



Cluj University Journal
Interdisciplinary: Social Sciences and Humanities

no.1

Volume 2/2024

ISSN 3008-4849

Bogdan Vodă University Press

CLUJ UNIVERSITY JOURNAL. INTERDISCIPLINARY: SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

This journal is published **4 times a year** by Bogdan Vodă University of Cluj-Napoca. All articles submitted are double-blind peer-reviewed by the Scientific Committee. The journal is financed by Bogdan Vodă University and coordinated by its Centre of Interdisciplinary Research.

Bogdan Vodă University Press – zip code: 400285, Cluj-Napoca, România

Senior editor: Vasile RIȚIU Ph.D., e-mail: vasiritiu@yahoo.com

ISSN 3008-4849 (Print)

ISSN 3008-4822 (Online)

ISSN-L 3008-4822

Contact: e-mail: journal@ubv.ro; **Tel. +40264431628 – ext. 201**

Indexation: CEEOL

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INTRODUCTION

Peace, economic development, political stability, attachment to the principles of progress and sustainable development, mutual knowledge are, according to Andrew Linklater, in the work 'European Civilizing Process,' a European civilizing process.

How far is this syntagm today in the conditions where for Europeans in the third decade of the 21st century, the dramatic reality is based on unacceptable military developments... Where is that already utopian concept of the 'European dream,' so beautifully presented once by Jeremy Rifkin?

The terrible war in Ukraine, or the most recent one in the Middle East, is today's reality, far from everything that was stated in the context of the first decade of the century. WHY?

Many say we are witnessing a rewriting, a new global order or, as others question, that the 21st century will be Asian, or that we are witnessing the decline of the West, the Pacific century. All this, despite the previous analyses of a Kissinger, who left us the other day, or of a Brzezinski, who, at least for the time being, still believed that the engine that energizes this perception, the American one, preferred itself. The center of gravity that is Washington, apparently missed what could have become a global pole, while China - seems already prepared to assume, besides economic positions, and geopolitical interests.

Retracing oneself in accelerated historical times is calculated in costs that nations will not afford, except with efforts to return and recover, in which confrontation will have more to say than political will.

On the other hand, the geographical over-dimensioning of the Pacific area - comprising the continental mass of the Far East and the vastness of the Pacific - is difficult to manage in institutional terms (of course, not impossible), and it is the space of different civilizations: Islamic (with particularities from Pakistan to eastern Indonesia), Japanese, Chinese, and Hindu themselves syntheses of well-individualized regional cultures, without forgetting the Anglo-Saxon cultures of the American, Canadian, and Australian Pacific or the Latinity of South America.

Against this background of strong 'tectonic movements,' without a doubt the success of the European model and the current international order, no matter how undulating, the stability is irrevocably demonstrated. This, even if the European inspiration provided in 1991 to Yitzhak Rabin to design a Common Market of the Middle East reunited: Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, not only did not have a chance of success, in time, but we see today after Syria, or in the wake of the dramatic Gaza conflict, visible elements of unrest, implosion of the geopolitical space of the Middle East, located at an unbelievable distance from the model of good governance, at the regional level.

I'm still talking and I still want to believe that the world we live in can have - or not? a chance for global governance, integrating multiple interests, expressly seeking good governance and contributing to progress and stability, and to ask myself, are these the great advantages in principle and in fact, through which, in particular, the European Union has imposed itself both as an economic-political, social but also cultural experiment?

I still believe that the transatlantic relationship but also the pacific relationship, with the turning point in Washington, in a regime of strategic emergency, to maintain valid, active, the whole set of global relations as form and substance, that is, this much-needed capacity for performance and renewal, meant to treat a global democracy in great distress, WILL IT?

We, like Jeremy Rifkin or Mark Leonard, strongly believe that the World, but also our Europe, can revive, reinvent, democratically its future.

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EDITORIAL

THE FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP

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Amidst the prevailing narrative of deteriorating Franco-German relations, recent incidents, from canceled state visits to mutual misunderstandings, have cast a shadow over the historically significant partnership. However, a closer examination of the past reveals that the current crisis is not unprecedented. From the Treaty of Rome negotiations, where Paris and Bonn clashed over the common market's nature, to disagreements over Algeria and the EEC's inception, historical differences were navigated by leaders like Adenauer, de Gaulle, Brandt, Pompidou, Schmidt, Mitterrand, and Kohl, fostering European integration. The post-Cold War era introduced shifts, challenging the dynamics post-reunification. Discrepancies on issues like the Iraq War and the Economic and Monetary Union reflected evolving dynamics. Despite recent tensions surrounding the pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, the article argues that political leadership remains pivotal for joint projects. The authors propose focusing on democracy, European industrial production, and sovereignty in migration, research, sustainable development, and defense as areas for collaboration, aiming to revitalize the driving force behind European integration. The complex relationship, despite its challenges, holds the potential to shape the future of Europe.

All the media emphasise the deterioration of Franco-German relations. Recent episodes certainly support this approach. From cancelled state visits to reciprocal misunderstandings and vexations, there is nothing short of a cloud over relations between the two neighbours on the Rhine. Yet the past is full of examples and situations that have nothing to envy the current Franco-German crisis.

As early as the negotiations on the Treaty of Rome, Paris and Bonn were at odds over the nature of the common market. For the former, it should be protectionist and be transformed into a customs union as soon as possible; for the latter, this market should be integrated into the world economy, move closer to a free trade area, and therefore achieve the disappearance of intra-European customs barriers within a short space of time. Nor did the FRG understand the war France was waging in Algeria, the torture it was practising and the fact that it was bogged down in this hopeless conflict.

Just after the EEC was launched, it feared the arrival in power of de Gaulle, who was highly critical of the Community adventure as it had begun with the Schuman plan. A decade later, both countries were questioning their partner's willingness to take a step forward. In Bonn, the Gaullist attitude towards the United States and France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated command was little appreciated, just as German reticence towards a powerful Europe was not understood in Paris. Later still, Germany's economic power, the strength of the Mark and the first steps of Ostpolitik made the French government fear that their country would be downgraded. The arrival in power of a team that included Communist ministers in 1981 in France and the economic policy put in place by François Mitterrand aroused the anger of Chancellor Schmidt who, as he confided to President Reagan's advisor George Schultz in February 1982, wanted the experiment to fail. The French President, for his part, found it difficult to understand German apprehensions about the installation of the Pershing on West German soil. This litany of Franco-German disagreements could be extended. [Mazzucelli, 1997]

These difficulties were often overcome by a real political will. Adenauer's, aware that a common market without France would mean a loss of power not only for the EEC but also for Germany. That of de Gaulle, who agreed to make the FRG a *primus inter pares* with France in this European adventure, because without this couple his plan for a Third Great Europe would be doomed to failure. Brandt and Pompidou relaunched Europe at The Hague in 1969 and agreed to take a step towards each other! This paved the way

for enlargement towards Northern Europe, the launch of a monetary policy and the first forms of a political Europe, if we remember the Copenhagen summit in December 1973.

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt were not to be outdone, with the political advances they implemented and above all with the launch of an ambitious monetary Europe that culminated in the Euro a few decades later. We must not forget the work of François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl, who, through the Single European Act and the launch of the integrated market, brought Europe into the world economy and overcame the Euromissile crisis. Their dialogue, though sometimes heated, enabled the EEC to absorb the German reunification of 1990 without major turbulence.

However, these different leaders did not forget the national interests for which they were responsible. The FRG became part of international bodies and obtained an enlarged market, necessary for its industrial power. Bonn was a reliable partner for its neighbours, whose security now seemed assured. France compensated for its withdrawal from the colonial world and modernised itself through its cooperation with Germany in European structures. It remains a geopolitical power, through its possession of nuclear weapons, its presence on the United Nations Security Council and its responsibilities in Germany inherited from the Second World War.

Convergences have even emerged on both sides of the Rhine. The FRG has gradually converted its neighbour to the virtues of the social market economy, and France's embrace of the single market under a socialist government is the most visible manifestation of this. Paris, for its part, has succeeded in getting Bonn to accept the need for a more sovereign Europe, better able to assert its claims in terms of foreign policy and defence. During the Cold War, Franco-German cooperation helped to settle a number of bilateral disputes, although it was not exclusive, since the construction of Europe, a joint project, brought other players into the dialogue. Franco-German leadership worked because the two states fed off each other's imbalances and constantly involved the other states of the European Community.

It is often said that a first break occurred following reunification in 1990. The asymmetrical partnership that had existed until then (a double imbalance: French political weight/German economic weight) disappeared and the new FRG found greater political room for manoeuvre. Paris was more fearful of confrontation than in the past, and differences were increasingly resented within the couple. Some have come to fear that the balance of power in Europe will shift in Germany's favour, as Jean-Pierre Chevènement once said: "What Germany was unable to achieve through two world wars, it is now achieving in a different way". Germany's attitude to Yugoslavia, its restraint in the first Gulf War, its plans for a federal Europe with security support from the United States, and the configuration of the future EMU are all factors that have led France to fear "a German Europe". The arrival in power of a new generation of German leaders (Schröder/Fischer) and their desire to defend German interests made French leaders nervous. The Nice summit (2000) was a good illustration of this. Paris did everything it could to maintain parity between the two countries within the European Commission, but had to give in on the number of German MEPs in the European Parliament. In short, the decade following reunification saw the Franco-German relationship change from "an imposed fact" to "a voluntary process" between two nations that were now fully equal! This made dialogue more difficult, but not impossible. Without the Franco-German compromise of 2002 on CAP financing, enlargement to include the countries of Eastern Europe would have been difficult. In 2003, Paris and Berlin refused to join the United States in Iraq. This indirectly calls into question the preamble to the Elysée Treaty voted by the Bundestag in 1963. This proves that German Atlanticism is no longer unreserved, a position that pleases Paris.

The Franco-German partnership also suffered from France's relative decline during the first two decades of the 2000s. Paris had great difficulty in maintaining its financial equilibrium. In the wake of the introduction of the euro, Paris and Berlin were subject to a procedure for non-compliance with the convergence criteria. The FRG entered a virtuous cycle of public expenditure management, while France found it very difficult to comply. Added to this is Germany's economic performance: national production, leading export power, top European contributor, record trade surpluses. At the same time - and especially after the crisis of 2008/2009 - France is stalling and struggling to overcome its difficulties, whereas the German figures are the envy of many. Since then, Berlin has led the way in Europe, whether in the debt crisis (Greece, for example) or in the migration crisis. Criticism of national egoism is rife, reinforced by

certain attitudes during the Libyan crisis, when the FRG voted differently from its NATO partners in March 2011 at the United Nations, or the rapprochement with Russia, which has not suffered any respite, despite the annexation of Crimea and secessionism in the Donbass. President Macron, elected in 2017, signalled France's return with the Sorbonne speech in September 2017, without any convincing response from the Germans. The Treaty of Aachen (2019) is supposed to give a boost to the Franco-German relationship. But a new context has entered the discussion: first the pandemic and then the invasion of Ukraine are reshuffling the cards. These two events seem to have thrown the relationship between Paris and Berlin into unprecedented turmoil.

Almost everything now divides the two states. On the question of security, the two nations have always had a divergent approach to NATO, a thorny issue if ever there was one, and one that is not new. Berlin was recently annoyed by French initiatives linked to the Ukrainian conflict. Didn't Paris announce the delivery of French light tanks to Kiev before anyone else, thereby putting pressure on West Germany? Even more recently, at the Weimar Triangle summit in June 2023, Macron and Polish President Duda outlined similar positions on Ukraine's membership of NATO, which Chancellor Scholz found incomprehensible given France's previous positions, particularly at the start of the Russian aggression. In any case, the impression in the FRG is that France is walking a fine line between its initial position, which was designed not to humiliate Russia, and its current position, which is to open up the prospect of Ukraine joining the Atlantic Alliance so that it is credible.

What is Paris looking for? Put pressure on Berlin? To restore France's image in Eastern and Central Europe? In any case, in the absence of a substantive position, the method - the French "cavalier seul" - is not going down well. Not to mention the fears in Germany that such a prospect would provoke an escalation with Russia! Conversely, in the case of the air defence shield project piloted by Germany and involving 17 other countries, a project announced for autumn 2022 by Chancellor Scholz, it was France that felt that its partner had backed it into a corner. The Chancellor favours an anti-missile system based on the acquisition of American, Israeli and German weapons, whereas Paris wants to acquire European weapons, in particular those of the MBDA group, and has obtained the backing of Italy, Spain and Portugal, for example, for this prospect. Another divide between North and South in Europe! Especially after the early development of a Franco-Italian system in this area: the Mamba! For Paris, it is not so much European security that is at stake as the German desire to support a project designed to promote German industry and technology! What's more, Berlin's project, which presupposes the use of American and Israeli missiles, is a long way from a "sovereign European solution", which is essential for France.

The dialogue of the deaf also affects other sectors. Energy, for example. Berlin does not understand France's attachment to civil nuclear power, having taken the unilateral decision to pull out in 2011. The German authorities had to accept an agreement on renewable energies that allows nuclear power to be used in the decarbonisation of part of French industry. In return, France has had to contend with a German U-turn on the issue of internal combustion engines, with Germany succeeding in slowing down and partially blocking the European Commission's initiatives in this area. [Krotz, 2015]

Distrust between the two neighbours has grown. France's image has deteriorated in Germany, and the FRG is worried about France's level of debt. It sees its partner as a "spendthrift nation", capable of dragging Europe down the same path. An observation that regularly occupies the pages of the German press. "It is doubtful that the French will accept a reduction in spending. In absolute terms, no country is as indebted as the second-largest economy in the eurozone", as the *Handelsblatt* of 24 April 2023 put it. For Germany, this situation is not linked to recent events, but is the result of a French problem, as the country has not significantly reduced its debt since the 2008 financial crisis. France is thus a problem in Europe: it could find itself at the heart of a European financial crisis if we are not careful. Recent domestic political realities have further tarnished this image. The French protests against pension reform give the image of a fractured country. This image is further tarnished by the recent nights of rioting following the death of young Nahel. These events appalled Berlin, and the cancellation of President Macron's planned state visit to Germany only confirms Berlin's doubts about Paris. They also affect other aspects of the relationship, symbolic though they are, when the Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg, Winfried Kretschmann, "considered that learning French was no longer a necessity for young Germans"!

France has the same doubts about Germany. It is annoyed by Germany's about-turns on internal combustion engines and by Berlin's demands for reform of the Stability and Growth Pact. On 12 July 2023, two leading French figures, former minister and European Commissioner Michel Barnier and former member of the board of the Autorité des marchés financiers Jean-Michel Naulot, wrote in *Le Monde* urging "France [not] to accept Chancellor Scholz's proposals on Europe", in particular on the financing of the major European loan, the reform of the electricity market and the voting arrangements within the European Council. On this last point, the two leaders expressed France's fears following Annalena Baerbock's article in *Politico.eu* on 12 June 2023, in which she proposed abandoning the unanimity rule for foreign and security policy within the European Council. A red rag in Paris! In France, Scholz's earlier statements in 2018 calling for the pooling of France's seat on the UN Security Council and in Prague in August 2022, where the head of government was already arguing for the abandonment of the unanimity rule, were also brought to the fore. Behind these declarations, France reads a desire for a German Europe: a Europe made up of 27 States voting by qualified majority and represented on the UN Security Council by the pooling of the French seat! What also disturbs France is the dissension within the coalition in power, which means that Berlin's word can no longer be trusted. Faced with the contradictions of his three-party coalition, the Chancellor is finding it difficult to set a clear and coherent course for German policy.

As a result, he is at the mercy of the environmentalists' and liberals' chin wagging, provoking a number of German stiffeners. These disagreements and mutual resentments have one major consequence: they are paralysing European integration. The Franco-German motor has run out of steam. Instead of reunifying and seeking convergence, the two states are fracturing Europe on a number of issues.

They often lead coalitions of states that oppose each other on debt, on the Atlantic alliance, on the missile defence shield, on the shape of Europe, and so on. If the engine no longer works, it's because the two states doubt themselves! Recent changes in the context (pandemic, war in Ukraine) have shaken certainties in both countries. And the dominant role that the two had in Europe is no longer self-evident. Germany, which had staked its hopes on dialogue with Russia for at least two decades, is forced to admit that it has not succeeded in preventing Moscow from aggressing against its neighbours (Georgia and Ukraine, for example). The sanctions to which it is subject are forcing it to reconsider its energy foundations. The economic difficulties it has been experiencing since the pandemic are putting the brakes on exports, a mainstay of the German economy. It is questioning its relations with China, whose market has become even more closed. Germans are "nostalgic for their industrial power" and the debate on the necessary transformation of the German economy is no longer taboo in Germany.

