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Introduction

COMBAT MINDSET. THE MILLISECOND THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

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Abstract: *Through this paper, we aim to bring to the fore the Norwegian experience in theorizing and implementing the concept of Combat Mindset, on the basis of which a similar module was established within “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy in Braşov, Romania. The exchange of experience was possible within a project financed through EEA Grants 2014-2021/ ANPCDEFP, carried out in partnership with the University of South-Eastern Norway and the Society of Military Psychology Association which allowed, in addition to implementation Combat Mindset module for the Romanian military students, the translation and adaptation of a useful psychological tool: the Multidimensional Self-Control Scale (MSCS).*

Keywords: *Combat Mindset; EEA Grants; battlefield; awareness; Multidimensional Self-Control Scale*

1. INTRODUCTION

Redefining Community in Intercultural Context (RCIC) is more than a conference. Founded in 2011 in Braşov, in “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy, RCIC has become a traveling conference, with editions held in Lisbon, Bari, Vlora, Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. The confluence between RCIC and the project *Combat Mindset Training for Romanian Military Students* (CoMind) developed by “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy in partnership with University of South-Eastern Norway, USN School of Business, Institute of Business, Strategy and Political Sciences and the Society of Military Psychology Association is a natural one. Through the current 11th edition of the conference, the emphasis on the topic of combat mindset is also natural and involves consciousness and self-awareness in a multicultural framework and in a context that implies the presence of permanent danger and the assumption of risk. From this perspective, combat mindset is a requirement of the new configuration of the battlefield, which highlight the cognitive dimension of the war.

2. THE NORWEGIAN LESSONS

The Norwegian lesson in the issue of combat mindset is one that starts from an unfortunate event.

As with 9/11, a terrorist attack at the Twin Towers (World Trade Center) in New York that changed in 2001 the paradigm in terms of security studies, especially in perception, combating or prevention of terrorism, the 7/22 event, in which Anders B. Breivik conducted two terrorist attacks, the Norwegian perspective on security has changed considerably. The massacre on Utøya island on July 22, 2011, a Norwegian 9/11, allowed the paradigm shift and the understanding of the role of mental preparation for the unexpected, which also includes a particular path called combat mindset training, assuming “both realistic training and systematic reflection in order to a better ability to deal with sudden and unforeseen events” (Boe *et al.*, 2020:1).

Combat mindset training has therefore become the academic and practical answer to a huge challenge for a society of unpredictability, with applicability especially in a few narrow fields, especially battlefield training. Combat mindset assumes a multidisciplinary perspective in solving a complex, current problem, and starts from the development of mental skills that are known as mental training strategies. At the interference between the academic dimension, assuming physiological psychological and communicational foundations, and the practical dimension, these strategies are precisely formulated and assume the consideration of self-awareness and self-

development as a response to environmental challenges on five levels:

These are visualization, goal setting, positive self-talk, combat mindset (courage, determination, aggression), and relaxation. Utilizing these five main strategies we aim to develop confidence; control of physical arousal; attention control (focusing and spreading attention); arousal control; imagery use or visualization; commitment; self-talk use and the commitment to stay in good physical condition (Boe, 2022).

The Norwegian openness in the field of combat mindset, based on the previously mentioned five mental strategies, systematically repeated in Boe's articles and books (see, for example, Yanilov & Boe, 2014:11), were developed through curricula of the University of South-Eastern Norway in Drammen, through the USN School of Business, Institute of Business, Strategy and Political Sciences, of The Norwegian Defence University College and of the Police Academy in Oslo. An example in this regard is the 3-year BA-program in military leadership and land operations within the Norwegian Defense University College in Oslo (Nilsen, 2022), which includes mental preparation for the battlefield in the Leadership in combat module of the 2nd year, formulated as an end state upon completion for the cadets who must have

[...] a thorough understanding of how the exercise of military leadership can affect soldier's ability and willingness to solve missions (and fight) in combat and other physically and mentally demanding situations (Nilsen, 2022).

Norwegian good practices and training experience in this area have enabled developments in related areas, for example in the refinement of psychological self-control scaling instrument such as *The Multidimensional Self-Control Scale* (MSCS). In parallel, combat mindset was developed in South Africa (Van Wijk, 2017), Australia (Caligari, 2017), or France (Plain, 2018), constituting the turning points for the foundations of scientific or promoting good practices articles. Awareness of mental preparedness for the battlefield has developed along with the related psychological toolkit, and this can be evidenced by the existence of the psychological first aid kit on the battlefield in the case of South Africa (HFCR, 2020).

3. THE ROMANIAN CASE

Aware of the need for development in the area of combat mindset, the Air Force Academy in Braşov,

Romania, took as a reference the Norwegian model of good practice and developed a Cooperative Project in Higher Education Area, entitled *Combat Mindset Training for Romanian Military Students* (CoMind), 21-COP-0012, financed through EEA Grants 2014-2021/ ANPCDEFP and carried out in partnership with the previously mentioned institutions, the University of South-Eastern Norway and the Society of Military Psychology Association. The project, having an important innovative character, aimed at introducing combat mindset training for military students for the first time in Romania, based on the training model successfully developed in Norway and the adaptation in Romanian of a psychological assessment tool, the previously mentioned MSC Scale.

The Romanian peculiarities of the combat mindset implementation were taken into account, including the aspects regarding desirability for the officer profession, the general favorable climate in Romania (the huge degree of public confidence in the armed forces), the rigorous selection of cadets, the competition between them and their strong motivation for the career:

a military career is extremely desirable for young people and there is higher competition in the military universities, compared to the usual national universities, especially for those from disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. Therefore, CoMind project is focused on democracy and citizenship topics because it will include a teaching module in a field with a strong inter-disciplinary component (i.e., combat mindset training). (Andronic *et al.*, 2022:167).

The project constituted the framework for the adaptation of the mentioned psychological tool, created by the Norwegian partner involved in project, which has already been translated and adapted and which will constitute an open educational resource. Within the project, two groups of 20 Air Force Academy students each were selected and completed a combat mindset module, in the two semesters of the 2022-2023 academic year. Previously, following a Train-the-Trainer session organized in October 2022 in Braşov, with Norwegian experts from the university partner in project, in which platoon commanders and instructors from all Romanian military universities participated, the instructors of the project promoter were also trained for the implementation of the multidisciplinary module, including classes of anatomy and physiology of the human nervous system, psychology, communication and Israeli martial arts (Krav-Maga). Apart from the professors part in project, physician Alexandru Keresztes, and

instructor Mădălin Slăniceanu, contributed to the implementation of the module. In parallel, also according to the Norwegian model, “Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy developed a CoMind laboratory for physical and mental training for the battlefield.

Additionally, there was a particular openness of the professors and researchers in the project to disseminate the model of good practices in the field of combat mindset and, above all, to develop those aspects that required a more in-depth analysis, both in terms of psychological instruments (Nilsen *et al.*, 2022), and regarding the substantiation of the module from physiological and communicational perspectives (Boe *et al.*, 2022a; Lesenciuc & Sauciuc, 2022), or in highlighting the implementation of the CoMind project itself (Andronic *et al.*, 2022; Boe *et al.*, 2022b). This opening in the study of neurophysiological foundation of combat mindset will allow the development, through a project financed by the Romanian Ministry of Defense, of the CoMind laboratory and its equipment with necessary technology for measuring and controlling the cerebral activity of the students involved.

The eleventh edition of *Redefining Community in Intercultural Context* conference proposes a final debate on this topic during CoMind Project implementation, viewed through socio-communicational and security lenses. Through the twelve articles on this topic: Gillian Warner-Söderholm (University of South-Eastern Norway, Drammen, Norway) – The critical role of intercultural understanding within security leadership: building resilience; Vasile Doru Marineanu (Society of Military Psychology Association, Bucharest, Romania) – Enhancing operational resilience through artificial intelligence and cognitive flexibility: insights and challenges Alexandru Keresztes (“Regina Maria” Military Emergency Hospital, Brasov, Romania) – Can the mentality be made more efficient?; Ioanna Lekea (Hellenic Air Force Academy, Athens, Greece) – Unraveling the battlefield puzzle: AI-driven ethical and legal training for military decision-making, Florin Buștiuc (“Mihai Viteazul” National Intelligence Academy, Bucharest), Cosmin Dugan (Bucharest University Emergency Hospital, Bucharest) – Neuro-HUMINT at the intersection of classical HUMINT and operational neuroscience; Ulpia Elena Botezatu (National Institute for Research & Development in Informatics/ Romanian Space Agency, Bucharest, Romania) – Developing a comprehensive Combat Mindset for outer space security: Integrating technical, strategic, and psychological competencies; Andreea Stoian

Karadeli (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, USA), Daniel-Gabriel Dinu (University of Economic Studies, Bucharest) – Augmentation of cognitive abilities: Exploring cognitive enhancement in the Digital Era; Andreea Stoian Karadeli (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, USA), Daniel-Gabriel Dinu (University of Economic Studies, Bucharest) – Securing the mind: the emerging landscape of cognitive warfare; Andreea Losekamm (US Department of the State, Washington DC) – Military’s mental armamentarium in national and alliance defence; Adrian Lesenciuc, Iasmina-Georgiana Sauciuc (“Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy, Brașov) – Combat Mindset as a communication process: task awareness, preparation and execution; Cristina Maria Tofan (Romanian Academy, Iași), Răzvan-Lucian Andronic (“Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy, Brașov), – Social identity and ‘fake-news’ identity; Michael B. Rhode, Indira Y. Junghare (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA) – The Power of the Subconscious Mind: Cross-Disciplinary Perspective, of which five were selected for publication, an impressive interest of the academic community and of the practitioners was ascertained. The conference proposed to highlight this topic among others, in a gradual understanding of the issues debated in thematically closed panels, such as *Hybrid Warfare. Cognitive Warfare, Security Studies. Security Culture and Intercultural Communication*, within which dozens of papers were selected in a peer-review process.

4. CONCLUSIONS

What is the use of deepening this field, combat mindset? The pertinent answer, resulting from years of study and practice in Norwegian universities and in the Norwegian armed forces is simple and eloquent: to gain a few milliseconds or even a millisecond, in which the trained brain allows the individual as the potential victim against whom an unforeseen threat is launched, to transform mentally, into a vigilant person who manages to prevent the treat or at least to counter it with combat mindset abilities. The mental preparedness in these conditions, even if it is not a new one, is one of the maximum interest and wide applicability. Human factor combat readiness (HFCR) saves lives in military operations. Our research contributes to developing the *Multidimensional Self-Control Scale* (MSCS) within a Romanian empirical setting, to help new knowledge development within the field of combat mindset training in the contemporary battlefield. To what degree CoMind modules will

secure the gaining of milliseconds that count to save lives remains to be fully empirically tested globally. Our work has been a critical step in this direction. Until then, we trust in the models of good practice, which have proven their usefulness through application in the national security system of Norway.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

No study is without its limitations as is the case with this study. The work with the Multidimensional Self-Control Scale (MSCS), with vigorous back-to-back translation procedures and the data collection period, came at a challenging post pandemic period, with many armed forces people needing to prioritize supporting neighboring countries facing conflict. We are most grateful to all our respondents for taking the time to participate in our study. Future research is already under way to collect data from non-military respondents in Romania to investigate and compare findings from two demographic groups. We hope this will help our understanding of the value of developing mindfulness resilience in a nation for both business leaders and public sector organizations, as well as military personnel.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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July 22 (7/22), 2023, 12 years after the terrorist attacks in Norway

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Combat
Mindset

COMBAT MINDSET AS A COMMUNICATION PROCESS: TASK AWARENESS, PREPARATION AND EXECUTION

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to design Combat Mindset as a communication process, starting from the perspective of Johnson communicational model (1946/1975). Under these conditions, distinguishing between the preverbal stage in the perceptive dimension (as apperceptive preparation for the battlefield) and in the communicative one, we have engaged in making a set of measurements of some mental parameters to identify the level of preparation in accordance with the context. After a series of coordinated experiments, aiming at measuring the mental processing of specific tasks conveyed in English by native and non-native speakers (Panal, 2023), respectively visualizing the activation of brain areas in the mental processing and execution of military commands (Sauciuc, 2023), through this paper we aimed to identify the differences between the preverbal and the verbal or actional stage of the communication act in an exam within the basic military training module in the "Henri Coandă" Air Force Academy, using an EEG headset and specialized software for the appropriate measurement of the indicators regarding the preparation of the mental state in the two phases of the experiment.*

Keywords: *communication; Combat Mindset; frustration; relaxation; stress*

1. INTRODUCTION

We have tried to look at mental preparation for the immediate contingency (as well as for the battlefield) from a communicational perspective, as a sum of verbal and nonverbal reactions involving the body's response to environmental challenges. Communication sciences provide a fractional answer to this problem. By studying the verbal communication behavior, we can find a series of intelligible verbal reactions, but extremely few, in many instances even missing, as a result of passing through the filter of verbalization, i.e. going through the layers of the expression of preverbal emotions and the selection of those words that summarize the essence of the transmission, i.e. of those elements able to prevent a similar situation from happening. This verbal selection as part of a complex reaction was first studied by the American psychologist Wendell Johnson, but his work from 1946 became widely known only after 1960, after Wilbur Schramm created the premises for the convergence of important research on what constitutes the communication sciences act of birth as a distinct field of study, through the book *Mass Communication*. Wendell Johnson considered that both following the awareness of the fact that an

event is taking place and following the transmission of the communicational content, the individual who is aware of the event or who receives the informative content has a similar reaction, which involves a series of imperceptible steps directly and the verbal or action-reaction later, as a result of filtering and controlling the reaction. The two communication partners in Johnson's model are Mr. A, in direct interaction with the event taking place (the perceptual dimension), respectively Mr. B, to whom Mr. A summarizes the information content (the actual communication dimension¹). In order to highlight this common

¹ The model was later exploited by George Gerbner (1956:175), who refers to the two dimensions as the perception axis and the means and the axis of control. The contribution of Wendell Johnson (a researcher with a tarnished reputation after The Monster Study experiment), is an extremely important one in that it goes beyond the classical framework of analysis, that it deepens the study of communication from a communicational perspective, and that it foreshadows a new paradigm: "Basically, W. Johnson does not transfer Shannon's procedural model to the plane of human communication, but builds a new model, in which two dimensions intervene, thus anticipating Gerbner's studies, which explicitly delimit the two dimensions of the communication process: perceptive and communicative. Despite a complex approach, assuming the consideration, apart from language and gestures, of posture, facial expression, general body position, Johnson's functionalist model remains

reaction in terms of the response of the two actors of communication, both in the case of the one who receives the signals from the environment, and the one to whom these signals are communicated in summary, we transposed Johnson's communication model, emphasizing what is common in communication contagion:

1. An event occurs (any first-order fact serving as a source of sensory stimulation)
2. which stimulates Mr. A. through eyes, ears, or other sensory organs, and **the resulting**
3. **nervous impulses travel to Mr. A's brain, and from there to his muscles and glands, producing tensions, preverbal "feelings," etc.,**
4. **which Mr. A. then begins to translate into words, according to his accustomed verbal patterns, and out of all the words he "thinks of"**
5. **he "selects," or abstracts, certain ones which he arranges in some fashion, and then**
6. by means of sound waves and light waves, Mr. A. speaks to Mr. B.,
7. whose ears and eyes are stimulated by the sound waves and light waves, respectively, and **the resulting**
8. **nervous impulses travel to Mr. B.'s brain, and from there to his muscles and glands, producing tensions, preverbal "feelings," etc.,**
9. **which Mr. B. then begins to translate into words, according to his accustomed verbal patterns, and out of all the words he "thinks of"**
10. **he "selects," or abstracts, certain ones, which he arranges in some fashion** and then Mr. B. speaks, or acts, accordingly, thereby stimulating Mr. A. -- or somebody else -- and so the process of communication goes on, and on -- with complications, as indicated in the accompanying text. (Johnson, 1946:472, *apud* Schramm, 1975:301-302)

The communication process, as it results from Wendell Johnson's research, is a repetitive, iterative one, assuming what, from a semiotic point of view, constitutes the premise of communication *ad infinitum* starting from the natural trace or emanation from the sign-object link in the semiotic series of Charles S. Peirce, or from the infinite semiosis it implies:

confined to the mechanistic functionality, specific to the preparadigmatic thinking of the mid-20th century. In addition to machinist functionalism, the American researcher brings into discussion the two dimensions, to be exploited, given the perception of the act of communication as a complex, united product, the result of the organic condition of the communicator. Therefore, communication is mechanistically structured in an organic framework of production and reception through the psychological and the cultural (social) dimension. Thus, Johnson overcomes the closure of the mechanistic paradigm of communication, foreshadowing a new, organic paradigm" (Lesenciuc, 2017:111)

Upon being interpreted, the representamen has the ability to trigger an **interpretant**, which in turn becomes a representamen by triggering another interpretant referring to the same object as the first representamen, and thereby allowing the first one to refer to the object. And so on, *ad infinitum*. (Peirce, 1990:274-275)

Obviously, we asked ourselves the question, from the perspective of preparation for the battlefield, what happens in the minds of people who receive signals from the environment, who are transmitted certain informational contents with a high degree of redundancy, or who prepare for unpredictable informational contents. Without engaging in intracranial measurements to differentiate, for example, the intensity of brain activity in the case of sender and receiver in the continuation of the Johnson model, we set out to identify what was considered until now in the communication sciences to be communicative ballast, in fact, the unseen part of the communication iceberg: the brain activity that leads to mental preparation for the unexpected and verbal filtering of communication content. In fact, understanding nonverbal communication should boil down to understanding the physiology of the central and peripheral nervous systems, the direct connections between stimuli types and implicit reactions. We aimed, therefore, through this paper, to highlight the way in which non-verbal activity in situations of mental preparation for the unexpected leaves visible traces, measurable indicators regarding the first phase of the synaptic arc, i.e. the electrical activity in the cranial box (without being able to highlight the chemical mechanism that makes it possible to excite the postsynaptic membrane). For this, we measured in certain experimental conditions the brain activity of some subjects prepared for the unpredictable and for a complex communicative response, which involves the resort to different signification systems.

2. PREMISES OF THE RESEARCH

The problem of measuring preverbal emotions is not, however, new. There are a number of relevant studies regarding communication by maintaining the stage of expressing emotions, without the need for verbal mediation, insufficient to convey the informational content in its complexity. Many of these studies focus, however, on highlighting the neural or psychological foundations in communication from the preverbal stage of children's development (Scheiner *et al.*,

2002; Valloton, 2008; Scheiner & Fischer, 2011; Skerry & Spelke, 2014; Cong *et al.*, 2018; Ruba *et al.*, 2019; Ruba & Repacholi, 2019), involved in maternal communication (Lenzi *et al.*, 2009). Regarding the study of preverbal expressions in adults, most studies aimed at their psychoanalytic reconstruction (for example, Anthi, 1983) or psycholinguistic objectives. There is an obvious connection between these two major lines of research on the preverbal level of communication. From this last category of studies regarding the relations between thought and language, the work of Phyllis Schneider (1990) stands out, which brings together the Vygotskian and Piagetian perspectives on the connections between thought and language. Essentially, regarding the preverbal emotions in Wendell Johnson's studies, the focus is on these relationships and the type of predefinition.

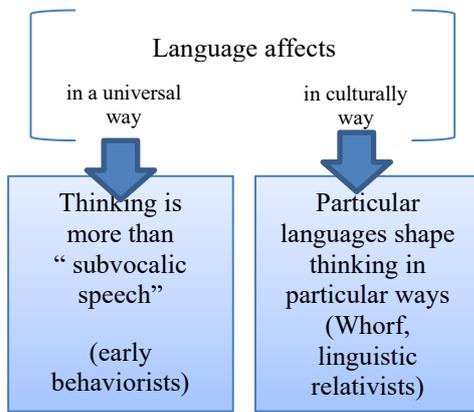


Fig.1. Effects of language on thinking (*apud* Schneider, 1990:3)

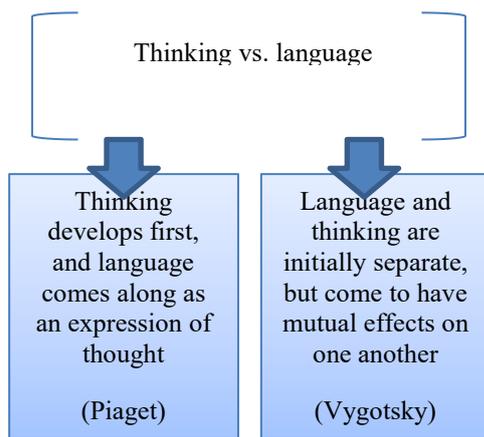


Fig.2. Thought-language relations (*apud* Schneider, 1990:3)

Schneider's summary scheme concerning the typologies of postulates regarding thought-language connections was useful for identifying possible directions for studying the mental preparation of

the reaction (verbal or non-verbal), testing both the pattern of the effects of language on thinking, as well as that of thought patterns on language and action through the various experiments carried out.

Our study's interest is to highlight the preverbal level of communication in situations characterized by the unpredictability of the environment and by the need to be aware of the mission and configure the appropriate response. For this, we used the experiment method with the help of a useful tool for measuring brain waves, without invasive or painful procedures: EMOTIV+ EPOC EEG Headset, and related software: Emotiv Launcher, Emotiv BrainViz, Emotiv BCI, Emotiv PRO.

In the pretest phases, we chose to study the effects of language on thinking from the perspective of cultural (linguistic) relativism, because the behaviorist hypothesis is contradicted by countless studies. I coordinated a research undertaken by student D.C. Panal conducted on a group of seven subjects (cadets of some Air Force academies), native English speakers (from the U.S.) and non-native speakers (from Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Italy, and Romania) regarding the processing of tasks transmitted in English, in a specialized language appropriated – the standard phraseology of communication –, strongly redundant, with the purpose

to understand the English language when the communication between the pilot and the air traffic controller is devoid of standard phraseology, but to analyze how neural connections are produced and where in the brain they are located, when native speakers, but also non-natives, listen to instructions in English (Panal, 2023:96),

of the reaction times of native and non-native English speakers, respectively. The results were eloquent both in terms of the reaction times of the native speakers (regardless of gender, with relatively equal scores) and, above all, in terms of the brain activity of the native and non-native speakers. Following the areas of the cerebral cortex assigned to language processing, it is illustrative of the intensification of brain activity in these areas, illustrated by the increased intensity of electrical activity (the first phase of the synaptic arc) in the case of non-native speakers, who require a greater effort of language processing. In the minds of the subjects, this activity intensifies, which from the perspective of communication sciences can be called intrapersonal (non-verbal) communication. The measurements made are more in line with the public language hypothesis of thought than with the Mentalese hypothesis and, regarding Schneider's

projection, more in line with Piaget's hypothesis than Vygotsky's. In the case of native subjects, the "intrapersonal communication" stage, involving higher cerebral energy consumption, is reduced to simple interactions. Therefore, in the case of natives, the response becomes automatic and no energy is consumed at the level of the cerebral cortex.

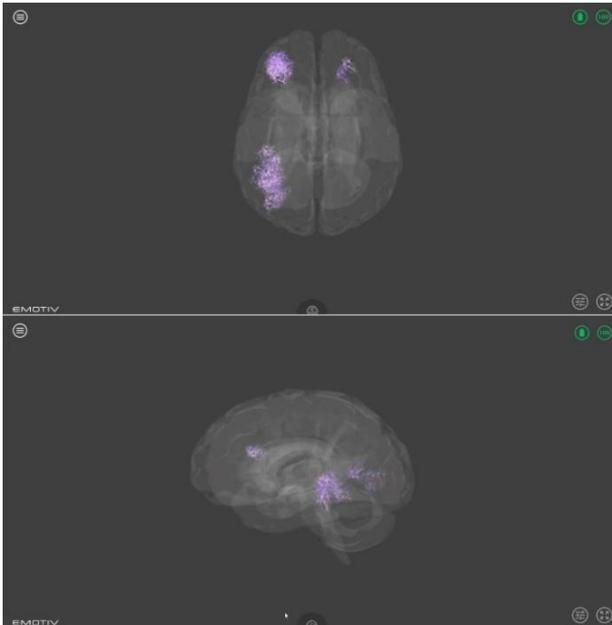


Fig.3. Brain activity of a native speaker, in side and top view (apud Panal, 2023:101)

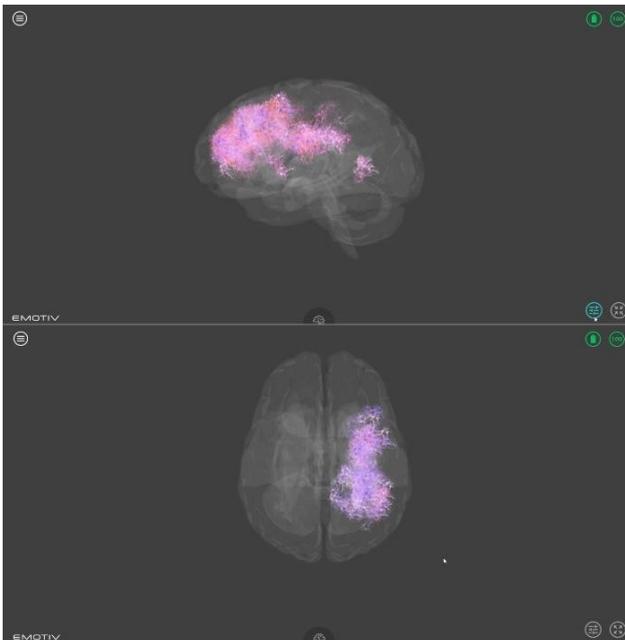


Fig.4. Brain activity of a non-native speaker, in side and top view (apud Panal, 2023:110)

A similar experiment is the one concerning the action response in the situation of the execution of

frontal instructional movements. Based on a series of previous researches (Lesenciuc & Sauciuc, 2022), I coordinated this experiment carried out by the student I.G. Sauciuc (2023), through which we followed the activation of brain areas in the mental processing and execution of military commands. The complex research highlighted the activation and synchronization of alpha, beta and gamma waves in the two cerebral hemispheres in the case of the eight investigated subjects (all Romanians, students at the "Henri Coandă" Air Force Academy) and allowed the differential mapping of brain areas in the case of subjects with more experienced in frontline training movements (graduates of national military colleges) relative to subjects with less experience (graduates of civilian colleges). The differences between the two categories of subjects are relevant: in the case of those with less experience we find a lower activity of alpha waves, due to the fact that they have difficulties in reaching the state of relaxation/ intellectual comfort in the preparation of the movement, but a more pronounced one of the waves beta, predominantly present in the auditory cortex, in the parieto-temporo-occipital associative area and, in particular, in the limbic area:

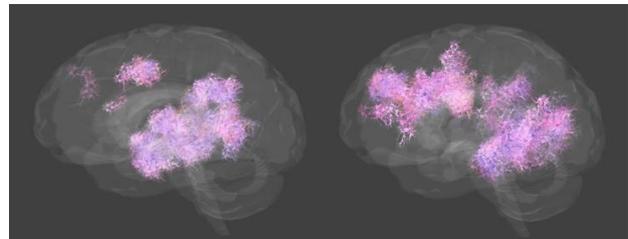


Fig.5 Active alpha and beta waves in the auditory cortex and the parieto-temporo-occipital associative area (5a), respectively in the limbic area (5b) in the case of students with less experience (apud Sauciuc, 2023:169)

Intense brain activity, especially in the limbic area, is the index of inexperience and the need to regulate emotions in relation to stressful situations, resulting in the intensification of:

[...] alpha and beta waves in the limbic areas during movement due to the increased emotional and cognitive demands of the task. The limbic system is involved in regulating emotions, motivation, and memory, being activated in response to new or challenging stimuli, which are some possible reasons why less experienced military personnel show more active limbic areas during a movement. Thus, motor anticipation can be influenced by emotional factors because they can influence the individual's motivation and attention. In general, emotions affect both the ability to plan and execute movements and

how they are perceived and interpreted or performed. Students with less experience show a high level of stress, and their brains are not in a state of mental peace, but in an alert state, as you can also observe the activation of these waves in the area of the attention-specific dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (Sauciuc, 2023:169).

The results highlight major differences in the mapping of brain areas active during frontal instructional movements between the two categories of subjects, which can be extrapolated beyond those achieved in the previous study: the more important the experience in the linguistic or practical activity, the more the activity of the cerebral cortex is less and the response reaction, verbal or action, more precise.

3. MISSION AWARENESS

3.1 Description of the experiment. In more complex military actions, response reaction means considering both the potential verbal and actional communication response. Therefore, situations of mental preparation from a communication perspective are not limited to Starting from this consideration, we considered a communication situation that simulates the emotion of preparation for a real, unforeseen situation, which also involves the use of complex (including linguistic) codes, and the action response, both useful in making the optimal decision. We designed the conduct of the experiment in two successive phases: before entering the military topography exam – oral, individual exam, conducted in the field, assuming the solution of a useful topography problem in a tactical situation projected on the map –, respectively during the exam. The central objective of this experiment was to illustrate the preverbal level of communication in situations characterized by the unpredictability of the requirement (the subjects being different and covering the entire subject) and by the need to be aware of the requirement and to configure the appropriate complex response to it. Therefore, the goal was to identify the need for mental preparation in the preverbal level of communication, the one that makes the difference between success and defeat (Yanilov & Boe, 2014:10-11). Therefore, concentration, awareness of reactions to stressors and adequate mental preparation are essential – Yanilov and Boe identify five mental training strategies: “visualization, goal setting, positive self-talk, combat mind-set (courage, determination, aggression) and relaxation” – but, until the

implementation of these strategies, it is important to adequately measure the indicators regarding the preparation of the mental state in the two phases of the experiment. We used the same tool, the EMOTIV+ EPOC EEG headset, and the Emotiv BCI software, which highlights states and types of brain activity by correlating the values of the intensity of electrical activity at the level of the cerebral cortex, that is, using EEG frequencies to identify (1) the level of engagement or cognitive and emotional involvement of the subject (*Engagement*, En), associated with frequencies in the gamma band (30-40Hz); (2) the level of stimulation, enthusiasm, interest, positive emotions of the subject (*Excitement*, Ex), associated with the frequencies in the alpha (8-15 Hz) and beta (15-30 Hz) wave band; (3) the level of frustration or dissatisfaction of the subject (*Frustration*, Fo), associated with frequencies in the alpha band (8-15 Hz); (4) the level of interest, curiosity, openness to stimuli, tasks, the level of alert attention and higher mental activity (*Interest*, In), associated with frequencies in the beta band (15-30 Hz) and in the gamma band (30-40 Hz); (5) the level of relaxation and calmness of the subject (*Relaxation*, Re), associated with frequencies in the alpha wave band (8-15 Hz) and (6) the level of anxiety, stress or tension of the subject (*Stress*, St), associated with frequencies in beta band (15-30 Hz). Five subjects underwent these successive measurements.

