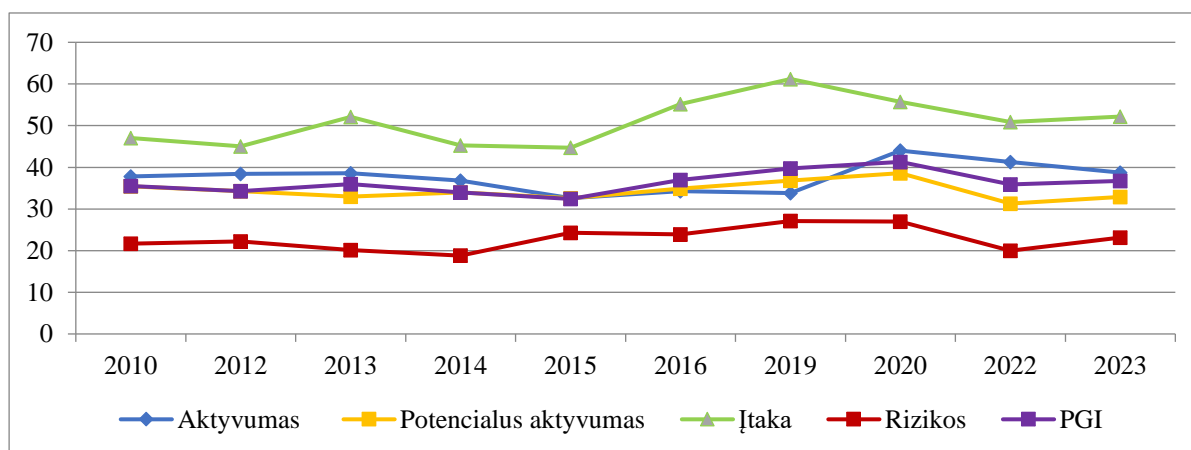
	Lietuva	EBPO šalių vidurkis
Pasitikėjimas nacionalinio lygmens valdžia (2020), proc.	41	51
Pasitikėjimas valdžios institucijomis pirmosios COVID-19, bangos metu (2020), balais nuo 1 iki 10	4,7	5,2
Pasitikėjimas valstybės tarnyba (2018), proc.	48,91	48,89
Pasitikėjimas dalyvavimu politikoje (2018), proc.	16,31	35,38

Šaltinis: EBPO, 2021, p. 207-209

Analizuojant pasitikėjimo iššūkius ir pateiktą Lietuvos gyventojų pasitikėjimo institucijomis palyginimą su visomis EBPO (2021) šalimis svarbu akcentuoti, kad Lietuviai vis dėl to nėra vieninteliai skeptikai: EBPO pasitikėjimo tyrime nustatyta, kad mažiau nei trečdalis (30,2 proc.) žmonių visose šalyse teigia, kad jų šalies politinė sistema leidžia jiems pasisakyti ir daugiau nei keturi iš dešimties respondentų (42,8 proc.) teigia, kad mažai tikėtina, jog jų šalies vyriausybė priimtų per viešąsias konsultacijas pareikštas nuomones, kas atitinkamai mažina gyventojų norą įsitraukti į šiuos procesus ir tam skirti savo laiką bei kitus resursus. Tad kitas svarbus klausimas – gyventojų aktyvumas ir jų dalyvavimui poveikį darantys veiksniai.

Lietuvoje, remiantis pilietinės galios indeksu ir atskiromis jo dedamosiomis (4 pav.), gyventojų tikėjimas visuomenės galia paveikti svarbius viešojo gyvenimo sprendimus nors 2023 m. augo, prie ko labiausiai prisidėjo kiek sumažėjęs su pilietine veikla siejamų galimų rizikų vertinimas visuomenėje, vis dėl to negrįžo į 2019-2020 m. lygį. Atitinkamai, asmeninę įtaką visai visuomenei svarbiems sprendimams tyrime dalyvavę respondentai apklausoje įvertino 3,1 balo, gyventojų – 3,3, nevyriausybinių, visuomeninių organizacijų, bendruomenių

– 4,9, žiniasklaidos – 6,6 balo. Aukščiausiai vertinta Seimo narių (8,8 balo), Prezidento (8,7 balo), „valdininkų“ (8,1 balai) įtaka. Kitas įdomus aspektas - piliečių į(si)traukimo ir atvirumo kultūros suvokimas, nes remiantis to paties PGI tyrimu, 57 proc lietuvių mano, jog pilietinė veikla užsiimantis žmogus gali būti aplinkinių įtarinėjamas savanaudiškumu, o 56 proc., kad bus palaikytas keistuoliu, tad siekiant skatinti aktyvesnį piliečių dalyvavimą ir įsitraukimą, reikalinga apsvarstyti veiksmus, kurie keistų tokias jų nuostatas viešojo sektoriaus atžvilgiu.