On security issues, regardless of the rifts between Paris and Berlin, the FRG must question its own involvement and open the way to European sovereignty and the consolidation of Europe's eastern flank, not forgetting migration issues in the south. But doubts also beset France. How can the country be reformed to absorb the structural deficits that are undermining it? Is reform possible on this side of the Rhine? French troops recently left the Sahelian strip (end of operation Barkhane) and Paris' influence is diminishing in its former African homeland to the benefit of China, Russia and other powers. There is also an urgent need to reinvest in Europe's eastern and south-eastern flanks to a greater extent than in the past, as President Macron has just reminded us in his Bratislava speech. Given Warsaw's active role in this area, should we be relying more on Poland to help us build a European defence architecture? The Poles have just joined the Eurocorps as a framework nation. In short, the lines are moving imperceptibly and are challenging the two States, whose fundamentals are being shaken up. Berlin is making headway on the strategic question and is no longer leaving Paris to occupy this niche on its own. Conversely, France's more dynamic economic performance of late has led it to question the German model. This double imbalance (German economic superiority, French strategic superiority) is slowly being resolved before our very eyes. However, this will not be enough to restore the Franco-German relationship and overcome the crisis that has engulfed it.

Despite the quality of relations between civil societies (Franco-German associations, twinning, cross-border passports, parliamentary meetings, apprenticeship agreements and so on), these cannot have as strong an effect as a strong political will at the top of the two States on a promising project. A political will supported by both government teams on essential objectives would have a real impact in Europe.

This project could revolve around the defence and reinvention of democracy, around European industrial production and around European sovereignty that addresses the issues of migration, research, sustainable development and defence. Values are at the heart of the European project, because the Community adventure was built on a double rejection: that of the fascist and national-socialist dictatorships and that of the communist dictatorship. Today, democracy is threatened and contested on a global scale and within the Union itself. At the very foundation of the European Community, Germany and France have a joint duty to defend this supreme good.

This means making demands of partners outside the EU and of countries within the EU that might call its precepts into question. It is up to the two States to think about how to dress up this requirement. It is also up to them to think about Made in Europe production, which would guarantee our economic sovereignty and ensure greater social and territorial cohesion within the European Community. We must dare to imagine industrial cooperation with cross-shareholdings (Airbus is always an inspiring example) and define the sectors where this is essential. It is up to Berlin and Paris to set an example in this area. This industrial sovereignty, which we need to work towards, naturally goes hand in hand with a reflection on our ecological transition, on sustainable development, where we need to put the thorny issues (nuclear, coal, internal combustion engines, etc.) on the table. We can continue with research in strategic sectors where we are lagging behind in Europe. Paris and Berlin have an interest in this! The aim is not the fortress Europe that some nationalists dream of, but simply to enable us to make choices that are not dictated from outside. If the Franco-German relationship can be rewritten on this basis, then Europe will once again have a driving force.

It is up to the leaders of the two countries to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. From the latter, we must retain the idea that the national interests of Germany and France are not incompatible with an inclusive European project, but that, on the contrary, they are part of it if they and Europe want to carry weight in this conflict-ridden world. A glance at a map of the world should convince them that Europe is no more than a cape, a finistere of a vast Eurasian entity separated by "a lake" from another equally massive entity to the south, Africa, with which it will have to resolve the migration issue. This major challenge to Europe's existence in the world was already mentioned in the Schuman Declaration, and for it the key was in the hands of France and Germany.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Franco-German relationship, despite its historical significance and successful collaborations in the past, is currently facing a period of strain and divergence. Recent episodes, including disagreements on security issues, economic policies, and divergent positions on international matters, highlight a significant rift between the two nations. The once-powerful Franco-German motor that drove European integration is now showing signs of slowing down, contributing to divisions within the European Union. However, the text suggests that there is still hope for revitalizing this crucial partnership. The leaders of both countries are urged to focus on shared values, such as defending democracy, promoting European industrial production, and addressing issues like migration, sustainable development, and defense collaboratively. By embracing a joint commitment to a redefined vision for Europe, the leaders can potentially restore the Franco-German relationship to its pivotal role in shaping the future of the European Union.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION, POLAND, HUNGARY AND ISRAEL

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Abstract

This article conducts a comparative analysis of the political and legal systems of three democratic nations—Poland, Hungary, and Israel—specifically exploring changes within their intergovernmental relationships. Originating from doctoral research on the legislative and judicial dynamics in Israel, the study delves into the challenges posed by populism in these countries and examines the role of the European Union (EU) as a potential umbrella organization. The article scrutinizes the response of EU systems to shifts within the political landscapes of Poland, Hungary, and Israel. Additionally, it addresses the intricate relationship between populist parties and the legal system, grappling with these issues through a combination of substantive and procedural approaches. The research aims to contribute insights into the impact of populism on democratic structures and the EU's efficacy in navigating these complexities within its member states.

J.E.L Classification: K4, P1, P2

Keywords: European Union, changing judge selection methods, intergovernmental relations

1. Introduction

This article focuses on the relationship between the political and legal system and presents a comparative analysis between three democratic countries - Poland, Hungary and Israel, which have undergone a change or an attempt to change the governmental relationship. The article also focuses on the description of the two systems of government in the European Union and the way these systems respond to the aforementioned changes. This article was written as a result of doctoral research addressing the relationship between the legislative authority and the judiciary in Israel. This article deals with two issues concerning the doctorate.

The first issue pertains to the populism phenomenon as it is reflected in the reviewed countries, and to the usefulness of an umbrella organization, i.e., the European Union (EU), with regard to these countries. The second issue pertains to the way the populist parties relate to the legal system. These two issues face a struggle that the doctorate tries to resolve with substantive and procedural tools. The article relies on a systematic literature review and brings insights that can shed light on the struggle through populist processes whose essence is to weaken the legal system so that it does not pose a threat to the legislative authority and allows the ruling party to rule under the claim that it is the will of the people.

2. Literature Review

"The Oxford Handbook of the European Union" by Erik Jones, Anand Menon, Stephen Weatherill: This handbook is a comprehensive collection of essays that provides an in-depth examination of various aspects of the European Union (EU). It covers topics such as the history of the EU, its institutions, policy

areas, challenges, and future prospects. The contributors, experts in their respective fields, offer insights into the political, economic, and legal dimensions of the EU, making it a valuable resource for scholars, students, and policymakers interested in European integration.

"Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy" by Sharon L. Wolchik, Jane L. Curry: This book explores the political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe from the collapse of communism to the establishment of democratic systems. It provides a historical overview of the region, examining the challenges and opportunities faced by these countries during the transition period. The authors analyze political developments, institutions, and societal changes, shedding light on the complex processes that shaped the political landscapes of Central and East European nations.

"Israel's National Security Law: Political Dynamics and Historical Development" by Amos Guiora: Amos Guiora delves into the legal framework governing Israel's national security in this book. Focusing on the intersection of law, politics, and historical context, the author explores the development of Israel's national security laws over time. The book likely addresses key events and policies that have influenced Israel's approach to national security, offering a legal and political analysis. It provides insights into the complexities and challenges associated with safeguarding a nation's security within a legal framework.

3. Methodology

The main objectives of this research are:

- a) Understanding and analyzing various aspects related to the European Union (EU) and its evolution, particularly in the context of political, economic, and legal dimensions.
- b) General Review of EU Institutions: Examining the political and judicial institutions within the EU, including the European Council, European Commission, European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice (ECJ)
- c) Circles of Relationship between Israel and the EU: Exploring the various levels of relationship between Israel and the EU, with a focus on the EU-Israel Agreement of Association, European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), and EuroMed.
- d) Comparison between Poland, Hungary, and Israel: Investigating the changes in the relationships between government authorities and judiciaries in Poland, Hungary, and Israel. Exploring similarities and differences in the mechanisms of these changes, specifically focusing on alterations in judge selection processes and the impact on the independence of the judiciary.
- e) Comparative Analysis between Israel, Poland, and Hungary: Conducting a comparative analysis between Israel, Poland, and Hungary, highlighting key similarities and differences in the shifts in government-judiciary relationships.

The main hypotheses are:

1. *The EU has both political and economic goals. Politically, the EU aims to ensure peaceful borders within Europe and empower all member countries, exerting political power beyond individual member states.*
2. *The evolution of the EU is outlined in distinct phases, ranging from a transition period (1958-1969) to the establishment of the EU through the Maastricht Treaty (1993-1997). Key stages include removing taxes and barriers, creating common policies, freezing economic integration, and forming a complete internal market.*
3. *Focusing on political and judicial institutions, including the European Council, European Commission, European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The European Parliament is seen as a democratic organ representing broad interests and participating in the legislative process.*
4. *Israel's relationship with the EU is centered around the EU-Israel Agreement of Association, followed by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the more distant circle of EuroMed.*
5. *Changes in relationships between government authorities and the judiciary are observed in Poland, Hungary, and Israel.*

The main research question is:

"How have the political and economic goals of the European Union (EU) manifested and evolved over time, particularly in terms of guaranteeing peaceful borders, empowering member countries, and advancing efficiency in the international arena through unified monetary and economic policies?"

Additionally, how has the institutional structure of the EU, especially its political and judicial components, contributed to or hindered the realization of these goals? Moreover, what is the impact of the EU's relationship with third-party countries, such as Israel, and how do changes in the relationships between government authorities and judiciaries in Poland, Hungary, and Israel influence the democratic regimes and the definition of populist parties in these countries?

The European Union (EU) has political and economic goals. At a political level, the Union is meant to guarantee peaceful borders within Europe and empower all countries. Hence, the Union has a political power over and above all its member states. The economic goals seeks to advance efficiency and ability to progress in the international arena by creating a unified monetary economic policy, to the extent that in 1992 the Euro was established as a single European currency.

4. Evolution of the European Union

The evolution of the EU unfolded through distinct phases. The subsequent stages are outlined below:

1. 1958 – 1969: Transition period – removing taxes and barriers between the six member states, creating a common tax and common agricultural policy (CAP). Creating homogeneity between founding states.
2. 1970 – 1984: Interim period – community increased to 10 member states. Institutional changes. Freezing economic integration processes. EEC Charter unchanged for approximately 30 years.
3. 1993 – 1995: Complete internal market – The European 92 Plan through the Single European Act (signed in 1986 and enacted in 1987), enacted a majority requirement for many sections – the importance was that more laws could be passed through majority vote than unanimity, because one country did not approve a law for any reason. In this period the EEC was central.
4. 1993 – 1997: EU process – the Maastricht (Netherlands) Treaty – establishment of the EU, formulating single policies in the fields of social policy, internal security, judiciary, foreign and security, and monetary policy (Euro currency). Subsidiarity principle – preference for arrangements by member states, but if more efficient (through substantive examination) to carry out at EU level, only then would legislative and policy authority be given to the EU in itself. The EEC became the EC (removal of the economic aspect). The term “federation” was rejected, but the word UNION was agreed upon.
5. IGC – Intergovernmental Conference – The process itself establishing the EU is seen as “on the move”. It appears its jurists and economists failed to take into account that every country and nation strove to preserve its unique culture, which influenced the Union’s rate of progress and its citizens assimilating its decisions.

5. General Review of EU Institutions

This review focuses on the political and judicial institutions. The political institution includes the European Council, European Commission and European Parliament. The judicial institution includes the European Court of Justice made up of two courts. Every official document contains the 23 languages of the EU.

The European parliament is meant to represent broad interests and is the democratic organ. The democratic parliament is required to participate in the legislative process. Its makeup and members are elected from all member states in direct, general and relative elections throughout the community every five years.

The European Court strengthened the parliament in a number of rulings, such as the ruling of a French company that appealed to invalidate a council regulation setting a production quota [Case 138/79 Roquette Freres v Council], when the council legislated without consulting the parliament contrary to what is stated in EEC paragraph 43. The court decided that consultation with the parliament was a feature of democracy. To consult means to acquire an opinion. The court increased the duty of consultation to acquire an opinion.

Another case [Case C-65/93 European Parliament V Council, 1995] ruled that the European Parliament failed to cooperate with the Council. The parliament requested invalidating a regulation claiming that it had not been consulted. This regulation was intended to change the list of developing countries to which the Union gives trade benefits. This had to be passed throughout the Union. The Council wanted to pass the matter with urgent consultation. The parliament delayed it. The Council considered these countries' interests and the strong economic interest of the Union and finally legislated and changed the list without parliamentary consultation. Although the previous ruling was emphasized in the claim, the court balanced between the two institutions and found that parliament had been given an opportunity for urgent consultation and not taken it up in time.

EU Court of Justice – (CJEU) expresses the judicial and supra-national nature of the Union. Its first instance – General Court (GC) – was established in 1989 to ease the court's workload. There is a great deal of "judicial activism". Therefore, there are two courts, the GC and CJEU established beforehand. Both sit in Luxembourg, and each has one judge from each member state (currently 27), judges are appointed for six years as agreed with each state. The court president is chosen by these judges. Makeup: usually 3-5 judges, in special cases 13 judges. Principal language spoken – French. The General Court areas of authority are: competition laws, import and export laws, trademark issues, civil or country claims against Union institutions (administrative, damages or contractual). In 2005, the European Civil Service Tribunal was established to remove community claims from the GC. Appeals against this court's rulings are brought to the GC. It also has authority for preliminary judgments in certain areas. Appeals in this case go to the CJEU.

The authority of the CJEU is claim against countries for not fulfilling their commitments according to the treaty (can lead to countries being fined, (TFEU 258, 259) – international judicial authority. Claims against community institutions (TFEU 263,265), administrative judicial authority. Submissions from local courts for preliminary CJEU rulings (TFEU 267). Thus, it is similar to the Israeli H CJ – it is more to establish precedents than providing opinions.

If such cases arise in international courts of member states, that must be interpreted – question of interpretation of Union judgments – must be addressed to the CJEU. If a citizen in one of the countries wants to sue authorities – if they come from the same country that has no appeal court, and the question is one associated with the Union, then the question is submitted to Luxembourg for a CJEU opinion. However, the citizen must go through the whole process in his own country first, and cannot apply directly to Luxembourg.

One of the reasons for all these steps is efficiency, so that people will use their own judicial and policy systems. Another reason is for integration – that there be emissaries from Luxembourg in all states, work to be distributed and the essence of interpretation of Union justice. Additionally the CJEU cannot overturn opinions, but every state can, which is why it is such.

An example of the relationship between the state of Israel and the EU can be found, for example in the Bulk Oil V. Sun ruling (1985) in which the British government oil company Sun cancelled a contract to sell oil to Bulk Oil, because of the British government's embargo on oil sales to Israel. Bulk argued that the embargo was null because it contradicted a trade agreement (Israel-EU), and in any case constituted a breach of contract, when there is a free trade agreement.

The CJEU recognized that in principle there can be a direct influence between the EU and third party countries – in other words countries such as Israel have the right to appeal to European courts, enforce and use parts of the agreement, but export restrictions are not covered by the agreement, and therefore the claim was denied.

The heart of Israel's relationship with the EU is the EU-Israel Agreement of Association. This is followed by the ENP (European Neighborhood Policy) – a more intense cooperation than the Agreement of Association and therefore, more desirable in terms of Israel. The external and most distant circle is EuroMed. The agreement reached in 1995, is monumental for Israel, mainly because of the environment in which we live, Israel are extremely dependent on world economy, and therefore, this agreement with a large and important body such as the EU is highly significant. The EU is our largest trade partner – larger even than the U.S.A. This is most positive, despite all the politics and the negative implications of this agreement, as will be seen below:

6. Comparison between Poland, Hungary and Israel

There are different relationships between authorities in Poland, Hungary, and Israel. However, in all three there have been changes in relationships between the government authority and judiciary.

In Hungary, this change occurred at the start of the second decade of the 21st century with the rise of Prime Minister Victor Orbán, head of the Fidesz for Government party. In Poland, this process began in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century with the rise to power of the Law and Justice Party led by Andrzej Duda. In Israel at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century with the rise of the Likud party to power under Benjamin Netanyahu's authority.

This short article reviews the changes in relationships between authorities in these three countries, discuss what is different and similar between them and explore whether these changes meet the definition of populist parties.

□ Poland

With rise of the Law and Justice party after it won a majority in Parliament in 2015, it did not have a majority to formally change the Polish constitution. Therefore, it addressed changing the makeup of the constitutional court by appointing five judges to the Constitutional Court, thus increasing the number of judges in this court, who sit in the trials in most cases to 13 out of 15 judges, and instead of a normal majority to issue a ruling that binds the government authorities, it was stipulated in legislation that any ruling given by the Constitutional Court would require a two-thirds majority [Adv. Dafne Benvenisti, 2023]. That is How changes in Judge Selection Mechanism Predicted Changes in the Democratic Regime in Poland and Hungary. The Israel Democracy Institute.]. Another change was in the manner petitions are heard, such that the order in which they are heard is according to their order of submission and not their degree of urgency.