3.2 Results and interpretation. By collecting this information, we followed the correlation of the collected values and the correlation between them and the exam results, but, in particular, the identification of the differences between the preverbal and the verbal or action level of the communicative act called the surveying exam.

During the exam, S1 departed from the level of the following values: 64% En, 87% Ex, 81% Fo, 53% In, 58% Re and 79% St. During the course of solving the subject, the values became 60% En, 98% Ex, 75% Fo, 62% In, 60% Re and 64% St, which indicates an intensification of enthusiasm, generated by the desire to complete the subject, against the background a slight relaxation. At the end of the measurements during the exam, with the communication of the grade, the levels of excitement and interest decreased consistently, in parallel with the decrease in the level of frustration, which reached the lowest rates in the entire range of values: 43% En, 68% Ex, 22% Fo, 58% In, 52% Re and 40% St. At the reception of subject two, the trend of evolution was preserved in the case of almost all values, except for the level of

engagement, reaching the following indicators: 61% En, 18% Ex, 19% Fo, 57% In, 70% Re and 38% St. Until the end of the evaluation, S1 recorded higher values at the level of engagement, i.e. a maintenance of the level of interest, against the background of an increase in the relative values

for the level of relaxation: 70% En, 29% Ex, 24% Fo, 46% In, 70% Re and 39% St. S1 showed a moderate level of engagement, maintaining his focus until the first partial note was communicated, and responded quickly and correctly, processing information in a short time and making appropriate decisions. The stage of preverbalization suggests relatively low-intensity brain activity related to a high level of instruction and appropriate communicative reactions.



Fig.6 S1 mental states during the exam

Upon receiving the subject, S2 had relatively low parameters, 50% En, 42% Ex, 42% Fo, 44% In, 43% Re, and 29% St, indicating a moderate level of involvement and stress. With the reception and processing of the first subject, the student kept his parameters, except for the level of excitement, 52% En, 70% Ex, 48% Fo, 51% In, 54% Re and 52% St, to later alter the values of engagement and excitement against the backdrop of moderate relaxation 66% En, 50% Ex, 44% Fo, 47% In, 22% Re and 28% St, with small variations regarding excitement in terms of mental reasoning and mapping of the answer: 41% En, 60% Ex, 49% Fo, 57% In, 70% Re and 47% St. As in the case of S1, the final values indicate a significant decrease in the engagement and enthusiasm of S2, but in the conditions of maintaining, however, a high level of stress: 39% En, 53% Ex, 61% Fo, 65% In, 70% Re and 76% St. The subject had a fluctuating level of concentration, he felt the tension of the exam and did not get rid of the stress even at the end, he had a slower pace of solving the tasks, presenting difficulties and partially fulfilling the exam requirements, the marking being consistent with the level of knowledge, and the state of mind foreshadowing the answer.

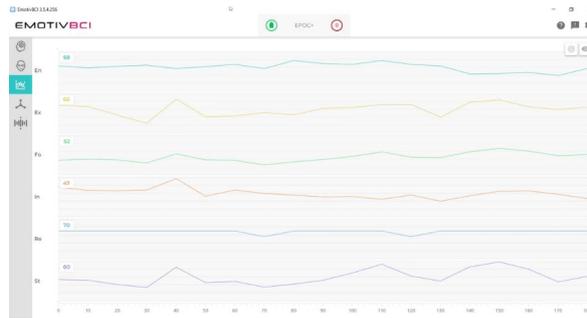


Fig.7 S2 mental states during the exam

S3 had initial difficulties in understanding the requirements of the first subject, registering moderate levels of the parameters: 53% En, 95% Ex, 62% Fo, 56% In, 69% Re and 39% St, except for emotional tension, which was also maintained at giving the answer quickly, and moving, also quickly, to subject two: 64% En, 98% Ex, 61% Fo, 57% In, 69% Re and 36% St. We noticed an increase in the level of engagement and interest, values that varied after the elaboration and indication on the map of the answer for subject two, with the mention of maintaining a very high level of excitement: 45% En, 99% Ex, 46% Fo, 68% In, 49% Re and 34% St. Although he had initial difficulties in understanding the requirement in the first subject, the student adapted quickly, engaged at an increasing pace and managed stress well, responding promptly and fully focused on the subject.



Fig.8 S3 mental states during the exam

S4 had somewhat similar input parameters to S3, with moderate levels for three of the indicators, but with a very high level of excitement counterbalanced by a high level of stress (highest among all subjects): 62% En, 99% Ex, 80% Fo, 58% In, 70% Re and 90% St. At the time of the elaboration of the answer to the first topic, the parameters indicating frustration, tension and stress began to decrease, while the level of excitement remained high, 54% En, 99% Ex, 67% Fo, 60% In, 67% Re and 47% St. The trend was also

maintained at the time of the elaboration of the answer to subject two, with a maximum concentration: 100% Ex, the other parameters being: 65% En, 67% Fo, 46% In, 62% Re and 40% St. Uncertain about the answer to topic two, S4 showed the greatest swings in the range of values, increasing frustration and stress and decreasing the level of concentration: 39% En, 53% Ex, 61% Fo, 65% In, 70% Re and 76% St. S4 had an oscillating behavior overall, with states of concentration compensating for the high level of stress but only in the case of the first subject, later emotional levels worsening the state and suggesting, by decreasing the level of involvement and concentration, a state of fatigue or uncertainty.



Fig.9 S4 mental states during the exam

S5 entered the exam relaxed, with below average parameter values: 33% En, 57% Ex, 42% Fo, 28% In, 66% Re and 58% St, the highest being, however, the stress level. During the solution of the first subject, the values registered a slight increase, including the stress level, the most important being the increase in the excitement level: 34% En, 91% Ex, 54% Fo, 65% In, 52% Re and 72% St. Stuck in finding a solution, the subject lost his concentration, the values dropping to low levels, except for a maintenance in the same parameter of the stress level: 18% En, 21% Ex, 46% Fo, 55% In, 72% Re and 58%. Getting out of the jam with the help of the teacher's questions improved the indicators, but led to an increase in the level of stress and frustration indicators: 39% En, 53% Ex, 61% Fo, 65% In, 70% Re and 76% St. Without confidence in the correctness of the answer provided, S5 recorded the following indicators, keeping the increasing trend of the stress index: 27% En, 82% Ex, 72% Fo, 44% In, 70% Re and 86% St. With fluctuations in involvement and concentration, with a constant increase in stress level, without being convinced of the correctness of the answer, S5 showed a mix of involvement, concentration, frustration, uncertainty, probably also on the background of fatigue.



Fig.10 S5 mental states during the exam

During the exam, students had different reactions and behaviors. The levels of the values measured using the Emotiv BCI software varied in relation to the level of training, the degree of involvement in solving the task and, obviously, the previous mental state. Before the exam, the levels of the six indicators were more pronounced, and the variations in values occurred over longer intervals and more times. For example, the maximum values for the engagement state were between 70% and 94%, as opposed to those in the examination period, which were between 39% and 71%. Also, the minimum values were in the value range of 37-66% during the waiting period, and during the exam between 19-38%. This indicator is illustrative of the level of concentration and involvement of students in the pre-examination phase, much higher than during the exam. Regarding the state of excitement, the values were relatively constant, higher during the period of mental stress, during the examination, with maxima between 76-100%, compared to 42-99%, and with minima between 11 and 95%, versus 2-77%. Thus, the level of stimulation and positive emotions varied more and over longer intervals during the examination period as a result of different intellectual demands and related emotional involvement. The state of frustration was maintained in identical parameters, with maximum values between 25 and 93% and minimum values between 16 and 79% during the waiting period, and with maximum values between 61 and 81% and minimum values between 19 and 46% during the exam. We note the constancy of this parameter, except for the variation interval during the exam, of 62% percentage in the case of a single subject. The state of interest had the same tendency as that of excitement, of a slight increase in values during the exam period, with maxima between 62 and 77% and minima located between 28 and 56%, unlike the waiting period, in which the values were ranging between highs 55-67% and lows 34-47%. The increase in the level of

interest in learning the content of the subjects can be associated with the level of involvement in solving the task and with the concentration on the subject itself. The state of relaxation assumed the smallest variations between the two phases of the assessment of cerebral activity indicators: maximums of 68-70% during the waiting period and 69-70% during the examination and minimums of 29-56% during the waiting period and 15-52 % during the exam. The subjects showed the tendency to relax and stabilize the values especially in the final phase of the examination, proving the ability to manage the stress and emotions associated with the examination. There are subjects who managed to maintain a constant level of relaxation during the whole exam (e.g. S1), which denotes an adequate mental preparation to approach this stressful situation. Arriving at this last indicator, the state of stress, the manifest tendency was that of a decrease in the level from the waiting period, with maxima between 37 and 94% and minima between 21 and 78%, compared to the exam period, with maxima between 39 and 90% and minimums between 22 and 58%, which can be seen in the mirror with the relaxed state. We note the sharp increase of this parameter during the exam for subject S5, who, unlike his colleagues, in whom the state of stress decreased with involvement in the exam, increased the level of anxiety and registered a lower level of concentration. The importance of stress management was also found in the values of the grades obtained by the subjects in the exam.

Table no 1 Variation of parameters during the waiting period and the examination

Engagement (En)		maximum value [%]	minimum value [%]	variation range [%]
pending subjects	S1	94	66	28
	S2	70	44	26
	S3	71	60	11
	S4	76	37	39
	S5	78	45	33
subjects during the exam	S1	70	43	27
	S2	67	36	31
	S3	64	45	19
	S4	71	33	38
	S5	39	18	21
Excitement (Ex)		maximum value [%]	minimum value [%]	variation range [%]
pending	S1	42	6	36

subjects	S2	77	34	43
	S3	99	77	22
	S4	72	2	70
	S5	78	41	37
subjects during the exam	S1	98	18	80
	S2	76	24	52
	S3	99	95	4
	S4	100	11	89
S5	91	21	70	
Frustration (Fo)		maximum value [%]	minimum value [%]	variation range [%]
pending subjects	S1	34	16	18
	S2	56	29	27
	S3	93	79	14
	S4	25	20	5
	S5	61	44	17
subjects during the exam	S1	81	19	62
	S2	61	42	19
	S3	62	46	16
	S4	81	21	60
S5	72	42	30	
Interest (In)		maximum value [%]	minimum value [%]	variation range [%]
pending subjects	S1	55	34	21
	S2	56	40	16
	S3	67	47	20
	S4	60	36	24
	S5	66	40	26
subjects during the exam	S1	62	46	16
	S2	65	40	25
	S3	68	56	12
	S4	77	46	31
S5	65	28	37	
Relaxation (Re)		maximum value [%]	minimum value [%]	variation range [%]
pending subjects	S1	70	50	20
	S2	68	42	26
	S3	70	29	41
	S4	70	52	18
	S5	70	56	14
subjects during the exam	S1	70	52	18
	S2	70	15	55
	S3	69	49	20
S4	70	45	25	

	S5	70	52	18
Stress (St)		maximu m value [%]	minimu m value [%]	variation range [%]
pending subjects	S1	51	21	30
	S2	67	37	30
	S3	94	78	16
	S4	37	28	9
	S5	92	49	43
subjects during the exam	S1	79	38	41
	S2	76	22	54
	S3	39	34	5
	S4	90	35	55
	S5	86	58	28

In conclusion, the results obtained in this study indicate that the states of engagement, excitement, frustration, interest, relaxation and stress of the students before and during the surveying exam present certain patterns and trends. Based on the data obtained, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding these states of the five students. The state of engagement was more pronounced while waiting for the exam, suggesting an increased level of involvement and commitment to the exam, however, it decreased during the exam, which can be attributed to the stress and anxiety associated with the pre-assessment process. The state of excitement showed lower values during the waiting period and intensified during the exam, indicating that the students experienced an increase in enthusiasm and positive emotions when they started to solve the work tasks. The state of frustration was more pronounced during the exam, being associated with the high level of requirements, with the pressure and stress of the exam or even with external factors. The moderate or high level of frustration felt by students during the exam may suggest that they are engaged and focused on the tasks and requirements of the exam. Frustration can be the result of an active attempt to concentrate and engage effectively in solving exam tasks, even if this involves extra work or increased effort. However, the students were able to focus on the exam tasks effectively despite a moderate or high level of frustration. The state of interest was maintained during the exam and may suggest that the students showed a high level of interest and curiosity towards the topics and content of the exam, maintaining their motivation during the assessment. The state of relaxation was maintained during the exam, having values similar to its waiting period.

This indicates that students were able to maintain a level of composure during the exam, which can be beneficial for performance and managing associated stress. The state of stress presented lower values compared to the state of relaxation at both times, but was still present and registered, with one exception, a slight decrease during the course of the examination. This finding indicates that stress was present at the examination but was managed to some extent and the level of relaxation contributed to the reduction of perceived stress. Perception and evaluation of the exam context can influence the level of variation in emotional and cognitive states. For example, waiting for the exam to start involves more uncertainty and anxiety, but a constancy of values, in contrast to the exam itself, during which performance stress and time pressure produced greater variations in emotional and cognitive states. Allowing for exceptions, they generally found similar patterns of variation. The marginal exceptions, which we will exemplify, are S1, calm and relaxed, unlike S5, whose stress level increased during the examination.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the research highlighted the importance of the preverbal stage and the need for mental preparation in order to elaborate the complex verbal and/or action (intentional nonverbal) response, complemented by unintentional nonverbal communication. The differences are conclusive and highlight the need for military training to solve work tasks. Therefore, this previous mental preparation and awareness of the task, understanding the context, maintaining the high level of interest and concentration on the task, in parallel with the reduction of frustration, anxiety, panic, is necessary. The research revealed that each subject exhibited different levels of engagement, excitement, frustration, interest, relaxation and stress during the exam. Approaches and emotional states were influenced by the previous mental state, the preparation for the task – mindset –, the received task and the ability to concentrate to solve the subjects. Monitoring and understanding these aspects demonstrated the importance of adaptability (as a result of previous mental preparation) and different reactions of students in an exam, and approaches and emotional states had an impact on academic performance. Understanding students' levels of engagement, excitement, frustration, interest, relaxation and stress provides important clues about how these states affect cognitive abilities and performance in

a concrete situation with a certain amount of unpredictability (task type). By identifying and analyzing these states, research can provide relevant information for improving the learning and assessment process in military higher education institutions. The acceleration or efficiency of learning presupposes, consequently, the previous mental preparation (Yanilov & Boe, 2014:1-11) in relation to the actual communication situation - combat mindset seen as a multistage communication process - and the acceleration or efficiency of learning through simulation training and through stimulation of neural activity (Dugan, 2020:218).

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SECURING THE MIND: THE EMERGING LANDSCAPE OF COGNITIVE WARFARE

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Abstract: *Cognitive warfare, as a multidimensional and rapidly evolving domain, presents formidable challenges within the contemporary information-driven world. The purpose of this article is to conduct an assessment of the current traits in the terrain of cognitive warfare, centering on its various facets, strategies, and ramifications. By scrutinizing recent research and studies, we undertake an exploration of the dynamic interplay between visual stimuli, emotional reactions, and the dissemination of information in the molding of cognitive warfare tactics. The paper draws upon previous research that focused on the meticulous selection and analysis of video materials employed in cognitive warfare campaigns, discussing their classification as either news or propaganda, their temporal extent, and their pertinence to specific occurrences. Through an examination of video materials from a diverse array of sources, encompassing Russian, Ukrainian, and international news channels, we acquire insights into the purposeful deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues to exert influence over public opinion and perception. Furthermore, the paper investigates the role of techniques for acquiring biological data in comprehending the impact of cognitive warfare. By utilizing EEG devices, eye-tracking technology, measurements of galvanic skin reaction, mouse tracking, and high-speed cameras, researchers unearth valuable insights into human cognition, attention, and emotional responses during exposure to propaganda materials. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the mechanisms employed by agents of cognitive warfare to exploit vulnerabilities and shape narratives. Additionally, the relevance of data processing and analysis in cognitive warfare research is also discussed. By employing advanced computational techniques and engaging in collaborative efforts with multidisciplinary teams of experts, researchers can effectively eliminate artifacts, detect patterns, and validate their findings. This rigorous approach serves to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the obtained results, thereby enhancing our understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within cognitive warfare. In conclusion, the paper provides a comprehensive mapping of the emerging landscape of cognitive warfare, discussing invaluable insights into the multifaceted nature of cognitive warfare and, at the same time, contributing to the development of efficacious countermeasures, strategies, and policies aimed at fortifying the mind and safeguarding societies against the manipulative tactics employed within the realm of cognitive warfare.*

Keywords: *Cognitive Warfare; countermeasures; neuroscience; propaganda; Russia; Ukraine*

1. INTRODUCTION

Cognitive warfare has emerged as a multidimensional domain that poses significant challenges in today's information-driven world. The manipulation of human thinking process and behavior through the militarization of neuroscience has become a prominent concern for national and international organizations, within and beyond the defense field. This paper aims to provide a thorough exposition of the evolution and current state of cognitive warfare, exploring its facets, strategies, and ramifications. By scrutinizing recent research and studies, we investigate the interplay between visual stimuli, emotional reactions, and

information dissemination in the molding of cognitive warfare tactics.

2. UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE WARFARE

The expanding spectrum of conflict is no longer limited to physical and cyber domains, as it now encompasses the manipulation of individuals' cognitive processes. Recent developments in cognitive psychology and information communication technology (ICT) empower various actors to intricately target individuals' perception of their environment and volitional capacities. In response to these transformations, cognitive

warfare (CW) has emerged as a novel paradigm in the realm of military strategy.

Acknowledging the lack of a widely recognized definition of cognitive warfare currently, the current work in the field emphasizes the convergence of several prevailing elements such as the deliberate aim to exert influence over particular individuals and collectives concerning political affairs, acknowledging the notion that warfare constitutes a manifestation of politics through alternative means; the overt targeting of human cognition, encompassing the intricate processes by which individuals perceive, interpret, and assimilate information to acquire knowledge and comprehension (Ottewell, 2020); and the utilization of psychological principles and cutting-edge technologies to precisely direct interventions toward specific individuals or groups (Takagi, 2022).

The underlying objective of cognitive warfare is not novel, as proponents have referred to Clausewitz's emphasis on willpower and Sun Tzu's endorsement of achieving victory without direct conflict as early indications of this concept. However, what distinguishes cognitive warfare today is the unprecedented level of precision it can achieve. In the past, the precision of operations was typically limited to the smallest identifiable group that could be analyzed and targeted. Primitive capabilities constrained cognitive warfare-like operations to broad categories such as masses, nations, organizations, and occasionally high-profile leaders. However, the emergence of disruptive information and communication technology (ICT) has revolutionized the field by enabling the identification, analysis, and targeting of thousands, or even millions, of specific individuals based on their behaviors and characteristics. These tactics are expected to continue to mature.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of cognitive warfare extends well beyond the scope of traditional influence operations. Global actors are cognizant of this evolving landscape and are actively devising methods to harness its opportunities.

On June 21, 2021, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), through its Innovation Hub located in France, convened its inaugural meeting on Cognitive Warfare (Claverie & Cluzel, 2021). NATO perceives CW as an amalgamation of two distinct military domains that were previously managed separately: psychological operations and information technologies, including cyber warfare. CW leverages a substantial body of scientific knowledge accumulated over recent decades,

which now serves as a foundation for military action. Specifically, it draws upon insights from the disciplines of neuroscience and behavioral sciences, which are then applied on a large scale through computing and network technologies, utilizing an understanding of social, complex, and adaptive systems.

The central principle of CW extends beyond mere strategic advantage without direct combat. Its objective is to exert control over an adversary by influencing their thoughts, preferences, and beliefs through modifications of their cognitive representations of reality. In this context, CW represents a form of warfare that targets the underlying structure of human thinking, responsible for the spontaneous conceptualization of reality at the individual level. The aim of CW is not annihilation but absolute dominion over a population to achieve maximal net gains.

Although shrouded in secrecy, several declassified documents from the past decades have revealed methods and technologies that foreshadow the present ensemble of CW. Notably, an essay published by NATO's Allied Command Transformation office in 2020 proposed CW as the sixth domain of military operations, alongside the existing domains of land, sea, air, cyber, and space (Cole & Guyader, 2020). This opinion piece presents a selection of such evidence, focusing on the human elements of CW, and underscores how the scientific advancements that have contributed to improving human health and communication in recent years can also be employed to disrupt attention span, memory, and reasoning abilities within a population, thereby fundamentally altering their perception of reality.

3. ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON VIDEO MATERIAL SELECTION AND ANALYSIS IN COGNITIVE WARFARE CAMPAIGNS

3.1 Classification of Materials as News or Propaganda. Research on video material selection and analysis in cognitive warfare campaigns has emphasized the importance of distinguishing between news and propaganda content. In the context of cognitive warfare, where the manipulation of information is a key strategy, the classification of video materials becomes crucial. Previous studies have focused on developing criteria and frameworks to differentiate between news, which aims to provide accurate and unbiased information, and propaganda, which seeks to influence and manipulate public opinion.

For instance, Dugan *et al.* (2017) conducted a content analysis of video materials employed in cognitive warfare campaigns, examining the presence of bias, framing techniques, and manipulative tactics. Their findings revealed distinct characteristics in propagandistic videos, such as the use of emotional appeals, selective presentation of facts, and the creation of narratives to shape audience perception. In contrast, news videos were found to prioritize factual reporting, multiple perspectives, and journalistic integrity.

3.2 Temporal Extent of Video Materials.

Another aspect explored in previous research is the temporal extent of video materials used in cognitive warfare campaigns. Understanding the duration of these materials is essential for assessing their impact, evaluating the strategies employed, and identifying patterns in the dissemination of propaganda messages over time.

Dugan *et al.* (2017) conducted a longitudinal analysis of video materials in cognitive warfare campaigns, tracking their temporal extent from their initial release to their discontinuation. They found that propagandistic videos exhibited longer durations compared to news videos, indicating a deliberate effort to captivate and influence viewers through extended exposure. The extended temporal extent of propaganda materials was linked to the intention of reinforcing narratives, instilling emotions, and shaping long-term perceptions among the target audience.

3.3 Pertinence of Video Materials to Specific Occurrences. In cognitive warfare campaigns, the pertinence of video materials to specific occurrences plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and influencing decision-making processes. Previous research has sought to understand the strategic selection of video materials and their alignment with specific events or incidents to advance cognitive warfare objectives. For example, Barna and Dugan (2015a) examined the echoes of the hybrid war and Romanian media coverage of the Ukrainian crisis and extrapolated the analysis on video materials used during a specific geopolitical conflict (Dugan *et al.*, 2017) and analyzed their pertinence to key occurrences. Their study revealed a deliberate pattern of selecting and disseminating videos that aligned with critical events, aiming to reinforce preferred narratives, manipulate public sentiment, and influence the interpretation of the conflict. By establishing connections between video materials and specific occurrences, cognitive warfare actors

strategically shape the public's perception of events, thereby gaining control over the narrative surrounding the conflict.

Previous research on video material selection and analysis in cognitive warfare campaigns has shed light on the classification of materials as news or propaganda, the temporal extent of video materials, and their pertinence to specific occurrences. These studies have underscored the deliberate tactics employed by cognitive warfare actors to manipulate public opinion through the selection, framing, and dissemination of video materials. By understanding these aspects, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into the strategies employed in cognitive warfare and develop effective countermeasures to mitigate the impact of manipulative propaganda.

4. DISCUSSION OF PURPOSEFUL DEPLOYMENT OF NARRATIVES, VISUAL COMPONENTS, AND LINGUISTIC CUES IN COGNITIVE WARFARE

4.1 Insights from Video Materials Analysis.

The purposeful deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues in cognitive warfare campaigns has been a subject of extensive research. Scholars have sought to analyze video materials to gain insights into the strategies employed by cognitive warfare actors and the impact they have on public opinion and perception.

Research studies have examined video materials from diverse sources, including Russian, Ukrainian, and international news channels, to uncover the deliberate tactics used in cognitive warfare campaigns. For instance, Dugan and Dinu (2017) conducted a qualitative analysis of video materials, focusing on the narrative structures employed and the presence of visual and linguistic cues. Their findings revealed patterns in the construction of narratives to shape audience perception and manipulate emotions. The strategic use of visual components, such as imagery, symbols, and graphic design, aimed to enhance the persuasive impact of the videos and create a lasting impression on the viewers.

Additionally, Dugan and Dinu (2017) employed a mixed-methods approach to analyze video materials, combining content analysis with audience reception studies. Their research highlighted the significance of linguistic cues, such as persuasive language, framing techniques, and the manipulation of rhetoric, in influencing the interpretation of cognitive warfare messages. Through this analysis, they uncovered the

intentional deployment of linguistic devices to evoke emotional responses, create a sense of urgency, and foster specific attitudes among the target audience.

4.2 Influence over Public Opinion and Perception. The purposeful deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues in cognitive warfare campaigns has a profound influence on public opinion and perception. Through the strategic manipulation of these elements, cognitive warfare actors seek to shape the narrative surrounding specific events, issues, or conflicts.

Previous research has demonstrated the impact of cognitive warfare videos on public opinion and perception. Wang *et al.* (2016) conducted an experiment to assess the effectiveness of video materials in influencing attitudes and beliefs. Their findings indicated a significant correlation between exposure to persuasive narrative of the videos and shifts in product preference that can be extrapolated to correlation between propagandistic videos and shifts in public opinion towards the desired narratives promoted by cognitive warfare actors Dugan *et al.* (2017). The analysis revealed that the deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues in these videos played a crucial role in shaping the attitudes, emotions, and cognitive processes of the viewers.

Moreover, Dugan *et al.* (2017) conducted an experimental study where participants were exposed to different versions of video materials with varying degrees of narrative framing and visual manipulation. The results demonstrated that the intentional deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues influenced the interpretation of information and subsequently affected individuals' perception of the depicted events. These findings highlight the persuasive power of cognitive warfare videos in shaping public opinion and perception.

The purposeful deployment of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues in cognitive warfare campaigns has garnered significant attention in research. Insights from video materials analysis have provided researchers with valuable knowledge about the strategies employed by cognitive warfare actors. Furthermore, these tactics have been found to exert a powerful influence over public opinion and perception. Understanding the impact of narratives, visual components, and linguistic cues is crucial in developing effective countermeasures to mitigate the manipulative tactics used in cognitive warfare.

5. THE ROLE OF TECHNIQUES FOR ACQUIRING BIOLOGICAL DATA IN COMPREHENDING THE IMPACT OF COGNITIVE WARFARE

5.1 Utilization of EEG Devices, Eye-Tracking Technology and Galvanic Skin Reaction. Understanding the impact of cognitive warfare on human cognition, attention, and emotional responses requires the utilization of advanced techniques for acquiring biological data. Researchers have employed various tools and technologies, including EEG devices, eye-tracking technology, galvanic skin reaction measurements, mouse tracking, and high-speed cameras, to delve into the intricate dynamics at play in cognitive warfare campaigns. EEG devices have been widely used to measure brain activity and electrical signals during exposure to propaganda materials. Studies by Johnston *et al.*, (2022) demonstrated the effectiveness of EEG devices in capturing neural responses associated with cognitive processing and emotional arousal. By analyzing the neural correlates of specific stimuli, researchers can gain insights into the impact of cognitive warfare on human cognition.

Eye-tracking technology has been instrumental in understanding visual attention and the influence (Johnston *et al.*, 2022) of cognitive warfare materials on gaze patterns. Dugan *et al.* (2017) conducted eye-tracking studies to investigate how propaganda videos manipulate viewers' attention and direct their focus. By tracking eye movements, researchers identified areas of interest within the videos and examined the patterns of attentional allocation, providing valuable insights into the visual components that attract viewers' attention and facilitate narrative shaping.

Galvanic skin reaction measurements have been used to assess emotional responses during exposure to propaganda materials. Alsharif *et al.* (2022) employed galvanic skin response techniques to measure physiological changes indicative of emotional arousal. The findings of Dugan *et al.* (2017) highlighted the emotional impact of cognitive warfare videos and their ability to elicit strong reactions from the audience. By examining galvanic skin reaction, researchers can identify the emotional triggers employed in cognitive warfare campaigns.

5.2 Insights into Human Cognition, Attention, and Emotional Responses. The application of techniques for acquiring biological

data has yielded significant insights into human cognition, attention, and emotional responses in the context of cognitive warfare. By examining brain activity, eye movements, galvanic skin reaction, and behavioral responses, researchers have gained a deeper understanding of how propaganda materials impact individuals.

Studies have revealed that cognitive warfare materials can elicit cognitive biases, influence decision-making processes, and shape beliefs and attitudes. For example, EEG can be used for measurements to examine the neural correlates of cognitive biases induced by propaganda videos. Their findings demonstrated how specific techniques employed in cognitive warfare exploit cognitive vulnerabilities, leading to biased information processing and the shaping of narratives. Eye-tracking studies have highlighted the strategic deployment of visual components to capture viewers' attention, guide perception, and influence interpretation. Johnston *et al.* (2022) found that *eye-tracking data revealed systematic patterns in visual attention*, indicating the intentional design of cognitive warfare videos to direct viewers' focus towards specific elements. These findings underscore the role of visual cues in shaping narrative comprehension and subsequent cognitive responses. By measuring galvanic skin reaction and physiological arousal, researchers have uncovered the emotional impact of cognitive warfare materials. Dugan *et al.* (2017) demonstrated that propaganda videos evoked strong emotional responses, including fear, anger, and empathy, among viewers. These emotional reactions can shape individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and willingness to accept manipulated narratives.

5.3 Exploitation of Vulnerabilities and Shaping of Narratives. Techniques for acquiring biological data have provided valuable insights into the exploitation of vulnerabilities and the shaping of narratives in cognitive warfare. Through the analysis of EEG data, eye-tracking patterns, galvanic skin reaction, and mouse tracking, researchers have identified the mechanisms employed by cognitive warfare actors to exploit cognitive vulnerabilities and guide narrative comprehension.

Heslen (2020) discusses the concept of neurocognitive hacking and its potential applications in cyber conflict at different levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. Neurocognitive hacking involves the activation of specific neural areas in the brain through subliminal or supraliminal stimuli to influence the behavioral

outcomes of an adversary. Research indicates that mortality-related stimuli activate certain neural correlates in the brain, such as the right amygdala and left anterior cingulate cortex, leading to negative behavior towards out-group members, including unconscious discriminatory behavior.