4 pav. Lietuvos visuomenės pilietinės galios indekso (PGI) kaita 2010 - 2023 m.

Šaltinis: Pilietinės visuomenės institutas, 2024, p. 28

Lietuvoje, LR Vidaus reikalų ministerijos (2024, p.27-29) atlikto tyrimo duomenimis, 2023 m. 50 proc. respondentų žinojo apie galimybes ir būdus teikti siūlymus viešojo valdymo įstaigoms ir 33 proc. nuo visų respondentų įsitraukė į veiklas jiems aktualiais klausimais. Šio tyrimo dalyviai neišskyrė vienos dominuojančios gyventojų skeptiško požiūrio dalyvavimo klausimais priežasties, bet jos iš atkartoja tas pačias problemines, kituose aptartuose tyrimuose įvardintas sritis: jie netiki, jog gali daryti įtaką savivaldybės sprendimams (34 proc.), gyventojams nerūpi vietos reikalai (29 proc.), vietos bendruomenėje trūksta iniciatyvių žmonių (28 proc.), gyventojai tam neturi laiko (28 proc.), trūksta pačios savivaldybės iniciatyvos (23 proc.). Taip pat 21 proc. nurodė, kad jiems nepakanka informacijos apie dalyvavimo galimybes (LR Vidaus reikalų ministerija, 2024, p.32).

Kadangi demokratinis valdymas remiasi dvipusiu procesu, kitas svarbus niuansas yra sudaryti dalyvavimo mechanizmai, teisėkūros procesas bei pačių institucijų požiūris ir kiek jos yra linkusios įtraukti gyventojus ar atskiras jų grupes į sprendimų priėmimą. Remiantis 4 lentelėje pateikta Lietuvos ir visų EBPO šalių suvestine apie jų taikomas visuomenės informavimo formas, konsultacijų vykdymą bei grįžtamąjį ryšį matoma, jog Lietuvoje, kaip ir daugelyje kitų šalių nėra įprasta praktika informuoti visuomenę ir kviešti ją į konsultacijas dar prieš rengiant sprendimus ir dažniausiai pasirenkami ganėtinai formalūs jų įtraukimo būdai pateikiant svarstyti jau parengtus projektus per specialiai tam sukurtas konsultavimosi su interesų grupėmis ir gyventojais platformas (tinklapius).

4 lentelė. Suinteresuotųjų šalių dalyvavimas ir jų pateiktų pastabų politikos formuotojams nagrinėjimas

	Visuomenės informavimas apie konsultacijas				Konsultacijų vykdymas	
	Prieš konsultacijų pradžią	Per konsultavimosi tinklapius/platformas	El. paštu	Per socialinius tinklus	Ankstyvoji stadija	Vėlyvoji stadija
Lietuva	Niekada	Sistemiškai	Nesistemiškai	Nesistemiškai	Nesistemiškai	Sistemiškai
EBPO šalys:						
Sistemiškai	9	21	8	2	7	31
Nesistemiškai	8	13	20	23	28	5
Niekada	20	3	9	12	2	1

Šaltinis: sudaryta remiantis EBPO, 2021, p. 149

Taip pat svarbu tai, kad EBPO duomenimis, nors visi pateikti siūlymai pasiekia adresatą ir gali būti viešai prienami, informacijos apie tai ar (ir kaip) yra reaguojama į pateiktas pastabas, komentarus Lietuvoje kaip ir kitose šalyse pasigendama, kas tikėtina gali juos demotyvuoti aktyviai dalyvauti sprendžiant kitus klausimus.