In other instances, the government changed judge selection processes. Until 2017, judges were selected by the judiciary only, then an amendment to the law regarding changing the composition of the National Judicial Council determined that candidates for the composition of the committee would be recommended to the chair of the lower house of parliament who was not obligated to accept their recommendations. Furthermore, it was determined that all judges serving in the National Judicial Council would actually stand down immediately. Likewise, it was determined that all judges serving on the national justice council would stand down immediately [Adv. Dafne Benvenisti, 2023]. That is How changes in Judge Selection Mechanism Predicted Changes in the Democratic Regime in Poland and Hungary. The Israel Democracy Institute.]. Hence parliament took control over judges' appointments and politicians appoint most judges.

The judicial authority was weakened compared to the governmental system as it lost its independence. In terms of the Law and Justice party, the change sought to connect judges in Poland to the wishes of voters and increase their responsibility toward the electorate and thus better reflect the nation's will.

Another change increasing the judiciary's dependence on government authority was passing laws allowing judges to be dismissed or their salaries affected. Hence, the government authority earned legitimization to its legislation through the judicial system and reduced the judicial system's possibilities of criticizing it.

□ Hungary

Whereas the change in relationship between the authorities in Poland was gradual and was opposed by the state president and many demonstrators, in Hungary, Victor Orbán was elected president in 2010 [Adv. Dafne Benvenisti, 2023]. That is How changes in Judge Selection Mechanism Predicted Changes in the Democratic Regime in Poland and Hungary. The Israel Democracy Institute.]. when he established a coalition with a two-thirds majority in parliament, in Poland this was not the case.

This majority allowed Orbán to change the Hungarian constitution in April 2011 and adopt a new constitution. Changes included lowering the age of judges' retirement from 70 to 62 [Adv. Dafne Benvenisti,

2023. That is How changes in Judge Selection Mechanism Predicted Changes in the Democratic Regime in Poland and Hungary. The Israel Democracy Institute.], which allowed the immediate dismissal of numerous judges, and especially Supreme Court judges.

The judge selection process was also changed. If until Orbán's rise to power, judges were appointed by the judiciary council, an independent body with judges carrying most weight, after his election, a national justice office was established, which appointed 15 judges. Its head is chosen by two-thirds of parliament and has great authority over the appointment, dismissal, promotion or punishment of judges. Although changes were made to the president's authority as a result of international criticism, in practice presidents of the national justice office were close to the ruling party and coordinated judges' appointment with the ruling party's agenda. Another body established as a counterbalance to this body did not reduce its power or status of its president.

Constitutional court judges also had to be approved by a special parliamentary committee with a two-thirds majority to be appointed. This structure was different in the past, whereby every party had one vote on the committee, today the makeup of the parliamentary committee reflects parliamentary makeup. This change in how judges are appointed to the constitutional court made the opposition's agreement to constitution court judges appointments redundant.

□ Israel

With the establishment of the coalition in January 2023, the ruling party, the Likud, presented a proposal to change the relationship between the judiciary and government authorities so that, among others, it attempted to acquire a majority on the Judge Selection Committee (JSC) with the main reason being that in the judicial system's desire to interfere in legislation, it should reflect voters' wishes. Another reason was that the government authority has the responsibility for all results of laws legislated in parliament therefore the judicial system only has the authority to intervene or invalidate laws without carrying the responsibility for this intervention.

Examples of this were given in relation to conservative policy relating to migration to Israel whereas the intervention of the Supreme Court made it easier to enter the country and left the state of Israel and its residents with a problem of many migrants living in Israel because of a Supreme Court ruling. Table 1 illustrates a comparative analysis between Israel, Poland and Hungary.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis: Israel, Poland and Hungary

	Poland	Hungary	Israel
Time of Change	2010	2010	2023
Factors causing wish to change	Rise to power of the Law and Justice Party, Andrzej Duda Prime Minister	Rise of Fidesz for Government party, Viktor Orbán Prime Minister.	The Likud party rises to power - Netanyahu prime minister.
Motivation for change	No majority to formally change the Polish constitution	Adapting judge selection to ruling party's agenda	- If the judiciary seeks to intervene in legislation, it must reflect the voters' will. -HCJ's intervention facilitated entry of foreign workers and left the State of Israel with the problem of migrants remaining in Israel by virtue of the HCJ ruling
Essence of Change	♦ Changing Constitutional Court Composition ♦ Changing method of hearing petitions - not by urgency, but by order of submission	♦ Changing the constitution and adopting a new one ♦ Lowering judges' retirement age from 70 to 62 ♦ Changing the judge selection method	Changing judge selection method
Results of change	♦ Weak judicial system. Lost its independence ♦ Dismissal of judges and damage to their salaries ♦ Judiciary depends on governmental system	♦ Dismissing judges ♦ Courts lost independence ♦ Composition of the Judge Selection Committee reflects that of Parliament	Not completed
Implications for Democracy	♦ The governing authority receives legitimacy for legislation through the judiciary ♦ Reducing judiciary's possibility to audit government	♦ The judiciary cannot criticize government ♦ Constitutional Court Judge selection method made opposition's consent redundant.	Not completed
Public Response	Weak protests and demonstrations	No protests and demonstrations	Intense protests and demonstrations
Implementation of change	Implemented slowly	Implemented	Not implemented

7. Comparison Findings

Similarities

The three countries took an approach of weakening the judicial system vis-a-vis the government authority, in their words, to reflect the wishes of voters' whose desires are an expression of democracy

through elections. They did so by weakening the judiciary, taking over judge selection and the personalities that will be appointed to judge.

Differences

In Hungary, where the ruling party had a two-thirds' majority it was easier and thus they addressed the constitution directly without any significant citizens' disturbance.

In Poland, where the ruling party did not have such a large majority and because of civic opposition, changes were seen more slowly. In Israel where there is no constitution, attempts to change the JSC have led to strong civic opposition, hence changes the government proposed have not yet been introduced.

8. Conclusion

The EU grants the judicial system considerable weight, and the European parliament is an umbrella organization for different countries. However, every country developed its inner judicial and government systems relationships differently. The example this article discusses is Poland and Hungary as part of the EU. Israel is not part of the EU but is its point of reference.

In each country reviewed in this article, ruling parties attempted to weaken the judiciary with populist arguments in which voters' wishes must be reflected in the judiciary.

Populist claims accompany the weakening of the judiciary so that it will not have control over the action of government elected by the people and legitimize the government. In a democracy, majority wishes are not everything, and only a strong civic society can significantly repel the will of the majority to make a change in the relations between government branches so that the executive branch cannot do as it pleases, and this is in order to retain the balance between the branches which will act not only according to the will of the majority but also to preserve the rights of the minority as is the case in the State of Israel.

Freedom of expression is the central tool for this, not only through demonstrations but that all information reaches the electorate especially where the ruling party does not have a clear majority as a result of elections giving it the power to make changes weakening the judiciary.

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STUDY ON ELDERLY PEOPLE AS RESOURCE IN SOCIETY AND FAMILY

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Abstract

This paper explores the untapped potential of elderly individuals as vital resources within families and societies. Challenging the conventional notion of seniors as dependents, it delves into strategies for integrating them actively into social and community roles, resonating with the activity theory's emphasis on continued engagement. A thorough literature review reveals a significant gap in understanding the social, cultural needs, and leisure activities of retirees, crucial for enhancing their quality of life.

Our study predominantly focuses on developing and successfully implementing activities that foster 'more active ageing', thereby keeping seniors engaged at both community and territorial levels for extended periods. This research not only redefines the role of the elderly but also provides practical solutions for their continued active participation, thereby enriching the fabric of society and family life.

J.E.L Clasification: J14, J18, I31, Z13

Keywords: retirees, family, activity, society

1. Introduction

The situation of the elderly people in Romania is described in the literature of the field from rather a demographic and medical point of view. From a social perspective, there are a few regional studies that describe the differences between retirees and people employed or studies regarding the relations between generations (Ionescu, Bunescu, 2007; Tîrhaş, 2007).

The present research targets the identification and definition of aspects referring at the social and cultural life of retirees, to offer operating models of spending their free time, with the objective to keep an active and independent life, which is first of all, qualitative.

We have to mention that the instruments used in research are, generally, determined by a pre-survey (pilot research) which allows the testing of the descriptive scheme, of the instruments and procedures for work, and also the estimation of costs and anticipation of results (Mărginean, 2000). In the qualitative research on the elderly people in the municipality of Cluj- Napoca, we have used the interview as method, the technique used being that of face-to-face semi-structured interview.

2. Literature review

The literature on aging and its social implications offers diverse perspectives, encompassing sociological, psychological, and gerontological approaches. Atkinson (2006) highlights the importance of narrative in understanding the lives of the elderly, emphasizing the richness of life stories captured through interviews. This qualitative approach offers deep insights into the experiences and perspectives of older individuals.

Barrow (1992) takes a broader view, examining aging both at an individual and societal level. His work underscores the complex interplay between aging individuals and the societal structures around them, recognizing the dynamic nature of aging within the context of society.

Bucur (2007), in his discussion on social work with the elderly, provides a practical perspective,

focusing on the challenges and strategies in assisting the aging population. This work is particularly relevant for practitioners in the field of social work and caregiving.

Chelcea (2007) and Davidson (2006) contribute significantly to the methodological aspects of research on the elderly. Chelcea emphasizes both quantitative and qualitative methods, providing a balanced approach to sociological research, while Davidson focuses on the use of probability sampling in social research, ensuring the representativeness and reliability of research findings.

Dooley (2001) and Gal (2003) discuss the role of social work in addressing issues faced by older workers and the elderly in general. These works highlight the challenges and potential strategies for social work practice in the context of an aging population.

The contributions of Iluț (2005), Mărginean (2000), Popovici (2001), Rădulescu (1999), Rotariu (2009), Șchiopu & Verza (1997), and Tîrhaș (2007) further enrich the literature by exploring various dimensions of aging, including the sociology of family, demographic perspectives, psychological aspects of aging, and intergenerational exchange models. Together, these works provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of aging and its impact on individuals, families, and societies.

3. Metodology

The steps of the qualitative research are the following:

- The confirmation of the social self (of the researcher's position in society);
- The adoption of a perspective - in the present research we have used the functionalist paradigm;
- The choice of the study design (the face-to-face semi-structured interview);
- Collection of data – the period between July-October 2021;
- The analysis of data – the period between April-May 2022.

The qualitative research was carried out on a number of 27 people with residence in the municipality of Cuj-Napoca, 12 men and 15 women, all subjects being above the age of 60. They have a medium level of education, respectively elementary studies/ 8 grades or less (6); 10 grades/vocational school (7), high school (10), post-high school studies (2), higher education (2).

The reason of retirement is, mostly, the age limit (19 people), the pre-retirement (4 people) and sickness retirement (4 people).

The profession of the subjects taking part in the interviews, before retirement, has the following structure: workers (10 people), personnel with medium level studies (health, education, services) (6 people), retirees (5 people), clerk, technician, supervisor (4 people), personnel with higher education (2 people). All these socio-demographic data are synthetized in the following matrix, for a better view and identification of the people taking part in the interviews (table 1):

Table 1 – Socio-demographic data in qualitative research

Subjects	Age	Gender	Civil status	Education level	Profession	Reason of retirement
1	68 years	Male	married	10 grades	lathe operator	Sickness
2	66 years	Male	married	Higher education	teacher	Age limit
3	64 years	Male	married	Supervisor training	tehnician	Age limit
4	73 years	Male	married	10 grades	machinist	Sickness

5	68 years	Male	married	Highschool	mechanic	Age limit
6	67 years	Male	divorced	Vocational school	warehouse worker	Age limit
7	64 years	Male	divorced	highschool	warehouse worker	Pre-retirement
8	71 years	Male	married	Vocational school	retiree	Age limit
9	67 years	Male	married	Vocational school	rectifier	Age limit
10	70 years	Male	married	8 grades	retiree	Age limit
11	66 years	male	married	Military school	retiree	Age limit
12	68 years	male	married	10 grades	mechanic	Age limit
13	65 years	female	married	8 grades	textile worker	Age limit
14	68 years	female	married	Post-highschool	medical assistant	Age limit
15	58 years	female	divorced	8 grades	tailor	sickness
16	61 years	female	widowed	highschool	accountant	Age limit
17	63 years	female	married	highschool	accountant	Sickness
18	59 years	female	divorced	highschool	kindergarten teacher	Age limit
19	65 years	Female	married	highschool	cook	Age limit
20	72 years	Female	married	8 grades	care-taker	Pre-retirement
21	84 years	Female	widowed	highschool	accountant	Age limit
22	66 years	Female	married	Higher education	horticulturist engineer	Age limit
23	59 years	Female	married	highschool	chemical operator	Pre-retirement
24	74 years	Female	widowed	highschool	school teacher	Age limit
25	67 years	Female	married	Vocational school	tailor	Age limit
26	58 years	Female	widowed	10 grades	retiree	Pre-retirement
27	66 years	Female	married	8 grades	retiree	Age limit

4. The retiree's life style

a) The importance of the family

For most of the respondents, family remains the reference point of their lives, most answers highlighting the importance of the family in the activities carried out within it.

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	Number
IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AFTER RETIREMENT	Involvement in grandchildren's lives	11
	Increased attention to family	6
	Other activities	5
	Accommodation of spouses to each other	2
	Same as before	3

Table 2 – Importance of the family after retirement

b) The retiree's role in the family

Most elderly people see their life within the life of a family, therefore, ignoring the aspects related to family life means ignoring the most important part of the elderly's life. Keeping in touch with the family is very important, regardless of frequency.

Table 3 – The retiree's role in the family

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	Number
RETIREE'S ROLE IN THE FAMILY	Administrative/household	10
	Educational	5
	Decision making	5
	Advisor	4
	Affective support	3

c) Joys/problems of retirement

Wishing to find out the pleasant and less pleasant parts of retirement, this being one of the most important parts of life, besides school, marriage, birth of children, we asked the following questions: "Which is the most unpleasant side when you are retired? Which is the most pleasant part?"

Table 3 – Unpleasant sides of retirement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	Females	Males
UNPLEASANT SIDES OF RETIREMENT	Lack of activities/socialization	2	6
	Discrimination	5	-
	Financial status	2	3
	Health problems	2	2
	Perspective of death	3	-
	No sides	1	1

Table 4 – Benefits of retirement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	females	males
BENEFITS OF RETIREMENT	Family	5	3
	Spare time/freedom	5	3
	Ability to work/health	2	2
	Spare time activities/ socialization	-	4
	Other benefits	3	-

5. Achievements before and after retirement

To observe the differences of joys and satisfaction between the period of employment and the period of retirement, we asked the following associated questions: “Can you list the most important achievements (joys) in your life before retirement? What about those after retirement?” The subcategories formed determined us to present life situations separately from the satisfactions before retirement, and joys and satisfactions after retirement, each of them shaping a category with various subcategories.

Table 5 – Achievements before retirement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	Number
ACHIEVEMENTS BEFORE RETIREMENT	Family-related achievements	18
	Material achievements	10
	Professional achievements	3
	Social life-related achievements	2
	Hobby-related achievements	2

Table 6 – Achievements after retirement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	Number
ACHIEVEMENTS AFTER RETIREMENT	Family-related achievements	12
	Material achievements	7
	No achievement	4
	Does not mention	3
	Social life-related achievements	2

6. New acquaintances/new friends after retirement

To identify the socializing level of the elderly in the retirement period, we asked the following associated questions: “Have you met new people after retirement? Have you made new friends?” The resulting subcategories, after answer coding, were Yes or No.

Table 7 – New friends/acquaintances after retirement

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	female	male
NEW FRIENDS/NEW ACQUITANCES	Yes	6	10
	No	9	2
	Total	15	12

7. Social/cultural needs of retirees

As one of the study objectives entailed the identification of the social and cultural needs of the elderly, we asked the question: “Can you mention some social and cultural needs you feel that you have as a retiree?”

Table 8 – Social /cultural needs of the elderly

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORIES	number
SOCIAL/CULTURAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY	Culture	10
	Socialization	9
	Information	8
	Organized activities	5
	Health care	2
	Does not have	2
	Has an organized program	1

8. Hobbies of the elderly

One of the premises at the basis of research was the fact that the effects of retirement, as the main period in the life of an individual, can be attenuated by the availability of an extra-professional activity so that, at the moment of retirement, the individual should not feel the lack of professional roles so acutely.

Research (Popovici, 2001) shows that people who prepare for the moment of retirement manage to cope with it more successfully and retirement is no longer considered a loss if the intervention of certain motivational factors is possible, such as the extra-professional activities (hobbies).

Also, to identify the motivations behind the category of “spending free time”, we asked the associated questions: “Do you have a hobby? How long have you had it? How often do you practice it?”