The phenomenon of neurocognitive hacking has implications for information operations targeting populations with diverse ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds. By leveraging the in-group/out-group dynamic, this approach could be exploited to manipulate target populations using tailored propaganda or the shaping of specific behavioral outcomes. Although the theoretical framework behind neurocognitive hacking is still being developed, the introduction of mortality-related stimuli is proposed to activate an individual's unconscious vigilance system, prompting further evaluation of the stimuli's significance and potential threat. As a result, discriminatory affective reactions towards out-group members may arise as automatic heuristics designed to protect the individual from perceived survival threats.

Consequently, the presentation of mortality-related stimuli via computer networks to targeted audiences holds the potential to facilitate the dissemination of customized propaganda and the manipulation of specific behaviors within a population. The intended outcomes may include sowing division within a target community or weakening support for a particular political regime. Neurocognitive hacking offers a novel approach to cyber conflict, exploiting the neurocognitive processes underlying human behavior. By understanding and manipulating the brain's response to mortality-related stimuli, this technique has the potential to shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within targeted populations. However, further research is needed to fully develop the theoretical framework and explore the practical implications of neurocognitive hacking in the context of cyber warfare (Heslen, 2020).

Studies have revealed that cognitive warfare materials strategically target specific cognitive biases and heuristics to manipulate individuals' decision-making processes. By exploiting biases such as confirmation bias, availability bias, and framing effects, cognitive warfare actors shape narratives that align with their objectives. For instance, Barna and Dugan (2015b) demonstrated how propaganda videos leverage cognitive biases to reinforce pre-existing beliefs, distort perceptions of reality, and manipulate individuals' cognitive processes.

The utilization of techniques for acquiring biological data has shed light on the ways in which cognitive warfare materials shape narratives. The analysis of eye-tracking data has shown how visual components, such as salient imagery, text placement, and graphic design, guide viewers' attention and facilitate the construction of desired narratives. By strategically manipulating visual cues, cognitive warfare actors create a narrative framework that aligns with their goals and influences individuals' interpretation of events.

Furthermore, the examination of emotional responses through galvanic skin reaction measurements has revealed the intentional elicitation of specific emotions to shape narrative comprehension. Cognitive warfare materials often aim to provoke fear, anger, or empathy, evoking emotional responses that strengthen the narrative's impact and enhance persuasion. These emotional manipulations contribute to the successful dissemination of propaganda messages and the shaping of public opinion.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper provides a comprehensive mapping of the emerging landscape of cognitive warfare, shedding light on its multifaceted nature while contributing to the development of effective countermeasures, strategies, and policies to fortify the mind and safeguard societies against manipulative tactics. Addressing the complexity of informational conflict requires the identification of symmetrical and asymmetrical means of countering it, the establishment of scientific research tools and institutions, and the development of a legal framework to dismantle this phenomenon. Furthermore, protecting personal digital footprints, securing decision-makers against disinformation, and adopting cultural security strategies become imperative. Lastly, the role of neuroscience in understanding cognitive warfare necessitates interdisciplinary research directions, technological breakthroughs, and ethical frameworks for the use of neurotechnologies, with neuroethics and international laws serving as a legal foundation for counteracting cognitive warfare.

The relevance of data processing and analysis in cognitive warfare research cannot be underestimated. The employment of advanced computational techniques, collaborative efforts, and multidisciplinary approaches contributes to a deeper understanding of cognitive warfare phenomena. By ensuring the accuracy and

reliability of findings, researchers can develop more effective countermeasures and strategies to mitigate the influence of cognitive warfare. By employing these rigorous analytical approaches, researchers can enhance our understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within cognitive warfare and inform policies and practices aimed at safeguarding societies against manipulative tactics.

In conclusion, techniques for acquiring biological data, including EEG devices, eye-tracking technology, galvanic skin reaction measurements, mouse tracking, and high-speed cameras, have provided valuable insights into the impact of cognitive warfare on human cognition, attention, and emotional responses. These techniques have revealed the exploitation of cognitive vulnerabilities and the deliberate shaping of narratives by cognitive warfare actors. By understanding these mechanisms, researchers can develop effective countermeasures and strategies to mitigate the influence of cognitive warfare and safeguard individuals against manipulative tactics.

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NEURO-HUMINT – AT THE INTERSECTION OF CLASSICAL HUMINT AND OPERATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE

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Abstract: *Achieving and persistently maintaining maximum performance in the case of demanding professions is a complex and expensive process, but essential for the fulfillment of institutional tasks. In the NATO countries, there has been an increased interest in the integration of knowledge from the fields of operational neuroscience, occupational health and related areas in the training of military personnel (especially intelligence and SOF operators) in recent decades. The stated purpose of these selection and training programs is to ethically achieve cognitive dominance, physical supremacy and emotional resilience at the individual, team, human-AI-robot system level. The structure of personalized prevention, optimization/augmentation and resilience programs is based on the measurement and analysis of a large number of data from medical, functional, psychological, sociological evaluations, genetic, anthropometric parameters, etc. that generate a constellation of data analyzed through "big data" methodologies, with the use of ML algorithms and the identification of individual patterns. The objectives are achieved through precision and personalized interventions on a large number of modifiable factors (physiological, functional, behavioral, attitudinal, psychological) that are responsible for influencing the neurocognitive and psycho-social performances. In our paper we propose to present the main concepts, the history, the current good practices and a state-of-the-art in the extended field of operational neurosciences, as well as specific applications in the field of HUMINT-related intelligence operator training. Among the objectives of the neuro-humint training processes we mention: the identification of discrete, atypical and/or rare neuropsychological qualities that can offer competitive advantages in the humint field; persistent and secure non-invasive monitoring of physical and cognitive performance in the natural environment; accelerated learning using innovative methodologies and wearable neurotechnologies; developing the ability to creatively build atypical, non-linear, original tactical scenarios; continuous self-programming of stress resistance and emotional recovery; the rapid identification and threat assessment of the potential of neuroaugmented opponents or with special qualities.*

Keywords: *HUMINT; neuroscience; human performance; operational neuroscience; neuro-HUMINT*

1. HUMAN PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION – OLD CONCEPT, NEW APPLICATIONS

Technical-scientific progress in the field of national security has forced the reconceptualization of human performance, considered to be

the ability of the person, as a unit and biological entity, to cope, to adapt to special conditions, conditions that exceed the 'functional parameters' for which man is ontologically and genetically conditioned. Exceeding the parameters can be adverse (extreme environmental conditions, high stress, etc.) or intentional (performance sports, physiologically or mentally demanding activities, etc.) (Marin *et al.*, 2015:107-113).

By definition, the *concept of optimizing or*

increasing human performance (Human Performance Optimization/ OPU/ HPO) emphasizes the fact that it is addressed to healthy people, an essential particularity that differentiates it from a preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, regenerative or aesthetic approach:

... is an emerging field that aims to explore medical or rehabilitation therapeutic methodologies, such as strategies, drugs and external artificial prostheses whose main purpose is to compensate for the diminution or lack of a function, in order to increase / augment the physical and cognitive abilities of healthy individuals, beyond the characteristic level of physiological performance in healthy conditions (Di Pino *et al.*, 2014;109).

The HPO concept focuses on physical, cognitive and social performance and has three

main interconnected objectives of interest and action:

- professional excellence (zero errors) and the culture of safety at work (zero accidents);
- resilience and endurance (in the case of demanding professions – maintaining the quality of the prolonged professional act and / or in adverse conditions by increasing the functional reserve and the capacity to manage stressors);
- preventive, protective strategies and countermeasures to professional risk and aggression factors (prevention, rapid recovery, active longevity, quality of life).

In the United States The Force 2025 “Human Dimension” programme introduced a new human element optimisation vision in 2014.

The HPO's broad adoption is part of the military's flexibilization in a complex, unpredictable environment. This initiative created a framework for evaluating, integrating, and synchronising training and educational, scientific and technological, holistic medical, and human resources policies, programmes, and more to support military professions. The HPO is

a process in which emerging knowledge, skills and technologies are used to enhance and maintain the individual capabilities of the military and military organisations to perform essential tasks (Army.mil).

The BRAIN (2013) and Precision Medicine (2015) programmes of President Barack Obama provided another chance for HPO incorporation into the military. These efforts have funded many military research projects that are not directly oriented at performance optimisation. The cyborgization-optimization programmes are the most apparent and scientifically fascinating. HAPTIX envisioned neural interfaces for bionic prosthesis that provided input through a peripheral nerve implant. This programme compliments the “Revolutionising Prosthetics” effort, which created two anthropomorphic bionic modular prosthesis. “Restoring Active Memory” (RAM) intends to construct a wireless implanted brain-computer interface for restorative (medical, for veterans with neurological damage) and augmentative reasons. Despite advances in high-accuracy encephalographic analysis and microelectrodes, hippocampus implanted neuroprostheses are not yet employed in medicine.

The Preservation of the Force and Family Task Force (POTFF-TF) (USSOCOM) programme for US Special Forces (SOF) fighters is devoted to their dual roles as family members and military

“family” members. This programme integrates all aspects that affect performance across two or three decades, the operational life of a SOF fighter. This programme uses psychologists, marital consultants, coaches and trainers, doctors, priests, and others to achieve “preventive maintenance” – early identification, awareness, prevention, resilience and strategies, coping, social and family reintegration – to prevent chronic problems. Stress resilience and group cognitive and behavioural performance are prioritised psychologically. SOF operations require lengthy periods of family separation in often quite diverse geographical places, covert and high-risk missions, and optimising “social performance” via open and constructive interactions in families. Performance nutrition, sports medicine, and sports psychology comprise HPO. Spiritual performance, aimed to “improve essential spiritual beliefs / identity, values, awareness, relationships and experiences” within and without religion, is remarkable.

The most important civilian US agency involved in HPO research is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), especially through The Human Research Program (HRP). Particular interest is given to the factors that influence the health and performance of cosmic crews in conditions of prolonged isolation, exposure to cosmic radiation, biological effects generated by microgravity, etc.

Other civilian US institutions involved in various human performance optimization niches are Sandia National Laboratories, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Center for Applied Brain and Cognitive Sciences (a consortium between Tufts University and the U.S. Army DEVCOM Soldier Center).

Early exposure to this culture of improved performance since college education has a facilitating effect on the adoption and enrollment in HPO programs during military service. We mention some of the HPO centers in the American academic environment: the Fighter Human Performance Research Center (University of Pittsburg), the Human Performance Laboratory (Connecticut University), the Department of Health and Human Performance (Hudson University), the UCSF Center for Human Performance from California), Center for Advanced Bioengineering for Survival (GeorgiaTech), Brain and Cognition Research Laboratory (University of Illinois), etc.

In 2018, the United Kingdom approved the OPSMART/Optimizing Human Performance Through Stress Management and Resilience Training (Army.mod) programme to diagnose

psychological disorders early, improve mental resilience, and improve quality of life. Mental resilience helps regulate psychological stressors and emerging emotions caused by operational stressors like information and sensory overload, complexity, fear, anxiety, sleep deprivation, fatigue, time pressure, and extreme weather.

“Human Augmentation – The Dawn of a New Paradigm” (MoD, 2020) is a report by the UK Ministry of Defence and the Bundeswehr's Office of Defence Planning on human performance optimisation, necessary technologies, ethical and legal issues, and defence and society implications. The most promising augmentative technologies for military institutions are listed.

“Future Soldier” is the British Army's modernization plan for the future decades. “Health, performance, and well-being” is one suggestion to dominate physical, cognitive, and social domains. Multidisciplinary Force Mental Health Teams will improve military mental health, well-being, and performance.

NATO has shown an early interest in the applications of human performance optimization methods in the military field. The symposium “Human Performance Enhancement for NATO Military Operations” was held in Sofia in 2009. The conference examined NATO operations' HPO theoretical and ethical limits.

This conference concluded that performance-enhancing technology is not yet operational, there are no clear research plans, no ethical framework, and no NATO Member State synergies in this area. The recommendations were to establish separate performance scales for fitness and health, develop a minimum ethical framework, implement HPO medical research programmes between NATO member states, and establish a foundation from military HPO programme implementation.

NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ) sponsored the 2017 workshop “Human Performance Programmes in Special Operations Forces”. Decision-makers and scientists from 25 nations discussed creating common organisational platforms, vocabulary, and metrics for SOF operator human performance optimisation programmes.

In October 2021, Rome hosted “Applying Neuroscience to Performance: From Rehabilitation to Human Cognitive Augmentation”. This symposium focused on military neuroscience applications, emerging neurotechnologies, NATO Member State research collaboration, and neurotechnology for military personnel, other demanding professions, and extreme environments.

The NATO Centre of Excellence for Cold Weather Operations will host the symposium “Human Performance and Medical Treatment and Support During Cold Weather Operations” in autumn 2022 to develop biomedical research for Arctic and adverse weather operations. Human-Autonomy Teaming: Supporting Dynamically Adjustable Collaboration, Improving Human Effectiveness Through Embedded Virtual Simulation, and Assessment of Augmentation Technologies for Improving Human Performance were also discussed at other NATO symposia. At the start of 2022, the Science and Technology Organisation website listed 14 HPO-related projects.

These projects include monitoring pilots' stress through brain-computer interfaces, countermeasures to prolonged cognitive load and/or sleep deprivation in operational conditions, “operational ethics,” blockchain technology in portable/mobile medical sensors, identification and prevention of organic damage caused by high-speed marine vessels, and more.

2. HUMINT – ANCIENT, BUT NEVER OLD

The activities of collecting, verifying, evaluating and completing the raw data are carried out within the framework of integrated informational projects/ operations, related to the monitoring of areas, places and environments of informational interest. The specific activities involve the exploitation of secret human (agent network) and technical sources (operative surveillance, informational investigations, radioelectronic research, secret finding, operative records), public sources (mass media, internet, public relations, documentation) and official ones (cooperation with authorities and public institutions, internal/ external partners).

Usually, as a result of the connection to the concept of intelligence, the reference to the gathering of information through human (secret) sources is made through the term HUMINT.

Intelligence has the following meanings (Kent):

- organization – defines the structures, units, agencies, which implement the respective process and develop the final product
- process – the directing-gathering-processing-dissemination cycle of information
- product – current information is disseminated to decision-makers, which relates to usual events, estimated information that projects potential developments, warning information that triggers an alarm, scientific and technical information that

includes an examination of the development and technological capabilities of foreign entities.

HUMINT is a three-dimensional view of person-process-product. a) planning and preparation – research and operational planning for an information gathering activity correlated with a specific source; b) filtering/ screening –evaluating/ differentiating people based on factors like knowledge, attitude towards specific questions, degree of cooperation, general appearance/ accessories, approach techniques. Screening is a time-saving way of identifying individuals who are most likely to have valuable information and who fit a predetermined source profile – level of knowledge, degree of cooperation, positioning, and access; c) the approach – control and report elements are established to develop cooperation and facilitate information acquisition; and d) formulating questions/questioning – an interrogation, debriefing, or elicitation method. These factors affect HUMINT:

- approach (technique/ tradecraft), which involves planning, organising, and coordinating SSU activities to minimise risks to the Human Secret Sources (SSU in Romanian), operational officer, and organisation. Procedures involve SSU information retrieval and other abilities. HUMINT relies on recruiting people and using counterintelligence, surveillance, exploiting links, “cover” (commercial or official), and false flag operations (invoking the quality of a representative of another state or organisation).

- information needs vs. security - before a HUMINT operation, the persons of interest (potential targets) are identified and evaluated, with arguments for and against, depending on the counter-informative risks;

- disruptive factors, which are events/actions that affect cooperation, when the balance between the operative officer's objectives and the SSU's objectives becomes unstable and an adjustment is needed

- staff adequacy (insufficient) – the specific selection of some targets determines the specific selection of operative officers, so it is possible that the unavailability factor also appears (prioritising according to the critical level); – time constraints – HUMINT activities require significant time to develop SSU relationships and trust; – evaluating and disseminating information – verifying and establishing the verity.

Operational officers are educated and accredited to gather data from persons to meet information needs.

A satellite or listening device can provide valuable information, but only a human source reveals intentions... and the recruitment and management of HUMINT is essential to the effectiveness of an intelligence or security service.

HUMINT's main idea is that "the foundations of human relations have not changed in any way since the origins of civilization, it being necessary to at least build a rapport, connected to the ability to empathise and the feeling of trust, as pillars of a successful relationship". A person attempts to get information without the other person knowing or wanting to provide it. Thus, an operational officer should have “subtle science” and/or “delicate artwork” features that aid HUMINT operations (native qualities are important).

Human Secret Sources requires a relational and informational alliance:

I. Informative Alliance, centred on the goal (task), consisting of three elements: language, message form/style, and approach/introduction. Language must match SSU comprehension and language kind. The SSU should be informed of the security risks if the instructions are given as a command. Persuasion may encourage informative tasks, security norms, collaboration, and task solving. The informational alliance requires two skills: persuasion and behaviour modification.

II. The Relationship Alliance, centred on communication, refers to the link and attachment (bond, attachment) between the SSU and the operational officer, important for beneficial outcomes. The following attributes of an operational officer are significant, associated with the notion that he will, in a premeditated way, know (sometimes under numerous identities and vocations) a variety of persons he will contact and some he will convert to SSU:

1. multitasking/active attention: a) focusing on the information provided and constantly evaluating its value and veracity, based on informational requirements, current data, and other data; b) analysing the interaction with the SSU, the para and non-verbal language, associated with the assessment of truthfulness, the degree of cooperation, and the state of mind; c) notifying the opportunity for breaks and insisting on addressing/detailing a topic; and d) providing solutions for the SS

HUMINT information has security/ counterintelligence risks:

- social and personal implications of identity disclosure and cooperation with information structures; – improper, manipulative behaviour

towards the operative officer, even for his protection.

HUMINT (clandestine) relies on understanding and manipulating interpersonal dynamics to affect operational targets.

2. patience, tact, and self-control (patience, tact, self-control) – for rapport and questioning efficiency. Lack of patience/self-control may cause: a) SSU to become non-responsive, seeming to give up asking questions and devalue the connection; b) the operative officer to display displeasure, exhaustion, actual anger, and lose the initiative. Positive relationships take time and SSU training demands patience.

Asking the right question or avoiding the wrong question (not synonymous) does not guarantee the accuracy, credibility, relevance, or timeliness of information, but it is a prerequisite for informing decision makers and good analysis, which requires applying the right techniques to good and answerable questions to understand meaning.

Self-awareness – knowing one's weaknesses and triggers – leads to self-control.

3. initiative – the operative officer understands the needs and steers the discourse to the areas of interest to create a relationship/get information.

4. objectivity – underlined in: a) appraisal of knowledge; b) neutral attitude independent of emotional responses, to avoid inadvertently distorting information (and for flexibility in approach and questioning approaches).

5. credibility – credibility is built and maintained through: a) personal presence and consistency; b) fulfilling promises and avoiding unfulfillable promises; c) clear articulation of complex situations and concepts; and d) providing a clear, precise product with an objective assessment of qualities.

The operative officer might concentrate on a good feature of the SSU to establish true empathy, which increases trust.

– adaptability – based on: a) the relationship with various categories of personalities and the reflection from the SSU position; b) frequenting different types of locations and operational environments, which allows the SSU to easily change questioning and approach techniques depending on the operational environment and personality.

– SSU (ability to recognise the human source's goal) is crucial for developing real empathy (motivation is not just based on reward), and it must be balanced with the operative officer's professional agenda.

– Given the ongoing strain, an operational officer needs resilience to overcome challenges and concentrate on goals.

– persistence (endurance) –when faced with resistance, non-cooperation, or other challenges, perseverance will yield information. Consistency makes the SSU trust the operational officer.

– (pre)vision/ (foresight “bigger picture”) – collecting information is done to chronicle a current danger and anticipate tomorrow's hazard. Partial, unusual, apparently inconsequential facts that question assumptions and define alternate configurations (the large picture) can help develop credible forecasts.

– critical thinking – framing/interpreting elements in particular situations, formulating questions, and rationally contesting important assumptions are necessary for successful operational solutions. Pressure requires good logic.

– detecting patterns and strange differences (patterns, uncommon differences) – theoretically, human behavioural patterns and security risks are lessons learnt. Thus, while reality imposes unrelated conditions, links may be found to project scenarios (with a particular judgement based on past data).

– physical appearance and behaviour (appearance, demeanour) – personal appearance, comprised of organised and professional look, way of action expressing accuracy, power, and efficiency, may substantially impact SSU attitude - becomes more cooperative and receptive. Charismatic implies friendly, open, and confident.

– interpersonal skills/social cue response - HUMINT includes innate traits or training. The operative officer must assess the SSU's personality (by observing behaviour and verbal, para, and non-verbal language) to determine the appropriateness of formulating the cooperation proposal and the SSU's credibility and information veracity. Identifying the SSU's changing motive impacts operational security.

Empathy is developed through responding to social signals, both verbal and nonverbal. The operative officer must be able to establish and hold a discussion, discuss diverse issues, and tailor the topic to the SSU level. The relationship is positive when the operative officer adapts to the SSU level, adopts a non-threatening demeanour and conversational approach, is professional, “gets the language – jargon, slang,” and has a relaxed and friendly attitude (no pressure to succeed or be liked).

– active/reflective listening skills, because it is possible to identify topics addressed and messages sent to the SSU that provide clues about

its dispositional characteristics (especially when the statements are not appropriate to the situation/context).

- competence/language barrier - being unable to speak directly to the SSU without an interpreter might hinder information collecting and rapport building.

- understanding of investigative practise, which is shown via experience and authority when the SSU is given a job and different scenarios are provided (“What would happen if...?”).

The SSU strategy is founded on background information/antecedents, therefore research is essential to good coordination and constructive communication.

HUMINT is a person-centered intelligence-gathering tool. Thus, the operational officer must know how to function in the field and adapt to different situations. Patience, tact, attention, judgement, and prudence matter. In conclusion, HUMINT operative officers must have above-average general knowledge, the capacity to operate in a team, an internal locus of control, non-aggressive behaviour, rapid thinking, and unbiased argumentation. Motivations, core beliefs, wants, and desires, as well as SSU strengths and weaknesses, affect the recruiting process. In summary, the listed skills enable the operative officer to: understand and recognise non- and paraverbal language, emotional states, and nuances in a conversation (emotional intelligence); understand and evaluate the intentions and motivations, respectively to motivate the SSU; successfully direct the SSU to obtain the information of interest; verify the credibility of the SSU and the authenticity of the information provided; and

HUMINT is one of the hardest forms of intelligence to develop and deploy since it requires time and money to identify targets and analyse material. Learning foreign languages, recruiting skills, surveillance detection, and performance require time. “Operational officers are trained in 5-8 years and develop continuously” according to foreign intelligence agencies. The training includes human secret source recruiting, coverage modalities, particular technique, elicitation, foreign languages, report writing, and fitness.

From a military viewpoint, the operational officer (HUMINT operator) is the important component in the HUMINT process, and his training in foreign languages, acting courses, weaponry, and technological equipment is continual. 10 weeks of basic training are followed by 20 weeks of advanced training in intelligence

gathering, HUMINT analysis, interrogation techniques, language skills, and more (much of the training is done outside the classroom to simulate real contact with the environment/environments in a specific area).

The SSU operates covertly and organised in operational contexts and gives data to operative officers, which needs the following:

(a) Perception, the initial step of familiarisation with the operational environment, focuses on data gathering, organisation, and interpretation. The assumption of informative tasks/data collection involves: a) quickly achieving the link between the requirements, access to the data of interest, and the collection capacity; b) correctly receiving the instructions (task instructions) and transmitting the results; c) rapid awareness of deviations from planning for appropriate and prompt reactions; and d) continuous updating/upgrading of the activity to avoid a visible operational routine.

(b) memory and concentration – the ability to: a) take in all the task details accurately; b) retain various aspects in the data collection phase, where it is most vulnerable; c) summarise certain data and situations, with as much accuracy as possible after a long period of time; d) indirectly direct the perception of the significant elements of the environment in which data is collected, because they are very important for the sustainability of the SSU activity; “SSU training in this area would increase effectiveness, make various situations easier to manage, make task execution more precise and probably less time-consuming, with fewer mistakes.

(c) the capacity to re-generate/physical form (regenerate) - success depends on the secret agent's physical condition, regular physical exercise, and proper diet. “Through operative officers, the intelligence services should pay attention to such elements, because they affect the quality of the activity.”

(d) attention aids data selection in a complicated setting. The atmosphere and substance of private data are important in secret/covered information acquisition. The environment dictates data integration and meaning for the bearer, which affects data substance and timeliness for an information service.

Data value is reflected in its substance, and attention to minutiae may dramatically impact data utilisation.

(e) emotionality – emotions might cause quicker, slower, or even erroneous responses, altering data quality/usability or SSU activity concealment. Emotional choices are “affectively

charged” and often wrong. Thus, the emotional stability of the SSU is important (it can also affect loyalty) – they usually work in a team because the emotional state cannot always be determined on direct contact, but changes in the emotional state (or the causes of the changes) can be detected later, in the evaluation of the task related to data collection or content evaluation.

Operational officers use HUMINT (often disguised as a businessman, tourist, student, etc.) to acquire information and analyse human motivation and impact. Operational officers become multifunctional generalists. However, the SSU's mental processes and value system may considerably impact data quality, task performance, and operating relationship causes.

HUMINT training must focus on the following elements:

- planning – 80% of success – so specific objectives will be set so that the operative officer:
 - will plan the operation in a detailed, organised manner, respectively will develop, based on the available data, a coherent, achievable plan;
 - will study SSU by analysing and learning behaviour patterns, access level, interests, occupation, any previous contacts, etc.

- execution – based on theoretical and practical training, the operational officer assesses adaptability to a pre-determined source. Analysis and critical thinking are developed to appropriately analyse obstacles and build adjustment mechanisms when "the source's way of being and acting" is different.

- reporting writing training standardises procedures and records information. The training focuses on writing synthetically (clearly, precisely, and concisely), making comments and observations about the meeting, interpreting the source's statements, and explaining whether the source's verbal or non-verbal communication was consistent or inconsistent.

The intensity of the operational officer-SSU relationship makes the cooperation/coordination activity “something interesting and different” because it is a constant dynamic between exploiting the SSU's access to information (or directing its involvement in an action/situation) and SSU security.

3. THE FUNDAMENTALS OF AN HPO PROGRAM FOR HUMINT PROFESSIONALS

We consider that the principles underlying the cognitive optimization program for HUMINT professionals (personalized-prevention-and-

performance-for-intelligence-professionals-as-a-service) are as follows:

- Holistic vision - the goal is to ethically achieve cognitive dominance, physical supremacy and emotional resilience at the individual, team, human-AI-robot partnership level.

- The optimization program is scientifically based and is managed and implemented by a multidisciplinary team that combines the medical act with psychological intervention, forms of counseling, training and coaching.

- Implementation (learning, communication, monitoring, self-reporting, etc.) involves forms of direct and online interaction through a secure platform in the collective, thematic groups or individually, depending on the context and stage.

- The main areas of expertise used in the optimization program come from medicine (neurosciences, neuroergonomics, metabolism, neurology, ophthalmology, physical medicine and recovery, sports medicine, etc.), psychology, biophysics, sports, informatics (ML, AI), engineering, personal development, NLP, coaching.

- The establishment of personalized optimization programs is based on the analysis of a large number of data from medical, functional, psychological, sociological, sports evaluations, anthropometric parameters, etc. that make up a multidisciplinary analyzed data constellation. The large volume of data collected at the individual level (~ 200-300 initial indicators/individual + ~ > 50 stage monitoring indicators) allows a "big data" approach with the use of ML algorithms.

- Participation in the optimization program is based on informed consensus, direct and motivated ethical interest in improving professional qualities, prevention against risk factors, promotion of intercollegiate cooperation and the freedom to leave the program at any time without the need for justification or the risk of punitive consequences.

- Achieving the objectives is achieved through precise and personalized interventions (aiming/targeting) on a large number of modifiable factors (physiological, functional, behavioral, attitudinal, psychological) that are responsible for influencing the neurocognitive and psycho-social performances involved in the professional effort. These factors are functionally interconnected in the form of a network, which when it is persistently optimized determines the emergence of a synergistic inflection effect (threshold), objectified in the form of directed improvement of

neurocognitive and psycho-social performances at individual and team level.

- Optimization generally involves the persistent maintenance of some parameter values in a narrower (optimal) range within the normal range.

Program stages

1. Standardized anamnesis
2. Health status assessment and medical pathology screening based on questionnaires, scales and standardized scores
3. Evaluation of neurocognitive performance based on standardized questionnaires and scores
4. Parameters: anthropometric, psychological, sports performance, professional performance, etc
5. Functional examinations: pulmonary, ophthalmology, ENT, neuroophthalmology, etc
6. Biological investigations (general, metabolic, screening, hormonal, toxicology, etc.)
7. Assessment - psychological, psychiatric, medical. The establishment by a multidisciplinary commission of the objectives of the stage, the monitoring parameters. Proposals – restorative interventions, psychological and biological optimization, etc. - making a personalized psycho-medical intervention plan (3 months) and communicating with the subject (informed consent)
8. Monitoring and periodic self-monitoring (online platform, self-reporting based on indicators)
9. Re-evaluation, complex re-testing – stage conclusions (intra- and inter-individual comparisons, statistical analysis and ML/AI, interpretation and discussions on the results, conclusions, etc.)
10. Stage II – EEG assessment during professional activities, NFB-EEG, non-invasive transcranial stimulation (plasticity), hyperbaric oxygen therapy
11. Stage III – genetic testing.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We appreciate that through the development of effective and safe neuroaugmentation programs, a possible re-approach to the classic HUMINT problem, understood in the form of exploiting individual skills and access to relevant information, can be considered.

Consequently, we propose the concept of “neuro-humint”, circumscribed to the concerns of a state or non-state entity to optimize individual and collective physical, psychological and behavioral capacities (operational team) related to HUMINT, and we propose the following topics:

- the accelerated multisensory learning associated with the rapid development of correlations, which transforms the individual into a primary factor of “professional and credible (sometimes singular)” drafting and interpretation of some information in a desirable direction,

- developing the ability to creatively build atypical, non-linear, original scenarios with the aim of diversifying access to information or people of interest,

- the amplification of one's own capacities to influence and manipulate the decisions of some “target persons”,

- self-training and the ability to identify opportunities for rapid socio-professional advancement within an organization-objective

- the development of “spontaneous” reactions/justifying behaviors of one's own activities within a counter-informative context, respectively decisions in borderline situations,

- continuous self-programming of stress resistance and emotional and moral recovery within a reasonable time frame (resilience),

- achieving maximum performance and sustaining a predictable period of time in order to carry out specific activities in a hostile environment

- rapid identification and evaluation of the potential of neuroaugmented opponents or with special qualities

- the assimilation, development and application of methods of vulnerability, blocking, deviation (in “useless” directions/domains) and/or de-efficiency of the potential of classic, neuroaugmented or special-quality opponents.