Atsižvelgiant į įvardintus svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo sąlygas, galimus iššūkius ir esamą situaciją Lietuvoje, vis dėl to akcentuotina, jog, visų pirma, svarstomoji demokratija neturėtų pakeisti dalyvaujamosios demokratijos ir svarstymų principas gali būti integruotas į daugybę kitų piliečių įsitraukimo veiklų. Tad kiekvienu atveju institucijoms siekiant įtraukti piliečius svarbu išvardinti, kokios srityse ir kokius klausimus sprendžiant gyventojau jau yra įtraukiami bei ar toks įtraukimas yra pakankamas ar reikalingos papildomos priemonės, tai yra:

- įsivertinti, kaip esami procesai ir procedūros atliepia demokratinio valdymo principus
- įsivertinti, kaip sekasi įgyvendinti veiklas/procesus įtraukiant piliečius į esamas iniciatyvas ir kokius rezultatus jų dalyvavimas sukuria
- apsvarstyti, kokiose srityse reikalinga svarstomoji demokratija ir koks mūsų tikslas (informuoti, konsultuoti, įtraukti) ir tik tuomet pasirinkti tam tinkamiausias priemones.

Pavyzdžiui, nors įvairių veiklų, aplinkos planavimo ir kiti projektai skelbiami viešai ir sudaroma galimybė įsitraukti teikiant pastabas, galbūt gyventojų įtraukimas šio proceso pradžioje leistų ne tik priimti labiau jų poreikius atliepiančius sprendimus, bet ir užtikrinti, jog jų projektai buvo parengti atsižvelgiant į gyventojų siūlymus, taip didinant pasitikėjimą savivaldybe ir motyvuojant gyventojus aktyviau dalyvauti kitose veiklose.

Išvados

Siekiant užtikrinti demokratinį valdymą šalyse, piliečių dalyvavimas galimas pasitelkiant įvairias jų įtraukimo formas, Lietuvoje įprastai tam pasitelkiami dalyvaujamosios demokratijos įrankiai (pvz. referendumai, peticijos, gyventojų apklausos ir t.t.) dažnu atveju pasiekia tik aktyviausius visuomenės narius. Vis dėl to, analizuojant iššūkius, su kuriais susiduriama skirtingose šalyse siekiant didinti visuomenės atsparumą, užtikrinti saugumą ir demokratinės vertybes, reikalinga ieškoti būdų, kurie prisidėtų prie socialinės sanglaudos stiprinimo bei

pasiektų piliečius, kurie įprastai neįsitraukia į šias veiklas bei konstruktyvias bendradarbiavimo formas su valdžios institucijomis.

Svarstomosios demokratijos siūlomų piliečių įtraukimo įrankių (piliečių asamblėjos, piliečių žiuri ir kt.) privalumas, jog gyventojai į klausimų sprendimą atrenkami atsitiktinai, užtikrinant visuomenės charakteristikų reprezentatyvumą, visų vienodas galimybes dalyvauti klausimo sprendime bei gali pasiekti tuos asmenis, kurie dėl tam tikrų priežasčių (informacijos stokos, pasyvumo, išankstinių nuostatų, galimybių aktyviai įsitraukti į įvairias ilgalaikes veiklas nebuvimo ar kitų) lieka sprendimų priėmimo užribyje.

Analizuojant svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimui reikalingas sąlygas, išskiriamas pasitikėjimas valdžios institucijomis, pasirinktu dalyvavimo modeliu, procedūrų legitimumu bei tai, jog į piliečių poziciją bus atsižvelgta. Tam reikalingas nuoseklus komunikacinis procesas, aiškus sprendžiamos problemos ir proceso tikslų formulavimas bei visos reikalingos sprendimui priimti ekspertinės informacijos pateikimas tokia forma, kuri būtų suprantama ir prieinama visiems proceso dalyviams. Atitinkamai su šiuo procesu susiję iššūkiai apima netinkamą proceso valdymą (pradedant nuo planavimo ir dalyvių atrankos etapo, baigiant priimto sprendimo įgyvendinimu).

Svarstomosios demokratijos atvejų raiška yra sparčiai didėjanti užsienio šalyse ir pasižymi: vis didėjančiu reguliarumu bei institucionalizavimu prie viešosios politikos formavimo ar (ir) įgyvendinimo institucijų; nagrinėjami atvejai yra susiję su aplinkosaugos, infrastruktūros, miestų planavimo, sveikatos ir kitomis socialiai ir (ar) politiškai jautriomis sritimis; siekiant pasiekti didesnę auditoriją, dažnai susirinkimams taikomas „nuotolinis“ būdas, tačiau prioritetas labiau teikiamas „akis į akį“; svarstomosios demokratijos dalyviams dažniausiai taikoma išlaidų kompensavimo praktika.