Table 9 – Hobbies of the elderly

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	number
HOBBIES OF THE ELDERLY	I have no hobbies	8
	Information	4
	Manual activities	4
	Music auditions	3
	Cultural activities	2
	Others	5
	Civic responsibility	1

We mention that the qualitative research is only a stage in the study carried out on the elderly in the municipality of Cluj-Napoca, as the data obtained on qualitative research have only an orientative value, following that through further research we will complete these results with those of quantitative research, to meet the requirements of validity and fidelity specific to sociological research.

9. Conclusions

Influences on the identity of the elderly are mostly provided by both family and social services. These influences can be both positive and negative, in relation to the approach to the problems that face an elderly person. The family can provide a protective climate of balance by avoiding conflict, psycho-affective traumas, wants and affective frustrations, as well as factors of super and subchallenge, but such a behaviour, which takes over all the tasks of the elderly, can make them feel useless. On the other hand, even though all the social services for the elderly are so organized that they come to their aid, these services can be labelling by their own destination: the elderly, whose subculture may thus be formed.

The main objective of this paper was that of identifying the possibilities of using the elderly as human resource in the family and society, taking into account the present trend of doing away with the state of dependence of the elderly and providing solutions, by identifying active social roles, to keep them within activity - values promoted by the theory of activity.

Analysing the qualitative data of research, we can observe that the elderly can be a valuable resource for both family and community in the society they live in.

They wish to remain active and in touch with the society, taking into account the main needs signalled by them: cultural, socialization and information needs. It is interesting that these needs may be satisfied by the day centres/clubs for the elderly, but which are not accessed by them due to various reasons: they are not interested in the integration into such a collectively or do not know of such a club. The present paper confirms the fact that the elderly can be a valuable resource to both family and society.

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INTERCULTURALISM IN THE POLITICAL ARISTOCRACY MEMOIRS OF ROMANIA DURING 1881-1914

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Abstract

Interculturalism, explored by anthropologists, sheds light on global dynamics in the past two centuries. The 19th century featured economic interdependence and labor mobility. In Europe's La Belle Époque, the nobility, predominantly in foreign affairs or state institutions, demonstrated unique intercultural interactions. Romanian nobility of the late 19th century, educated in Western universities, engaged in cultural exchanges during events like Eastern celebrations, mingling with peasants. French correspondence occasionally included phrases like "je un dor de vous." Memoirs reveal intercultural instances, emphasizing a network of connections. Romanian noble families intertwined with French, Russian, Austrian nobilities through marriages, some residing abroad, notably in Paris. Bucharest hosted French newspapers reporting global news. The daily life of the Romanian nobility authentically exemplifies interculturalism, offering historians a valuable perspective on their evolution until the First World War.

J.E.L Classification: N43, Z13, F54.

Keywords: aristocracy, daily life, interculturality

1. Introduction

Historical research increasingly appeals to concepts and methods from other sciences to analyze certain periods in the evolution of human communities. In addition to political, military, or diplomatic aspects, in recent decades, historians have oriented their investigative approach towards everyday life and its multiple implications, aspects that can offer a clearer picture of the past. For a long time, the nationalist perspective of analysis, understanding, and explanation of the 19th century, as the century of the formation of nation-states, is predominant in Romanian historiography to highlight identity, those specific elements of the nation-state.

The paradigm of interculturality and its research methods, [Zhu Hua, 2016], such as critical discourse analysis, critical incident, conversation analysis [Zhu Hua, 2016], can be applied with interesting results for Romanian society in the second half of the 19th century. The existence of political and social elite from the old boyar class can be consider as an example of a group where intercultural communication is present. Moreover, in the memoirs, journals that exist in archive funds or those edited reflect how aware this old boyar class was in everyday life of the presence of elements of interculturality.

2. Literature review

Some literature on this subject are the following books: "**Memorii**" by Constantin Argetoianu [2008]: This memoir by Constantin Argetoianu, a significant figure in Romanian politics, offers a personal and detailed perspective on the political and social dynamics of the Romanian aristocracy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly highlighting the intercultural aspects within this elite group. "**Românii în secolele XIX-XX. Europeanizarea**" by Ioan Bulei [2011]: Ioan Bulei's book, which translates to "Romanians in the 19th-20th Centuries: Europeanization," explores the broader context of Romanian society's transformation under European influences. It provides a backdrop against which the intercultural interactions and changes

within the Romanian aristocracy can be better understood. "**Lumea era toată a mea. Amintirile unei prințese**" by Ana-Maria Callimachi [2015]: Translated as "The World Was All Mine. Memories of a Princess," this book by Ana-Maria Callimachi provides a unique view into the life of the Romanian aristocracy from a personal standpoint. It offers insights into the intercultural interactions and lifestyle of the elite during the period covered by Popescu's research.

3. Methodology

The main research objectives are:

- a] The research aims to illuminate the unique intercultural interactions of the Romanian nobility in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting their education in Western universities, cultural exchanges, and intertwining with other European nobilities.
- b] A significant objective is to study the Romanian aristocracy's role in modernizing Romania, aligning political institutions and the economy with Western European models, while also discussing the assimilation of bourgeois and intellectual elements within the aristocracy.
- c] The research delves into the concept of interculturality from both anthropological and sociological perspectives, emphasizing its relevance in interpreting phenomena and processes in the humanistic domain in the context of globalization and social changes.
- d] Investigating the stratification within the Romanian aristocracy, considering aspects such as wealth, functions, responsibilities within state institutions, and family status, to understand the power dynamics and socio-economic changes of the era.
- e] The study focuses on the everyday life of the Romanian aristocracy, particularly the imitation of European aristocratic lifestyle and the intercultural aspects manifesting in their social practices, leisure activities, and language use.
- f] Utilizing memoirs and journals of Romanian aristocracy members to document their experiences, social interactions, education, and lifestyle, providing a comprehensive view of the intercultural elements in their lives.

The main hypotheses are:

1. *The Romanian nobility in the late 19th century, particularly those educated in Western universities, engaged in unique intercultural interactions.*
2. *The paradigm of interculturality and its associated research methods can provide insightful results for analyzing the Romanian society of the second half of the 19th century.*
3. *The concept of interculturality, from both anthropological and sociological perspectives, is increasingly relevant in understanding the changes brought about by globalization and economic and social interdependencies.*
4. *The modern era in Romania can be analyzed from the perspective of interculturality, moving beyond the dichotomous Marxist view of class antagonism.*

The main research question is:

"How did the experiences and expressions of interculturalism among the Romanian political aristocracy, as evidenced in their memoirs and personal correspondences from 1881 to 1914, reflect and influence the socio-political dynamics of Romania during this transformative period in European history?"

The research methods to answer this questions are the qualitative ones, such as content analysis or cause-effect analysis.

4. Romanian aristocracy and interculturality

The Romanian aristocracy during the period 1881-1914 has predominantly studied from the perspective of its contribution to the modernization of Romania, aligning political institutions and the economy with those already operational in Western Europe. Although in that era the aristocracy presented itself as a social group with all its characteristics, studies dedicated to the modern period do not distinguish between the old land-owning and administratively influential families and the "small and middle nobility" or those who became wealthy through commercial activities. Dissolving at the beginning of the 20th century, as was the case throughout Western Europe, the Romanian aristocracy still provides, for the society of the Old Kingdom, a classic example of interculturality specific to a national state. Constituted as political and cultural elite, the aristocracy assumes the role of having shaped the modern Romanian state. However, due to the evolution of the economy and society, it is compelled to accept within itself elements of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals.

Additionally, for several months each year, a part of the aristocracy returns to its properties, and on Christmas or Easter, it intersects with the rural world during religious services or festivities. The arguments provide primarily by journals, memoirs, and to a lesser extent by correspondence or the press. An example is both the Journal and the Memoirs of Zoe Cămărășescu, the daughter of Queen Elisabeth's lady-in-waiting, Zoe Bengescu. For her, the Romanian language with archaic forms, no matter how much effort she made, could not be adopted because she was to remain "a poor Frenchified woman." [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p. 209]

The concept of interculturality, specific to the social sciences in the 20th century, both from an anthropological and sociological perspective, is increasingly relevant in the context of changes brought about by globalization and the intensification of economic and social interdependencies. This has led to a paradigm of difference, [Dietz, Gunther, 2018] highlighting distinctions between living spaces, civilizations, and cultures. It necessitates both a horizontal analysis from ethnic and religious perspectives and a functional, vertical analysis as a strategy for educational policy, tolerance, and communication.

Consequently, interculturality becomes a paradigm for interpreting phenomena and processes specific to the humanistic domain in the context of globalization. Linked to culture and distinct from civilization, a distinction that may blur in certain socio-historical contexts, interculturality as a paradigm is itself used from positivist, relativist, and constructivist perspectives [Bennett, Milton J., 2005].

The concept of culture defined as a set of representation schemes for events held by each state individually. Some of these schemes may sometimes conflict or have similar elements [Paul Kay, 1999]. Consequently, culture constituted as a set of conceptual tools used to make sense of the surrounding world [Paul. Kay, 1999]. Therefore, culture, as an individual or group human activity, is linked both to communication on one hand and, on the other hand, as an element of identification in interactions between individuals or groups.

From the perspective of structuralist anthropology, culture encompasses everything that gives people the ability to live, think, and realize themselves by adapting to the environment in which they live. It simultaneously provides them with the opportunity to develop and create. [Sirota, A, 1998.pp, 91-107].

In the context of the Romanian space, the modern era can be analyzed from the perspective of interculturality without being likened to the dichotomous Marxist view of the two antagonistic classes. This is because within the category that holds economic power, there is not only stratification based on wealth but also in terms of functions and responsibilities within state institutions. This is further compounded by the age of the family and the status held in society, alongside a numerical increase in the bourgeoisie and, last but not least, the most numerous social category, which remains the peasantry.

In the 19th century, and especially in its last decades, the aristocracy is a social category that, in the Romanian context, had not undergone significant changes; on the contrary, it was the one holding both political and economic power. In the Principalities, the Russian model of ennoblement through functions becomes dominant after 1833 [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004, p. 15]. Thus, in Muntenia, the "quality of noble lineage" is recognized even for those who were not actually nobles [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004,

p. 15]. What assured them the status of nobility was solely the "royal decree." However, despite the ensuing impoverishment, fragmentation of properties, or loss of functions, the noble status ensured through the compilation of genealogies. The Romanian aristocracy is present based on criteria such as antiquity, origin [princely or noble of the first or second rank], and geographic location. Thus, in the "*Annuaire mondain de la Roumanie*" for the year 1903, after presenting the royal family, the princely families that ruled in Moldova and Wallachia are inventoried. These include the Ghica, Cantacuzino, Moruzi, Șuțu, Calimachi, Bibescu, and Știrbey families [*Annuaire mondain de la Roumanie*, 1903]. The following pages cover the high-ranking and middle-ranking nobility. Consequently, we are dealing with this nobility that considers itself to have inherent authority, [Bourdieu, P, 2007, pp 385,397] refinement, personal distinction [Bourdieu, P, 2007, pp 385,397], and, not least, preeminence in terms of the symbolism of power.

As a result of the economic and political changes that occurred during the 19th century, this nobility quickly established a boundary between the public and private spheres [Mension-Rigau Éric, 1994, pp 225-236]. The demarcation aimed to preserve within the private space a specific lifestyle that ensured the maintenance of one's own identity. This was also because the abolition of noble ranks, parallel to changes in the economy, resulted in the infiltration of elements from the bourgeoisie into the Romanian aristocracy.

For the 19th century, the transformations undergone by the nobility are described in a newspaper of the time: "The establishment of the Moldavian nobility does not know hereditary nobility. The son of a nobleman is no longer a nobleman; there is only a nobility of public functions, the services of the state and the court are mixed with each other and form the steps of the nobility." [Platon Gheorghe, Platon, Alexandru Florin, 1995, p. 93].

In France, where what remained of the old nobility after the political and economic revolutions seems to be a conscious group that holds a set of traditions not shared with any other group or individual they meet. [Platon Gheorghe, Platon, Alexandru Florin, 1995, p. 93] Even in the Old Kingdom, the nobility behaves as such, although, for the most part, they adopt French culture to a considerable extent. Consequently, an increasing number of members of noble families grow up with not only governesses and education but also continuing their studies in major European capitals, accounting for 75% of them. [Iacob, Gheorghe, 2-13, and p.26] this is because the institutions of higher education in the Romanian space did not always match the social status of the Romanian aristocracy. An example in this regard is that as early as 1863, in Paris alone, there were 900 young Romanians, with 400 studying at universities and 500 pursuing high school studies. Among them, only 55 were state-sponsored scholarship recipients from Romania. [Bulei, Ion, 2011, p25] However, not everyone completed his or her studies with a bachelor's degree. The political elite of the Old Kingdom thought and spoke in French because, for example, out of the 141 ministers who served in modern Romania, 101 had studied in France [Sturdza, Dimitrie, Mihai, 2004, p 31]. It is also known that King Carol held audiences in French and spoke in this language during Crown Council meetings.

In fact, the political elite of the 19th century is a nobility caught between modernization and Europeanization on the one hand, and tradition on the other. Many of its representatives are proponents of the English political model, even if their cultural background is predominantly French and German. This is because not only modernization was occurring without radical actions but also because it was being carried out in harmony with tradition.

In England, the nobility was more concerned with maintaining effective power rather than the appearance of power, leading to the adoption of strategies for accommodation with other classes. [Coenen-Huther, J., 2007, p. 39]. In France, the aristocracy continued to cling to privileges and gradually wielded less political power. The Romanian political aristocracy, despite the political ideas it supports, remains a social category united by blood ties and the need to defend the remaining privileges. [Hitchins, K., 1998, p. 39]

The changes occurring in the modern Romanian aristocracy are reflected in the fact that some of them will not be satisfied solely with the incomes provided by landed properties or political positions. They will also engage in other fields such as the military, administration, judiciary, or diplomacy [Nicolescu, N, 2003] [Păunescu, C., Ștefan, M, 2004].

5. Interculturality in romanian aristocracy memoires

The domain of daily life is so vast that it is challenging anyone to establish an analytical model or structure. This is because it involves numerous elements of human existence. As a result, researchers have focused their attention on either a political personality, a social category, a specific time, or larger or smaller human communities. Historians have also directed their attention to lucrative activities or leisure pursuits. What can be noticed is the vastness of documents and sources, at least for the modern era, and any research can be criticized either for not covering all aspects or, despite being exhaustive, for failing to identify unique elements.

Most studies and publications on the daily life of the Romanian space in the second half of the 19th century and up to World War I focus on the everyday life of the middle-class categories of society, the emerging bourgeoisie, and the cultural elite. Only to a very small extent do they concentrate on the high nobility. Therefore, regarding the aristocracy understood as representatives of the old major noble families from the extracarpathian space, their daily life has been considered as the imitation of the European aristocracy's lifestyle rather than from the perspective of interculturality.

An important aspect of daily life is that it must originate from human actions, actions that have causes and consequences as diverse as the actions themselves. Such a mechanistic, deterministic method can lead to results that, in the humanistic domain, may be generalizations with serious consequences, as numerous examples in history demonstrate. Significant in this regard is the statement of Isaiah Berlin, who said, "What I am is largely due to my feelings and ideas, which in turn are the result of the feelings and ideas of the society to which I belong" [Berlin, Isaiah, 2000, p.194]. This makes it even more challenging to construct an image of daily life in a particular historical era. Nevertheless, Isaiah Berlin's statement can be a primary argument for researching the Romanian aristocracy from the perspective of microhistory between the years 1871-1914. This is because the Romanian aristocracy in the Old Kingdom undergoes the same transformation process as the rest of Europe, often merging with the political elite, and its daily life is an imitation of that in Paris or London.

Daily life unfolds in both a public and a private space. The term "public space" belongs to Jürgen Habermas, who used it in his doctoral thesis published in 1962 [Lits, Marc, 2014, p.77]. This term defined the space where the circulation of ideas leads to the formation of a necessary and legitimate public opinion in the case of a democracy [Ballarini, Loïc, n.d.], and during a period of bourgeois development. Over time, due to societal evolution, the concept of public space has not only been applied to describe the realm of ideas and the debate of opinions but also spatially. Because Habermas used the concept of public space for the period when the bourgeoisie was thriving and contributing to the formation of public opinion, consequently, the place where this was most easily identified was the city. The term "public sphere" is also used, originating from Anglophone literature, with a more material connotation [Lits, Marc, 2014, p.70], than an ideational and communicational one.

Another characteristic of public space is that of accessibility, meaning that anyone can be accepted in these spaces [Bodnar, Judith, 2015, p.291] [1]. This is because public space is not just a place where certain events take place but also the permission to participate in those events [Gottdiener, Mark, 1985, p.121] [2]. The industrial revolution led to changes even at the level of the city, diversifying public space to include state institutions, mass media, as well as theaters, cinemas, and spaces dedicated to leisure activities.