Our work calls on civilian and military departments, research labs, centres, and institutes to apply Human Performance Optimisation for demanding professions of special relevance.

Human Performance Optimisation may be a “technological crucible” for cutting-edge medical and psychological research, artificial intelligence technologies, and associated sectors. Accelerated technical progress has made specialised breakthrough “technological surprises” more likely, creating knowledge market asymmetries. The sectors have wide-ranging commercial and military applications.

Human Performance Optimisation may also be utilised to build responses to the hostility variables caused by demanding civilian and military professions. Astronauts, deep-sea divers, climbers, extreme sportsmen, Arctic explorers, and others use this pragmatic approach to create “revolutions” in weapons systems or reach a maximum threshold

of human performance (used in enhanced human operations).

A more general approach allows countermeasures for common professional situations (chronic or longer sleep deprivation, prolonged cognitive load, neurovisual fatigue, decreased operative performance during prolonged activities, decreased ability to struggle due to physical fatigue, etc.).

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DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE COMBAT MINDSET FOR OUTER SPACE SECURITY: INTEGRATING TECHNICAL, STRATEGIC, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES

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Abstract: *This scholarly article explores the imperative need to cultivate a combat mindset within outer space security training, encompassing technical, strategic, and psychological competencies. It highlights the diverse threats facing outer space security, emphasizes the significance of technical skills in space engineering, communication, cryptography, and data analysis, and underscores the importance of strategic competencies in crisis planning, international cooperation, and space policy development. The study also emphasizes the role of psychological competencies, including resilience, decision-making under pressure, and emotional regulation, in effective threat mitigation. The article proposes strategic implementation approaches, including collaborative initiatives, specialized training centers, and realistic simulations. Case studies showcase the efficacy of combat mindset training in addressing space security challenges. Ultimately, this research underscores the critical role of cultivating a combat mindset to ensure a secure and stable space environment..*

Keywords: *combat mindset training; outer space security; technical competencies; strategic competencies; psychological resilience*

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by remarkable technological advancements and an ever-expanding reach into outer space, the significance of this celestial domain for modern society cannot be overstated. Space exploration and utilization play a pivotal role in various sectors, including communication, navigation, weather forecasting, and national security, offering limitless opportunities for scientific discovery and economic development. As nations and corporations aim to explore and exploit the vast expanse of outer space, it has emerged as a strategic domain (Bessone *et al.*, 2013:321-327; Borrell, 2022).

However, with the rapid progress of space technology and the growing number of actors involved in space activities, a new challenge has arisen – the escalating threats to space security (Brenner *et al.*, 2016). What was once an arena of scientific curiosity and international cooperation is now witnessing a shift in dynamics, with nations seeking strategic advantage and safeguarding their interests in orbit. Vital assets that provide crucial services to humanity are now susceptible to

disruption or destruction from hostile actors. The threats to space security manifest in various forms, ranging from deliberate acts of aggression to unintentional hazards resulting from space debris and space weather. The concept of security has expanded beyond terrestrial boundaries, as space becomes a domain for military operations, intelligence gathering, and defensive measures. The potential consequences of space-based conflict or catastrophic incidents in orbit cannot be ignored, as they may have far-reaching impacts on global communications, navigation systems, and the safety of astronauts aboard the International Space Station.

Recognizing the evolving security landscape, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) declared space as an operational domain in 2019 (Stickings, 2020). This significant declaration signifies NATO's commitment to addressing the challenges and threats posed by hostile actors in outer space. Moreover, the establishment of dedicated space forces, as exemplified by several nations, including the United States, underscores the growing significance of space security (Carrigan & Akin, 2003:46-59). These space forces are responsible for protecting critical space-based

assets, conducting intelligence gathering, and, if necessary, engaging in defensive or offensive operations in space.

The establishment of space forces reflects the changing nature of warfare, as outer space transforms from a sanctuary into a potential battlefield. Disrupting or destroying satellite communications, navigation systems, or reconnaissance capabilities has become a compelling strategy for those seeking a military advantage (Carrigan & Akin, 2003:46-59). Consequently, space forces are tasked with developing strategies to deter and respond to potential threats while ensuring the continued availability and integrity of vital space-based assets.

The formation of space forces and the recognition of space as an operational domain demonstrate a commitment to protecting national interests, enhancing defensive capabilities, and fostering international stability in the expanding realm of outer space. However, it is essential to balance military activities with peaceful exploration and cooperation to ensure that space remains a domain that benefits all of humanity.

Effectively addressing these challenges necessitates developing a combat mindset in outer space security training. Adapting the traditional concept of combat mindset, which emphasizes mental preparedness, situational awareness, and decisive action, to the unique environment and demands of space operations is imperative. Space operators and security professionals must be equipped with the necessary skills and mindset to counter emerging threats in the celestial domain, just as military personnel undergo rigorous training for terrestrial warfare.

This article explores the significance of outer space in modern society, delves into the growing threats to space security, and highlights the need for developing a combat mindset in outer space security training. It examines the key elements that should be incorporated into such training programs, emphasizing the critical role of mental preparedness and proactive decision-making in space operations. By doing so, we can better safeguard our assets and maintain the peaceful and secure use of outer space for the benefit of all humanity.

2. COMBAT MINDSET TRAINING: CULTIVATING RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY IN OUTER SPACE

Combat mindset training is an integral aspect of military preparation, designed to develop the

mental resilience, adaptability, and decision-making capabilities required for effective performance in high-stress and potentially life-threatening situations. In the realm of outer space security, combat mindset training takes on even greater significance, given the unique environment and challenges of space operations that demand a specialized approach to mental preparedness.

Central to combat mindset training is the provision of psychological tools and strategies necessary to maintain composure, focus, and decisiveness in dynamic and unpredictable situations. It goes beyond technical proficiency and physical prowess, recognizing that one's mental state and ability to make critical decisions under pressure significantly impact mission success.

The distinct challenges posed by outer space operations make combat mindset training paramount for astronauts, space operators, and security personnel. These challenges include prolonged periods of isolation, extreme conditions, and the potential for hostile encounters. In the context of outer space security, the following key elements of combat mindset training hold particular relevance:

1. **Mental Resilience:** Outer space operations present unique stressors and challenges, such as extended periods of confinement, isolation, and inherent space travel risks. Developing mental resilience enables individuals to adapt to adverse conditions, recover from setbacks, and maintain focus and determination in the face of adversity.

2. **Situational Awareness:** Maintaining a comprehensive understanding of one's surroundings, potential threats, and mission objectives is vital in outer space security. Situational awareness allows space operators to identify and analyze emerging risks, make informed decisions, and respond effectively to changing circumstances.

3. **Decision-Making under Pressure:** Combat mindset training emphasizes the cultivation of sound judgment and quick decision-making skills, even in high-pressure situations. Outer space operations often demand split-second decisions with far-reaching consequences, making the ability to prioritize, evaluate options, and act decisively of paramount importance.

4. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The space domain constantly evolves with technological advancements and unforeseen challenges. Combat mindset training fosters adaptability and flexibility, enabling space operators to adjust strategies, tactics, and responses to changing conditions and emerging threats.

5. Emotional Control and Stress Management: Outer space operations can be mentally and emotionally demanding. Combat mindset training includes techniques to manage stress, regulate emotions, and maintain mental clarity during high-stress situations. Emotional control ensures that individuals can make rational decisions and effectively communicate and collaborate with their team members.

6. Teamwork and Communication: Effective teamwork and communication are vital in any operational setting, and space operations are no exception. Combat mindset training emphasizes the development of teamwork skills, promoting collaboration, cohesion, and clear communication among space operators, security personnel, and other relevant stakeholders.

By incorporating these key elements into combat mindset training tailored to outer space security, space operators and security professionals can enhance their readiness to face the unique challenges presented by the celestial domain. Such training not only prepares individuals for potential threats but also fosters a proactive and preventive mindset, mitigating risks and ensuring the continued peaceful and secure use of outer space for the benefit of all nations and humanity as a whole.

2.1 The Challenges of Human Presence in Outer Space: Pushing the Limits of Exploration.

Human presence in outer space represents a monumental achievement that pushes the boundaries of exploration and scientific advancement. However, it also poses numerous challenges that necessitate overcoming obstacles to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of astronauts and space travelers. The unique environment of space introduces physical, physiological, and psychological challenges that demand careful consideration and innovative solutions.

1. Microgravity and Physical Effects: One of the primary challenges of outer space is the presence of microgravity or very low gravity conditions. Prolonged weightlessness can lead to muscle atrophy, bone density loss, cardiovascular deconditioning, and alterations in the vestibular system. Astronauts must undergo rigorous physical conditioning and exercise regimens to mitigate these effects, but it remains a persistent challenge during space missions.

2. Life Support Systems: Providing a habitable environment for humans in space is a complex task. Sustaining necessary resources, such as breathable air, water, and food, becomes a critical challenge

due to their limited availability in space. Developing efficient and reliable life support systems is essential to ensure the survival and well-being of astronauts during their missions.

3. Radiation Exposure: Beyond the protective atmosphere of Earth, astronauts are exposed to higher levels of ionizing radiation from cosmic rays and solar flares. Prolonged exposure to radiation can increase the risk of cancer, damage DNA, and impact the central nervous system. Effective shielding, monitoring systems, and countermeasures are vital to minimizing the risks associated with radiation exposure during space travel.

4. Psychological and Psychosocial Factors: The psychological impact of space travel cannot be overlooked. Astronauts experience significant psychological stressors, including isolation, confinement, separation from loved ones, and the inherent risks associated with space missions. Maintaining mental well-being and addressing the psychological challenges of extended space travel through support systems, communication with Earth, and adequate psychological training are crucial for the success of long-duration missions.

5. Communication and Time Delays: Communication with Earth from outer space encounters significant time delays due to vast distances involved. This delay can affect operational decision-making, emergency response, and real-time guidance from mission control. Developing effective communication protocols, autonomous decision-making capabilities, and training for contingencies are vital to address this challenge.

6. Human Error and Reliability: Human error is an inherent risk in any complex system, and space operations are no exception. Astronauts and space operators must undergo rigorous training and adhere to stringent protocols to minimize the potential for errors. Additionally, designing reliable systems and redundancy measures becomes paramount to mitigate the consequences of any potential failures.

Overcoming these challenges requires ongoing research, technological advancements, and a deep understanding of the human body and mind in space environments. Collaboration between space agencies, scientific institutions, and medical professionals is critical in developing innovative solutions that address the physical, physiological, and psychological demands of outer space exploration.

7. Threats to Outer Space Security: The exploration and utilization of outer space have

brought about remarkable advancements and opportunities. However, this progress has not been without challenges, as the significance of space assets and the number of entities engaged in space activities continue to rise, leading to an escalation in threats to outer space security. Understanding and effectively countering these threats, both intentional and unintentional, is paramount to safeguarding the celestial frontier.

3. THREATS TO OUTER SPACE SECURITY: ANALYZING AND MITIGATING EMERGING CHALLENGES

The exploration and utilization of outer space have ushered in new opportunities and knowledge. However, this progress comes with the escalating concern of threats to outer space security. This section identifies and scrutinizes diverse threats faced by outer space, including intentional acts like satellite interception and destruction, cyber espionage, and other attacks on space infrastructure, as well as unintentional hazards such as space debris.

3.1 Intentional Threats. Satellite Interception and Destruction: Hostile actors present a significant challenge to outer space security through deliberate acts of aggression against satellites. Anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons tests involve destroying or disabling satellites, severely disrupting communication networks, navigation systems, and intelligence gathering capabilities, aiming to gain a military advantage or disrupt adversaries' operations. Cyber Espionage and Attacks: With increasing reliance on digital technologies, cyber threats have emerged as a major concern. Adversarial entities seek to infiltrate space infrastructure through cyber espionage, aiming to gain unauthorized access to sensitive data, disrupt operations, or manipulate information. Cyberattacks targeting satellites, ground control stations, or communication networks can have severe consequences and compromise space-based operations' integrity and confidentiality.

3.2 Space Debris. Collisions with Space Debris: Space debris, consisting of defunct satellites, spent rocket stages, and fragments from previous space activities, poses an unintentional yet significant threat to outer space security. Collisions with space debris can cause catastrophic damage to operational satellites and critical space infrastructure. Effective debris mitigation measures, active debris removal technologies, and improved

space traffic management are essential to mitigating this threat.

3.3 Other Attacks on Space Infrastructure. Electromagnetic Interference (EMI): Hostile actors may disrupt or jam satellite communications, navigation systems, or remote sensing capabilities using EMI. This interference can disrupt or degrade signal quality, affecting the reliability and accuracy of space-based services. Detecting and mitigating EMI are crucial to maintaining the integrity and availability of space assets.

Physical Attacks on Ground-Based Infrastructure: Space infrastructure on Earth, such as ground control stations, tracking facilities, and communication networks, are vulnerable to physical attacks. Sabotage, destruction, or compromise of these critical facilities can disrupt space operations, compromise communication links, and impair effective satellite monitoring and control.

Addressing these threats necessitates a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. International cooperation among space-faring nations, industry stakeholders, and regulatory bodies is crucial to establishing norms, guidelines, and mechanisms for responsible behavior in outer space. Initiatives like space debris mitigation strategies, diplomatic efforts to prevent space militarization, and strengthening international frameworks for space security are essential.

Moreover, investing in advanced technologies and capabilities for space situational awareness, early warning systems, and space-based infrastructure resilience is vital for effective threat detection and response. Enhancing the ability to attribute and deter malicious activities, promoting international information sharing and collaboration, and fostering responsible space conduct are critical components of a comprehensive outer space security strategy.

Additionally, other potential threats faced by outer space security must be acknowledged and addressed. These include radio frequency interference, spacecraft hijacking, space-based cyberattacks, satellite spoofing, and jamming. Ongoing research, innovation, and collaboration among governments, space agencies, industry stakeholders, and cybersecurity experts are vital in mitigating these evolving threats.

By recognizing and proactively addressing these challenges, the international community can ensure the resilience, security, and sustainable use of outer space for peaceful exploration, scientific discovery, and the advancement of humanity's

understanding of the cosmos. Continuous investment in advanced technologies and training for space operators and cybersecurity professionals will further enhance readiness and response capabilities in this critical domain.

4. TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED IN COMBATING THREATS TO OUTER SPACE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Addressing the emerging threats to outer space systems and technologies necessitates a range of specialized technical competencies. Spacefaring nations, space agencies, and industry stakeholders must possess a diverse skill set to effectively respond to the evolving challenges posed by hostile actors, space debris, cyber threats, and other potential risks. This section outlines the essential technical competencies required to combat these threats and safeguard the integrity of outer space operations.

1. **Space Engineering Expertise:** A profound understanding of space engineering principles is indispensable for designing, developing, and maintaining resilient space systems. Proficiency in areas such as spacecraft design, propulsion systems, materials science, and thermal management enables the creation of robust and reliable satellites and space infrastructure capable of withstanding potential threats. Space engineers play a vital role in implementing advanced technologies, such as radiation-hardened components and resilient communication systems, to ensure the integrity and functionality of space assets.

2. **Communication Systems Knowledge:** Effective communication is paramount for maintaining situational awareness, coordinating responses, and mitigating threats in outer space. Competence in communication systems, including satellite communications, ground-based networks, and secure data links, is necessary to establish reliable and secure connections. Expertise in developing robust communication protocols, encryption algorithms, and error detection and correction techniques helps safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of critical space-based information.

3. **Cryptography and Cybersecurity Skills:** With the increasing reliance on digital systems and networks in space operations, expertise in cryptography and cybersecurity becomes paramount. Proficient knowledge in cryptographic algorithms, secure key management, and secure software development practices allows for the

protection of sensitive data and the prevention of unauthorized access. Cybersecurity specialists play a critical role in identifying vulnerabilities, implementing effective security measures, conducting regular penetration testing, and responding to cyber incidents to safeguard space infrastructure from malicious actors and cyber threats.

4. **Data Analysis and Anomaly Detection:** Given the vast amount of data generated by space-based sensors, competent data analysis skills are essential for detecting anomalies, identifying potential threats, and predicting system failures. Proficiency in data analytics, machine learning, and anomaly detection techniques empowers space operators to identify patterns, deviations, and potential cyber intrusions that may impact the integrity and functionality of space systems. These competencies enable proactive monitoring, early warning, and swift response to emerging threats, ensuring the resilience of outer space operations.

5. **Space Situational Awareness (SSA):** Competence in space situational awareness is critical for monitoring and tracking space objects, identifying potential collisions, and detecting hostile activities. Expertise in SSA technologies, including radar systems, optical telescopes, and data fusion algorithms, allows for accurate cataloging, prediction, and assessment of space objects' trajectories and behaviors. Professionals with SSA knowledge contribute to maintaining a clear understanding of the space environment and detecting any potential threats or suspicious activities.

6. **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:** Combatting threats to outer space security often requires collaboration across various technical domains. Interdisciplinary cooperation between engineers, scientists, cybersecurity experts, and policy specialists is necessary to develop comprehensive strategies, technologies, and policies that address the multifaceted challenges in outer space. Effective communication and collaboration among different disciplines foster innovative solutions and holistic approaches to space security.

To adapt and counter emerging threats effectively, continuous investment in research, education, and training programs is crucial to developing and maintaining the expertise necessary to navigate the dynamic landscape of outer space security. Moreover, staying abreast of emerging technologies and advancements is vital for maintaining technical competencies in combatting threats to outer space systems and

technologies. The areas of expertise such as Quantum Communications, Autonomous Systems and Artificial Intelligence (AI), Resilient Spacecraft Design, Advanced Analytics and Visualization, and International Space Policy and Law are particularly relevant in this context.

By nurturing and fostering these technical competencies, spacefaring nations and organizations can effectively adapt to and counter emerging threats, ensuring the resilience and security of outer space systems and technologies. Continuous training, education, and knowledge-sharing initiatives are crucial for developing and maintaining technical competencies in combatting threats to outer space systems and technologies. Collaboration among academia, industry, and space agencies promotes the exchange of expertise, fosters innovation, and enhances the collective ability to address emerging challenges. By cultivating and expanding technical competencies in these areas, the international community can effectively adapt to and counter evolving threats, ensuring the safety, security, and sustainability of outer space activities. The development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce is essential for protecting vital space assets, promoting responsible space conduct, and advancing the exploration and utilization of outer space for the benefit of humanity.

5. STRATEGIC COMPETENCIES REQUIRED IN COMBATTING THREATS TO OUTER SPACE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

In addition to technical competencies, countering threats to outer space systems and technologies necessitates the cultivation of strategic skills. These capabilities enable effective crisis planning and management, foster international cooperation, and facilitate the formulation of robust space policies. The following strategic competencies are pivotal in addressing the complex challenges encountered in outer space security:

1. **Crisis Planning and Management:** The ability to plan for and respond to crises effectively is critical in safeguarding outer space systems and technologies. Strategic competencies in crisis management involve conducting risk assessments, scenario planning, and establishing clear protocols for incident response. Professionals with crisis planning skills can develop contingency plans, coordinate emergency responses, and mitigate the impact of potential threats, ensuring a swift and efficient recovery of space operations.

2. **International Cooperation and Diplomacy:** Outer space security is a global concern that demands collaborative efforts among nations. Strategic competencies in international cooperation and diplomacy facilitate the establishment of partnerships, frameworks, and agreements to address common threats and challenges. By fostering dialogue, building trust, and promoting information sharing, professionals skilled in international cooperation can enhance collective security, reduce the risk of misunderstandings, and develop norms of responsible behavior in outer space.

3. **Space Policy Development:** Developing comprehensive and robust space policies is crucial in countering threats and ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Strategic competencies in space policy development involve understanding the legal and regulatory frameworks, analyzing technological advancements, and engaging with stakeholders to shape effective policies. Professionals proficient in space policy can contribute to the formulation of guidelines, regulations, and standards that promote security, safety, and responsible use of outer space.

4. **Risk Assessment and Mitigation:** Assessing and mitigating risks is a strategic competency essential for protecting outer space systems and technologies. Professionals skilled in risk assessment can identify vulnerabilities, analyze potential threats, and develop strategies to minimize the likelihood and impact of adverse events. By conducting thorough risk assessments, implementing mitigation measures, and regularly reviewing risk profiles, organizations can proactively address vulnerabilities and strengthen the resilience of space infrastructure.

5. **Strategic Communication and Public Relations:** Effective communication and public relations skills are vital for managing the public perception of outer space activities and security concerns. Strategic communicators can disseminate accurate information, address misconceptions, and build public trust and support for space programs. They play a crucial role in maintaining transparency, managing crisis communication, and educating the public about the importance of outer space security.

6. **Future-oriented Thinking:** Strategic competencies in future-oriented thinking involve anticipating and preparing for emerging threats and challenges. Professionals skilled in this area monitor technological advancements, geopolitical trends, and societal changes to proactively identify potential risks to outer space security. By thinking

critically and innovatively, they can develop strategies and solutions that adapt to evolving circumstances and ensure the long-term security of space activities.

Developing these strategic competencies requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, space agencies, international organizations, and industry partners. Training programs, workshops, and forums that focus on crisis management, international relations, space policy development, and risk assessment can help professionals acquire and refine these strategic skills. By cultivating these strategic competencies, the international community can effectively respond to and mitigate threats to outer space systems and technologies. Collaboration, diplomacy, and policy development serve as key pillars in establishing a secure and sustainable environment for space exploration, scientific discovery, and the realization of the benefits derived from outer space activities.

6. PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED IN COMBATING THREATS TO OUTER SPACE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGIES

In the challenging and high-stakes environment of outer space, psychological competencies play a vital role in effectively addressing threats to space systems and technologies. Professionals engaged in outer space security must cultivate a diverse range of psychological skills to navigate stressful situations, make critical decisions under pressure, and manage emotions during crisis events. The following psychological competencies are essential for effectively countering the complex challenges encountered in outer space security:

1. **Stress Resilience:** Outer space operations demand a high level of stress resilience due to factors like long-duration missions, high-risk situations, and the potential for unexpected events. Developing effective coping strategies, maintaining a positive mindset, and employing stress management techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and physical fitness are crucial in building stress resilience. Strengthening stress resilience enables professionals to remain focused, composed, and capable of making sound decisions even in high-pressure environments.

2. **Decision-Making Under Pressure:** Outer space security often entails making critical decisions within limited time frames and with incomplete information. Psychological competencies in decision-making under pressure

involve the ability to analyze complex situations, evaluate multiple options, and choose the most appropriate course of action. Professionals skilled in decision-making under pressure remain calm, think rationally, and consider the potential consequences and risks associated with their choices. Training in decision-making processes, problem-solving techniques, and simulated scenarios can enhance these competencies.

3. **Emotional Management in Crisis Situations:** Crisis events in outer space security can be emotionally charged and demanding. Psychological competencies in emotional management enable professionals to regulate their emotions, maintain composure, and make rational decisions during crisis situations. Effective emotional management involves recognizing and understanding one's own emotions and those of others, practicing empathy and active listening, and effectively communicating in high-stress environments. Training in emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and communication skills can help professionals develop these competencies.

4. **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Outer space security operations often involve multi-disciplinary teams working in close quarters and high-stress environments. Psychological competencies in teamwork and collaboration are essential for fostering effective communication, trust, and cooperation among team members. Professionals skilled in teamwork can effectively contribute to group dynamics, adapt to diverse personalities and work styles, and resolve conflicts constructively. Training in team-building exercises, leadership development, and interpersonal skills can enhance these competencies.

5. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The dynamic nature of outer space security requires professionals to be adaptable and flexible in the face of changing circumstances and evolving threats. Psychological competencies in adaptability involve being open to new ideas, embracing change, and quickly adjusting to unexpected situations. Professionals with adaptability skills can think creatively, adjust strategies on the fly, and respond effectively to emerging challenges. Training programs that foster adaptability, innovation, and creative problem-solving can strengthen these competencies.

6. **Resilience to Isolation and Confinement:** Outer space missions often involve long-duration stays in isolated and confined environments, which can lead to psychological challenges such as loneliness, monotony, and psychological fatigue. Psychological competencies in resilience to

isolation and confinement involve developing strategies to maintain mental well-being, fostering social connections, and engaging in activities that promote psychological resilience. Training in resilience-building techniques, psychological support systems, and effective communication methods can help professionals mitigate the psychological impact of isolation and confinement.

Investing in the development of these psychological competencies is crucial for professionals involved in outer space security. Tailored training programs, psychological support services, and debriefing sessions can significantly contribute to the cultivation of these skills. By nurturing robust psychological competencies, professionals can effectively manage the unique challenges of outer space security, promote individual and collective well-being, and ensure the success of space missions while safeguarding space systems and technologies.

7. CASE STUDIES OF SPACE FORCE

The concept of a dedicated Space Force is relatively new, but notable case studies already demonstrate the application of combat mindset training in outer space security. These examples highlight tangible results achieved through such training programs.

7.1 United States Space Force (USSF). As the first independent branch of the U.S. military dedicated to space operations, the USSF places a strong emphasis on combat mindset training for personnel development. Specialized programs like the Space Training and Readiness Command offer rigorous instruction in mental resilience, critical thinking, and decision-making skills needed in outer space.

Through simulated exercises, realistic scenarios, and specialized modules, the USSF cultivates a combat mindset, enabling members to adapt quickly and respond efficiently to emerging challenges. This approach enhances readiness, operational effectiveness, and proactive responses to threats, safeguarding vital space assets and supporting space missions' success.

7.2 Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC). Operated by the USSF, the JSpOC serves as a centralized command and control center for space operations, with combat mindset training deeply integrated into its personnel curriculum. Real-time scenario-based training replicates potential threats, fostering quick decision-making, effective

coordination, and efficient response to space-based threats.

The integration of combat mindset training equips JSpOC personnel with the skills and mindset necessary to detect, assess, and counter threats in real-time. This approach ensures the integrity and security of outer space operations, making the JSpOC a crucial player in outer space security.

7.3 European Space Agency (ESA). The ESA, in collaboration with its member states, recognizes the significance of combat mindset training to strengthen personnel's psychological competencies. Specialized training programs focus on stress resilience, decision-making under pressure, and emotional management to address space operation challenges.

Practical simulations and exercises replicate space mission challenges, equipping ESA personnel with the mental agility and fortitude to combat threats effectively. This training fosters preparedness, enhanced situational awareness, and a proactive approach to outer space security.

7.4 International Space Station (ISS) Crew Training. Astronauts undergo intensive combat mindset training for missions aboard the ISS. Psychological resilience training, teamwork exercises, and decision-making simulations prepare astronauts to navigate the challenges of space.

Combat mindset training enhances astronauts' stress resilience, decision-making skills, and emotional management, enabling them to handle unexpected challenges, mitigate risks, and maintain mission success (Karasinski *et al.*, 2017).

These case studies demonstrate the significance of combat mindset training in outer space security. By enhancing psychological competencies, combat mindset training improves readiness, response capabilities, and overall mission effectiveness. Continuously developing these competencies ensures space operators are prepared to safeguard space systems, maintain mission success, and ensure the safety and security of outer space operations.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Combat mindset training holds paramount importance in the realm of outer space security, given the unique and complex nature of space operations and the ever-evolving landscape of threats. Throughout this article, we have thoroughly examined the significance of combat mindset training in outer space security,

emphasizing its key elements, and presenting its practical applications through various case studies.

By honing in on the psychological aspects of training, combat mindset training enhances crucial competencies such as readiness, decision-making capabilities, stress resilience, and emotional management among space operators and personnel. These skills are vital for effectively responding to threats, adapting to dynamic circumstances, and ensuring the success of space missions. The case studies, encompassing entities like the United States Space Force (USSF), Joint Space Operations Center (JSpOC), European Space Agency (ESA), and International Space Station (ISS) Crew Training, have vividly illustrated the tangible benefits of integrating combat mindset training into space security programs.

However, as the field of outer space security continues to evolve, there is an imperative need for ongoing research and development in combat mindset training. The dynamic nature of threats and the emergence of new technologies demand continuous innovation in training methodologies and techniques. To this end, collaboration among space agencies, military organizations, and research institutions becomes crucial to deepen our understanding of the psychological demands of outer space operations and to devise training programs that effectively cultivate the required competencies.

Moreover, the integration of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR), holds immense promise in enhancing combat mindset training. Leveraging AI-driven simulations and VR environments can offer realistic scenarios for space operators to sharpen their decision-making skills, foster effective teamwork, and develop well-calibrated responses to complex threats. Continued investment in research and development will pave the way for incorporating these cutting-edge technologies into combat mindset training, thereby further augmenting the readiness and effectiveness of space security personnel.

In conclusion, combat mindset training stands as a critical component of outer space security training, providing space operators with the indispensable psychological competencies needed to navigate the intricate challenges of space operations and to effectively counter emerging threats. The ongoing research and development in this field will drive innovation, fostering the continuous improvement of training programs and methodologies. By prioritizing combat mindset training and embracing technological

advancements, we can ensure the safety, security, and successful operation of space systems and technologies, thus fortifying a robust and resilient outer space security landscape.

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MILITARY'S MENTAL ARMAMENTRIUM IN NATIONAL AND ALLIANCE DEFENSE

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Abstract: Romania is increasing its national and alliance defense capabilities. This is a key element of the "turning point" proclaimed by the Romanian Minister of Defense Angel Tilvar in response to Russia's war against Ukraine: "We are interested in the Romanian Army having the best capabilities that allow exercising its duties and carry-out the entrusted duties" (Tudor, 2023). The most recent resolutions in NATO and the EU point in the same direction: a free Europe should become more defensive. This aspect not only requires more financial resources, material and personnel, but also the appropriate mentality in politics, society and armed forces. As war mentality has no longer been the focus of the Army since the second world war ceased, this calls for rethink of the Romanian armed forces. It is important to internalize a strategic defense mindset so that troops can effectively fulfill their mission to protect democracy and freedom.

Keywords: mindset; capabilities, Romania; army; troops

1. INTRODUCTION

Mindset: the hardest to teach and understand. It calls for effort and self-control. It needs to be accepted by the person and integrated into daily life. It is really challenging to teach someone to have a proper mindset. Is it even possible to do such a thing? Finding a solid foundation is the first component of a right attitude. The second component is to consistently practice the right form. A third component is applicability. Everything lays in its foundations.