Viešojoje erdvėje vis daugiau dėmesio skiriant svarstomosios demokratijos įgyvendinimo galimybės Lietuvoje, pažymėtina, jog tokios iniciatyvos ne tik stiprintų pasitikėjimą institucijomis, bet ir padėtų priimti visų poreikius atitinkančius sprendimus. Vis dėl to, kaip atskleidžia kitų užsienio šalių praktikos, reikalinga apsvarstyti, ar tikrai piliečių įtraukimas per svarstomąją demokratiją prisidėtų prie geresnio reglamentavimo, veiklų planavimo ir kitų klausimų sprendimo konkrečiu svarstomu atveju, o gal tam turėtų būti pasitelkti kiti mažiau išteklių (laiko, finansinių ir žmogiškųjų) reikalaujantys jų įtraukimo būdai, leidžiantys parengti duomenimis ir gyventojų nuomone pagrįstus sprendimus.

Nepriklausomai nuo to, koks piliečių įgalinimo būdas – svarstomoji ar dalyvaujamoji demokratija, būtų pasirenkamas, atlikta apžvalga leidžia išskirti, jog Lietuvoje susiduriama su iššūkiais, kurie daro poveikį visam viešojo valdymo demokratizavimui ir visuomenės atsparumui, esamų saugumo iššūkių kontekste. Visų pirma, piliečiai dažnai save suvokia ar yra įvardijami kaip politiškai pasyvūs, nenorintys ar negebantys įsitraukti, taip pat ne visose viešosios politikos srityse susiformavusi piliečių į(si)traukimo ir atvirumo kultūra. Antra, demokratinės institucijos yra palyginti jaunos, neturi patirties ir praktinių žinių kaip įtraukti gyventojus ar ne visais atvejais suvokia jų dalyvavimo sukuriama pridėtinę vertę, tačiau aiškiai identifikuoja jų dalyvavimo užtikrinimui reikalingus papildomus laiko ir kitus išteklius. Tad šiame kontekste dėmesys turėtų būti skiriamas ne tik tinkamo dalyvavimo metodo pasirinkimui ir jo įgyvendinimui pagal numatytas procedūras, bet ir išankstinių gyventojų nuostatų dėl dalyvavimo keitimui.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF IMPLEMENTING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN LITHUANIA

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Summary

The analysis of citizens' participation and drawing attention to the value it generates is not a new field of research, but currently the urge for citizens to be directly involved in decision-making process is receiving more and more attention. Such need of deeper analysis in this area is associated with the challenges faced in different countries, ensuring public resilience, the democratic nature of governance and formulation of policies on public-sensitive issues, which requires active participation of citizens not only in the political cycle or in the other traditional tools of participation (petitions, referendums, etc.), but the need for social inclusion and them to be directly involved in the decision-making process. The aim of the article is to analyse the possibilities and challenges of implementing deliberative democracy in Lithuania, taking into account the practices of foreign countries.

The results of the conducted research made it possible to distinguish the advantages of deliberative democracy: the tools of participatory democracy that are usually used in Lithuania (e.g. referendums, petitions, etc.) often reach only the most active members of society, while the tools of citizen involvement offered by deliberative democracy (citizens' assemblies, citizens' juries, etc.) ensure equal opportunities for all members of society to participate in the decision of the issue and can reach those persons who for certain reasons remain on the margins of decision-making.

Distinctive conditions necessary for the implementation of deliberative democracy: trust in government institutions and chosen participation model; legitimacy of procedures; feedback and considering the decisions made by the participants of deliberative democracy. This requires a consistent communication process, a clear formulation of the problem to be solved and the goals of the process, and the presentation of all expert information necessary for decision-making in a form that is understandable and accessible to all participants in the process. Accordingly, challenges related to this process include inadequate process management (starting from the planning and participant selection stage to the implementation of the decision).

The expression of cases of deliberative democracy is rapidly increasing in foreign countries and is characterized by: increasing regularity and institutionalization at public policy formation and/or implementation institutions; the considered cases are related to environmental protection, infrastructure, urban planning, health and other socially and/or politically sensitive areas; to reach a larger audience, meetings are often "remote", but "face-to-face" is more preferred; participants in deliberative democracy are usually subject to cost reimbursement practices.

Lithuania faces challenges that affect the entire democratization of public administration: citizens are often treated as politically passive; democratic institutions are relatively young, do not have experience and practical knowledge of how to involve the population or do not in all cases realize the added value created by their participation, but clearly identify the additional time and other resources needed to ensure their participation. Therefore, in this context, attention should be paid not only to the selection of the appropriate method of participation and its implementation according to the provided procedures, but also to the change of preconceived notions about participation.

Keywords: *democratic governance, deliberative democracy, participation of citizens, public governance*

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