The time spent at the estates was not dedicated to checking how they were administered but rather to relaxation, horseback riding, hunting, reading, or study, and occasionally meeting with the local minor nobility and officials. The daily life within the private space of the aristocracy is divided between the residences in Bucharest and those in the countryside. Typically, during the summer, aristocrats would visit their country estates, where they interacted not only with peasants but also with the intellectual elite of the villages, local officials, and the minor nobility. However, members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Bucharest or other prominent noble families also visited families like that of Nicolae Kretzulescu or Elena Văcărescu.

Regarding the meetings with the local minor nobility, especially the visits that Dr. Kretzulescu received at the Leurdeni estate and mansion, his daughter Anna Kretzulescu-Lahovari wrote about them in "*Memories*." Among the visitors were not only old noble families like the Golești or Odobești, Câmpinenii,

but also the Misses Brătianu or General Davila with children whom he left on vacation, alongside those of Nicolae Kretzulescu [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018, p.119]. During these visits to Leurdeni, in the summer, members of the diplomatic corps whom the Romanian doctor and diplomat had met in St. Petersburg or Bucharest would also come, including Ambassador of Belgium to Bucharest Baron Hooricks, Count Tornielli with his wife, Baron d'Aehrenthal, the wife of the Russian ambassador, Hitrowo, with children. The Văcărescu and Catargi misses with their mothers also came to visit [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018]. The Kretzulescu children wore Romanian folk costumes at the estate, staged plays in which parents and visiting guests were spectators, took walks around the estate in a Dogcart, a carriage bought from Vienna. The costumes for the plays were also made by the children [Kretzulescu-Lahovari, Anna, 2018].

Phil Withington argues that analyzing the language used in a given historical period is essential for understanding the society of that time [Withington, Phil, 2010]. By examining the language used by people of that era, historians can identify concepts that allow a better reflection of the mindset and actions of the people of that period [Withington, Phil, 2010]. Following Phil Withington's perspective, for the Old Kingdom period in Romania, it would be accurate to use the terms "boier" [noble] and "boierime" [nobility] for that social category, which owned landed properties and, by virtue of these properties enjoyed certain privileges by birth. However, these boiers, who had studied in Paris, spoke and wrote, including their memoirs, in French, and use the term "aristocrat" when referring to aspects of everyday life. An example is Mișu Văcărescu's comment on one of the social events in Bucharest that he attended, a reception at Maria Fălcoianu's, where there was "an aristocratic and elegant perfume" [un parfum d'aristocratie et d'élégance] [Claymoor, 1883].

One of the elements of interculturality is language as the primary means of communication. In the 19th century, the French language was akin to what English is today. The aristocracy in Europe used the French language almost as a lingua franca. The German language occupied the second-place position, not only for Romanians in territories under the domination of the Habsburg Empire and later Austro-Hungarian Empire but also for those in the Kingdom. The Romanian political aristocracy learned French within the family, and there were moments when within the family they speak French.

In her memoirs, Zoe Cămărășescu wrote, "In the house, only French was spoken, with my mother, with us, with relatives, and friends. His Romanian was distorted." [Cămărășescu, Zoe, p.8] This might be because her father, Alexandru-Ahil Bengescu, had spent his childhood and lived in France until the age of 21. In his *Memoirs*, General Radu R. Rosetti mentioned that his father had attended high school in Toulouse and loved France and French culture. He also shared that when he and his brother argued, the brother would disdainfully refer to him as "salle valaque" [General Rosetti, Radu R, 2020, p.106].

Moreover, there is French-language press whose articles seem to address only the aristocracy and its daily concerns, such as *L'Indépendance Roumaine*, *Bucharest*, *La Roumanie Illustrée*, and *Annuaire Mondaine de la Roumanie*.

Family correspondence is predominantly in French, both letters and postcards written on Easter and, alongside "Christos a înviat!" [Christ is risen!], the greetings are written in French: "Nos meilleures souhaits de bonheur ce charmant trio. J'ai un grand dor de vous. Ma seule consolation est que vous êtes contentes. Tout à vous de cœur!" [Our best wishes for happiness to this charming trio. I miss you greatly. My only consolation is that you are happy. All my heart to you!] [ANIC, Fond Catargi, f 20]. The postcard signed by Marie Poenaru and addressed to Elena Catargi in Monaco. In Marie Poenaru's text, there is another word in Romanian, "dor," which is underlined. It is not the only example of correspondence among the Romanian aristocracy that includes the word "dor." Typically, it appears in letters between spouses or between parents and children. Furthermore, the calling cards sent on various occasions are in French, although there are situations where Romanian is used. However, when some of them hold public positions, they use Romanian when requesting services, as is the case with D.A. Sturdza. As the Minister of Domains, he asks the recipient to visit him before going to the King to discuss issues related to the Tulcea Prefecture [BNR, Arhiva istorică, *Fond Brătianu*, f11].

The journals of our aristocracy are also in French. An example is that of Elena Lahovary, later remarried as Șuțu, or the daughter of one of Queen Elisabeth's ladies-in-waiting, Zoe Cămărășescu, born

Bengescu. The journal of Elena Șuțu is dedicated to the two "now disappeared" men [Soutzou, Zoe *Jurnal de ma vie*], George Em. Lahovari and Alexandru Șuțu. She is the daughter of Jean N. Alexandrescu, "a large landowner, deputy, senator," and Zoe, born Ghermani. Through her marriage to Lahovari, who died in a duel with Nicolae Filipescu, she entered the ranks of the great aristocracy, and similarly through her second marriage to Alexandru Șuțu. This is because her father, and especially her grandfather, held the position of the court's "cafegiu" [coffee master] at the beginning of the 19th century. According to the criteria mentioned in Mihai Dim. Sturdza's *Encyclopedia*, the holders of this position did not fit into the aristocracy. Nevertheless, in the subsequent period, he would occupy administrative positions and acquire estates, eventually becoming wealthy enough for his daughter to enter into a marriage with a member of an aristocratic family.

As noted in her journal, Elena Alexandrescu has been educated in France since the age of nine, from where she returned as the wife of George Em Lahovari, the owner of the French-language newspaper *L'Indépendance Roumaine*. Her journal entries reveal the daily concerns of the aristocracy. Especially noteworthy is the organization of theater performances, for which they imported costumes from Paris. The cast of the play "Chicago – Bucharest" includes, among others, Michette Ghica, Anna A. Lahovary, Elena Ghica, Constantin Lahovary, Alexandru Davila, and Dimitrie Șuțu. After her marriage to Alexandru Șuțu, secretary at the Romanian legation in Athens, she spent the majority of her time traveling in Europe or Egypt, visiting museums, and meticulously recording the artworks she admired. Her journal also documents her participation in hunting and tennis parties, and in the early 20th century, her involvement and passion for bridge.

Another journal, this time belonging to a representative of the Romanian aristocracy, makes some references to moments of interaction between the two social classes, the aristocracy and the peasantry, without emphasizing belonging to the privileged category.

Zoe Cămărășescu is the youngest daughter of Queen Elisabeta's lady-in-waiting, Zoe Bengescu, from the Rosetti family. Born in 1895, she begins her Journal in 1909 at the age of 14. Being a representative of the old boyar families, learning foreign languages is an essential element of her education. Consequently, she writes her entries in French. In the early notebooks, she makes no mention of her father but focuses more on her mother and older sisters, such as Elena or Ella, married to George Băicoianu, and Maria, married to Nicolae Racotă. Maria's husband owned the estate in Ștorobăneasa, where Zoe joyfully spends 15 days to escape the heat, dust, and school life in Bucharest. The joy of going to the estate is immense but requires adherence to the customs of the "good society," namely the observance of "farewell visits" that had to be made before leaving Bucharest.

Regarding the journey from Bucharest to Ștorobăneasa and then to Alexandria, there is no mention for the summer of 1909 whether it was made by automobile. The usual activities include strolls, tennis matches with Florica and Noemi Rosetti, photographing landscapes, horseback riding lessons, and readings from French literature.

On May 11, 1909, she even records a visit to the animal fair. The purpose of such a visit was not mentioned, and it is unclear whether she and her friend Florica accompanied, presumably, Nicolae Racotă. A first interaction with the peasants noted on Thursday, May 14/27, 1909, when she dances in a traditional circle dance called "hora." Details about the duration of the dance and whether it took place in the manor's courtyard were not written down, as she will record in the years to come.

The only comment that draws attention is the one regarding Radu Tunaru, about whom she mentions hosting Maria for a day during the events of 1907. The word used is "revolution," and she considers Radu Tunaru "un vrai Roumain" (a true Romanian). For a 14-year-old, the gesture of helping a family member seems heroic, indicating that the environment in which she grew up and lives is one marked by social status differences. A "true Romanian" is someone who defends tradition and the family of the estate owner in the context of a social revolution. During another traditional dance [hora], which she notes was held in the manor's courtyard, she recalls that "rahat și vin" [sweets and wine] were distributed to the peasants.

The return to Bucharest made for the festivities of Materna, a charitable society aimed at helping women and children. Within this society, the first female doctor in Romania at that time, Maria Cuțarida-Crătunescu, had been active for many years. After the conclusion of the celebrations, preparations were for

the departure to Sinaia since, during the summer, the royal family resided at Peleş Castle. The ladies-in-waiting accompanied the queen, so the daughters of Zoe Bengescu moved to a rented apartment for the entire period.

The pages of the journal encompass the activities in Sinaia, where tennis matches, the visit of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, walks with Queen Elisabeth, English language lessons with Miss Driscoll, and the Lahovari family ball, play significant roles.

Visiting Prince Bibescu's residence and Martha de la Posada's is impressive for Zoe, about whom she writes that it is different from all the other evenings she had. Equally significant were the concerts organized by Queen Elisabeth, where George Enescu and Cella Delevrancea are almost permanent guests. Other important events include Blériot's flight, a solar eclipse, and a new winter sport, bobsledding.

Among other activities, Zoe, along with her friend Florica Radu, participates several times in séances held at the Filliti family residence, and finally yet importantly, she mentions the cinema. For the walks during their stay in Sinaia, she notes that they travelled in automobiles owned by Morțun, George Bibescu, or those belonging to the royal household.

It is interesting to note that the journal concludes in 1919, and the Memoirs published by descendants provide extensive information on various aspects of Zoe's life. Elements of interculturality highlight the cultural and social diversity she encountered and interacted. Information about education, holidays, sports, and more offers a more complete picture of her life.

The fact that there is no information about the financial situation directly from the journal may indicate a lack of interest or awareness of this aspect in her personal record. However, mentioning that the income comes only from her mother and from the Royal House, and that her mother's dowry had been spent, suggests a concern related to financial resources and a possible limitation within her family. It is interesting to analyze how financial aspects influence Zoe's perspective and life in a broader social context.

The existing journal at the National Archives concludes in 1919. Several elements of interculturality are present in the *Memoirs* published by descendants over the years, where information about education, holidays, practiced sports, and much more can be found. The journal does not reveal information regarding the financial state. Despite being part of the aristocracy, the income comes solely from her mother and the funds provided by the Royal House, as her mother's dowry had been spent by *Papa Achille*."

Zoe Cămărășescu describes a significant moment regarding the interculturality present within the Romanian aristocracy as follows: 'Vasile, today, tell me a story. And Vasile's story was like no other in the world. He had learned, in his village of Fîrțatești, from the elders, some beautiful tales with dragons, emperors, winged horses, stories with Saint Friday and Saint Sunday, enchanted forests, golden apples, and a magical bird, each more beautiful than the other' [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p 55]

Or the description of Maria's wedding at the Ștorobăneasa estate: 'There were musicians, champagne, and speeches, both witty and moving, as was customary at a grand wedding. After the meal, the hora dance unfolded in the courtyard with the bride and the wedding guests amidst the villagers. From hora to sârba and into the beat, you could only have seen how our ladies gathered the tails of their dresses on their arms, beating the ground and raising the dust.' [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011, p. 47]

If Zoe Cămărășescu or Elena Șuțu wrote their journals in French, Ana-Maria Callimachi [Callimachi, Ana-Maria, 2015] does not refer in her *Memoirs* about the language in which she wrote them. Similarly, there is no mention of the language used in family discussions or at social events in her memoirs, unlike the explicit mention made by Anna Kretzulescu-Lahovary, or Radu R. Rosetti for example.

The significant aspect of the interculturality present in the Romanian aristocracy is what Zoe Cămărășescu notes about the education of girls: "studies were only a complement to education. We had to know: French very well, to have solid notions of French literature, to speak as many languages as possible, to play the piano. But, above all, to be 'well brought up' [Cămărășescu, Z., 2011]. Another argument is the notebook of memories [ANIC, fond Barbu Știrbey], found in the Barbu Știrbey fund and whose owner is not mentioned but in which Al. Crețianu, I. Cantacuzino, Marie Știrbey, Lily Catargi also write. The questions and answers are in French. When asked about favorite writers or historical figures, Hugo, Chateaubriand, Mirabeau, Romain-Roland are mentioned, respectively Francis I, Lagardère, Jean-Christophe.

Defenders of the property decreed “sacred and inviolable” by the Constitution of 1866, patriots nurturing a sincere love for the country’s land, [Dumitrescu, D., 2007, p.19] understanding, in some cases, the situation of the peasantry, from the positions of the class from which they came, respectful of the country’s religion, which they considered a traditional cultural good, the representatives of the aristocracy imposed in the political life of the modern era a particular style that distinguished them from the other participants in the political act. Faithful to the given word, men of honor for whom the phrase “noblesse oblige” made sense, holding personal prestige as a family inheritance, the aristocracy considered politics not only an occupation but also a way of public manifestation [Dumitrescu, D., 2007, p.19].

In addition, this nobility considers itself to have innate authority, refinement, personal distinction and not least a preeminence in terms of the symbolism of power. Significant in this sense can be the statement of Isaiah Berlin, who said that, “what I am is due mostly to my feelings and ideas which in turn are the result of the feelings and ideas of the society to which they belong” [Berlin, I., 2000, p. 194]. This identity of the Romanian aristocracy is easy to notice not only from the press of the time that records the “events of the day” but also in terms of homes, clothing and even the use of paper for daily correspondence on which you can notice the monogram sometimes silver, sometimes gold.

The Romanian aristocracy often behaves as a closed group, as one of its members notes “it was almost excluded to meet in a salon or at a high-life ball a wife, a daughter or a sister of a liberal. When one ventured, they made such faces that they did not try a second time.” [Argetoianu, C., 2008, p.113] The attitude manifested towards the members of the National Liberal Party is also explained by the fact that most of them came from the small boyars, townspeople, intellectuals but who held political power. Consequently, this conservative aristocracy ends up sanctioning with the exclusion “from society” its own members for the simple reason that they were part of the liberal governments.

Regarding the Romanian political elite, where we find many representatives of the great boyar families, it is generally considered that they imitate European models, which happens at the border of the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, Constantin Argetoianu noted in his *Memoirs* “people with a handout had organized their lives and houses according to the norms and fashion of Paris. The Romanian language remained all behind the door, but the French one replaced the Greek one around the sofas” [Argetoianu, C., 2008, p.113]. But its integration into the European aristocracy also implies interculturality both at the level of this social category in Europe and internally by adopting the Romanian popular costume, fairy tales, dances, food.

6. Conclusion

This research on interculturalism in the Romanian political aristocracy from 1881 to 1914 provides a profound insight into the socio-political dynamics of Romania during a significant transitional era in European history. Key findings of this study include: **Intercultural Interactions:** The Romanian aristocracy, educated and influenced by Western European culture, engaged in unique intercultural interactions. These were manifested in their participation in foreign affairs, state institutions, and cultural exchanges, as well as in their personal lives, notably in matrimonial alliances with other European nobilities; **Influence of Global Dynamics:** The study revealed how global dynamics, such as economic interdependence and labor mobility during Europe's La Belle Époque, impacted the Romanian aristocracy, encouraging a network of intercultural connections.; **Role in National Modernization:** The Romanian aristocracy played a pivotal role in aligning Romania's political institutions and economy with Western European models, contributing significantly to the nation's modernization process.; **Reflection in Personal Correspondences:** The memoirs and correspondences of the Romanian nobility serve as valuable primary sources, offering historians rich insights into the daily life and intercultural experiences of this elite group until the outbreak of the First World War.

In essence, this research underscores the importance of interculturalism in understanding the evolution of the Romanian aristocracy and its impact on the broader socio-political landscape of Romania during this transformative historical period.