2. WAR, MILITANCY AND COMBAT READINESS

Ukraine's defensive struggle against Russia's attack is bringing a new world of thought back to Romania: Romanian society had grown weary of terms and concepts such as "war," "militancy" and "combat readiness"; they were considered antiquated and outdated. In the self-image of soldiers in the army, this world of thought has a special emotional presence: in their oath of service, they have pledged to serve Romania faithfully and to bravely defend the law and the freedom of the Romanian people.

Romania is currently drawing conclusions for its own defense and that of its allies. It became clear early on that, in addition to financial and material

efforts, a mental tour de force is also required in order to adapt to the world as it has presented itself since the Russian invasion of Ukraine - collectively, institutionally and individually. Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu also advocated such a change in thinking when he announced back in 2015 that a national security strategy would be drawn up and spoke of the ability to defend oneself in the alliance.

Romania is the external border of the EU and NATO and we have all the capacity to defend the community of values of which we are part.(...) In view of the major risks in our neighborhood, in the east and in the south of the EU, Romania believes that it is useful to develop a new EU security strategy, because the current strategy, no longer corresponds to the evolving security situation around the EU. (Aurescu, 2023)

Romania's President Klaus Iohannis made a similar statement while presenting the new National Defense Strategy for the period 2020-2024, adopted by the Supreme National Defense Council (CSAT) on May 27, 2020: "Romania is a state that must defend its citizens wherever they are, a state that ensures their security, respects their rights, and puts public institutions at their service." Furthermore, according to the President, the National Security Strategy for the next four years implies a new approach and proposes a management of national security issues with a focus on integrated

management of risks, threats and vulnerabilities. It is an approach driven by the global paradigm shift and takes into account developments in the region, deteriorating relations between NATO and the Russian Federation, the proliferation of terrorism, hybrid and cyber threats and other types of challenges. Also, as a novelty, the Strategy refers to a multi-dimensional concept of security, based on the relationship between security - prosperity - rule of law - democracy - identity, the balance between the state and the individual as beneficiaries of national security (*Romania Insider*, 2020).

It gives a sense of a change in thinking - at all levels in the defense strategy, coupled with confidence and a willingness to take risks.

The future development of NATO, in particular the enlargement of the Alliance, will have an important influence on regional stability in the Balkans and in particular on the whole of south-eastern Europe (Iohannis, *apud* DIGI24, 2020.)

3. FOREIGN MISSIONS: INTERNATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The 2020-2024 National Defense Strategy (SNap, 2020) already reaffirmed national and alliance defense as a central task of the army and placed it on an equal footing with foreign missions in the context of international crisis management. However, the majority of today's army soldiers have been socialized in foreign deployments (CSSAA, 2002; MAE, 2023), for example in Afghanistan, in Mali, in the Balkans or in the Horn of Africa. In contrast, deployments to NATO's eastern flank, such as enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Lithuania since 2015, have not been given high priority in the force's informal 'deployment ranking' so far. Although the presence of the army represents a real contribution to the defense of their homeland for the Eastern European allies, the mission participation was mostly perceived by Romania as having little prestige. At the same time, the threat situation existing on the ground and arising in particular in the cyber and information space was mostly ignored.

While many consider Mali and Afghanistan to be combat missions, the mission in Lithuania sometimes has the reputation of being a training exercise. However, this perception is deceptive. It runs the risk of underestimating the suffering, deprivation, and hardship to be expected in an emergency, and of making the mental as well as manual skills required for the job seem of little relevance. However, the picture of war revealed in Ukraine shows a reality that the army's combat experience in Afghanistan -

irrespective of the personal performance of the soldiers - does not come close to.

Overall, the military lessons learned from foreign deployments can only be transferred to the war picture of the army to a limited extent. Especially in past deployments, the ability to use military force often took a back seat to a parallel range of tasks to be accomplished. Soldiers of the army protect, fight, mediate, and help. Accordingly, the structure, equipment, and training of the Romanian armed forces in the past were oriented toward stabilization missions - often at the expense of the capability for army. Also, even in the most formative foreign deployment, the well-secured field camps provided relative security and a variety of amenities. These included regular meals, care facilities, and opportunities to contact home, while only up to a quarter of deployed army forces regularly left the protective camp walls. For most soldiers, their participation in the mission could be planned precisely, with a deployment duration of four to six months in most cases. In addition, despite the army's influence on foreign deployments, the stories of deployment that still resonate today, often shaped by the Army, are not collective troop experiences that would be equally effective or tradition-building for all parts of the armed forces.

4. THE MENTAL ARMAMENTRIUM FOR THE TROOPS

In contrast to the experience of foreign deployments, almost all soldiers in an emergency situation would have to expect to live in spartan conditions in the field for an unforeseeable period of time. Even behind the front lines, they would be exposed to a constant threat and terror of war. At the same time, they would be under the permanent strain of not having a secure knowledge of the situation of their dependents. Many of these factors would already come into play in a tension scenario without the outbreak of hostilities. A change in mindset is therefore indispensable if soldiers from all branches and organizational areas of the army are to be mentally equipped to defend themselves against an opponent on a military par. An important first step in this direction is to remember a constitutive principle of the armed forces: without exception, all soldiers must always be capable and willing to fight and to endure extraordinary hardships. This applies irrespective of the specific tasks involved and is a standard that has retained its validity in foreign deployments as well.

The ability to meet this essential basic requirement requires not only appropriate training

and equipment, but also the development and permanent anchoring of a robust and resilient mentality. The mental readiness to fight and the will to serve bravely are mental parameters that contribute significantly to the operational capability of an army. This is currently impressively demonstrated in the defense struggle of the Ukrainian armed forces.

The creation of such a mindset in the army requires continuous commitment at several levels. On the part of the political and military leadership, clarity in communication is needed in order to convey a type of democratic-values-based soldier in the role of determined defender. In contrast, the image of an "enterprise army" has emerged in recent decades; there has been no concern with the potential fighting, killing and dying of one's fellow human beings in uniform. However, it is precisely these central aspects of being a soldier that should be honestly brought into the public eye and into the center of the soldier's self-image. In the course of this, a „soldier employee" who is set up in his own comfortable self-image would also be reminded of the possible consequences of his choice of profession.

Even apart from existential questions of life and death, such a mindset, in drastic contradiction to the everyday service in the Romanian armed forces, which is perceived as bureaucratized and often overregulated, requires a very personal cold start ability from all military personnel - in case of doubt, in spite of all private challenges. This requires, on the one hand, appropriate preparations, support services and a clear information and expectations policy. On the other hand, the soldiers must also be professionally and mentally prepared for this.

The focus must be on imparting the necessary mindset in the social and comradely close environment of the troops. This responsibility lies in particular with military leaders at all levels. The means of choice here should be: realistic training and a stringent imparting of values for all military personnel without exception. The point is to defend freedom, democracy and human rights - in other words, to understand that these values require defense and are worthy of it. It also fits in with this that the political and military leadership deliberately uses images of Romanian soldiers ready for battle.

5. ACTIVELY SHAPED TROOP CULTURE AS A FOUNDATION

A soldier image aligned with army image could give the force the opportunity to shake off the Afghan desert dust of a mission often perceived as a failure in the missions in support of the Eastern European allies. In the long run and in parallel to other foreign

missions, it is precisely the mission-related obligations for alliance defense that qualify as potential sources of tradition, meaning and motivation for the self-image and external image of Romanian soldiers. Army members of all ranks should therefore upgrade the recognized NATO missions in Eastern Europe in their respective spheres of influence by recognizing them as proper missions. In this way, they could be incorporated into the various troop cultures and passed on there in a tradition-building manner. The multinational NATO battlegroup in Lithuania is already showing the beginnings of this, demonstrating a clear focus on alliance defense, credible deterrence and multinationality in practice. The fact that currently the Romanian contingent has already started its six-month rotation in Lithuania (NATO, 2023) may favor such a tradition. The same applies, for example, to the regular assumption of airspace protection in the Baltic states by the air force and the increased presence of the navy in the Baltic Sea.

If these opportunities for the formation of the Romania's army own tradition are not seized, this can lead to a military cultural vacuum of meaning and tradition. During the Afghanistan mission, such a vacuum was often lamented and filled by the soldiers themselves with an often wild and subcultural mission culture (Fritz, 2017).

This should definitely be prevented in the current missions enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) and enhanced Vigilance Activities (eVA). This is especially true since the points of contact to the darkest chapters of Romanian military history, which individual soldiers already made in Afghanistan, have moved closer in regional and historical terms with the areas of operations in Eastern Europe. Particularly in the current situation, the Romanian armed forces cannot afford to fill the headlines with scandals about anti-constitutional attitudes and degrading lapses, and thus provide fodder for the enemy's disinformation campaigns. In the army mindset, this is contrasted by the image of soldiers as vigilant defenders of the Basic Law, freedom and democracy.

A. Since foreign missions in the context of crisis management are likely to remain an important mission of the Romanian army, a further challenge is not to lose sight of the complexity of soldiering in international stabilization missions. Likewise, the military culture's focus on national and alliance defense must not lead to an apolitical, purely functional self-image as combatants among army members. In contrast, the narrative of the closed lines of defense of a Europe bound by values offers itself - a narrative that is actively supported by the multinational and lived operational comradeship in

the current missions on the eastern borders of the alliance. Moreover, the idea of defending a free and democratic Europe is expected to have a higher motivational force among younger, more pan-European generations..

6. CONCLUSIONS

Mindset: the hardest to teach and understand. It calls for effort and self-control. It needs to be accepted by the person and integrated into daily life. It is really challenging to teach someone to have a proper mindset. Is it even possible to do such a thing? Finding a solid foundation is the first component of a right attitude. The second component is to consistently practice the right form. A third component is applicability. Everything lays in its foundations. Consequently, the conclusion must be: With the beginning of the "turn of the times," the troop cultures necessary for the soldierly mindset as well as an operational culture of national and alliance defense that will emerge in the foreseeable future must also be actively shaped from the outset. In a positive sense, specific and, to a certain extent, distinct cultures and customs of individual branches of the armed forces can be conceded. Common elements of the soldier's self-image must be conviction, robustness and readiness for multinational cooperation in order to contribute to the operational and combat value of the entire Romanian army.

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The current work has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis or as an electronic preprint, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

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Security Studies
Security Culture

BEST PRACTICES FOR PURSUING A COMPREHENSIVE, SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SECURITY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

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***Abstract:** A fundamental principle in the nuclear industry worldwide is that all nuclear organizations strive to sustain and improve safety. Emergency preparedness is an intrinsic part of those efforts to improve safety. Nuclear emergency preparedness and response is a multi-organizational responsibility, shared by all levels of government and by nuclear facility operators. It involves cooperation and planning with operators, first responders, municipalities, counties, national government and international organizations. Recent global incidents have clearly demonstrated the importance of a well-coordinated response effort to a large-scale emergency and have led to increased public and media scrutiny of emergency preparedness. Within the nuclear industry, this has reinforced the need for authorities to inform the public of the improvements and actions that are being taken by the utilities, government, and response organizations that would be engaged in the event of a nuclear emergency. As a result, countries around the world have reassessed their nuclear emergency response plans with the goal of improving preparedness and response capabilities to a nuclear accident or incidents, including enhanced public communications. The best way to determine the level of the resilience and the robustness of the arrangements is to conduct a full-scale exercise. The overall purpose of a full-scale exercise is to test the preparedness and resilience of the utility, government and non-government agencies and communities to respond to a nuclear event and to identify area for improvements, best practices and lessons learned.*

***Keywords:** exercise; training programme; preparedness; resilience; robustness*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the international practices, the adequacy of emergency response can be assessed during the preparedness phase through conducting full-scale exercises. But also, the ability to carry out the required activities during response to an emergency can be assessed through audits and reviews of past performance.

The emergency preparedness program consists of several components, exercise programs being the key component (IAEA, 2005). The exercise program can provide unique insight in the level of preparedness and also can be the basis for continuous improvement programs for the over emergency response infrastructure. However, to be most useful, emergency response exercise needs to be well organized, professionally conducted and their evaluation must focus on constructive improvement potential.

Nuclear and radiological exercise program can be considered a powerful tool for verifying and improving the quality of all the arrangements developed in the preparedness phase.

To conduct exercises, significant investment of effort, financial resources and people are required to yield the maximum benefit. That benefit can be met if the preparation, conduct and evaluation of the exercise is performed with high quality (FEMA, 2021).

2. STUDY CASE: FULL SCALE EXERCISE VALAHIA 2016

An emergency preparedness program includes development of response arrangement like establishing resources, including human, equipment, communications and facilities, emergency plans and procedures, training program and exercise program. The training program

primarily includes theoretical and practical courses as well as testing and refresher training also for all of the key organizations and positions identified in the emergency plans (IAEA, 2005). For effectiveness of this program a qualification process should be conducted. To evaluate the level of these arrangements and their adequacy an exercise program should be in place. The exercise program should comprise command post exercise, table top exercises, drills and full-scale exercise. The focus of the exercise should be the testing of interfaces across emergency response organizations, related linkages, arrangements, governance structures and their implementation, roles, responsibilities, capabilities, and the integration across emergency response organizations. For each exercise an evaluation process should be conducted for identification of best practices, gaps and areas for improvement (IAEA, 2007). A successful exercise identifies where improvements are necessary in the plan, assesses the correctness of revised procedures introduced as a result of previous exercises and furthers the development of adequate emergency preparedness. A good exercise is one that allows many lessons to be identified. An exercise should not be seen as an opportunity to demonstrate the flawlessness of a response. A good exercise is not necessarily one where everything goes well, but rather one where many lessons learned are identified.

Exercise Valahia 2016 has been about a full-scale nuclear emergency at Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant, designed to assess the preparedness of the utility, government agencies and local communities to respond to a severe accident. The exercise consisted of a carefully constructed scenario involving a release that resulted in off-site consequences. Following an extensive planning and development process, the exercise was effectively executed and considered a success on many fronts.

Exercise Valahia 2016 involved more than 500 participants on every level of response from more than 15 organizations. The high-level focus of Exercise Valahia 2016 was to assess operational interoperability and coordination, transfer of scientific data and public communications. All Tier One exercise objectives were achieved, while each organization was provided with the opportunity to meet their internal goals. Participating organizations were able to test the response plans and strategic preparedness in response to a nuclear emergency, as well as assess of the communication and overall interoperability. Throughout the

exercise planning process, there were several key working groups that provided guidance and necessary logistical support for the development and preparation for Valahia 2016 conduct and evaluation. Each group was comprised of representatives from participating organizations or functional areas to ensure that the proper input and direction was provided from each of the disciplines. Given the large scale and scope of Valahia 2016 exercise, careful consideration was given to the development of a strategic communication plan that could provide accurate and consistent messaging to the media and public.

An evaluation working group was established to develop an effective and objective process for identifying the nuclear emergency response functions to be evaluated and to identify the operational linkages between response organizations. The working groups further define the evaluation criteria against which the response of various organizations would be measured. Once the evaluation was complete, they were also engaged to provide feedback for the improvement of identified response gaps.

The planning and development of Valahia 2016 required significant input from planners and trusted agents across all participating organizations. As such, several planning sessions, comprised of conferences and workshops, were conducted in an effort to better understand the exercise requirements and expectations.

To assist members of the Exercise Design Team in maintaining good communications throughout the planning process, an information website was established and served as a portal for all relevant documentation that was generated or required for planning purposes. The website had restricted access to ensure the integrity of sensitive information, and was an efficient and effective way of securely disseminating information to organizations. The website remained active throughout the entire planning, conduct and evaluation processes.

Valahia 2016 was conducted over three days, from 04 to 06 October 2016, with a daily exercise window from 09:00 to 17:00. There were a number of measures put in place before and during the exercise that allowed the exercise controllers to effectively manage the exercise process with minimal issues and interruptions. Exercise control was effectively maintained through the use of a large team of controllers situated in key locations across Romania. Controllers were selected by their own organization based on their level of knowledge and expertise in their respective area of

operations. Controllers were trained on their responsibilities prior to the exercise and received a comprehensive controller manual containing instructions and all exercise details. An exercise control cell was established in Bucharest, Romania during Valahia 2016, to ensure that the exercise stayed on course across all of the operations centres that were in play. The exercise control cell was well equipped with computers, phones and internet to provide an optimal environment for maintaining communication and situational awareness. The Lead Controller, overseeing all controller activity, was in direct communication with all Site Controllers via cell phone and the chat function on the exercise website. Exercise control was responsible for tracking injects, simulating non-participating organizations, managing site controllers, resolving issues, and controlling exercise forums.

The following exercise scenario overview provides a short summary of key exercise events. For a more detailed description, including player actions, please refer to the Valahia 2016 Controller Manual. Day 1 at 09:02 on the morning of 4 October 2016, Unit 2 of the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant experience conditions that led to a Facility Alert. The situation degraded, forcing a Facility Emergency at approximately 09:55. During repair attempts, two station personnel became injured and required transport to hospital. At 13:00 an earthquake of magnitude 7.7 struck the NPP and resulted in the loss of class III and class IV power, along with the Emergency Power System (EPS). These events forced the site to move to General Emergency. Emergency Mitigating Equipment (EME) was deployed and available at 14:30. Projections eventually led to an estimated release time 70-75 hours after General Emergency was declared. Day 2 at 06:13 on 5 October an aftershock damaged the EME. The projected controlled release time was moved up to 14:00 that day. At 13:45 a containment isolation valve failed, leading to an uncontrolled release that resulted in the contamination of some evacuees. By 14:45 the containment valve was repaired and the unfiltered release stops. A second, controlled release was scheduled for 21:00 that evening. It began as anticipated. Day 3 at 00:30, on 6 October, class III power and EPS were re-established. At 01:00 the controlled release ended and no further releases were expected. On 6 October field activities were conducted. While taking field samples a worker passed out in the field and required extraction. While doing surveys a local radiological hotspot was identified that required

the evacuation of a small area of houses. Surveys continued throughout the day.

The evaluation focused on the interoperability and coordination of key response organizations and associated plans. For the purposes of the evaluation, interoperability was defined as the ability of Nuclearelectrica, the Cernavoda NPP, local authorities, and the national government to respond and communicate together coherently, effectively and efficiently while responding to a nuclear emergency at the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant. The six main nuclear response objectives that were evaluated to establish the level of the response objectives with specific reference to notification, activation and emergency response coordination, to examine the level of the implementation of the urgent protective actions with respect to the public to ensure that optimal safety is established and maintained, along with the provision of services to manage the psycho-social impacts of the event, to inspect the coordination of health services and sharing of medical related information accordingly which are supported by external organization and to review the consistency of the information provided to the public and the ability of all levels.

To assist with the evaluation process, a web-based data collection system was developed to capture observations from evaluators and controllers across all locations. This website also allowed for the collection of data from a player's online post exercise survey, critical timeline from evaluators, and data on interoperability, scientific data exchange, and public communications. Following the exercise, evaluators were required to input the critical timelines in their areas of responsibility and highlight possible areas requiring further investigation as part of the overall exercise evaluation process (e.g., time of alert, emergency declarations, activations, decisions, briefings, communications with external organizations, etc.). This process captured the timings of the responding organizations' important actions. The timelines served as a reference during the evaluation process. Evaluators were asked to complete web-pages that collected their observations as they related to specific response objectives. Their responses were compiled and used to guide the evaluation process during the two days exercise evaluation meeting. The evaluation of each six main nuclear response objectives was performed based on the evaluation criteria that were developed and approved by the evaluation working group during the planning phase of the exercise.

Prior to the exercise conduct, a team of evaluators with knowledge on the roles and responsibilities of response organizations and their respective plans were carefully selected to observe Valahia 2016 participants. Evaluators were selected based on their ability to recognize best practices and deficiencies and to make recommendations for improvement, if required.

A detailed briefing was provided to the selected evaluators in an effort to ensure that they were thoroughly familiar with the scenario timelines, exercise objectives, evaluation criteria and the respective response plans that would be observed in their area of response function. During the exercise, evaluators were strategically placed at specific locations and required to observe and record the timeline and note events and actions, identify strengths and weaknesses and listen to all communication that affected their area of evaluation. Following the exercise, evaluators were directed to provide input via the evaluation website. Information was compiled and organized to serve as a guide to assist with the facilitation of a detailed evaluation discussion based on the components and criteria established by the evaluation working group.

A two-day evaluation meeting was conducted from 10 to 11 October 2016 to enable evaluators to discuss their observations, noting response gaps and elements of best practice as applicable. Supporting observations were captured during the discussions, along with recommendations for improvement. National Exercise Valahia 2016 had many benefits identified by players, controllers, and evaluators. These benefits were determined not only during the conduct phase of the exercise, but also during the planning and evaluation processes. The exercise provided a unique opportunity for participating organizations at all levels to confirm response plans, protocols and procedures for strategic preparedness to a severe accident. Organizations were afforded an exceptional opportunity to test interoperability between participating agencies, enabling the identification of areas of best practice and those requiring improvement. The use of multi-organizational working groups (e.g., Joint Exercise Planning Team, Evaluation Working Group) and a senior level steering committee to plan, develop, and oversee the exercise was seen as extremely valuable. The planning process proved to be highly effective in generating an exercise scenario that allowed organizations to achieve very diverse objectives and effectively resolve issues. The planning and development stage of the exercise

highlighted the opportunity for improvement of inter-agency relationships across all levels of response. The exercise also served to confirm and strengthen the pre-existing relationships between responding agencies. The planning events (i.e., conferences and workshops) also provided an excellent opportunity for exercise staff, subject matter experts and participants to meet, network, and collaborate with multiple organizations that they may not otherwise have had an opportunity to work with.

The scenario demonstrated how quickly resources can become depleted, which resulted in organizations developing a better understanding of the needs for robust mutual aid support and interoperability.

3. CONCLUSIONS

We appreciate that Full Scale exercise Valahia 2016 had many benefits and best practices that can be a solid base for further discussion and included in future emergency preparedness program. These benefits identified can be considered in future exercises and should also be used to enhance real-world operations.

The evaluation result of the Valahia 2016 exercise requires a collaborative approach to revise existing processes and plans or implement new solutions to further enhance interoperability.

The scenario demonstrated how quickly resources can become depleted, which resulted in organizations developing a better understanding of the needs for robust mutual aid support and interoperability and how important is the level of resilience.

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ASEAN-EU COMPARATIVE REGIONALISM ARCHITECTURE. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN SECURITY COOPERATION

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Abstract: *Both the European Union and ASEAN are generally dealing with similar issues. One of their major concerns represents the growth of weaknesses engaging them in continuous political efforts in order to overcome the threats at any level. The geographical location of Asian and European countries has shaped their position right after the War in the debate of international relations, in the belief that this would contribute to restoring security in the Balkans, with beneficial implications for the whole continent. The end of the war urged the reshaping of international relations, demanding a redefinition of the structure, of the concept of security. Thus, new factors on the international stage determined new forms of diplomacy and new security strategies. This article proposes to examine the changes in modern regionalism architecture along the process of integration and disintegration after some major events occurred on the international stage; the factors which determined this alternative to traditional diplomacy, and to initiate plans of action for measuring the changes. While EU is seen as a supranational organization and a model for ASEAN, the last one is simply a Free Trade Area, making its way towards ASEAN Community, but both are known in world politics for their effective diplomacy, pursuing an engagement strategy adapted for the 21st century.*

Keywords: *EU; ASEAN; EU-ASEAN strategic partnership; security*

1. INTRODUCTION

Both the European Union and ASEAN are generally dealing with similar issues. One of their major concerns represents the growth of weaknesses engaging them in continuous political efforts in order to overcome the threats at any level. The geographical location of Asian and European countries has shaped their position right after the War in the debate of international relations, in the belief that this would contribute to restoring security in the Balkans, with beneficial implications for the whole continent. The end of the war urged the reshaping of international relations (Blue Book, 2008), demanding a redefinition of the structure, of the concept of security. Thus, new factors on the international stage determined new forms of diplomacy and new security strategies.

This article proposes to examine the changes in modern regionalism architecture along the process of integration and disintegration after some major events occurred on the international stage; the factors which determined this alternative to traditional diplomacy, and to initiate plans of action for measuring the changes. Even if in the

past diplomats negotiated with the political ideology and military alliance of their governments in mind, today behind negotiations stands political and economic benefits mainly. Leguey-Feilleux, Baldwin, Collier & Gilpin observed the diminishing nature of ideology in diplomacy, all of them making the same mistake: the observation from a strictly political or a strictly economic perspective, without examining other aspects (*apud Trunk*, 2011). While EU is seen as a supranational organization and a model for ASEAN, the last one is simply a Free Trade Area, making its way towards ASEAN Community, but both known in the world politics for their effective diplomacy, pursuing an engagement strategy adapted for the 21st century.

Furthermore, EU and ASEAN have built the transatlantic cooperation between their groupings filling up the missing link of the European and Asian continents. In fact, ASEAN is a loosely-structured organization initially established to preserve peace and security while EU was primarily established as a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). How will the two regional groupings maintain good cooperation and strengthen their bilateral ties in the future to come?

Prior to the establishment of ASEAN, there were attempts to establish other regional groupings as to settle down conflicts within the region such as SEATO, ASPAC, ASA. To be specific, factors driving the establishment of ASEAN and those organizations are mainly conflicts among Southeast Asian countries. Ben Rosamond (2001) argues that there are three dangers in comparing these two regional groupings as they could lead analysts to the dangerous trap of Eurocentrism. The first one is European regionalism as mentioned above. The second one is noted for its "depth" and its accompanying institutionalization. The final one is early academic models of political and economic integration. When the world is changing, ASEAN and EU have still maintained its mainly aim to adapt their countries to the change of multipolarity. Hence, the implications of regionalism and democratization upon the emergence of many regional groups. Reasons to pursue observing ASEAN and the EU vary but they do not go beyond the concept of regionalism or globalization. Regional integration has aroused many interests as to seek answers whether there is virtually a necessity to integrate the region or not. If the integration owes itself to the concept of regionalism and globalization, the functions of two regional groupings should be similar. The second interesting aspect is that ASEAN and the EU has to do with the possibilities of comparison. The understanding of the two models can be best obtained from the comparable studies which will lead to the comprehension of ASEAN and the EU.

The present article has been the doubts whether regional groupings will be sustainable amidst the rapidly changing world or not. We are entering the era whereby politics have become the secondary activity. It is the era where fragmented economies are no longer needed or regarded as instable. Richard Lee Armitage, former Deputy Secretary of State and the Chairman of Armitage International has stated in the speech on "the United States, Asia and a Rapidly Changing World" on June 02, 2006 that challenges in the next 15-20 years are the existence globalization process which may not be successful persuading failed states to co-exist peacefully with international community. Secondly, the world economy will grow but the gap between the rich and the poor will be wide. Thus, it will cause migrants problem especially workers and also the problem of poverty will exist. Third, China will be another economic superpower, but it is unpredictable. There will be uncertainty between international politics of China in the future and the readiness of U.S.A. in accommodating China's

superpower. Fourth, the ageing population will cause problems on stability. Fifth, there will be problems on urbanization as to whether metropolitan cities can manage the livings condition of its population (problem particularly projected to China). Sixth, U.S.A. will remain the superpower in the next 20 years, assuming from the fact that U.S.A has benefits in almost every region. The challenges are to what extent all countries can accept the existence of U.S.A. as a superpower.

This does not mean that ASEAN and the EU would compete with any superpower. What we have to realize is the fact that since the end of the Cold War, many new state actors have emerged. The world has turned into multipolarity since the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Therefore, each regional grouping has to prepare itself to adapt with the changing world. International cooperation is vital in the world of interdependence, with security threatened almost on a day basis.

The objectives of the article are three-fold: (1) To compare the development of ASEAN and EU in terms of historical background, integration, enlargement process; (2) To study the cooperation of ASEAN and EU or ASEM. To foresee the development of ASEAN and whether this establishment would outweigh the role of superpowers or not.

2. THEORY OF INTEGRATION

Taking theories which are applied to European integration, it can also be said that ASEAN integration is similar to EU's one. ASEAN, is integrated by way of mutual agreement, as suggested by confederalism, in order to transform the existing patterns of relations into the internal relations of one state. To elaborate further as to attempt to classify ASEAN's integration into one kind of integration, it is justified to understand the situation encouraging integration process of many groupings.

Karl Deutsch (1994) sees integration as "the process" leading to the establishment of security community. Members of community have to realize that they are members from the same community and have the strict implementation for plans. These plans are guarantor in the long-term to serve the needs of people who wish to see the peaceful change. Regarding the behavior, the result of the integration has made political units change their political behavior. Ernst B. Haas (1961) defines integration as "the process" by which each

state alter loyalty and expectation including political activities which are implemented freely to be under the control of central political unit. This unit controls the decision-making process and has supra-national power as to fulfill the goals of each state by peaceful means. This process decreases an importance of state territory and environment in the nation state system and will create the complete international community system in later time. Johan Galtung (1968) defines integrations as “the process” whereby the political actor from two to create bigger political actors. When that process terminates, former political actor vanishes. However, from the above definitions, the integration process refers to at least two political units or state actors, interact under conditions which are different according to the condition of integration. The said interaction occurs under the process which brings about changes in many matters such as decision-making process, attitude towards national interests of members and the establishment of new political organization. The development of integration theory has initiated from Federalism as it is believed that politics which has emerged from the composition of many small independent states as USA, Australia could exist at the international level through the effective integration under the constitution. Under this system, there is the separation between central institution and the secondary institution. The former is responsible in keeping the mutual benefits of each state.

The other related integration theory is transactionalism which explains the integration in terms of conditions which encourages or obstruct with the integration of states. These conditions comprise sense of community which will exist only when there are transactions and the relations of prominent values or geographical proximity. Later on, functionalism has emerged. As previously mentioned in the first part, functionalism has paved the hypothesis that problems which many nations have encountered are technical problems which are for more too complex to be solved by government alone. Hence, experts are needed to assist rectifying these problems. Apart from the complexity, many nations need to face the problems together. Thus, to effectively solve the problems, it is important to implement the plan through experts which will narrow the political units to become closer.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF EU

The phenomena of European integration cannot be captured in a single or explained within one

concept. Many analysts refer to European integration as “sui generis” or taken as given. Thus, it might be worthwhile to examine the evolving process of European integration through various conceptual and theoretical perspectives. The former means thinking about phenomena in abstract terms, and theorizing means - to give general explanations of phenomena. It is true that both concepts and theories contradict each other.

Three concepts of EU’s prominent character will be briefly mentioned to pave the way for better understanding of theories of integration in the latter part.

- **States and intergovernmental organizations:** It cannot be denied that to conceptualize EU requires understanding of the smaller unit of international system which is ‘state’ with its characteristics. EU does not fall onto the definition of ‘state’ nor has the characters of ‘statehood’ as traditionally understood. EU had shown that it possesses traditional characteristics of state but the progress of integration has shown that the development of EU’s integration will strengthen this characteristic. Cooperation among states known as intergovernmental organization (IGO) could not also be applied to the EU integration while IGOs are organizations in which representatives of national governments come together to cooperate on a voluntary basis for reasons of mutual benefit. EU is neither a state nor is it an intergovernmental organization.

- **State-centrism and consociationalism:** Model of state-centrism is the advance process of intergovernmental view of integration process. This concept views EU as nation states that have gathered to cooperate for specific purposes. It is true that states have rights to vote supporting or against EU’s decision. But most of the times, member states have to change all their rules of law to comply with EU’s regulations even prior to their membership. Each member state has to surrender their sovereignty to EU’s supranational actors.

- **Multi-level governance:** In early 1990s, EU has been viewed as multi-level governance into analysis of EU integration. This concept is in opposition with state-centric model which sees state executives as actors and decision-makers. It might be argued that national government is important to a certain degree but they do not dominate and control decision-making processes of EU.

Gary Marks, Liesbet Hoohe and Kermit Black (1996:345-346) have explained the multi-level governance model of EU in three main aspects.

1. Decision-making competences are exercised by national government, institutions and actors at

other levels. Supranational actors such as the Commission, the EP and the Court of Justice influence on policy processes and policy outcomes. Member states do have roles to play with regional and local authorities to engage in policy activities that are not controllable by national governments.

2. Collective decision-making by states at the EU level is regarded as a loss of national sovereignty and loss of control by national governments. States, according to intergovernmental view, retain the ultimate decision-making power which cannot be applied to the concept of multi-level governance one.

3. Political arenas are interconnected. So national political activity is confined to the national arena and national inputs into EU decision-making. The collective decision-making is finally channelled via state-level actors, a variety of channels and interconnections between different levels of government, supranational, national and subnational.

The integration process in Europe begun in 1951 when Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the Treaties of Paris to found the European Coal and steel Community (ECSC). Later in 1957, these six states signed the Treaties of Rome to found the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom. Similar to ASEAN, European integration has expanded to cover more countries along the way. The achievement of ECSC in its early years encouraged further integration by the creation of the two further European Communities in 1957. The first one is European Defence Community (EDC) and Western European Union (WEU). The EU was created by the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on November 1, 1993. The treaty was designed to enhance European political and economic integration by creating: a single currency, a unified foreign and security policy, and common citizenship rights and by advancing cooperation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and judicial affairs.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF ASEAN

As the integration theory vary and ASEAN is merely a free trade area paving its way for community, the most suitable theory to be applied will be Transactionalism and Functionalism. For the former, Deutsch's concept will be used as it concerns the establishment of community. In the case of ASEAN, its birth can be considered to be pluralistic security community. The Association of Southeast Asia or ASA which was set up in 1961

was the first organization revealing true regional co-operation in Southeast Asia and emerged few years after Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

The main motivation for mutual efforts to band together was to strengthen the position and protect themselves against Big Power rivalry. However, ASA collapsed as fast as SEATO following territorial dispute, relating to a colonial legacy, erupted between the Philippines and Indonesia and Malaysia.

Other initiatives followed which eventually shared same destiny as its predecessors' following failure in regional co-operation.

On 8 August 1967, five leaders from those countries signed the Bangkok Declaration to establish the Association of Southeast Asian nations or ASEAN. Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand signed the Bangkok Declaration to officially establish the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

After its establishment, ASEAN declared its various objectives in Bangkok Declaration, 8 August 1967, as can be narrated as follows:

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian nations;

2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;

3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields.

Hence, ASEAN begun its enlargement process by including countries in Southeast Asia region. Later on, in the coming fourth decade, ASEAN has set up ASEAN Vision 2020 (1997) to create ASEAN a concert of Southeast Asian Nations. The main principles of ASEAN in the coming decade concerning political cooperation are three-fold: (1) To be the zone of stable peace, freedom and neutrality; (2) To be the balance of power in the multipolarity world; (3) To have unity within ASEAN.

5. EU-ASEAN ANALOGY

Similarities and differences of ASEAN and EU can be examined through five main points:

A. The two regional groupings were established with different motivation. ASEAN emerged out of political factors, driven mainly by the spread of communism in Southeast Asia region. On the other hand, EU was established as ECSC which is clearly the economic factors. At that time, Europe did need an organization capable of uniting the continent after World War II. ASEAN and Asian regional groupings such as SEATO, ASPAC, MAPHILINDO were purely initiative of Asian Nations. Southeast Asian Nations needed regional cooperation for stability and solidarity ASEAN was created without any support from countries outside Southeast Asian region.

On the other hand, the evolving process of integration in Europe can be said to be partly supported by USA. After World War II, America has drawn a Marshall Plan to help assisting financial situation of Europe. USA has indirectly urged European nations to integrate as it has become more influential in economic and political aspects. As a matter of fact, both ASEAN and EU were established to sanction US presence and hegemony in the region. The former wanted to sanction US presence in Vietnam as in the case of SEATO while the latter wanted to have its own power without relying on USA and the Soviet Union. Both regions learned that they should rely on their own power as the third force might not be reliable in the long run.

Considering the motives of the establishment of ASEAN and EU, there seems to be no similarities in terms of structural development. EU has begun its integration not with Free Trade Area but as a Common Market. Furthermore, it has begun its integration with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) upon Schuman Declaration in 1950. Later in 1951, the six Founding countries signed the Treaty of Paris which has become effective in 1952. The Treaty has laid down major principles founding a common market for basic materials for industrialized society namely, coal, coke, iron ore, steel and scrap. The reason behind it is to ensure sufficient supplies to all member states, produce a rational expansion and modernization of production and improve the conditions and lifestyles of those working in the industries in question. Moreover, this Treaty has shown that EU possess significant supranational characteristics. These could be found in the new central institutions: the High Authority, Council of Ministers, Common Assembly and Court of Justice.

On the other hand, ASEAN was established upon the Bangkok Declaration signed by five

countries, namely, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The prime aim was not to create a common market but a Free Trade Area. Thus, the structure of ASEAN does not have any similarities to share with that of EU or ECSC. That is to say, ASEAN does not have any supranational authorities which have power to control or harmonize all ASEAN's internal law. ASEAN member countries are bound to change law simply because they have to abide by rules and regulations of international organization as World Trade Organisations (WTO). Thus, ASEAN is smaller in scale than the present EU or even then ECSC. The highest level of mechanism is ASEAN Summit meeting which holds a meeting three times a year. Participants are Heads of Government of member countries. The next lower mechanism is ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) which is the forum for Foreign Ministers. Its main aim is to lay down guideline policies for cooperation among ASEAN member countries. Apart from these, there is ASEAN Economic Ministerial Meeting (AEMM) to be held twice a year as to lay down policies concerning economic aspects to correspond with consensus of ASEAN Summit Meeting. There is a Meeting of Ministers in their Respective Fields held for functional cooperation among ASEAN countries such as transportation, education. In order to follow up the work of ASEAN's activities as agreed upon in the Summit Meeting, Standing Committee has been set up. A level lower than this Committee is Senior Official Meeting (SOM) which hold meetings on politics (SOM) and on economics (SEOM). ASEAN has also set up ASEAN Secretariat which has the headquarter in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Hence, the structure of ASEAN and EU is completely different. What is interesting about the structure of both groupings does not lie in the fact that they are not similar. But this leads to a question why the present EU has started its establishment as supranational institutions or common market whereas ASEAN rather establishes itself as merely free trade area. It may be possible to make an abrupt assumption that EU had to start its establishment form common market due to its internal conflicts. Should ECSC begin as free trade area like ASEAN, superpowers as Germany, France and United Kingdom would make objection due to their economic benefits.

The other dimension of ASEAN and EU is that ASEAN has been integrated to prevent communist threats and internal conflicts at the same time.

The difference among ASEAN countries is more vast and higher than that of EU. Generally

speaking, EU founding members are those countries who colonized most ASEAN countries. In practice, they can make further progress than ASEAN as EU member countries are more or less at the same level in terms of politics and economics. That might be the answer why EU could start its establishment from common market rather than free trade area.

B. The integration process of the two regions is also similar in the sense that it embraces countries with diversity to become a regional grouping. ASEAN comprises ten countries which do not share similar language, religion, or ruling systems. Europe is also a region of diversity divided by language, religion cultural traditions and historical experiences. Therefore, the establishment of ASEAN and EU has served to manage the diversity and to make the whole continent turn each country's interests into communal benefits.

C. With regards to EU, candidate countries will have similar pattern of economy, to be a democratic country, and fulfill similar requirements. The concept of this criteria reflects the need of EU to become an actual supranational organization. At present, EU has issued its own constitution. On the contrary, ASEAN has no such criteria as it holds on to "non-interference" policy. The fact that ASEAN has not set any criteria for candidates but instead has set its goals that it would cover the ten countries in the Southeast Asia region reflects that ASEAN is different from EU in terms of the scale of integration. The outstanding character of ASEAN is not a supranational organization but a regional grouping at the level of free trade area. No ASEAN countries would lose its sovereignty to comply its laws with any communal regulations.

D. Both ASEAN and EU have enlarged their membership to include countries with transitional economies or former communist countries. The only difference is that EU has more members than ASEAN and has tendency to enlarge further to cover countries once had centrally planned economies. Meanwhile, ASEAN will maintain its members as ten in the near future without enlarging further to cover other countries in Southeast Asia as China or Japan.

E. The EU and ASEAN are like-minded partners in a challenging geopolitical context, both of believe in multilateralism rules-based. Over the course of forty-five years of cooperation, ASEAN and the EU have managed to build a strong relationship, based primarily on trade and economic ties, and are currently strategic partners. For ASEAN, the EU is the second most important

trading partner, After the USA and China, ASEAN is the EU's third largest partner outside of Europe. The overarching goal remains the conclusion of an EU-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) at regional level. Aside from ASEAN's big interest in expanding trade sector, there is the EU main interest towards strenghtening security cooperation with geographically strategic partners.

6. PLAN OF ACTION TO IMPLMENT EU-ASEAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (2023-2027)

The Plan of Action to strengthen the ASEAN-EU enhanced partnership 2013-2017 came in response to the decision of Foreign Ministers at the 18th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Madrid, on 26 May 2010. Building on the successes of 35 years of ASEAN-EU Dialogue Relations, it planned to advance collaboration by tackling issues of common interest on a regional and global scale for the forthcoming five years 2013–2017. It included a wide range of topics, from political and security, economic, and sociocultural, reflecting the complexity of relations between ASEAN and the EU. This Plan of Action basically reaffirmed the statement in the Nuremberg Declaration on ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership (2007), of a long commitment to boost dialogue relations.

After the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action for 2013-2017 [10] was successfully put into effect, the two parties collaborated on a new document that would pave the way for further cooperation between them. This resulted into the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action for 2018–2022 [11], which emphasised the same three areas of cooperation: political and security, economic, and sociocultural. Additionally, it addressed two topics that cut across all areas, namely connectivity and closing the ASEAN development gap.

Marking their longstanding relationship, namely forty-four years of liasion, the EU and the ASEAN agreed to upgrade their cooperation on December 1, 2020, by opening a new chapter: a strategic partnership for 2023-2027. One year later, the EU was acknowledging the importance of ASEAN in the EU strategy for Indo-Pacific Cooperation.

This strategic partnership would have the same directions of action as the plans before, however more focused on the security cooperation:

- economic cooperation forging a sustainable development
- security cooperation
- preserving peace and stability

- fighting against transnational crime and counter terrorism cybersecurity

- maritime security

This Plan of Action upgrade to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership supersedes the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018-2022) and it was adopted at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) +1 with the EU.

The two regional bodies have been engaging in dialogue and agreements for several decades, so this may seem like a long-time coming. Not to mention it surged in the wake of the world's largest free trade zone agreement - the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which brings together ASEAN and its individual free trade partners in Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand - so what an interesting and better timing for the Asian region to become even more important strategically to the EU. In line with their respective Member States' obligations under international law and their respective Member States' domestic laws, regulations and policies, ASEAN and the EU will cooperate in the following security areas as outlined in the Plan of Action (EU External Action, 2022):

1. Political and Security Cooperation

1.1 Enhance strategic dialogue and deepen political and security cooperation

- Convene biennial ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meetings (AEMM), Annual ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference with the EU (PMC)+1, supported by regular meetings of the ASEAN-EU Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) and ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting.

- Strengthen cooperation in regional and multilateral fora, including the United Nations and other bodies within the UN system, with the Asia – Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the G20, as well as enhance mutual support and develop joint positions where applicable/appropriate.

- Enhance dialogue between the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) and the EU Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta to support efforts in advancing the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership, which is based on mutual cooperation and mutual benefit.

1.2 Enhance the ASEAN-EU cooperation in the ASEAN-led security architecture

- Support ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture in Southeast Asia through ASEAN-led mechanisms.

- Support the open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based ASEAN-led regional architecture, as well as the deepening of the engagement of the

EU with the region through ASEAN-led processes and platforms, noting the EU's commitment to adhere to all relevant ASEAN-led security mechanisms, including the East Asia Summit, and the ADMM-Plus, relevant procedures and processes.

- Enhance dialogue and promote cooperation on defence and security matters, such as in the areas of maritime security, women, peace and security (WPS), youth, peace and security (YPS), peacekeeping operations, military medicine, cybersecurity, and counter-terrorism, as well as on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

2. Combat terrorism, transnational crimes, address other non-traditional security issues

- Support the implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025) and implement the ASEAN-EU Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime (2022-2024) as well as their successors.

3. Enhance maritime security cooperation

4. Promote disarmament and non-proliferation

5. Promote peace-building initiatives

Therefore, the plan will pursue cooperation in conformity with their respective Member States' obligations under international law, and in accordance with their respective Member States' domestic laws, regulations and policies in the above areas.

On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of EU-ASEAN Dialogue Relations, the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the European Union, gathered on December 14, 2022, in Brussels, Belgium, at the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.

During the summit, EU-ASEAN Plan of Action to implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027) was deemed promising, given adequate follow-up to ensure it yields tangible initiatives.

Moreover, the ASEAN should respond to mounting pressure to choose a side between US and China.

Another notable intervention raised concerns around whether the financial resources which the European Union and its individual member states are spending on the consequences of the War in Ukraine will draw budget away from new initiatives in Southeast Asia.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The image of regionalism is viewed as a reflection of the variety and complexities of world

politics. Without a wide range of organizations, the world would be short of solutions to important questions about security and economic development. To manage the regionalism depends on the extent to which regionalism can express and channel the needs of the actors involved with it. On the other hand, regionalism can be seen as a means which authority is transferred from states and other groupings to regional bodies to better be able manage the problems that confront them. The effectiveness of regional bodies is the extend to which security and prosperity can be achieved through collective action at the regional level. At the other level, regionalism appears as a contributor to or as an obstacle to world order and the management of the changing international arena. During 1990's there has been the concept of "open" and "closed" regionalism. The former implies the needs to adapt to the world order whereas the latter is an attempt to build a fortress and to manage by using regionalism as an insulator against the challenges of world politics. However, in the same period, the concept of "open regionalism" has been supported in terms of economic and security.

In short, regionalism can be seen as a force for integration and as a force for disintegration in world politics. It expresses the desire for difference and distinctiveness in the world arena.

Andrew Hurrell (*apud* Smith, 1997:88) has concluded that there are three theoretical approaches to regionalism, first, systemic theories which see regionalism as a response to outside pressures and forces. The main theme of the theories is on the development of regional interconnectedness and interdependence. Domestic-level theories focus on the impact of changes such as democratization and the tendency to regionalization and regional cooperation. Regionalism, in a larger context, has capsulated the paradoxes of a world more united yet in some ways more divided than ever before and it raises an important question about the future both of the state and of the world order.

Whatever the result might be, the enlargement process of both groupings clearly confirms the need to change the world to face global challenges and to arrange the new world order. That is, there is no alternative to regionalism and democracy. The balance of power is shown in the pattern of grouping, not by countries or in the form of fragmented economies as experiences of divided world has taught us that integrated countries would attain peace, stability and security more effectively.

8. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The current work has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis or as an electronic preprint, that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder.

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SECURITY CULTURE ON THE EASTERN FLANK

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Abstract: *Following the Crimean Invasion in 2014, and the Russian War on Ukraine in 2022, states on the Eastern Flank have increased their defense expenditures, prioritizing development of national armed forces in the face of different other social policies and public expenditures. In this context, the current paper aims to study if increased defense expenditures have helped develop a security culture in the last decade in states that are close to the border of war. For this reason we aim to study the impact of defense policies in developing a security culture in countries like Romania, Poland and the Baltic States. We also try to put in context and compare defense expenditures with other civilian public expenditures, in the so called guns and butter effect, in an effort to understand how societies from countries on the Eastern Flank agree or not with defense policies that are prioritized in front of other social policies*

Keywords: *security culture; defense expenditure; social policies; public expenditures; guns and butter effect*

1. INTRODUCTION

Security culture focuses on a broader scope: the ideas, customs and social behaviors, values of a group that influences the group and also society security at large level (Felea, 2018). While after the end of the Cold War public expenditures concerning security policies decreased, recent developments throughout the last decade have seen a rise in defense budgets. The cause is mainly the Russian Federation's aggression towards Ukraine that started in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and has culminated with the military invasion in February 2022. With investments in defense increasing following these new threats that have risen in Europe, a question must be asked concerning the willingness of European citizens of seeing a development of security policies. To better understand the need for security policies one has to analyze the security culture that European countries have. Security Culture in itself is a way of thinking, of addressing defense policies in connection the community needs and national desires. It is a way of analyzing and putting in balance what are the fundamental interests of a nation. Each state has its one founding myths, common values, traditions and aspirations. The question is how many of these can be correlated with security policies and how many cannot (Ostahie, 2022). US literature has introduced in accordance with this principle of guns and butter

effect. In macroeconomics, the guns versus butter model is an example of a simple production–possibility frontier. It demonstrates the relationship between a nation's investment in defense and civilian goods. The "guns or butter" model is used generally as a simplification of national spending as a part of GDP (Biernat, 2011). In other words there are simply not enough resources available for a nation to invest in both social policies like healthcare, education, the pension system, etc. respectively security policies in the same manner. By organizing and managing the available national resources, each country has to choose between them. A security culture is therefore a model that implies critical thinking and individual understanding of what national security means as well as what global security means, in an increased interdependent community. The essence of security culture has to be the sum of information and knowledge about the national values and needs regarding security, which if understood will generate the development and promotion of such behavior in individuals of a nation that are needed to defend against internal and external threats.

To analyze the development of security culture we have chosen countries from the Eastern Flank of NATO, countries that find themselves in the face of increasing defense expenditure, following the Russian Federation's actions in Ukraine.

As a methodology we have chosen descriptive analysis as a means to compare the different

engage that the chosen states have with the concept of security culture. As a data base in this paper we aim to use Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. The result of that analysis will be present in Chapter III of our paper. In the following chapter we aim to analyse the impact and shape that increased defense expenditures have taken on the Eastern Flank of NATO.

2. INVESTING 2% OF THE GDP IN DEFENSE

2.1 The general assessment of an increased defense budget in NATO. The consensus of investing 2% of the national GDP on defense was taken by NATO countries in the Wales Summit that NATO held in 2014, following the Crimean Invasion from the Russian Federation. The adoption of such a commitment was not a straightforward step as not all states from the alliance hurried to this procent. In 2022 only 7 out of 30 members have met this objective as can be seen in Figure 1.

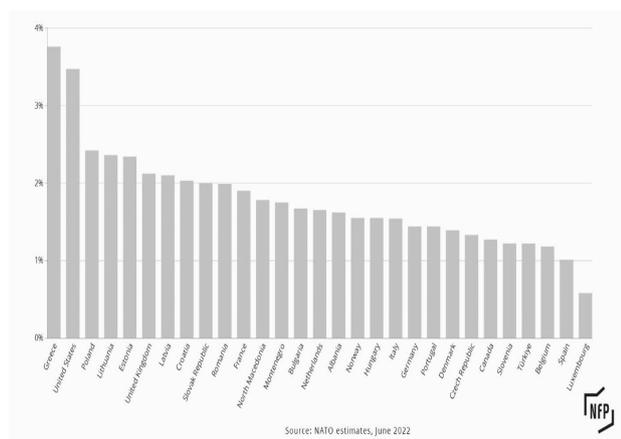


Fig 1. NATO spending 2022 (Ptak, 2023)

Currently, only Greece, United States of America, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, United Kingdom spend the assumed amount of the national budget on defense, with Romania coming close to that value, or even passing the percentage in a number of years starting with 2017.

Specialized literature (Grand, 2023) has tried to study and understand why many European states have come short of the 2% and the conclusion has been the different assessment of existing risk and threats. As can be seen from Figure 1 most of the countries that have chosen to invest more in defense spending are countries from the Eastern Flank. These countries feel a bigger threat in terms of the Russian Federation’s potential actions, while western European countries do not have same

perception of risk and challenges concerning security. It is here where the security culture comes into play. For countries like Spain, Portugal and Italy public expenditures like healthcare and education weigh more in the guns and butter effect balance and security is not seen as an overwhelming priority.

This mindset has been changed however starting with 2022. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has completely changed the dynamic of how NATO member states perceive the relevance of investing more in the defense budget. The emerging risk of a military threat from the east has made western countries including Germany determined to finally increase their budget to the desired 2% value. For countries on the Eastern Flank the increased risk represents a change in strategy and these countries find themselves in a situation where even more then 2% of the budget might be necessary in order to obtain the desired goals in terms of national security and deterrence. It must be noted that ever since the beginning, the idea behind the 2% assessment was that NATO countries should be able to create powerful national armies capable of resisting themselves on a potential battlefield for a number of days before NATO’s article 5 can be put into practice and help from allies can be present on any NATO member territory. For this, the importance of developing national militaries became a must and as an effect of these, a second decision was taken in Wales in 2014, that from the 2% allocated from the national budget, at least 20% would go to investments in acquisition, necessary for modernizing national capabilities in the army by procuring modern and new equipment. When we address the importance of security culture, it is in this sector of acquisition where the guns and butter effect is most present, as public opinion and the media are going to compare and put into balance the budget allocation for acquisition of military equipment in report with other social polices that might or might not be overlooked. It is therefore necessary that defense decision making authorities analyze their prospects of investment in a cost-benefit analysis in order to make sure that from an opportunity cost point of view the best alternatives are chosen that can be both efficient and effective in a competitive market and therefore no room is left for those that might contest whether allocated funds are spent wisely on developing national armies and security forces. Here security culture will matter in the way that nations respond to these types of investment. These type of responses will be studied in Chapter 3 of our paper. Before that,

however, another assessment must be addressed, as in 2023 NATO has changed its take on the 2% of the budget allocation.

2.2 The 2% becomes a floor not a ceiling. Following the previous idea, NATO has changed its assessment from 2014 in the Wales Summit and because of emerging threats resulted from the Russian Federation invasion of Ukraine, a decision has been made to make the 2% a floor, rather than a ceiling, allowing NATO members or actually encouraging them to invest even more than this former limit in defense spending. The decision is supposed to be acknowledged in the NATO Summit in Vilnius that will take place in the Summer of 2023. Some experts consider this change problematic as there is a risk that the guns and butter effect will increase even more, as spending defense resources in a smart and efficient manner is a complex process. Those who understand the life cycle cost process know that investing in defense doesn't mean only to procure military equipment but to integrate, train personnel and develop effective capabilities that are able to answer to the national security goals. NATO's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg addressed these issue to the member states, approving Germany's decision to hit the 2% former ceiling in 2024 while agreeing with NATO member states on the Eastern Flank that want to invest more in their defense systems (Ptak, 2023). Poland aims to reach a percentage for defense of 4% for the 2023-2024 budget, while Romania has already approved in parliament a 2.5% percent of the budget for 2023. These countries realize they have a gap in terms of building a modern ready army, that can answer to new risk and threats that have emerged in their region and therefore are obligated to increase their available resources. The different in security culture between these state and western European ones are clear. The increased investment in defense have been meat with minimum backlash, while similar measures would receive negative responses in countries like Germany, Netherlands, Denmark or Spain. The reason for this difference between the west and east block from the European continent also comes from the different development of security culture in these two regions.

If we analyze the western flank of Europe, here limited risk and threats that have manifested in the post-cold war environment in terrorist counter measures and reduction of worldwide weapons of mass destruction has meant an emphasis on developing soft power types of states that are first and first most interested in economic development,

contrary to the hard power concept where investment in defense in considered mandatory for developing a powerful state. Before the Crimean invasion for more than twenty years no clear military threats were visible for countries that are part of the Western European continent. Security culture is therefore diminished in these states, who have been mostly focused on economic growth and developing welfare states where social policies mainly go to education, healthcare, social assistance and the welfare system.

The situation is very different on the Eastern Flank. The group of countries situated on this part of the continent are states that have exited the communist regime following a long and intense cold war. Security culture like other social policies have been treated and developed different on the other side of the iron curtain. There has never been a complete transition for these states from a hard power type of mentality to well established soft power states where economic growth is the main priority of the entire nation. Investing in defense is not seen as a negative objective and due to limited procurement a balance between social and military policies is rarely made. Practically, before the Crimean invasion, the guns and butter effect was non-existent in these countries This has changed after major investments in defense have been implement following 2014 and the public opinion has become interested in how the budget is allocated for military procurement. The main concern and issue has been whether countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and the Baltics have the financial potential of acquiring modern military equipment or are they going to buy former, older western equipment that was available on the market. Another issue concerning an increased security culture was whether these defense investments would help the national economy or not. In order to cope with this challenge the off-set rule was created. This legislative decision means that for each major procurement of equipment in the military, the national economy must be involved in the production process. This decision has the aim of reducing the guns and butter effect as public opinion is likely to support investments that have a positive impact on national economies. With this in mind countries like Poland and Romania have tried to integrate their own defense industries into partially producing part of the acquired foreign military equipment by using local defense industry capacities.

It is therefore clear that investment on defense are to continue to increase in Europe, especially on the Eastern Flank. For this reason the security

culture in countries in this region becomes extremely relevant. It is the aim of the following chapter to analyze how this culture is manifested in a group of countries. Conclusions concerning this approach can then be taken in order to understand what are the effects of this strategy in NATO.

3. HOW SECURITY CULTURE DIFFERS ON THE EASTERN FLANK

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication, developed by Geert Hofstede. It shows the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behavior, using a structure derived from factor analysis. (Adeoye, 2014) Basically, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory represents a database model that allows analysts to compare how different countries relate on some typical factors and compare them to one another. For the purpose of our paper, continuing the idea of the previous chapter, we aim to study from a cultural point of view countries that are on the Eastern Flank of NATO and how they perceive security in the context of increased defence expenditures. We have chosen countries that are willing to increase their defence budget in the context of the war in Ukraine, countries like Romania and Poland, that are also interested in adding military aid to the Ukrainian side. We have chosen one of the Baltic states namely Estonia, which finds itself in the same situation, however with different available resources to spare compared to Romania and Poland. We have also chosen to analyse a country like Hungary which shows reluctance in allocating more defence funds in the current complicated regional context, preferring to invest in other social policies. Hungary has also manifested in its internal policies a restraint in helping the Ukrainian side unlike the other countries on the Eastern Flank introduced in this model. Finally, we have added to the analysis Bulgaria, a country that has shown interest in developing its defense capabilities and therefore investing more in its security assets, but unlike the other countries on the Eastern Flank has failed to do so for the moment. The social factors on which the countries are going to be compared, or rather the social dimensions are as follows:

1. Power distance
2. Individualism
3. Masculinity
4. Uncertainty avoidance
5. Long term orientation
6. Indulgence

In order to respect the format of this paper we have split the comparison in two figures as follows, Figure 2 and 3:

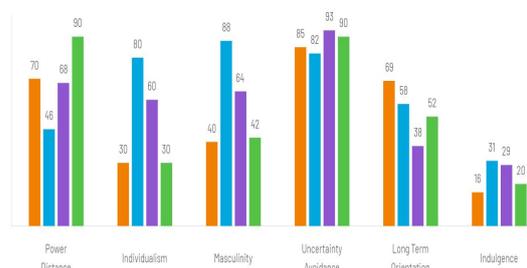


Fig 2. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Eastern Flank), I

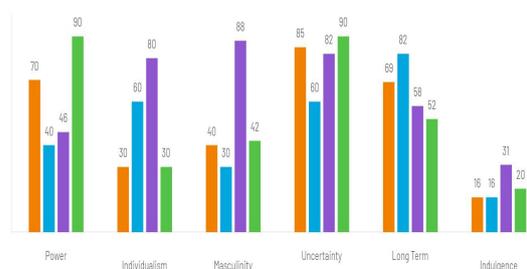


Fig 3. Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Eastern Flank), II

We consider that in order to determine a security culture two of the 6 dimensions are necessary and we aim to analyse those results concerning the Power Distance and Long Term Orientation. Based on the observed data from Figures 2 and 3 the following conclusions can be taken. When it comes to Power Distance, a dimension that is supposed to represent the idea that individuals of a society are not equal and how those inequalities affect social relations and whether they create social tensions or not, as can be seen Hungary scores low in this dimension, with a number of 46 which means considering the Hofstede model that the following can be acknowledged by the Hungarian model in accordance with the factor: a tendency to being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, relevancy of equal rights, a desire that superiors are accessible. Employees expect to be consulted.

Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on first name basis. Communication is direct and participative. In terms of the dimension entitled Long Term Orientation this is supposed to describe how every society tries to create and maintain links with its own past while trying to mitigate the emerging challenges of the present and future. The idea of this dimension is that societies prioritize these two existential goals in a different manner. Usually, countries that score low in this dimension are more conservative and tend to maintain traditions and core values more, being reluctant to changes in society. On the other hand, those that score high are more progressive and use social policies like education as a mean to evolve faster towards the future. Scoring 58 in this dimension, Hungary presents itself as pragmatic country, where people tend to believe that truth depends on the current event, context and time. This show a balance in the desire of a country to adapt accordingly to the changing environment while trying to maintain traditions, under a model that promotes prosperity, investing and perseverance in achieving national goals.

In Romania's case the value of the Power Distance is 90, while the Long Term Orientation score is 52. Romania scores high on the first dimension which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Romania has an intermediate score on the second dimension, meaning that just like Hungary it is willing to change its policies as long as it maintains part of its tradition and core values.