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SOME OF THE MODES OF OPERATION USED BY DRUG TRAFFICKERS

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Abstract

This article delves into the sophisticated and diverse methods employed by drug traffickers to evade law enforcement. It outlines the ingenious ways traffickers hide and transport narcotics, from using everyday vehicles modified with secret compartments to deploying complex drug manufacturing in clandestine laboratories. The study highlights the use of public transportation systems and international postal services for drug movement, underscoring the challenges faced by authorities in detecting these covert operations. Additionally, it details various methods for the identification and detection of narcotics, emphasizing the necessity of advanced scientific techniques to combat this global issue. The article provides valuable insights into the evolving strategies of drug trafficking, offering a comprehensive understanding crucial for law enforcement and policy development.

Keywords: *toxic substances, cocaine OIPC-INTERPOL, life belts, narcotics.*

J.E.L. Classification: K42, F17, 017

1. Introduction

This article aims in-depth exploration of the multifaceted and clandestine world of drug trafficking. This article sheds light on the intricate methods employed by traffickers to elude detection, encompassing both the transportation and concealment of narcotics. The investigative focus extends from the utilization of everyday vehicles, ingeniously modified for smuggling, to the complexities of drug production in hidden laboratories. The analysis also highlights the exploitation of public transport systems and international postal networks, revealing the daunting challenges faced by law enforcement agencies. Moreover, this piece delves into the advanced scientific techniques necessary for the identification and detection of narcotics, underscoring the continuous evolution of drug trafficking strategies. Through this exposition, the article aims to provide a thorough understanding of the operational tactics in drug trafficking, crucial for effective law enforcement and policy-making against this global issue.

2. Literature review

The literature review for "Some of the Modes of Operation Used by Drug Traffickers" encompasses a range of authoritative sources, offering a comprehensive overview of the criminalistics and legal aspects of drug trafficking. Bercheșan and Pletea's works (1994, 1998) provide foundational knowledge on the investigation of crimes involving narcotic substances, setting a theoretical and practical framework for understanding drug trafficking operations. Bunea (2019) and Gheorghită (2017) further expand on this by detailing criminalistic approaches and methodologies, offering insights into the complexities of detecting and analyzing drug-related crimes. Olteanu's (2004) focus on on-site research tactics aligns closely with the practical aspects of law enforcement in drug trafficking scenarios. Stancu's work (2001) adds another layer, discussing the broader scope of criminalistics in this context. The incorporation of legal frameworks, including The Romanian Criminal Code, The Romanian Criminal Procedure Code, and relevant laws (LAW

no. 143/2000 and LAW no. 300/2002), ensures a comprehensive understanding of the legal implications and guidelines governing the investigation of drug trafficking. This amalgamation of criminalistic literature and legal directives forms the bedrock of the current study, guiding the analysis of drug trafficking methods and the challenges faced in curbing this global issue.

3. Methodology

The main research objectives of the article "Some of the Modes of Operation Used by Drug Traffickers" are as follows:

- a) To examine the diverse methods used by drug traffickers for concealing and transporting narcotics: The article explores various ingenious techniques employed by traffickers, including the use of modified vehicles and other means of transport.
- b) To investigate the processes involved in the clandestine manufacture of drugs: This includes a look at the setup and operation of clandestine laboratories and the raw materials used in drug production.
- c) To analyze the methods of drug detection and identification: The article delves into the scientific and forensic techniques used to identify and analyze narcotics, including chemical analysis and chromatographic methods.
- d) To understand the challenges faced by law enforcement in combating drug trafficking: The research explores the difficulties encountered in detecting and intercepting drug smuggling operations, highlighting the need for advanced methods and strategies in law enforcement.

The research hypotheses are:

1. *Drug traffickers employ increasingly sophisticated methods for concealment and transportation, making detection by law enforcement agencies significantly more challenging.*
2. *Advanced forensic and chemical detection techniques are more effective in identifying narcotics compared to traditional methods, leading to a higher rate of interception and seizure of illicit drugs.*
3. *The effectiveness of drug trafficking prevention and enforcement is significantly influenced by the existing legal frameworks and regulations, with more comprehensive laws leading to more successful control and reduction of drug trafficking activities.*

4. Modes of operation used by drug traffickers

The forensic investigation of crimes related to drug trafficking and consumption is an extremely important activity for identifying the perpetrators of these highly dangerous acts. Drug traffickers employ a wide range of methods to conceal and transport drugs, aiming to avoid detection by judicial or customs authorities.

Regarding the locations and methods used for hiding narcotics, traffickers demonstrate considerable ingenuity. The choice of a hiding spot depends on the amount of drugs being trafficked, the method of transportation, the presence of inspections they must undergo, and, lastly, the trafficker's level of expertise and willingness to take risks.

Judicial experience has shown that traffickers use a variety of transportation means to move narcotics, such as cars, trucks, passenger or freight trains, boats, small vessels like sloops, commercial airplanes, and both private and company-owned passenger and cargo planes.

The significance of the *modus operandi* can be outlined as follows:

- a) By understanding the specific methods used in narcotics trafficking, judicial authorities gain a valuable tool for accurately identifying a pool of suspects.

Priority is given to individuals with a criminal history related to drug trafficking, those in the traffickers' circles, and those susceptible to committing such acts. Through targeted operational activities, there's a foundation for discovering narcotics or toxic products, items of illicit trafficking, as well as instruments used for drug administration, either on their persons or in their homes.

- b) Considering the operational methods used and correlating these with the timing of the crime, judicial authorities can identify potential witnesses from specific groups of people.

The practice of criminal investigation agencies in the anti-drug fight shows that traffickers often resort to placing narcotics in traditional "networks". Based on this, information about the movements of these

individuals in a certain area, their frequency of visits, and the company they keep, provides valuable clues about the location of the illegal activity, potential accomplices, and supply sources.

c) Lastly, understanding the *modus operandi* aids the judicial authorities in discerning or predicting the psycho-behavioral characteristics of the perpetrator.

This aspect is particularly significant in initiating criminal investigation procedures, choosing tactical surveillance strategies, and employing evidence and methods of proof.

5. Methods of masking the specific odors of some drugs

To prevent the detection of drugs due to their distinctive smell, especially by tracking dogs specialized in such operations, traffickers employ various methods:

1. Packaging drugs, particularly marijuana, in special cartons or tin canisters containing fish with a strong odor or mothballs to mask the scent.

2. Adding garlic or onion essences to parcels containing drugs, as these smells can confuse service dogs.

3. Using hermetically sealed containers that prevent any odor from escaping. However, these containers may still carry traces of drugs from being handled by individuals who have come into contact with the narcotics.

According to information provided by OIPC-INTERPOL, among the methods of disguising or concealing drugs, the most common methods of illicit drug trafficking include:

a) Industrial manufacturing of concealment devices using machinery, boxes, and labels from production lines of canned goods, often involving the complicity of employees from such factories. This operation involves substituting food products with narcotics.

b) Artisanal production of concealment devices through purchasing machines and raw materials like lids, empty boxes, and labels (either new or removed from full boxes) of appropriate sizes.

c) Altering finished canned products in several ways:

- Normally opening the can, peeling off the label, emptying its contents, cleaning it, and cutting it transversely below the factory seal. After inserting the drugs, the can is resealed and the label is reattached. The resulting can is slightly shorter in height.

- Making holes in the can's side walls after label removal, then emptying, inserting the drugs, sealing the cutouts, and reattaching the label.

- Cutting the can transversely and creating a lid. After label removal and cutting about 13 mm from the top edge, a metal strip is welded inside, slightly protruding. Drugs are inserted into the lower part, and the lid is placed on top, sealed with adhesive tape, and the label is re-glued. This allows for the transportation of drugs in solid or liquid form without odor emission.

d) Combining fabrics with narcotics for cocaine transport. This involves dissolving cocaine in pure alcohol, soaking cotton or linen fabrics in this solution, and then drying them for inconspicuous transportation. Approximately 1 kg of cocaine can be hidden in 140 handkerchiefs.

e) Utilizing the postal system, particularly by concealing drugs in letters or objects within parcels. Examples include:

- Narcotics hidden in letters, like in France where customs officers and anti-narcotics units discovered heroin in envelopes from Sri Lanka. Over a few months, 387 letters containing heroin were intercepted.

- Concealing narcotics in various objects sent through postal parcels, such as a case in Paris involving a tax inspector who received around 30 parcels from Latin America, used as a front by a trafficking network.

f) Employing couriers who sometimes ingest drugs in small plastic containers, or "olives," each containing a few grams of cocaine. One case involved a Colombian who managed to swallow 171 olives. For small-scale trafficking, drugs are also hidden in various bodily cavities and in everyday items like mouthpieces, dentures, underwear, bras, socks, vests, shoes, spray cans, hair dryers, babies' diapers, milk cartons, cans, fake cassettes, rigged batteries, and cigarette packs.

6. Ways of hiding drugs in transit

Vehicles, particularly cars, are most commonly used in drug smuggling, as they can conceal and transport up to 100 kg of drugs without drawing the attention of authorities. Regarding the construction and types of vehicles, numerous hiding places have been discovered, including:

- The ceiling and seat upholstery
- Headlights and glove compartments
- The dashboard and fuel tank
- Ornamental covers of car wheels
- Spare wheels or other specially arranged areas

These hiding spots are also utilized in buses, coaches, and trucks. It's well-known that at border points, both in Romania and in other countries, the largest drug seizures often involve passenger cars or TIR trucks.

In buses and trucks, the hiding places can extend to the cargo compartment, with well-disguised access routes created in various parts, such as:

- The cold production installation
- Inside the fuel tank with double walls
- The battery compartment
- The flooring and walls of compartments intended for furniture
- The connection point between the trailer and the tractor

Railway wagons are frequently used by traffickers due to the multiple concealment possibilities and the limited time for survey control by customs bodies when crossing borders.

In air traffic, passengers' suitcases, maps, and bags with double bottoms and walls are commonly used for drug trafficking. Common hiding places found in air traffic include areas related to the technical construction of the aircraft, such as:

- The crew cabin, toilets, passenger seats, ceiling, and side walls
- In the transported goods and personal belongings of travelers, such as flowers (both natural and artificial), beverage bottles, sports equipment, statuettes, and various personal items

On ships, suitable places for hiding narcotics include:

- The wind trunk and empty fuel tanks
- Cupboards and shelves with navigation logs
- Life belts, stores, refrigerators, crates, concave parts of the masts, the propeller, and rope coils

If a vessel, its crew, or cargo arouses suspicion of involvement in illicit drug trafficking, both a technical inspection of the vessel (engine room, crew cabins, radio room) and a thorough check of the goods and cargo structure are necessary.

The advancement in transportation and international trade in the modern era has greatly reduced distances between countries, allowing plants and drugs of formerly local significance to be known and transported to other regions of the world.

Particular attention must be paid to the inspection of transportation means, as they offer countless and unpredictable hiding places. Dismantling parts may be necessary, and it is advisable to include a specialist, typically an automotive bodywork expert, in the inspection team.

7. Manufacture, transport and distribution of drugs

Various methods are employed in the manufacturing, transporting, and consumption of narcotics for drug trafficking purposes. Concerning drug production, the raw materials come from clandestine cultivation of opiate poppy, *Cannabis indica* or *sativa*, the coca plant, and hallucinogenic mushrooms. These illicit crops often expand at the expense of food crops. Like the cultivation, narcotics manufacturing is conducted clandestinely in specially designed laboratories located in isolated areas.

The term "clandestine laboratory" typically refers to facilities where narcotics and psychotropic substances intended for the illegal drug market are produced, manufactured, and transformed, outside legal regulations, to supply drug addicts. Theoretically, any internationally controlled drug can be produced or refined in such a laboratory. The equipment used is improvised and inexpensive, easily purchasable from regular stores without raising suspicion. It has been observed that traffickers frequently change their laboratory locations to evade police detection.

Drugs are transported via air and sea routes, using various means ranging from individual carriers to airplanes and helicopters. Transport involves TIR vehicles, trains, aircraft, or ships. In TIR transport, traffickers exploit the fact that these vehicles are often loaded with perishable goods (meat, fruits, vegetables), which cannot be detained and inspected for extended periods.

Traffickers also use vehicles with false or temporary registration numbers for smuggling drugs. Romania is regarded by law enforcement as both a transit point for major drug trafficking networks and a consumer market. Drug trafficking and consumption, once sporadic, have now become commonplace. Narcotics from distant corners of the world enter Romania through various border points, eventually reaching the consumer market.

At the country's entry points, including various border crossings, personal cars and buses are subject to selective checks in addition to personal searches. However, large networks often have methods to evade these checks or, in some cases, corrupt the control bodies with bribes.

8. Methods of detection and identification of drugs

As known, the general characteristics of any substance can be observed through direct examination, which also applies to narcotic or toxic products or substances. Their general characteristics depend on their external morphological appearance. Narcotic or toxic drugs can be in solid, liquid, or gaseous states.

Solid products or substances might be crystalline or powdery, with a homogeneous or non-homogeneous structure, existing as single or mixed substances of plant or synthetic origin. Liquid or gaseous narcotics or toxic substances can appear as single substances, solutions, or mixtures.

The color and smell of toxic or narcotic drugs are due to their inherent properties or other components in the mixture. However, neither the color nor the smell provide definitive individualization, but only offer information about the nature of the examined substance.

This type of recognition, although indicative, requires technical-scientific analysis or expert verification to confirm the nature of the substances and products in question, determining if they belong to the group of toxic narcotics and if they constitute the material object of the crime of drug trafficking.

The external morphological examination, the initial stage of laboratory analysis and preliminary analysis, is conducted with the naked eye, in natural light, and under ultraviolet radiation, observing the color, appearance, and smell.

One of the methods for drug identification involves their precipitation and coloring reactions. Clues about the nature of substances that are suspected to be narcotics can be obtained from precipitation reactions when treated with specific reagents. Such reactions are particularly useful for alkaloids, with common reagents including picric acid, Mayer's reagent, Dragendorff's reagent, and Bouchardat's reagent.

For instance, cocaine forms a yellow precipitate when reacted with picric acid (1:100), turning brown when treated with Bouchardat's reagent. Morphine does not react with picric acid but forms a red-yellow precipitate (1:5000) with Dragendorff's reagent and a reddish-brown precipitate (1:5000) with

Bouchardat's reagent. Codeine exhibits similar reactions. These precipitation reactions are presumptive but should not be overlooked.

Presumptive analysis methods also include chemical analysis through color reactions and rapid on-site narcotic tests. Common reagents for color reactions are sulfuric acid, nitric acid, Erdmann's reagent, Frohde's reagent, Mandelin's reagent, Marquis reagent, and Mecke's reagent. These color tests are performed on residues or hydrochloric acid solutions, usually on porcelain or glass plates.

Microscopic examination is another method for detecting drugs. This examination, conducted with either a regular or stereomicroscope in natural or artificial light, can provide important information about the substance's nature, shape, and individual characteristics. It helps determine whether the substance is of plant, animal, or chemical origin and whether it is in an amorphous or crystalline state. For synthetic substances, the microscope can reveal the crystal's shape, color, and homogeneity.

Identifying narcotics or toxic substances can also involve determining the melting point or behavior in the flame. The melting point value is a unique characteristic of a substance and is influenced by its purity. For example, basic cocaine melts between 96°C-98°C, atropine at 116°C, and barbiturate derivatives have melting points ranging from 123°C - 220°C. The behavior in the flame can distinguish between inorganic substances (which don't burn) and organic substances (which burn, sometimes emitting smoke), or a mix of both, which partially burn leaving a residue.

For liquid samples, pH determination in aqueous solution is necessary before testing. Chromatographic methods are also employed for drug detection and analysis. Common drugs in illicit traffic include cannabis, heroin, cocaine, LSD, and amphetamines. Drugs sent to specialized laboratories are typically examined by chromatography to determine their nature and purity, with thin-layer chromatography (TLC), gas chromatography (GC), and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) being the most frequently used methods.

Chromatographic methods are separation techniques. Although their selectivity isn't very high, they play a crucial role, especially when combined with high-selectivity techniques like spectrometry. Chromatographic separation procedures are considered indispensable in analyzing complex mixtures of narcotic drugs, providing detailed information on minor constituents and aiding in the evaluation of the substances or products discovered.

9. Conclusions

The study highlights the evolving complexity and ingenuity in the methods used by drug traffickers for concealing and transporting narcotics. It underscores the necessity for law enforcement to adapt and develop more advanced detection techniques to effectively combat these sophisticated smuggling strategies. The research emphasizes that the success of drug trafficking prevention is significantly dependent on robust legal frameworks and international cooperation. The findings indicate a pressing need for continuous advancement in forensic and chemical analysis methods, as traditional approaches are often inadequate against the increasingly innovative tactics of traffickers. The study also calls for enhanced training and resource allocation for law enforcement agencies to keep pace with the dynamic nature of drug trafficking operations. In conclusion, a multi-faceted approach involving technological innovation, legal rigor, and international collaboration is crucial for effectively addressing the challenges posed by drug trafficking.

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SWOT-TOWS ANALYSIS OF THE PANDEMIC STRATEGIES APPLIED IN ROMANIA BETWEEN 2020-2021

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Abstract

This paper outlines pandemic management strategies, focusing on effective health policy improvements in Romania. Utilizing SWOT and TOWS analysis, it develops attack, defense, adaptation, and survival strategies to mitigate threats, leverage strengths, address weaknesses, and maximize national benefits. Emphasizing early disease detection and non-pharmaceutical interventions as crucial in pandemic control, the study highlights the importance of high vaccination rates. It advocates for health crisis management through the innovation of existing policies and the introduction of new methods, demonstrating the efficacy of the SWOT-TOWS approach in global health policy development.

J.E.L Classification: I18, O21, H51, H12

Keywords: COVID-19; Pandemics; SWOT; TOWS; infectious diseases; health policy; public health; health strategies; crisis management; pandemic management

1. Introduction

The importance of effective global health governance is reflected in countries' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. From the beginning of the pandemic until now, in Romania, gaps in the health system have been highlighted and inequalities between different groups of people have been accentuated, making access to quality health services difficult. The purpose of the research is to evaluate health policies and improve these plans by creating a clear picture of how crisis management works and how the responsible bodies respond to the crisis. With a clear picture, gaps in health systems and global health governance can be seen, with the opportunity to formulate broader and fairer policies that respond at all levels. As expected, the health policies brought by the European Union (EU), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) cannot be applied equally in every country due to economic and social differences. Thus, countries are obliged to adapt these recommendations according to the level of preparedness. The evolution of the pandemic highlighted the deficiencies already existing in the health sector in Romania. Thus, by implementing the lockdown on March 16, 2020, an attempt was made to reduce the burden on the health system and to obtain control over the spread of the disease and community transmission [Romanian Government, 2020a].

The lockdown was followed by other decisions aimed at managing the health crisis, such as the temporary closure of small and medium-sized enterprises, mask-wearing policies, regular hygiene policies, social distancing, vaccination strategy, digital transformation of the health and education sector, the implementation of applications COVID-19 and contact tracing [Romanian Government, 2020b, 2020c].

Romania, having among the largest diasporas in the EU, has contributed to the difficulty of pandemic management [Eurostat, 2020]. It was difficult to apply restrictive measures due to the circular movement of temporary labor between origin and destination. The need to re-adapt the control measures of the authorities to detect the transmission of the virus in these population groups and in the early detection of the disease by planning and preparing possible scenarios are useful policies for the control of the pandemic.

The spread of false information about the disease and about vaccination, have contributed to people's lack of confidence in political decisions and increased instability in the country. The authorities

took decisions in a hurry following the example of other countries in Western Europe without adapting them according to the needs of the country and the citizens. To formulate laws that can be applied in all EU countries, policy makers need to be aware of these state differences. Investment opportunities are multiple, and the evolution of health policies depends a lot on the communication and collaboration of the competent authorities.

2. Literature review

The study of pandemic management and health policy, especially post-COVID-19, has garnered extensive research. Joshua Gans' "The Pandemic Information Gap: The Brutal Economics of COVID-19" examines the pandemic's economic challenges and the information deficits affecting pandemic response and policymaking. This analysis is pivotal for understanding the economic strategies influencing health policy during crises. Michael Mosley's "COVID-19: Everything You Need to Know about the Corona Virus and the Race for the Vaccine" offers an exhaustive look at COVID-19, from its onset to vaccine development, illuminating health policy responses. Lastly, "Global Health Security: Recognizing Vulnerabilities, Creating Opportunities" by Simon Rushton and Jeremy Youde delves into global health security, surveying policy responses and international cooperation in health crisis management. Collectively, these works provide a comprehensive view of pandemic management, covering economic challenges, health policy, vaccine development, and global health security, thereby shedding light on the multifaceted strategies needed for managing health crises like COVID-19.

3. Methodology

The method chosen to study and to understand health policies was a qualitative case study analysis method. The research subject has an exploratory character, and the real, already existing data contributed to the depth and richness of the analysis. The research developed during the health crisis aims to study complex phenomena based on individual experiences, creating a different picture of reality. The pandemic period between the years 2020-2021 is a fixed period in which several existing official documents, rules, laws, policies, and strategies were analyzed to find gaps in pandemic management and to formulate innovative policies.

The choice of SWOT-TOWS analysis is because it helps to build an overview of a country's strengths and weaknesses, which are considered internal factors with a direct impact on the country. Opportunities and threats in the SWOT-TOWS analysis are considered external factors, external variables, which are not directly influenced by the internal governance of the country. Another reason why the SWOT-TOWS analysis was chosen is that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic opened the way to the applicability of the method in the analysis of health policies.

The recent disease outbreak has forced us to develop new health policies and adapt existing ones to the globalized world, and under these conditions, a SWOT-TOWS analysis is essential. In Romania, these policies have not received enough attention in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the government to rethink existing strategies and develop new strategies. Thus, a successful SWOT-TOWS analysis will contribute to the development of useful conclusions that could contribute to the development of health policies in the country.

4. Results

The SWOT analysis provides a qualitative comparison between several factors, both internal and external, that can influence the achievement of a certain objective in our field of interest, i.e. in pandemic management.

Thus, decisions can be made, and strategies can be built to lead to the fulfillment of the proposed goals (see Table 1.):

- we strengthen the favorable internal factors and further build on them, i.e. on Strengths (S).
- we strengthen the unfavorable internal factors or eliminate them, i.e. Weaknesses (W).

- we take advantage of favorable external factors, Opportunities (O).
- we avoid or remove unfavorable external factors, Threats (T).

Table 1. SWOT analysis of proposed goals

Favorable internal factors	Unfavorable internal factors
Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
S3 Promoting digitization and smart applications	W3 Locations with poorly developed internet network/no coverage
Favorable external factors	Unfavorable external factors
Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
O3: Digitization of the health, education and work sectors	T3: Risk of data theft

The unfavorable internal factors, which are found in W, respectively the unfavorable external factors, which are found in T, must be corrected, improved, or removed in order to solve the problems encountered in the pandemic. After completing the SWOT analysis, decisions can be made, strategies can be built to guide the achievement of the proposed goal. For this it is advisable to strengthen the favorable internal factors and build on them.

By making correlations between the four types of factors analyzed, four types of strategies that will help us to:

- take advantage of the strengths and improve them.
- correct weak points and overcome them.
- take advantage of opportunities and capitalize on them.
- keep threats under control and neutralize them.

Thus, we obtain four types of strategies (see Table 2.):

1. attack – use S to exploit O
2. defense – use S to diminish T
3. adaptation – use O to improve W
4. Survival – use W to avoid T

Table 2. TOWS analysis of the four types of strategies

TOWS	Opportunities	Threats
	Favorable external factors	Unfavorable external factors
Strong points	Atac strategy	Defense strategy
Favorable internal factors	use S to exploit O	use S to diminish T
Weak points	Adaptation strategy	Survival strategy
Unfavorable internal factors	use O to improve W	use W to avoid T

The optimal response to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic can only be formulated through highlighting gaps in the management system; by finding weak points and strong points. In the matter of health policies, it is very important to have transparency between the people in power, responsible for making decisions because that's the only way control can be achieved in case of a pandemic.

Our contribution and the novelty of the research paper is the application of SWOT-TOWS analysis by summarizing the strategies applied during the pandemic period 2020-2021 and finding solutions to manage the global health crisis. Thus, knowing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT = strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat) we can make global decisions based on scientific evidence and reformulate existing policies to improve them.

SWOT-TOWS analysis is useful to guide policy makers and global leaders in re-adapting steps/strategies for more effective management of the pandemic. It also helps to identify favorable and unfavorable factors, recognizing the challenges and obstacles of current strategies and in shaping political decisions. Thus, based on the evaluation of the SWOT-TOWS analysis, we can formulate new policies, guidelines, and health strategies in a targeted way. The objectives being the transformation of weak points into strengths and threats into opportunities.

We decided to carry out this analysis, setting a limit of 7 points for each factor, focusing mainly on health policies, strategies, public health measures and other interventions and laws especially in the field of health. The strengths listed are plans that can be implemented immediately with the help of pre-existing knowledge and resources. Weaknesses are components that can be improved or eliminated with certain efforts. Opportunities are what accelerate maturity of the system, and threats are difficulties that affect the proper functioning of the system.

In the following table (see Table 3.), a summarized SWOT-TOWS analysis can be found with the strengths and weaknesses of Romania, considered internal factors that directly influenced the country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same table opportunities and threats are presented, considered external factors, that can influence the response of the country, without having a direct impact on the response to the pandemic.

Table 3. SWOT-TOWS analysis of existing policies in Romania

Strategic analysis Internal factors External factors	Strength (S)	Weakness (W)
	S1: Implementation of rapid and effective actions in the early stages of the disease outbreak. S2: Community involvement to reduce the spread of the disease. S3: Promoting digitization and smart applications. S4: Development of financial support strategies. S5: Progressive shaping of public health and public health policies. S6: Daily/weekly reporting of the pandemic situation. S7: Combating food insecurity;	W1: Lack of medical equipment. W2: Ineffective communication. W3: Locations with poorly developed internet network/no coverage. W4: Eligibility problems when accessing financial support. W5: Political instability. W6: Propagation of false information. W7: Rising food prices;
Opportunity (O)	SO	WO
O1: Intensification of scientific research. O2: Standardization and harmonization of health policies at the level of the member states. O3: Digitization of the health, education, and work sectors. O4: Application for European funds. O5: Pragmatic redistribution of tasks at all levels in society. O6: Emphasizing the fight against disinformation. O7: Combating food insecurity;	SO1: Supplementing hospital beds and medical staff. SO2: Educating the population on health and global health policies. SO3: Stabilization of connections to the global internet network. SO4: Helping vulnerable populations. SO5: Facilitating coordination at regional level based on common EU policies. SO6: Elaboration of informative materials from reliable sources (e.g. from the official WHO website). SO7: Distributing free food;	WO1: Facilitating joint procurement of medical equipment and effective treatments. WO2: More effective collaboration between the EU, WHO and Member States. WO3: The need to increase funds for digitization. WO4: Extension of eligibility criteria. WO5: Sharing tasks at all levels, increasing stability, communication, and collaboration for an effective pandemic response. WO6: Participation in current EU and WHO projects in the fight against disinformation. WO7: Food price control and limitation;

T1: Migration of medical personnel to other countries. T2: Precautionary knowledge in the health field. T3: Risk of data theft. T4: EU funds are distributed to all EU countries in a certain percentage. T5: Collaboration and coordination difficulties in choosing the right strategy. T6: Inconsistency/inefficiency in the applied strategy. T7: Lack of labor workers, difficulties in transport and lack of agricultural equipment;	ST1: Accelerating the hiring of new medical personnel/creating jobs. ST2: Mandatory introduction of the Health Education subject in schools. ST3: Facilitating data protection. ST4: Fair and equal distribution of funds. ST5: Development of new strategies considering the specific factors of each country. ST6: Emphasizing important aspects and reducing fear in the population. ST7: Attracting the labor force, creating centers that distribute the surplus of free food during the crisis, avoiding food waste and facilitating production by implementing new technologies;	WT1: Correcting the lack of medical personnel through specific strategies established by the government. WT2: Investment by global leaders in educating the public about health and improving communication at every level of society. WT3: Investments in digitization and their development. WT4: Correct calculation of the amount of funding required for each country. WT5: The EU can accelerate progress within the country by choosing the right strategies. WT6: Controlling the spread of false information. WT7: Developing long-term strategies, making target groups more efficient;
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In the following, useful correlations are presented to understand Table 3 (see Table 3.):

1) **Attack strategy:**

Strengths (S) – Opportunities (O)

The correlations between these two types of analyzed factors helped to identify which of the "Strengths" of the pandemic can be used as much as possible through the "Opportunities" discovered. For example, S6 - Daily/Weekly Pandemic Situation Reporting and O6 - Emphasizing the fight against disinformation, are correlations that can be improved with strategies from SO6 – Developing informative materials from reliable sources (from the official WHO website) and WO6 – Participation in current EU and WHO projects in the fight against disinformation.

2) **Defense strategy:**

Strengths (S) – Threats (T)

The correlation between these two types of factors in the analysis helps us to discover if we can use the "Strengths" to minimize, and even remove the "Threats". For example, S1 – Implementing fast and efficient actions in the first stages of the disease outbreak and T1 – Migration of medical personnel to other countries, are aspects that can be minimized through strategies ST1 – Accelerating the hiring of new medical staff/job creation and through WT1 – Correcting the shortage of medical personnel through the specific strategies established by the government.

3) **Adaptation strategy:**

Weaknesses (W) – Opportunities (O)

By correlating these two types of factors we can see which of the "Weaknesses" can be adapted or changed to help us take advantage of the identified "Opportunities". For example: W – Ineffective communication with O2 – Standardization and harmonization of health policies at the level member states.

The thinking strategy for solving the weak point is WO2 – More effective collaboration between the EU, WHO and Member States and SO2 – Educating the population on the topic of health and global health policies.

4) Survival strategy:

Weaknesses (W) – Threats (T)

The correlation between these two types of factors could help us find solutions for "Weaknesses" so that we can avoid the "Threats" identified in the analysis. The choice for exemplification: W5 – Political instability and T5 – Difficulties in collaboration, coordination of strategies. Avoiding this threat can be achieved perhaps through ST5 – Developing new strategies considering the specific factors of each country and WT5 – the EU can accelerate progress within the country by choosing the right strategies.

5. Discussions

Looking at the results, Romania seemed to control very well the early stages of the pandemic, by implementing non-pharmaceutical measures (basic hygiene, social distancing, school closures, etc.). Limiting the movement of people entering and exiting the country should have been better controlled. The increase in the number of cases every day highlighted the global lack of medical equipment, making it more difficult to fight the disease. The Romanian government made great efforts to collaborate with the EU to facilitate the procurement of medical equipment and to supplement the number of beds in every COVID-19 hospital in the country to slow down the pandemic, but the steps made were not enough.

The lockdown imposed by the government had clear results in managing infection rates, but at the same time it also had socio-economic consequences, and effects on the mental health of the population. Several businesses were closed during that time and people lost their jobs or agreed to work for less money to keep their job.

Public health and social measures taken to prevent pandemics must consider the principles of human rights (responsibility, equality, non-discrimination and participation) in the long term. The outbreak affected people differently, depending on age, gender, ethnicity, the presence or absence of disabilities, education, job, etc. [Inter Agency Standing Committee, 2020].

Before implementing prevention, mitigation, and response measures, the government should carefully analyze them because they can exacerbate inequalities. Moreover, the protection of medical personnel has to be provided by the authorities, to prevent a decrease in the quality of healthcare services and to keep mortality rates under control.

The establishment of the telephone line, called „Tel Verde” had a positive impact on the population. Health experts answered people's questions and concerns 24h/7 [World Health Organization, 2020c]. Romanian authorities have worked constantly to increase the testing of COVID-19 and to facilitate the availability of rapid tests [Simona Fodor, 2020]. Regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, the EU has taken several actions in this regard through various programs and collaborations [World Health Organization, 2021d].

Important factors were taken into consideration to deal with the crisis such as the capacity of the health system, attention to vulnerable populations, and the level of urbanization.

Elderly care facilities were at great risk due to the large number of people present in a relatively small and inadequate place. The risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 was very high in these centers, and the virus could also be brought in by caregivers or visiting relatives. For this reason, emergency plans had to be developed for the benefit of the residents.

The most significant challenges faced by these care centers in during the COVID-19 crisis included (European Committee of Regions, 2020a):

- lack of personal protective equipment.
- insufficient medical personnel.
- difficulties in isolating infected patients.
- inability to perform COVID-19 tests.
- unclear procedures for isolating the outbreak.

- difficulties in transferring patients from one center to another.
- lack of medicines.

To avoid fear and confusion, the authorities had to send clear and consistent information about existing outbreaks on people's preferred communication channels (e.g. social media, television, radio, etc.). Involvement of celebrities or other important people in the promotion of preventive measures to combat the pandemic have increased citizens' trust in their application and improved the attitude in managing disinformation.

Many mobile applications have been developed in the EU to detect potential patients with COVID-19, such as CovTrack in Romania [European Commission, 2020c]. The CovTrack app allowed users to keep a record of those they met and could also report to the local authorities if they have identified a potential case of COVID-19 [Ro Insider, 2020].

Provision of food, clean water, hygiene materials and other basic items are essential for isolated or quarantined people. Depending on the context, the services of volunteering were activated in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where volunteers offered help to people and delivered food every day [TVR Cluj, 2020].