The next country analyzed is Bulgaria, which scores 70 in terms of Power Distance and 69 in Long Term Orientation. Like Romania, Bulgaria also scores high on the first dimension and therefore the same conclusions can be observed. These scores are normal for countries that have lived for a long time under a communist regime and are adapting to new democratic regimes which lack in theory the presence of an autocrat, though in real life such leadership models are still present and even looked up to. These are countries in transition that need to reduce the gap in terms of what aligning to dialog between the political leadership and the civil society actually means. With a score of 69, Bulgaria has a Pragmatic culture according to the second dimension studied.

Just like in the previous cases of other Eastern Flank countries this comes as no surprise as even though all three countries Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary like to adopt their social model to a modern one, their progression towards this model is not going to be a really fast one, but rather a slow one, that takes into consideration the importance of national values and tradition that the society considers necessary in order for the national state model to exist and develop.

In the current model studied, Poland is the first state analyzed to be different then the others studied. While in terms of Power Distance, Poland scores high 68, not as high as Romania however, this means that even though Poland is in search for strong leadership, it still has its national interest in a high priority. Romania's higher scores might show why the Romanian state is highly dependent on other organization and alliances, seeking the power that the European Union, NATO and the strategic partnership provide. While Poland also seeks this protection, its slightly lower score demonstrates an interest in also achieving security by it own measures. It is therefore of no surprise why from the countries presented so far Poland is the first willing to jump way above the 2% defense budget ceiling and propose an intermediate budget of 4%, going so far as to perhaps 5% in the future.

Interestingly Poland scores just 38 in its Long Term Orientation. Poland's low score of 38 in this dimension means that it is more normative than pragmatic. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. This does not mean that Poland does not want to take progressive measures, but rather that it wishes to progress in its own terms and is even more willingly then the other states presented to keep and maintain its national values before changing due to current events.

Finally, in the case of Estonia this country scores just 40 in Power Distribution and 82 in Long Term Orientation. These two scores combined can present the idea that Estonia has reached a democratic level the fastest and while the first dimension means that even though Estonia is aware of its means but not willing to look only for outside solutions in its security policies, the high score from the second dimension studied shows that Estonia is willing to integrate much easily in democratic relations, even through high demanding progressive measure and cooperate in this manner with other partners, alliances and organizations..

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study from the previous chapter is useful if put in accordance with the idea that the countries analyzed are willing or not to invest more in their military and if they have a security culture on which the foundation for such investments can exist without the guns and butter effect triggering debates in the society whether such investments are necessary or not.

In the case of the eastern flank countries presented earlier it can be seen from the dimensions studied that such a security culture exists and these countries know their national interest and even if the means are different the objective to protect the sovereignty of the state remains the same. While Estonia might score different on both dimensions than the other states, and while Poland seems to be even more conservative when compared by the second dimension the result remains the same.

Countries on the Eastern Flank have developed a security culture, mostly due to their past and their shift towards democracy in the last 30 years has not changed their perception on existing and emerging security threats. Therefore the willingness in the Eastern Flank to invest in defense in order to obtain deterrence in front of potential enemies is high.

Our conclusion is that the security culture in these countries enables them to invest in increasing defense budget, whether on short, medium or long term with the main objective of protecting the national values of the country.

These investments are not seen as competing with other government investments be it social policies in the form of public expenditures but are rather seen as complementary. Therefore the guns and butter effect is not likely to be a major challenge in these countries, isolated debates in the society might happen on this topic, but it will not

be of overriding importance, in such a manner that it might affect the national decision making process of investing in defense.

If the guns and butter effect were to manifest itself in these countries it would probably be an effect of the Russian informational warfare and because of a lack of the security culture existing on the Eastern Flank.

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THE SECURITY IMPACT OF THE ILLEGAL ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA ON THE TATAR COMMUNITY IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *In today's geopolitical equation, the Black Sea is an area of "great strategic importance" (Jens Stoltenberg 2022) and has constantly been characterised by tensions in various forms. After 2014, the Black Sea area has become a hotspot, where soft-power politics have taken second place to the conventional war unleashed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, preceded by the illegal annexation of Crimea. Romania, a NATO member state and an important factor of stability in the Black Sea area, shares an important element of the societal component of Black Sea security: the ethnic Tatar community, which is directly connected to the Crimean conflict, given its origins with the Tatars on the peninsula. The purpose of this article is therefore to point out that the increased focus on the defence component following the annexation of Crimea, as a result of the militarisation of the peninsula and of the Black Sea basin by the Russian Federation, must be complemented by potential non-military vulnerabilities, in this case of a societal nature. The conclusions of the article will highlight that the societal dimension of security is important and needs increased attention from the authorities, as any challenge can become a vulnerability at any time, and also that a constant soft-power policy focused on the identity component can lead in time to the Russian Federation assuming the role of a kin-state at least for a part of the Tatar community in Romania.*

Keywords: *Tatar community; Crimea; Black Sea security; non-military vulnerabilities*

1. INTRODUCTION

After 2014, the discourse with ethnic overtones has supplemented the armed conflict during this period, increasing tensions in the Black Sea area, which is why, following an applied research, we will highlight in this article both military aspects, which are part of the traditional definitions of security, and societal aspects, a non-military dimension that equally defines security in Buzan's understanding. The multi-ethnic nature of Dobrogea, where most of the national minorities officially acknowledged by the Romanian state are present, has so far provided an opportunity to exploit the space between the Danube and the Black Sea from an identity point of view, creating the premises for a unique and inexhaustible cultural potential at national level. From the point of view of international relations, Dobrogea is seen, also in terms of its multi-ethnic character, as a factor of cultural diplomacy, which, following Brubaker's theory, provides the necessary context for a successful relationship between national minorities, the national state, in this case Romania, and the mother states. The Tatar community has a particularity compared to all the others: it does not

have a mother state, the role of protector being legally incumbent on Romania. The steps taken by various state and non-state actors after 2014 in order to get closer to the Tatar community in Romania, allowing them to validate the policy adopted by Moscow with regard to the ethnics on the peninsula, can be classified as associated challenges that may influence the internal security environment in the medium and short term.

2. ETHNIC MINORITIES IN ROMANIA

In the current geopolitical context, amid the war unleashed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, the Black Sea has become for Romania a landmark of security definition. In a note of predictability, the Romanian authorities have emphasised in the last two national defence strategies (2015-2019 and 2020-2024) the need to increase security in this area, amid threats such as the perpetuation of frozen conflicts in the region, but especially amid the actions taken by the Russian Federation in the area: "violation of international law norms, questioning the international order, preservation of frozen conflicts and annexation of Crimea" (SNAp, 2015:12). Always considered an area of strategic

interest for Romania, today the Black Sea represents a region with a strong political, economic, security and especially military and international significance. In this regard, the importance of multi-ethnic Dobrogea in the equation of maintaining a climate of stability at a national level, and by extrapolation at the NATO and EU level, is particularly important.

With a strong historical background, Romania has built up an image of a model state in the field of best practice policies towards national minorities, since 1990. The country's legislation, which is admirably harmonised with the international legislation, and the focus on the cultural life of ethnic communities have, over time, strengthened the public perception of these communities exclusively as a factor promoting multiculturalism and the model of inter-ethnic coexistence.

The need to analyse the role and place of these communities also from a security perspective has emerged amid the exploitation of the cultural component by an aggressor state, more specifically amid the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, followed by the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the outbreak of war in 2022, events that led to the emergence of a tense climate in the Black Sea area. From a theoretical point of view, the practice of local policies of ethnic minorities in our country follows the logic of a triadic relationship projected by Professor Rogers Brubaker (1996): *national minority - host State - motherland*. Currently, 20 national minorities are officially recognised in Romania, represented by 19 official organisations in parliament. Restricting the research area to Dobrogea, namely Constanța and Tulcea counties, we can see that the most numerous ethnic communities in this area were and still are the Turkish and the Tatar ones. According to the 2011 census, in Constanța and Tulcea counties there were 22,500 ethnic Turks out of a total of 27,698 declared nationwide and 19,720 ethnic Tatars out of a total of 20,282 declared nationwide. In the first population census conducted after December 1989, in 1992, the numbers weren't very different. Nationwide, 29,832 citizens declared themselves to be ethnic Turks, 26,685 of them in Constanța and Tulcea counties, and 24,596 citizens declared themselves to be ethnic Tatars, 24,185 of them being registered in Constanța and Tulcea counties. In this context, the national leadership structures of the two communities were established in Constanța, with most of the activity taking place in this region.

As for the ethnic Tatars of Dobrogea, they have strong ties with Crimea, having settled in Dobrogea area in the 16th century. Although they have

remained on Romanian territory for generations, the ethnic Tatars in our country have always kept in touch with those who remained in Crimea or settled in other countries. Historically, Tatars, regardless of the area they live in today, are strongly linked to the historic moment of 18 May 1944, the day when, on Stalin's orders, they were deported from the Crimean peninsula, so the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and later the war unleashed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine had a strong emotional impact on ethnic Tatars everywhere.

3. ETHNICITY IN THE UKRAINE'S WAR DISCOURSE

The Kremlin leader's aggressive, military-tinged rhetoric since the beginning of the invasion in March 2022 has been doubled by ethnic overtones. From the very first days, the military invasion was presented in Vladimir Putin's view as an action to "denazify Ukraine", which triggered the reaction of some Jewish leaders who stated that the Russian president was "distorting and trivialising the Holocaust". The Russian leaders continued their attacks on Jews through anti-Semitic messages, which created further discomfort in the Israeli government. Moscow Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Israel of "supporting the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev" and cited "tragic examples of cooperation between Jews and Nazis". In this way, Putin has tried to legitimise his aggressive acts in Ukraine by regularly making references to the Jewish people, in the public arena.

On the same note, we have to mention other ethnically-tinged messages used by the Kremlin to justify the military invasion of Ukraine. Just days before the invasion, at a press conference, Vladimir Putin accused Ukraine of "systematic and widespread human rights violations" against the Russian minority. This statement caused unrest in Western circles, which saw it as a Russian argument in favour of launching the invasion. The argument of protecting Russian citizens could become a leitmotiv of Russia's aggressive behaviour towards neighbouring countries where ethnic Russians live. Even the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has expressed concern about this dangerous practice.

Since the early days of the war, in the logic of an ethnic justification, the Russian president has tried to highlight the cultural and legal oppression to which the Russian-speaking population of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions is subjected and the

roles of Russia, which can be analysed in the major frameworks of the Kremlin discourse, as Ruxandra Buluc and Ioan Deac show in a recent study (Buluc and Deac 2022, 88): Russia as savior (*Russia feels compassion for the oppressed people in Donbass*), Russia as a state that respects and promotes Russian cultural heritage within the country's borders and beyond, but above all the most dangerous of the discursive frames, those of the non-existence of Ukraine:

A very important framework that Putin is creating with regard to Ukraine is that it does not exist independently of Russia, neither culturally nor state-wise. I have called this a framework of non-existence of Ukraine. Ukraine cannot be accepted as a separate country from Russia because it shares the same history, the same culture. «I will never abandon the belief that Russians and Ukrainians are one nation» (Buluc and, Deac 2022, 88-89)."

Kremlin discursive frameworks revolve around cultural explanations, which serve as the force elements in Russian Federation narratives. From Russia's perspective, Ukraine is an artificial state, with no culture of its own and therefore no ethnic or religious identity, and which serves as an instrument of Western manipulation, especially of the United States. The cultural annihilation of Ukraine is the Kremlin's policy goal. Once Ukrainian claims are transformed into actions lacking cultural legitimacy, they lose any form of legitimacy. From this perspective, the war in Ukraine, starting in 2014 and continuing with the Russian invasion in 2022, is a war whose main stake is a cultural one, according to Moscow's official discourse, which tries to induce a rewritten and favourably interpreted history. To this challenge in the war of narratives, President Volodymyr Zelensky has responded by affirming the cultural, ethnic and religious identity of Ukrainians and invoking the right to self-determination. In this war of narratives, the positioning of the Russian leader is precise but anachronistic, in the analysis by Professors R. Buluc and I. Deac:

The strategic narrative that Putin creates is based on a language of separation reminiscent of the post-World War II period, demonstrating that Putin's representations of Russia and its missions operate on the historical scale of eternity, permanence, and infallibility of his visions of Russia as a defender (Buluc & Deac 2022, 96-97).

Justification in line with the projection of cultural differentiation to Ichheiser cannot be a

relevant explanation in the current security environment. However, such a justification is likely to produce distrust, doubts, uncertainties, fears in the states bordering the Black Sea or in those of the Wider Region, as long as Moscow's official policy, using science and, implicitly, the Russian Academy of Sciences, produces projections in line with the intentions of the Russian Federation. However, the most illustrative and recent example comes from Crimea.

4. CRIMEA, THE POLITICS OF REPRESSION AND INTIMIDATION

The current war in Ukraine has its roots in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea, a political act that was internationally contested and vehemently rejected by the Tatars on the peninsula and internally supported. History has never been favourable to a good understanding between Russians and Tatars, on the contrary, the dissolution of the Crimean Khanate and the annexation of the peninsula in 1783 by Catherine II and then the "surrender" in 1944 when, on Stalin's orders,

187.859, according to Soviet sources, 238,500 according to Crimean Tatar sources, were deported (from Crimea) to Central Asia, Siberia and the Urals

are still vivid in the collective memory of ethnic Tatars no matter in which corner of the world they live today. The 2014 territorial misappropriation only revived the resentment Tatars have always had towards the Russians (Omer 2020).

Speaking in June 2022 at a meeting with American Jews in the context of the war in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that "Crimean Tatars in the occupied peninsula are subjected to very severe repression". (www.qha.com.tr). The situation, however, is one that has been ongoing since 2014 and has been reported both by Tatars who have managed to leave the peninsula and settle in other localities in Ukraine and by international authorities. The repression of ethnic Tatars has taken various forms and international public opinion has not ceased to report abuses and serious human rights violations.

The most common forms of intimidation of the remaining Tatars in Crimea were kidnappings. Most of those who have disappeared have been trusted members of the community, holding leadership positions in ethnic representative organisations, as the Russian authorities have sought to intimidate the population still protesting against the annexation, and to annihilate leaders in

order to impose their own representatives, as happened in 2015 when the religious leader, the head of the Muslim Cult in Crimea, was replaced by another mufti agreed by the Kremlin leadership. In 2016, a young Crimean Tatar member of the Coordinating Council of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars, Ervin Ibrahimov, disappeared from the front of his house and was forcibly taken away in a traffic police car. Also, in 2016, the Mejlis (the highest executive governing body of the National Parliamentary Congress of Crimean Tatars) was banned by the peninsula's Supreme Court and declared a "terrorist organisation".

The World Congress of Crimean Tatars is a governing body that brings together representatives of the Tatar communities from all over the world, in which the Romanian community has 4 representatives and whose last meeting took place in August 2015 in Ankara, where the situation in Crimea was intensely debated. As early as 2014, right after the annexation, the Russian authorities started the case against Refat Ciubarov (President of the Mejlis and the World Congress of Crimean Tatars, former member of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea within Ukraine and Vicepresident of the Crimean Parliament in Simferopol) for organising an unauthorised mass demonstration in Simferopol on 26 February 2014 against the imminent Russian occupation of the peninsula. As a result of this trial, Refat Ciubarov, now living in Kiev, was sentenced in 2021 by the Supreme Court of Crimea to 6 years in a maximum security prison, 200 hours of community service and a criminal fine of 200,000 rubles. Also in 2014, Mustafa Abdulcemil Kirimoglu (leader of Tatars everywhere and former deputy in the Kiev Supreme Rada) was banned from entering Crimea.

Media that were not controlled by the Russian authorities also posed a threat, so in April 2015 the Russian authorities decided to close down the ATR TV station, which broadcasted in the Tatar language and whose target audience were the Crimean Tatars. Amnesty International said at the time that the measure to close the TV station was "a blatant attack on freedom of expression, ornamented as an administrative procedure" which was "a brutal attempt to stifle independent media, to hinder dissenting voices and to intimidate the Crimean Tatar community". The station subsequently resumed its work in Kiev. The Tatar news agency "Qirim Haber Ajansi" was also relocated to Kiev, and remains the only source of information for Tatars, both in Ukraine and abroad, including Romania. Aware of the importance of

disseminating the message to as many countries as possible, the agency's coordinators decided to open news pages in Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, English and even Romanian in addition to the Tatar language.

5. HOW THE ILLEGAL ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA INFLUENCED THE TATARS IN ROMANIA

The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, however, has reshaped the relations between ethnic Tatars in Romania and those in Crimea. Connections between the two communities have since been limited to very few opportunities for online interaction. A presence of Tatars from any country, including Romania, in Crimea in the context of the 2014 events and the international challenge to the annexation of the peninsula would be tantamount to a public declaration of acceptance of the territorial misappropriation and a violation of the international sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation. The cultural demands for the preservation and promotion of identity values that were a constant in the daily lives of Crimean Tatars and the diaspora from 1990 to 2014 have been replaced by political ones. The World Congress of Crimean Tatars held in 2015 in Ankara, a body to which four representatives of Tatars from Romania were elected, became a common voice of Tatars from different corners of the world calling on the international community not to recognise the annexation of Crimea and to take measures for the return of the peninsula to the borders of Ukraine.

The Ukrainian press, as well as other media outlets to which ethnic diaspora had access, have been writing constantly since 2014 about the pressures on Crimean Tatars, abductions of mostly young Tatars who criticised the Russian authorities, the closing of schools in the Tatar language and the banning of Tatar leaders from entering Crimea (Radio Europa Liberă, 2020). In 2016, the National Assembly of Crimean Tatars (Mejlis) was declared by the so-called Supreme Court of Crimea to be an "extremist organisation", and the World Congress of Crimean Tatars meeting in 2015 in Ankara was no longer recognised by the Russian Federation authorities (Radio Free Europe, 2016). However, the World Tatar Congress in Kazan, established in 1992, has gained increased visibility and over the years has mainly gathered participants from former Soviet states.

Ethnic Tatars in Romania have organised, since 2014, a series of public activities condemning the

annexation of Crimea and the pressures to which the Tatars on the peninsula were subjected, directly targeting the diplomatic representations of the Russian Federation in Bucharest and Constanța (Adevărul 2015). In response, however, the diplomatic missions of the Russian Federation began a policy of rapprochement with the Tatars in Romania, trying to establish relations and interact with them in an attempt to impose their perception of the approach to the Crimean Tatar problem by the authorities in Moscow. Such a successful approach would be tantamount to an indirect recognition of the annexation of Crimea by Romania, an EU member state and NATO border landmark on the eastern flank. The diplomatic and distant approach of the only meeting requested by the Russian Consul General in Constanta himself with UDTTMR representatives in spring 2015, and the refusal of the latter to respond to the Russian diplomat's invitation to visit the Crimean Tatar community, reconfirmed the social-political cohesion and loyalty to the state, but also to democratic, European and Euro-Atlantic values of UDTTMR, an organisation that has officially represented the Tatars in Romania in the public arena for 25 years.¹

The split of the Tatar community in Romania in 2016, due to the temporary loss of the seat in the Romanian Parliament by UDTTMR and thus of its funding, led to increased visibility among ethnic and other organizations, which brought some Russian representatives closer to the Romanian community. A link in this regard among the Romanian community was the Tatar Democratic Union, based in Medgidia. Its leaders confirmed and publicly assumed after 2014 both their openness to having Russian diplomats accredited in Constanta in their midst, in the activities they organized, and their participation in international activities validating the policy of the Moscow authorities on the issue of the Tatars in the Crimean peninsula, as happened in 2019, when they participated in the World Congress of Tatars in Kazan (AGERPRES, 2019). For the first time since 2014, cultural and sports activities organised by UDT, which brought together Tatars from Romania, were attended by participants from Russia and Crimean Tatars (Replica 2019). In addition to this, members of the community, who are also representatives of associations, regularly visit the Russian Federation to participate in events

¹ According to interviews with UDTTMR representatives who attended the meeting

organised by the Russian authorities for local ethnic Tatars.

The increasing frequency of activities that, after 2014, have brought the Tatar community in Romania closer to Moscow politicians in the public space, even if only in terms of image, has created concern among the community, with UDTTMR leaders and the representative of the Muftiate of the Muslim Cult in Romania constantly raising alarm signals regarding the interference of foreign (non)state entities in the life of the Tatar community in Romania, these activities being perceived as a threat to the community with national implications (România liberă 2020). Their approach has been reconfirmed at the level of the authorities, with the mayor of Constanța in 2020, Decebal Făgădău, taking a public stance, following a controversial visit to Constanța by the Russian Federation ambassador, and pointing out that the “unprincipled actions of some foreign diplomats present in Constanța” may affect the climate of interethnic coexistence specific to Dobrogea. It is also the mayor of Constanța who highlights a very important issue, with reference to the security of the area and our country's status as a NATO member state:

I understand the increased interest of some regional powers towards Dobrogea, especially since the military base «Mihail Kogălniceanu» will become the largest US military base in Europe, with all the security guarantees and advantages for our country (Făgădău, 2020).

With its accession to NATO in 2004, Romania has clearly defined and assumed its future policy in relation to the current spheres of influence in the Black Sea. As the study on the Tatar community in Romania after 2014 shows, this has not prevented the players in the area from seeking solutions in an attempt to reconfigure the balance of power in the area. The tense situation in the wider Black Sea region, especially after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation (2014), has accelerated the process of strengthening military capabilities, but has also opened up new paradigms for addressing challenges, vulnerabilities and threats in the region.

The illegal annexation of Crimea has triggered an increase in tensions across the Black Sea region and a rewriting of security strategies in the area. Romania has also adapted its National Defence Strategy and the document for the period 2015-2019 was built around two framework concepts for the first time: “extended national security” and

“security culture” (SNAT 2015 - 2019). The same strategy, drawn up one year after the illegal annexation of Crimea, was based, among other things, on the "global paradigm shift" focused on the deterioration of relations between NATO and the Russian Federation, a situation that “directly raises the issue of the security of Romanian citizens”. In the National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024, the Russian Federation is mentioned three times in the chapters “Threats” (points 119, 121) and “Risks” (point 155), a situation that has drawn a chain reaction from Russian officials (SNAT 2020 - 2024).

The present approach is intended to point out that the increased emphasis, after the annexation of Crimea, on the defence component as a result of the militarisation of the peninsula in general and of the Black Sea basin by the Russian Federation must be complemented by potential non-military vulnerabilities, in this case of a societal nature. The multi-ethnic nature of Dobrogea, where most of the national minorities officially recognised by the Romanian state are present, has so far provided an opportunity to exploit the space between the Danube and the Black Sea from an identity point of view, creating the premises for a unique and inexhaustible cultural potential at national level. From the point of view of international relations, Dobrogea is seen, also in terms of its multi-ethnic character, as a factor of cultural diplomacy, which, following Brubaker's theory, provides the necessary context for a successful relationship between national minorities, the national state, in this case Romania, and the mother states. The Tatar community has a particularity compared to all the others, namely that it does not have a mother state, the role of protector legally devolving upon Romania. The steps taken by various state and non-state actors to get close to the Tatar community in Romania in order to validate Moscow's policy towards the ethnic population of the peninsula can be classified as associated challenges that may influence the internal security environment in the medium and short term.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From the experience of the Tatar community in Romania after 2014 we can conclude that the societal dimension of security is important and needs equally close attention from the authorities, as any challenge can become a vulnerability at any time. We could also conclude that a constant *soft-*

power policy focused on the identity component may lead in time to the Russian Federation assuming the role of a kin-state at least for part of the Tatar community in Romania.

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THE AGGRESSION WAR OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON UKRAINE: LESSONS LEARNED. A GENDER ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *It has been more than a year since the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine on a large scale. But the war between the two states did not start in 2022 but is eight years old, when the Russian Federation occupied the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine. One year after the fateful February 24, 2022, the two states have approximately 100,000 casualties and loss of military equipment. Ukraine's economy has shrunk by 30%, and more than 30% of its population has been displaced. 40% of Ukraine's energy capacity was destroyed. Neither side is considering reaching a compromise or negotiating a ceasefire. A year of relentless, horrific war, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, with widespread suffering for the people of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation. In this context, resilience has become a very important term, and a correlation between it and the gender perspective has appeared in the public discourse. What are the lessons learned from this war? Are we able to learn from them?*

Keywords: *war; resilience; the gender perspective; lessons learned*

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been 430 days since the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine on a large scale. But the war between the two states did not start in 2022 but is eight years old, when the Russian Federation occupied the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine. One year after the fateful February 24 (Walt, 2023), 2022, the two states have approximately 100,000 casualties and loss of military equipment. Ukraine's economy has shrunk by 30%, and more than 30% of its population has been displaced. 40% of Ukraine's energy capacity was destroyed. Neither side is considering reaching a compromise or negotiating a ceasefire. A year of relentless, horrific war, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, with widespread suffering for the people of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation (Earth, 2023).

2. RESILIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED

In commemoration of this date, a series of events were organized, including the first Conference on Security in the Black Sea under the auspices of the Crimea Platform and the symposium on resilience, co-organized by NATO, this year with the theme "Resilience in the age of

disruption". Panelists at both events emphasized the importance of learning from the lessons of this war, about resilience and supporting a neighbor in need. (A friend in need is a friend indeed.) Mr. Mircea Geoană (Geoană, 2023), Deputy Secretary General of NATO, emphasized that the Alliance's commitment to resilience remains firm in the face of Russia's war against Ukraine. Mr. Geoană praised the resilience of Ukraine, which has resisted Russian aggression since 2014. "When President Putin first ordered his tanks to cross the border, he expected Kyiv to fall within days and the rest of the country to follow in a matter of weeks. He was wrong. He underestimated the resilience of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people," adding that building resilience is critical in preventing and recovering from attacks, thereby reducing the likelihood of them occurring in the first place.

The Deputy Secretary-General highlighted recent actions by NATO, including establishing a High Resiliency Committee, the first annual meeting of senior national officials responsible for national resilience, and launching a process to develop collective resilience goals. This framework allows Allies to address their individual needs while addressing strategic vulnerabilities and gaps, strengthening the Alliance's collective resilience.

The Deputy Secretary-General saw the event as an opportunity to reflect "on the lessons learned from Ukraine's resilience, including its resilience, that can inform our preparedness."

For Irene Fellin, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, one of the key lessons learned from the Russian war is that "women must participate in their societies at all times, whether in war or peacetime". Ms. Fellin added that the use of sexual violence in war underscores the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in conflict management, resolution, peacebuilding, reconstruction, and defense capacity building. Ms. Fellin believes that new priorities – including counter-terrorism, climate change, cyber security, and resilience – have significantly broadened the Women, Peace, and Security agenda since the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 nearly 23 years ago. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of NATO, Mrs. Fellin emphasized the importance of "equal participation of women in decision-making throughout the war and after the victory of Ukraine" (Fellin, 2023). Also, initiatives funded by NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package "will be gender sensitive and that women's needs are met."

In this context, resilience has become a very important term, and a correlation between it and the gender perspective has appeared in the public discourse. This fact led me to analyze the meaning of the notion of resilience, the lessons learned, and how the gender perspective is a component of the public discourse and analyses carried out on this topic. But what do we mean by resilience? How do we define this concept? The term resilience originated in psychology and refers to both the process and the outcome of successfully adapting to challenging life experiences. This concept was included in a comprehensive approach to national security. In foreign and security policy, resilience (Hedenskog, 2023) means those procedures of immediate cooperation between the state, the army, and civil society, as a single body united in difficult moments and the ability to bounce back. According to DEXONLINE, resilience is one's ability to return to normal after suffering a shock (emotional, economic, etc.). The Cambridge Dictionary defines resilience as the ability to be happy, successful, etc..., after a difficult or bad situation (the ability to be happy, and successful, etc. again after something difficult or bad has happened). Trauma specialists associate the resilience of the human psyche.

The definition of resilience according to the Cambridge Business English Dictionary is the

quality of being able to quickly return to a good state before problems. (The quality of being able to return quickly to a previous good condition after problems).

Definitions of resilience have been formulated for fields as varied as social, environmental, engineering, and biology (Hodicky, 2020).

Another definition (Ran, 2020) of resilience is the ability of a system, community, or person to prepare for, cope with, recover from, and adapt to unforeseen or unforeseen events. The United Nations (2012) defines resilience as the ability of a system, community, or society exposed to a hazard to withstand, absorb, adapt to, and recover from the effects of the hazard, within an appropriate period and in an effective manner, including through the preservation and restoration of structures and its essential functions.

In the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty, the principle of resilience is introduced and protected in Article 3, supporting the security of the Alliance:

To more effectively achieve the objectives of this treaty, the parties, separately and jointly, through self-help and continuous and effective mutual aid, will maintain and develop the individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

This echo of this principle resonates through each NATO member nation's commitment to a national responsibility for robust military and civilian preparedness that reduces risk across the Alliance.

Resilience in a NATO context refers to the ability, nationally and collectively, to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and rapidly recover from strategic shocks and disruptions. Resilience is the ability of the Allies individually, the Alliance collectively, and NATO as an organization to withstand disruptions and shocks and continue their activities. NATO needs to be capable of continuous military transformation as well as the interconnectivity of military and non-military capabilities in all member countries to cope with the redistribution of geostrategic and military power. Alliance resilience comes from a combination of civilian preparedness and military capability. In this context, civilian readiness contributes directly to NATO's defense readiness – well-maintained, rapidly recovering, adaptable, sustainable, and ongoing military systems, supported and enabled by civilian capabilities, are required to ensure security and stability throughout the Alliance.

In 2016, NATO members agreed on the seven basic requirements of national resilience (assured

continuity of government and critical government services; resilient energy sources; ability to effectively deal with the uncontrolled movement of people; food and water resources capacity to deal with mass casualties; resilient civilian communications systems; resilient civilian transport systems) (Roepke, 2019) against which Allies can measure their level of readiness, and in 2021, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed on a strengthened commitment to resilience, emphasizing the importance of national and collective resilience against conventional, unconventional and hybrid adversary threats and activities.

As presented above, definitions of resilience have been presented for various domains. I understood that this topic of resilience was in the foreground during the Covid-19 pandemic, before that, in the global financial crisis and various corporate scandals. It has been defined as resistance to shocks, adaptation to change, and more, taking advantage of the opportunity brought by change (Țițirigă, 2023). As early as 2011, a well-known UK association, the Association of Insurance and Risk Managers in Industry and Commerce (AIRMIC) (Țițirigă, 2023) opined that to achieve resilience, an organization must consider the 5 R's (risk radar, resources, relationships organization, rapid response to incidents and review and adaptation of the organizational environment).

They defined the risk radar as the preoccupation with failure, through the permanent focus on detecting errors but also lessons learned from past mistakes. Although it seems simple, many examples have been observed of organizations repeating the same mistakes made by other similar companies before them. From AIRMIC's perspective, resources refer to employees and a company's moral compass.