The EU economic recovery plan has been accessed by several European countries, including Romania to support vulnerable populations and for financing small and medium-sized enterprises. The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the health, education, and other working sectors. Most people had to adapt to the new circumstances, and so did their children who continued their education in virtual mode.

Online education has been a challenge in several areas in Romania, where internet access was hard to achieve, and many families were facing financial problems. The Ministry of Education intervened by distributing tablets to help these children to continue their education [Paul Joyce, 2020]. Promoting lifelong learning, quality education, healthy living and well-being for all ages are part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations. All member states of the United Nations have adopted an agenda for Sustainable Goals as early as 2015, which means that members are firmly committed to implementing plans that will help achieve these global goals [United Nations, 2015].

Finally, considering the country's level of development, political instability, and the level of education of the population, Romania's response to the pandemic was a justified one.

Following the response of European countries, Romania applied its national strategies and tried to implement the EU/WHO recommendations in a timely manner. There are still several steps to follow regarding the EU's common legal framework for emergency situations. Most EU countries have extremely complex laws and regulations for managing a pandemic, and introducing new legislation from the EU could disturb the pre-existing laws (European Committee of Regions, 2021a).

We can conclude that in Romania there is potential in the field of development health policies, but investment and qualified personnel are needed. Patterns and strategies The EU and WHO are useful, but they need to be rethought to be applied in Romania. The pandemic COVID-19 is still ongoing, and we firmly believe that many more will emerge recommendations over the years that will be useful in crisis management.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, all decisions must be part of a long-term plan to rebuild the economy and increase the quality of life. In the field of health policies, when formulating new policies or improving existing policies, the task force should be composed of experts from various fields to touch all points and formulate policies that primarily consider the health of the population and not economic interests. To achieve these objectives, both the EU and Romania have already taken important steps whose effects will be seen in the near future.

The need for reform has never been more important than now. Challenges such as the implementation of measures to slow the transmission of the disease and the functioning of the global market

are difficult to balance, and fast and efficient response in these situations is very important. Also, socio-economic differences must be considered before health policies are formulated and modulated in such a way that they apply in each country according to its economic situation [Böhme K., 2020].

The study has a major impact on people's perception of health policies and emphasizes the importance of achieving a balance between the global market and human health. Also, the present paper is enriched with scientific data and summarizes existing policies, which can be used as a guide for specialists involved in the formulation of health policies both at the Romanian and global level.

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POPULISM AS A POLITICAL TERM AND IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN ISRAEL

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Abstract

This article delves into populism as a contemporary political term, focusing on its Western manifestation within Israel's political landscape. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review, the author distinguishes populism from historical connotations and employs a theoretical-philosophical approach, utilizing Israel as a case study. The study emphasizes the elusiveness of populism, rooted in its linguistic and cultural dimensions. The author contends that populism transcends traditional political divisions, illustrating this through examples from Israeli politics. Examining the role of language in shaping political thought, the paper invokes Wittgenstein's philosophy, asserting that populism's impact is deeply ingrained in social and cultural contexts. The article navigates through the complexities of populism in democracies, distinguishing between 'substantial' and 'skinny' democracies. It concludes by emphasizing the need to understand populism beyond mere rhetoric, acknowledging its intricate connection with societal structures and urging a nuanced cross-country analysis.

J.E.L Classification: D72, P16, O17

Keywords: *populism, contemporary politics, Israel*

1. Introduction

This paper deals with populism as a political term and relies on a comprehensive literature review including papers as well as articles from around the world which understand populism as a global phenomenon. However, here I address only its Western manifestation that has not skipped over Israel's politics. In this paper I refer to populism in its contemporary meaning, and not as a historical phenomenon which allegedly goes as far back as the 19th century. In what follows, I assess populism as a theoretical-philosophical term using the state of Israel as a case study to instantiate it. This theoretical discussion will be used as a groundwork for my PhD dissertation, which tackles the state of democracy as we know it today, in light of the rise of populism across Western societies.

2. Literature review

"The Populist Temptation: Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the Modern Era" by Barry Eichengreen: Barry Eichengreen's work explores the intersection of economic grievances and political reactions in the modern era, focusing on the phenomenon of populism. Eichengreen delves into the complex relationship between economic factors and the rise of populist movements, analyzing how economic discontent can shape political landscapes. Through a comprehensive review, Eichengreen contextualizes the populist temptation within historical and contemporary economic frameworks, offering insights into the motivations behind populist movements.

"Populism: A Very Short Introduction" by Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser: In their concise work, Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser provide a brief yet insightful introduction to the multifaceted concept of populism. The authors present a review that encompasses key theoretical

approaches to populism, drawing from political science, sociology, and other relevant disciplines. By examining the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of populism, the book aims to offer readers a solid foundation for understanding the common features and variations of populist movements worldwide.

"Populism in Israel" by Naomi Chazan: Naomi Chazan's work, "Populism in Israel," is trying to provide a comprehensive review on the subject, focusing specifically on the context of Israel. Chazan explores the historical and political factors that have contributed to the rise and evolution of populist movements within the Israeli political landscape.

3. Methodology

The main objectives of this research are:

- a) **Terminological Clarification of Populism:** The primary objective is to emphasize the importance of terminological clarification regarding the concept of populism. The term "populism" is often used pejoratively to label the 'other,' and it requires clarification to bridge the gap between theoretical definitions and the complex reality of modern states with diverse cultures and motivations.
- b) **Deconstruction of Populism Stereotypes:** aiming to challenge and deconstruct stereotypes associated with populism. It discusses how populists are often portrayed as simplistic, irrational, and superficial individuals caught up in myths. This characterization oversimplifies the diverse motivations and complexities within modern states, emphasizing the need to understand populism beyond stereotypes.
- c) **Populism as a Mental, Sociological, and Cultural Position:** Seeking to shift the understanding of populism from a purely political perspective to a mental, sociological, and cultural position. It argues that populism should be viewed as a complex phenomenon deeply rooted in social and cultural dimensions. Terminological clarity is essential in comprehending populism as a mental and cultural position rather than a strictly political ideology.
- d) **Contextual Examination of Populism:** The research argues for a contextual examination of populism within the social and cultural dimensions of each state. The populist dimension in politics is deeply grounded in the social and cultural context of a particular nation. Diagnosing populism in its causal and circumstantial context, distinguishing between liberal democracies and electoral democracies, and highlighting the impact of populist rhetoric on the democratic process.
- e) **Case Study of Israel:** Using Israel as a case study, the research explores the tension between being a liberal democracy and a Jewish state. It highlights the contradiction in defining Israel as a country belonging equally to everyone while also being a Jewish state. This tension is expressed in the failure to enact a constitution and reflects the broader challenge of reconciling civic nationalism with national identity.

The main hypotheses are:

1. *The research posits that the elusiveness of the term "populism" necessitates terminological clarification. The term, rooted in the Latin word "populus" (people), is linked to democracy, and the addition of "ism" implies the inclusion of scientific criteria to theoretically elucidate populism. The study aims to bridge the gap between theoretical definitions and the complex reality of modern states with diverse cultures and motivations.*
2. *The research hypothesizes that the term populism is used pejoratively in contemporary discourse, particularly to label the 'other.' It suggests that the 'other,' perceived as populist, is characterized as simplistic, irrational, and caught up in myths. The research aims to challenge these stereotypes and understand populism beyond the pejorative connotations.*
3. *The research contends that populism, philosophically defined as the division between 'us' and 'them,' transcends traditional left-right political divisions. It explores the hypothesis that the significance of terminological clarification lies in understanding populism not as a purely political phenomenon but as a mental, sociological, and cultural position.*

4. The research examines the hypothesis that political dynamics and party positions can shift over time. Using Israel's political landscape as a case study, it explores how parties like "Israel beiteinu" may transition from traditionally right-wing inclinations to supporting the leftist block, showcasing the evolving nature of political ideologies.

The importance of a terminological clarification derives from the elusiveness of the phenomenon called 'populism'. The term itself contains the old Latin word "populus" - namely, people, which directly corresponds with the term "democracy", as the latter presumes the will of the people. The "ism" suffix is added here to denote the inclusion of scientific criteria in order to theoretically elucidate populism as a phenomenon. It goes without saying that when it comes to phenomena which deal with human life, theories are never exhaustive, in the sense that some aspects are unavoidably excluded from the theory. Hence, I save no effort below to bridge the gap between theory and reality - at least as I understand it. And one last caveat before moving on, things are much more complex when it comes to modern states, which consists of minorities and multiple cultures with different motivations.

The main research question is

"How does the elusiveness of the term 'populism,' as a phenomenon intertwined with language, influence perceptions, political dynamics, and the cultural and sociological dimensions within modern states, particularly considering the shifting nature of political ideologies, the pejorative use of populism, and its philosophical underpinning as a division between 'us' and 'them'?"

4. The importance of understanding populism

The term populism is used today as a pejorative for addressing the 'other'. This 'other' is someone who is not 'me', or more precisely 'us'. This 'us' is believed to always think right, with a substantial degree of complexity and coherency. In contrast, the 'other' or 'others' are populists - they are simplistic, irrational and superficial - and they are caught up in myths. The populist is seen as an unreasonable creature, leaning towards the opinion of the masses, incapable of developing independent and rational thinking. Populists are activated by emotion fueled by grudge, and have immediate instincts to reality, even when it does not fit modern and progressive thinking.

Populist ideas - according to those who perceive themselves as not populists - originate from a-priori conclusions, which organize their world around mythical imagination underpinned by partial data. The data do not represent reality as it is, but rather a popular social structure stemming from the imagination of a shared past and a desirable future. Populist do not engage in deconstruction of the past and the present, fearing it may harm the historical stability as well as the present of the nation. Stability, it is claimed, is to the populist the most supreme value that sets aside all other values. Therefore, his way of thinking will always lead him to favor the particular past – in the sense of preferring the well-being of the people he belongs to over reason in its modern sense, which assesses reality on a case by case basis. The imaginative past seems as the ultimate guiding truth.

Philosophically, as we have hitherto observed, the definition of populism consists of 'us' and 'them'. Therefore, in practice the obsolete political division to 'left' and 'right' is irrelevant here. Rightists may blame leftist for being populists – and vice versa. Hence, the significance of terminological clarification becomes clear, for populism is not a political but rather a mental, sociological and cultural position and so it should be understood.

Right wing movements claim their political rivals are populists in the sense that they are trying to preserve old elite power. For example, in Israel, right wing parties treat left and center parties as if their sole purpose was to preserve their dwindling electoral power through the institutional bureaucracy, which sees itself as indispensably necessary, though in fact being nothing but a futile slogan of an empty signified in the world

To demonstrate this, see how right-wing parties often mock "Yesh Atid"'s ("There's a Future") party leader Yair Lapid for what they perceive as slogan-filled speech style, detached from a world of realpolitik and hence, inefficient in terms of changing anything in the world – if not an altogether

contradiction of reality. Lapid's own image of being a 'democrat' conflicts with the fact that his party conducts no primary elections and that its list is determined solely by him. For instance, ex-party member Ofer Shelah, was forced to leave the party by Lapid after demanding that the party choose its members through primary election. But Shelah also complained against his party leader that his political messages are intentionally opaque so as to gain broad support from the people .

Another party that instantiates the changing structure and positions of political left and right in Israel is "Israel beiteinu" party ("Israel our home"). Founded in 1999 by party leader Avigdor Liberman, the party traditionally targeted immigrants from former Soviet Union, voters with right wing inclination. However, since the 2020 electoral campaign, the party moved to support the leftist block as a part of their opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu's continuing rule and their rather consistent position against military service exoneration granted to orthodox 'Haredi' youth. Their objection to the latter generated populist expression by party leader Liberman who said that he "would send the Haredi's together with Bibi (i.e., Netanyahu) on one wheelbarrow to a good garbage dump ". Had such a statement been said in a different country, it would have probably been labeled as antisemitic. In Israel, however, it was seen as mainly populist, while categorizing in fact a whole group of the society, as the Haredi parties are political allies of the right block in Israel. Either way, this statement would probably force Liberman's party to remain in the left block for years to come as a shared coalition between the Haredi and Liberman's party seems to be a political impossibility in the near future.

Similarly, traditional ideological rifts between left and right in Israel - such as territorial concessions for peace or political economy (market or neoliberal economy vs social or social democratic economy) – are also being transferred to the terminological field of populism and its division between 'us' and 'them'.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein describes the instrumental use of language, in two of his books "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus " – the only book published during his life – as well as in "Philosophical Investigations ". These books have significantly influenced the way we think about language and its uses, and especially our understanding of its impact on the human consciousness. His work was subject to a fair number of interpretative studies. According to my understanding of Wittgenstein, the limit of human thought is language.

5. Beyond understanding the definitions

The use of language needs to be seen from within a play of words rather than analyze the word as a sole atom. If we accept his approach, then populism's use of language (e.g the division to 'us' and 'them') affects the way human beings think and trigger their actions. Again, it must be emphasized that we ought to avoid the mistake that deals with the ascription of populism to ideological right and left, since what is really at hand is the use of language populism and populist leaders make so as to achieve their goals.

Hence, the populist dimension in the political sphere is grounded deeply in the social and cultural dimensions of each state. Thus, the term must be examined in the context that is relevant to each particular state. It must be diagnosed in its causal and circumstantial context; Between liberal democracies, which emphasize human rights, and electoral democracies which tend to focus on electoral results. Professor Mordechai Kremnitzer would name the former 'substantial' democracies and the latter 'skinny democracies' .

Democracies which move away from human rights and tend to leave political decisions entirely at the hands of voters, develop from substantial democracies not only as a regime structure, but also as a source for the rhetorical pride they take as the 'real democracies' . The scholar Yascha Mounk, researcher of populism from Harvard University, claims that this kind of pride is not expressed exclusively in positive terms. Moreover, it is a sort of a counter reaction to forms of regimes that in the eye of 'skinny democracies' seem as 'undemocratic liberalism'. In this view, private liberal rights such as freedom of expression are indeed safeguarded in these democracies, but it comes at the cost of muting the collective freedom of expression of the people, that which expresses itself in free elections .

This article suggests not to underestimate the veracity of this statement. While old categories of the big ideologies such as fascism and communism openly and clearly subjected the people to the state, by the same token, illiberal democracies were easy to discern – populism as a structural regime is more complex and thus harder to distinguish. In fact, the argument goes like this: if you are interested in a real democracy, you must go voting in the free elections. In this way you express your true will, without being deprived of the liberal value for the freedom of speech. The other way around: the true expression of your will is in the ballot box. Those who rob democracy and the true freedom of speech do that by liberal means.

The counter reaction then, uses the democratic language and the liberal values themselves as weapons to attack from within. The rhetoric harnesses the sentiment of the people against the institutionalized elite in the judiciary, in the media and in other places, in order to establish a true democracy which enshrines the freedom of choice. One claim is that the elite allow for elections only because they believe that governance remains anyway in their hands between electoral campaigns. Hence the liberal democracy leverages liberal values to govern without permitting free elections.

A major expression for that in Israel is in the case of orthodox parties. According to Israel's declaration of independence, Israel is defined as a Jewish democratic country, and that makes it an interesting case study for testing this argument. On the one hand, Israel is a liberal democracy and on the other hand it is by definition a Jewish state and by nature gives weight to its belonging to the Jewish nationality. In the country where a big Arab minority group lives (approximately 20% of the population), there is an inherent contradiction between the definition of the state as belonging to everyone equally while being at the same time also Jewish. Some people try to settle this tension rhetorically by referring to Judaism as a national identity, yet all governments in the history of the country without exceptions refused to see Israel as if committed to neutral civic nationalism. This position is shared across the political gamut and between religious and Jewish secular parties alike.

One expression of that tension is demonstrated by the fact that throughout its 75 years of existence, Israel has never come to enact a constitution. Well known statement in this regard has been made by "Shas's" orthodox party leader Rabbi Aryeh Deri, who said that even if the "Tablet's of stone" had been declared as Israel's constitution, he would have objected, fearing that its interpretation by judicial elite would diverge from his own understanding and from that of the public he represents .

Conclusion

To sum up, populism as a term is neither merely a structural regime nor can be ascribed to one political camp only. Populism emerges from the review above as a vague phenomenon in the post-big-ideologies world. It should be understood not just as a political expression but also as a social and cultural structure.

It should not be dismissed as empty rhetoric or hollow slogans, but as a use of language that touches the people - mostly, in its objection to the dominant elite who govern in practice between the elections and trigger counter reaction from the people. It should not be seen as a mere sentiment. In addition, an absolute cross-country comparison cannot be so readily drawn for the social and cultural structures differ between states. Hence, an understanding of populism is crucial for the ability to engage in a dialogue with it, not from a sense of reason-supremacy but as a real-life phenomenon.

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ISSN 3008-4849 (Print)
ISSN 3008-4822 (Online)
ISSN-L 3008-4822