As for the relations within the organization, this refers to the way of communication within the organization and with external partners. It has been observed that one of the main causes of organizational failure is poor communication, that is, information does not "flow" freely within the organization, and it is not communicated effectively on all levels. At the same time, it can also be deficient as an organization that does not "listen" or pay attention to what is happening inside and outside it.

When an incident occurs, an organization must have a quick response to prevent the incident from turning into a crisis or disaster. For this it is essential to develop an organizational culture in

which the reporting of risks and incidents is encouraged, to enable an immediate reaction. In addition, the continuous review of the organizational environment that requires changes and improvements and immediate adaptation are basic elements in ensuring resilience. Specialists in the field of organizational resilience, following this idea, question whether it is not a mistake when the state of normality is represented by stability and maintaining the status quo. They opine that the secret of a resilient organization could be normality represented by constant change and adaptation, and a period of stability would only be an accident, a short period that should not be deceived. War is a harsh teacher, so it is important that from these sacrifices we focus our attention on the lessons identified and learn from them.

There is great diversity depending on the reference level in lessons learned. Ukrainian resistance up to this point was unexpected. It provides a model for how they have dealt with attacks from a state like Russia. Perhaps one of the most important lessons, not only from this war, given the devastating impact it causes, is that regardless of geopolitical or operational imperatives, war must not be started in vain (Singh, 2023). We can understand that President Putin felt threatened by NATO's expansionist policy, but there was never a real danger of aggression from NATO to justify such a brutal and cruel invasion.

Also, in today's world, the notion of a "short war" (Singh, 2023) is a myth. Starting a war by overestimating your forces and underestimating your opponent is doomed to failure. There were countless examples of hasty preparation and negligence on the part of the Russian Federation. For example, the use of personal mobile phones for conversations with families led to the interception of conversations and the discovery of Russian positions. The same overestimation of own forces but also demonstrating extreme cruelty, including towards the Kremlin's people, led to considerable human losses, due to poor training of the military, with little professional experience in combat missions. In today's interdependent world, when two states compete, the one with stronger relationships has an upper hand, even in the face of an obvious imbalance of capabilities. In modern warfare, a strategy with minimalist expectations appears to be more effective than a maximalist approach, which provokes greater resistance from the adversary (Singh, 2023).

According to Elbridge Colby (Grubii, 2023), a former Pentagon official who led the team that produced the 2018 US National Defense Strategy,

an important lesson is "Don't rely on indirect international pressure. You must be able to defeat the enemy's ability and retain the key territory of your state." From his perspective, countries vulnerable to an attack from Russia must rely on an asymmetric defense, with "decentralized forces, prepared and able to create problems for stronger forces that can execute aggressive military operations."

In this sense, Michele Flournoy (Grubii, 2023), former American undersecretary for defense policy, supports the need for "small, agile units that can sabotage the enemy and then retreat to a safe place." The Atlantic Council (Grubii, 2023) formulated a series of lessons learned addressed to all interested parties in this conflict, among which we, of course, mention Ukraine and the Russian Federation, but also NATO, the USA, China, Germany, and their allies, political and military leaders. This conflict changed the perspective not only of military strategies and operations but also of diplomacy, intelligence, national security, but also energy, economic policies, and many other areas.

The analysis starts from the assumption that the Russian F was considering a short-lived invasion with a quick victory. This is another assumption. The current perception is that this conflict is far from over, becoming a protracted one that will test the resolve of all parties concerned. The first lesson formulated is addressed to Western diplomacy which has learned that Ukrainians are trustworthy. They have proven that their demands on Western weaponry are pertinent, they have learned how to use/maneuver them reasonably, and they are adept at using information from intelligence structures.

The lesson in global diplomacy is that the Putin regime cannot be trusted and must be defeated. From personal experience, I have learned that today's friends can be tomorrow's enemies, and diplomacy disappears when "must" appears. However, some patterns of Russia have been recognized, namely, non-compliance with international rules, treaties, and commitments, and negotiations are not guaranteed. It has been shown that when you compromise with an aggressor state, it will be encouraged to escalate its attacks.

The Atlantic Council believes it would send a strong signal if the US will abandon the strategic ambiguity that only encourages an adventurist adversary. In today's security environment, expressing red lines explicitly and firmly can be considered a deterrent against escalation. Regarding US national security, the adversary is not only Moscow but also Beijing and Tehran.

Likewise, the recommendation to the US is not to ignore the civilian population during these critical times. The information war that Russia is waging with the West is very acute, and to avoid the manipulation of the civilian population, it is necessary to prevent it promptly, with empathy, and openly. Another recommendation was to invest in front-line partners who are fighting Russia and China. Following the model of US assistance to Israel, support for Ukraine is also recommended.

An important lesson identified for the military: "Equipment does not win wars. People do." Investing in the training of the military, in training by encouraging taking the initiative on the battlefield, by delegating command, has proven superior to a pattern of training and centralized command. Also, modern and agile weapons can defeat larger conventional armed forces, especially on the defensive. As Singh also concluded, the war in Ukraine demonstrated that tanks, warships, and fighter jets are more vulnerable than ever to "cheap" defensive systems (Singh, 2023). The effectiveness of artillery when using high-precision munitions, drones, and satellites in modern warfare has been demonstrated. Another lesson Singh drew is the importance of functional logistical support structures. In a war, speed of resupply is vital (Singh, 2023). As for deterrence, the lesson learned is that economic sanctions have not had the desired effect on Russia. A clear signal was sent with the presence of NATO troops on the Eastern flank of the Alliance. For the global economy, the lesson learned was that economic sanctions need time to produce results. That is why they must be included in long-term foreign policy objectives.

Lesson Identified for Wartime Strategic Communications: Influence operations are a daily job. Ukraine's sustained effort to attract international support is appreciated, but also the denigration of Russia's actions by exposing the aggressions and increasing confidence in the Government in Kyiv. Official messages are empathized by presenting direct visual images.

From the perspective of cyber defense, I understood that it is necessary to involve the private sector in operational-military cyberspace. I believe that the organization of military exercises in the field of cyber defense should be considered with the involvement of the private sector active in this field.

Referring to NATO, its importance and special value have been demonstrated. The alliance needs substantial long-term investment, both political and financial. The frequent disputes among its members

regarding the utility of the Alliance induced a message of weakening the commitments of the member states and vulnerability to its opponents. However, in crises, its unity was proven.

On the other hand, however, it is important to remember that, nowadays, after so many political efforts, the regulations of the Hague Convention, regarding the protection of civilians in conflict, are not respected. Moreover, a humanitarian crisis was deliberately created. By destroying infrastructure, post-conflict recovery is slowed, which is more about punishing the enemy than about victory (Resilience First, 2023). In this regard, Dr. Shea (Resilience First, 2023) warns that failure to comply with the Hague Convention in future conflicts could put NATO in a position to face humanitarian problems at the same time as the enemy.

Stephen M. Walt's analysis for Foreign Policy Magazine presents other lessons for political leaders and voters. Starting from the assumption that Vladimir Putin had in mind a short "military action", he misjudged three factors: Russia's military power, Ukraine's resilience, and the ability of Western states to find alternative sources of energy. The first important lesson is that it is very easy for leaders to make wrong decisions. (Lesson No. 1: It is very easy for leaders to miscalculate.) But the West also made mistakes: they did not seriously consider the possibility of a war, overestimating the power of economic sanctions, and underestimating the determination Kremlin to bring Kyiv back under its influence.

The second lesson is that states must act unitedly to fight against aggressors (Lesson No. 2: States united to counter aggression.) This is a lesson that Vladimir Putin did not take into account, namely the premise that Ukraine is supported by a coalition with an economic power 20 times greater than its own, determined to find solutions to Russian energy dependence. So instead of facing an inferior enemy, he faces a coalition-backed opponent with the most sophisticated weaponry.

Lesson No. 3: "It isn't over till it's over.", that is, we must not lose focus, even in the case of winning some battles. We do not consider the conflict ended until the signing of the Peace Treaty, but even then, I would say, in certain contexts, with certain opponents, vigilance is a permanent mandatory state. That's why Wait believes that dreaming about the recovery of Crimea by Ukraine or the change of the Putin regime is far too early and counterproductive. Russia is still a great power with a population three times that of Ukraine, a large arms industry, and a large arms stockpile. Also, both sides are looking for ways to put

pressure on the opponent, and the threat of a nuclear weapon cannot be completely ruled out (back to lesson #1).

War is a time when the stakes are very high, and rational thinking and careful calculation are often replaced by bluster, extremist speech, and hard opinions (Lesson No. 4: War empowers extremists and makes compromise harder.). That's why compromise is hard to accept, even if neither side has a real chance of victory. Here's Walt asking himself if all the voices who rule out peace negotiations and are in favor of continuing the war until Ukraine wins (because it can't be otherwise, can it?) have done an exercise in introspection and come to the conclusion that they are right. It has as its starting point this question, otherwise legitimate, from the lessons learned from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, which generous foreign support, moreover, sustained this conflict, and in the end, the countries were not in a better situation. Indeed, we are far from envisioning a ceasefire, but given the loss of life, the wounded, and the destruction that has been caused, which now seems unachievable, perhaps it should be thought of somehow or built, rational and calculated.

Walt's fifth lesson, and in his opinion, the most important, is that a more restrained NATO open-door policy and the intention to include Ukraine in Western economic and security institutions could have prevented this escalation war (Lesson No. 5: A strategy of restraint would have reduced the risk of war.). I do not share this opinion precisely because of the virulence with which Putin publicly expressed himself about the consequences of NATO's expansion in Eastern Europe. In my opinion, this arrogance of his did not offer any room for negotiation, he did not accept any explanation because I believe that this escalation of the conflict was premeditated and long-planned.

As an additional lesson, actually, as a reinforcement of the first lesson (Lesson No. 1: It is very easy for leaders to miscalculate.), he emphasizes that leader's matter (Bonus Lesson: Leaders matter). Although the messages about NATO's open-door policy were a well-known topic to the Russian elite, the question arises if Russia had a different president, how he would have positioned himself. Would he have done the same as Vladimir Putin? Or if there had been a different administration in the White House, would they have defused this crisis before it got rolling? Or how would this war have looked if the elections in Ukraine had been won by Petro Poroshenko, would it have had the same result in terms of international support? Of course not.

President Volodymyr Zelensky is a very important part of this story because his words and actions galvanized not only the Ukrainian people but the entire world (Custer, 2023). National leaders are the ones who decide how to react to the circumstances they face, so we cannot say that they are not responsible for the consequences of those decisions. As we also observe from the lesson learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, what seems appropriate, bold, and effective during the crisis, once the ceasefire and costs are finalized, can look the complete opposite.

Another perspective of the lessons learned from this war highlighted the fact that not everyone learned the same lessons from history (Everyone Learned the Wrong Lessons Last Time (Earth, 2023)). After the first invasion in 2014, Russia thought that it could grab a piece of Ukraine, slowing down its Euro-Atlantic course, and thought that if it had interests, which it considered justified, it could do the same. Europe considered the Minsk Agreement to be the end of the conflict. There was a general understanding that Ukraine had to accept the loss of Crimea and much of Donbas as a condition of peace. Consequently, Russia has learned that through military action it can interfere in the interests of another state, and many of the Western states believe that Russia's wish must be met.

After this conflict, Russia should learn that the rhetoric of nuclear weapons is not very useful in the conflict zone (Nuclear Weapons Are Not Useful on the Battlefield (Earth, 2023)) instead they are very useful as an advantage in deterrence (Nuclear Weapons Are Useful for Deterrence (Earth, 2023)). Given that the conflict zone is on Russian territory, according to Moscow's belief, it is unlikely that a decision will be made to use it. Russia used this rhetoric because it knew the importance the West placed on not using it. Thus, there were several actions, which in the process of deterrence, were successful for Russia, namely, its suspension from the New START Treaty, thus emphasizing the increase in nuclear risk, thus limiting the support offered to Ukraine but also reducing the risk of NATO involvement in the conflict. If, at the end of this conflict, Russia gains a territorial advantage using nuclear weapon rhetoric, it will learn the lesson that there are other uses for nuclear capabilities, namely to coerce adversaries against their interests.

One lesson that I find particularly important is that EXPERTS CAN BE WRONG, TOO. The assessments presented by various analysts, both political and military, in the initial phase of the

conflict, did not take into account the lessons learned by Ukraine in 2014. They considered that the Russian Federation would emerge victorious, due to its size. The army of the Russian Federation, numerically, is considerably larger, as is the technical endowment. The element of surprise was the human factor, the determination, and the determination of Ukrainians to defend their country when their sovereignty and existence as a Ukrainian people were threatened. Not counted were the number of volunteers, women, and men, who joined the army supporting it in any way they could. Their determination (Bejan, 2023, 10'43"-11'52") to raise funds to buy military equipment, yes, from private funds, in addition to those received from the West. How they survived this time of war, some of them reopened their small businesses and adapted to the existing conditions. The change of the political class also contributed to this resistance, as corrupt leaders were eliminated.

To deceive us as little as possible, instead, it is mandatory to understand the enemy's strategy (Understand the Strategy). Experts believe that Putin (Earth, 2023) thought he would have a quick victory, remove the current Government from power and replace it with a pro-Russian one. When it was obvious that the element of surprise had been missed, the Kremlin used the strategy of exhaustion, which could lead Ukraine and its supporters to seek ways to end the war by accepting Russia's terms. He thus used the threat of nuclear weapons, attacks on civilians, and propaganda. Through this strategy, Russia has ensured that this conflict will not end soon or easily, while the cost will be ever higher. As part of the strategy, Russia wants to make Ukraine think that it is paying too high a price for the recovery of the territories. The lesson of Crimea 2014 should be clear: freezing a conflict with Russia that remains with the gains intact does not resolve the issues that led to Russia's aggression in 2022, and there will be no resolution in 2023 either. Russia's long-term strategy appears to be to win now as much as he can, the regrouping, and when he has a favorable situation, they will try again to change the regime in Kyiv.

Regarding the effectiveness of the sanctions imposed on Russia, they do not have such a quick and strong effect (We Don't Have Sanctions Right). We have even noted the existing difference between European leaders regarding their application. Europe's dependence on Russian energy has led to a delay in their application, we have also found that the application of these economic measures does not change behaviors.

Given the success of relative independence from Russian energy, perhaps it would be opportune to rethink them to strengthen their effectiveness.

The lessons learned from the perspective of political, strategic, or international organizations are particularly important and, without unnecessary arrogance, it is necessary to be not only learned but also studied by the younger generation, to have an overview of the world and its characteristics. These lessons will appear periodically until they are learned. From a humanitarian perspective, the lessons are catastrophic and seemingly hopeless. A regime of a country that claimed to be modern uses war tactics that we considered to be long outdated. We found that no lessons were learned from the war in the former Yugoslavia. The same old and yet so effective tactic of terrorizing civilians and forced migration. This tactic of Putin's to evict the civilian population from the areas he controls to be replaced by ethnic Russians, and then use the rhetoric of their defense, is not new. 40% of Ukraine's population has migrated (Brookings, 2023). A significant part, abroad, and another part inside the country where there is no fighting. With rhetoric to justify the "special military operation" that led to the de-Nazification of Ukraine, the so-called "filtration camps" were discovered in the cities occupied by the Russian forces, in fact, a place of mass incarceration. The illegal deportation of children, either orphaned or separated from their families, should also be mentioned here.

All these tactics of reprisals against civil society, which contravene all international humanitarian laws regarding the protection of civilians in conflict zones, have been used by the Kremlin (Brookings, 2023) regime, including in Syria, alongside the Assad regime, as a means of pressure on international opponents.

However, one aspect not taken into account is the resistance and determination of Ukrainians to defend their country. This bravery and heroism of the Ukrainian people, contrary to Putin's expectations, caused a movement to support them, both from civil society and Western states, and not only. Ukrainians do not need any additional motivation to join the fight against those who kill and terrorize their children, women, and the elderly, who attack civilians and destroy civilian buildings, hospitals, kindergartens, and schools. Putin and the Russians motivate them enough (Sommerville, 2023, 9'58").

It is important to understand how this resilience was built, and what was their moment of awakening. This was after the failure of 2014 (Hubali, 2022) when the annexation of Crimea was

made possible with the complicity of some Ukrainian army generals who colluded with the Russian special forces to be appointed to leadership positions. Then, 75% of the Ukrainian Black Sea Naval Forces defected to the Russian Black Sea Forces.

As I said before, after this humiliation, there followed a process of internal cleaning and strengthening of the army. Kyiv (Hedenskog, 2023) has reformed its armed forces, uniting them under a single command, and improving its logistics and communications, under the control of mid-level commanders, and cyber defense. It was supported by the West to implement these modernizations, using their practices as a model.

In this modernization process, the Ukrainian military has demonstrated a great capacity to absorb new and complex knowledge and technology. Another success was the creation of a complex network of reservists and the involvement of civil society in a unique movement of volunteer forces, which sometimes acted in place of the state. The policies adopted after 2014 increased trust in regional leaders, giving them financial advantages, which were used to increase the quality of life in the region. Russia could no longer recruit important political leaders in the occupied zones, having to recruit obscure pro-Russian individuals with little influence to appoint them to key positions. Ukraine also invested in the modernization of the army, adopted in 2021, a military and security strategy that replaced the one of 2015, developed during the 2014 conflict with Russia.

Resilience has been the red thread in cooperation with NATO, even adopting a National Resilience System in line with NATO's requirements for resilience. Compared to the areas identified by NATO as important for a resilient society, Ukraine has identified two more areas that it has included in this System (informational influence/manipulation and the financial and economic area). Ukraine (Rybachok, 2023) has already implemented over 300 NATO standards, more than some NATO member states.

Another change was to decentralize the decision-making process by creating middle leaders in the officer corps who were encouraged to develop initiative and responsibility. Ultimately, this was the weak link in Crimea when the troops waited for direct orders from the highest level. This was one of the characteristics that made the difference between the Ukraine of 2014 and that of 2022, but also from Russia, which remained strongly centralized.

In addition, a big difference between Ukraine and Russia is the morale and motivation of both

soldiers and citizens. Some are motivated to defend their country and others were incorporated against their will, expecting to be welcomed as liberators, instead, they found themselves in a hostile environment, often without understanding the reason. Volunteers have played and still play a very important role in Ukraine's resistance, from large-scale fundraising to individual initiatives, purchasing weapons, equipment, food, and uniforms, all to support those on the front lines.

Resistance also meant people's attempt to continue their daily lives, to go to work, to school, even in conditions where alarms are heard at night, or everything around is barricaded with sandbags, under the threat of rockets falling on civilian buildings, hospitals, schools, kindergartens, apartment blocks, commercial complexes. What in peacetime is normality, these days in Kyiv (Bejan, 2023) means heroism. Civil society mobilized and they adapted, fended for themselves, did not freeze this winter, and stayed, more willing to fight for their country. Heroism in seemingly small deeds, from rebuilding a bombed mall last year to adapting to keep small businesses alive. A cafe, and a stand-up comedy club, seem banal and there seems to be no absolute need for them, but in the dynamics of mental health, they have their purpose (We Ukrainians, all together, went through this period - Anastasia, manager of the cafe). Slava Romania! voiced by a Ukrainian had a special resonance for me (Bejan, 2023, 12'36"). Performing for free to send money to the military, here's another heroic deed. Another very important role (Information Defense Hub, 2023) of civil society, in addition to providing humanitarian aid to war-affected civilians and organizing fundraising, is to document war crimes (Ukraine's Data Battalion, 2023). All silent, empathetic, and patient testimonies will be useful in judging the perpetrators because the atrocities committed by them must not be forgotten (Bejan, 2023, 16'44"-22'30"). We must not forget or forgive the war waged on women's bodies. The most silent battle, which must be carefully and gently documented and punished (Bejan, 2023, 20'31"-23'59").

It is important to mention the exceptional cooperation between IT companies for military purposes. Volunteers created a simple app that allowed civilians to report the approach of Russian drones and missiles, increasing the possibility of destroying them before impact (Hedenskog, 2023).

Another lesson learned by Ukraine is the importance of cyber defense. Thus, as on the battlefield, a country exposed to large-scale cyber-attacks by a larger and more resourceful adversary

needs help from the outside world. In addition to the support received from friendly states, Ukrainian companies in the field of IT and cyber security, with headquarters abroad, began to cooperate with national authorities. But perhaps the most important lesson Ukraine has learned in the field of cyber defense is that no matter how strong the cyber defense is, at some point, there is a possibility that it will be penetrated. Since the start of the war, 550 repulsed attacks have been reported. Investing in cyber security is a vital action for the future, given the fact that cyber-attacks will continue long after the ceasefire.

Nevertheless, the main lesson learned by Ukraine about resilience, even before investments in defense capabilities or cyber security, is the strengthening of national identity in the country. Based on the known pro-Russian preference for eastern and southern Ukraine, in 2014 Russian television was banned, social media pages were blocked, and the use of the Russian language in the media was banned. All these changes were made in parallel with the banning of communist and even Nazi symbols and doctrine, the demolition of communist monuments and statues, and the removal of all such symbols from public institutions.

The early investment in a robust civil society is not just an optional "extra" but is fundamental to a society's ability to deter, resist, and repel the destructive intent of an external aggressor in peacetime and wartime (Custer, 2023).

The total invasion of 2022 was a turning point in which Ukrainian identity was strengthened, leading to the elimination of the Russian language from everyday communication. The number of the population using only Russian, or almost only Russian, decreased to a single digit only in 2022, even in the eastern or southern areas. Practically, there was no longer any identity difference in Ukraine, the only difference being the regions under the influence of Kyiv and those under Russian occupation.

We can say that Ukraine's resilience is due to political pluralism, decentralization of decision-making, encouragement of individual initiative, an active civil society, strong national unity, and a sense of purpose to fight for. On the other hand, the Russian problem is caused by a dictatorial political system and a repressive society, a lack of a free press, growing corruption, and a permanent state of terror.

Another area from which we have lessons was the migration movement of civilians in Ukraine. As we already know, the declaration of a state of emergency in Ukraine activated the ban on men

aged 18-60 leaving the country. Women, children, and men over 60 are the ones who were able to leave the country. More than 70% of those who left the country at the beginning of the war are women, who take care of minors and/or elderly people.

In the first phase, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, in cooperation with international organizations (Globsec, 2023), provided aid to migrants. Municipalities, along with Ukrainian-led organizations, have been involved in humanitarian support for them. In all this endeavor (Globsec, 2023), challenges were found both from a legislative perspective and from the perspective of the needs and vulnerabilities faced by this type of migrants, among which we mention: the issue of the language barrier, and day-to-day integration, care services for minor children, obtaining positions with flexible programs and according to their training, obtaining housing, first of all, safe but also at affordable prices, preventing gender violence, the possibility of easily finding psychological support and combating labor exploitation and human trafficking. The last year is a source of learning for the actors involved. Thus, the European Union (Globsec, 2023) should consider strengthening the Directive on the temporary protection of Persons (TPD), to ensure fair guarantees to all member states. Also, coordinate a monitoring system focused on achieving the objectives of the Directive and collect detailed data for this purpose. These will be necessary for the creation of data-based policies. The European Union (Globsec, 2023) must ensure better coordination, cooperation, and exchange of information between member states regarding the challenges and good practices identified throughout this period. To support Ukrainian displaced persons, from a gender perspective, it is necessary to identify strategic communication.

The lessons learned at the government (Globsec, 2023) level are focused on facilitating access to labor markets but also on the implementation of affirmative policies to encourage the employment of displaced persons. At the same time, given the breakdown of families and the majority existence of only one parent, a better childcare service system is needed, as well as ensuring full access to the state health system for all categories of displaced persons from Ukraine. Given the fact that the majority of migrants are women, it is necessary to apply mechanisms to prevent sexual and labor exploitation.

The lessons identified for state and non-state actors (Globsec, 2023) are to employ as many Ukrainian speakers as possible for helplines and

train them to provide psychological support at least at the primary level. Also, all the people who provide help services should be trained including for services specific to war trauma. Sustained efforts are also needed for the social inclusion of Ukrainian children as well as systemic efforts for temporarily displaced persons. These actions can be supported by overcoming the language barrier, in both directions. To eliminate gender-based violence and human trafficking, concerted efforts of all actors involved (governments, international organizations, and specialized NGOs) are needed.

3. AN ANALYSIS FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

To resume what has been presented, I can say that lessons have been identified for all levels and in all phases; from the international level, at the state level, and the diplomatic, military, and civil level. We learned that what we cannot change, we must accept, and we cannot change geography. Neighbors, in these periods, are the same, and you have to know their strengths and weaknesses. We always prepare for the worst, even if it is peace.

Alliances are important, but also the existence of red, principled lines that we must not cross. This somehow goes against diplomacy. If we have learned that Putin is not trustworthy, what will the likely peace negotiations look like? Can we assume the isolation of Russia? Is this what we want? Or only Putin's. But how effective is it if his family and loved ones are free citizens to live anywhere in the world?

I learned that without leaders and managers who think about the people of the country, democracy, and freedom, we cannot have a healthy and resilient society. Corruption and centralization are factors of weakness. There are no areas that are more important and others less important. All are necessary for healthy systemic functioning. I learned that civilian training is important and you can do it with great effect in peacetime. For this, depending on gender and age, it is important to ask the right questions. Women and men are equally important, they should be treated seriously, but they have different needs. That is why we need to ask them to be properly prepared.

What Ukraine understood after 2014 was the willingness of women to participate in the struggle. Women have been accepted into the armed forces since 1993. During the invasion of Donbas in 2014, 257 women were decorated, nine of them posthumously (Security Women, 2023). Thus, all positions were opened for the participation of

women. After the total invasion of February 2022, there are 50,000 women in the Ukrainian army, of which 38,000 are in combat units, working as paramedics or snipers, and volunteers supporting behind the front, in logistics. Everyone helps as they can. Of these, 8,000 women are officers (Mathers, 2023). Also, a deputy minister in the Ministry of Defense is a woman.

The presence of women in the armed forces was not an action without controversy. Their presence together with men, in the front line, did not mean that they enjoyed the same rights as men. Female soldiers in Ukraine and beyond still have to overcome skepticism from commanders and fellow soldiers about their commitment and abilities, obstacles to promotion and career development, and difficulties related to practical - and vitally important - matters such as getting the right uniforms, body armor, and boots (Mathers, 2023). Military women from Ukraine paid the ultimate ransom, along with their colleagues, they were taken prisoner by the Russians, and they received specific treatments (Hinnant, 2023)

Even if Ukraine is a country with a strong patriarchal tradition, especially in the field of defense, since the beginning of this war, important steps have been taken to accept women in the armed forces, both at the societal level and at the level of political leaders.

To recognize the merits of women in the army, National Defenders Day was renamed Defenders and Defendresses of Ukraine Day (Office Holidays, 2023). Likewise, images of military personnel are constant presences on the website of the Ministry of Defense and on social media recounting their experiences. Another lesson that leaders from various fields should learn is to start programs to update legislation, implementing rules or any procedure, documented through studies. Thus, to draw attention to the condition of women in the Ukrainian army, they started a project called the Invisible Battalion (Mathers, 2023) through which legislative barriers were identified that prevented them from engaging in the fields of defense and security, accessing training courses training, impediments to being able to apply for specialized or leadership positions.

The positions of gender advisors, as well as auditors in military institutions, were established, which led to the removal of legislative barriers and improved social attitudes towards female soldiers. Thus, from 53%, in 2018, who agreed that women should be given equal opportunities in the military, to an increase of 80% in 2022 (Mathers, 2023). In families where both partners serve in the Armed

Forces, parental leave is granted to both mothers and fathers.

These are just a few examples of what Ukraine has done in the field of gender equality in the military. What the Invisible Battalion (Lischinska, 2017) study demonstrated is the fact that women veterans fought for the recognition of the veteran status both with the military and civilian authorities, a fact that made it difficult for them to access public services for veterans and the transition to civilian life (Mathers, 2023). It will be interesting to see how gender relations will evolve after the end of the war in Ukraine. Will women be recognized for their rights gained during this period of conflict? We must highlight that women have gained equal access rights in all fields during difficult times such as wars. Upon their completion, and the men returning home, the women were dismissed, including those from the army. In favor of this period, there are commitments assumed by Ukraine. In 2022, the national strategy regarding the equality of women and men was adopted, valid until 2030 (Ukrainian National Strategy, 2022) which gives a certain certainty regarding the preservation of the rights won, at least at the formal level. One must look at how these laws are enforced and what their effects are on women and men.

In 2020, the second National Action Plan for the implementation of the UN CRS was approved, valid until 2025, which included measures to improve the conditions of military women and ensure the necessary support for women veterans. Also included was the obligation to equip women who are part of the defense system, public order, and national security, with uniforms and protective equipment that take into account the conformation of women (Ukraine NAP 2, 2022), as well as providing veterans and their families with free legal advice. I believe that the awareness of women's different needs in terms of equipment and its inclusion in the NAP is a big step forward and is lacking all over the world. For example, Romania has, since 2017, a ballistic vest prototype for women, which has not yet been approved due to a very complicated procedure with diverging interests.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, gender roles are constantly changing. As a rule, this does not happen in peace. In the absence of men, women, as always, ensure the functioning of vital services. Here is a reason to have a unified education for girls and boys, starting from the family. We have the opportunity to grow a

resilient society by providing them with knowledge from all fields. Also, ensuring diverse participation, at all levels, so that in times of need, the provision of vital services would continue to be problematic. Here is one of the parameters of resilience.

I would emphasize the importance of focusing attention and formulating a peace negotiation plan. Given the fact that now the hot topic is Ukraine's counteroffensive, it is too early to consider the timing of peace negotiations. And yet... Lessons learned from the conflict in the Balkans have shown us that healing is hard, lasting, and honest. As in the conflict in Ukraine, rape was used as a tactic of ethnic cleansing. The women hardly spoke, and the healing process hardly began (Baftiu, 2022). The perpetrators were not punished. As we can see from the recent movements in Kosovo, the Western Balkans is still a region where peace has not settled, and the atmosphere is very tense where the leaders of the two belligerents accuse each other. More than 30 years have passed and no notable developments are recorded. But we must learn to observe those around us, understand their needs, and include them in society, and these are invisible children resulting from war rapes (Haxhijaj, 2020).

What did I learn after writing this material?

- Leaders matter! This means that we must invest in the education of the younger generation to prepare them for voting.

- Experts can be wrong too. That is why it is important to develop critical thinking. Let's learn to look around us and ask ourselves questions, to verify from several sources what we hear.

- Within the armed forces, let's develop diversity and flexibility. Let's prepare including role exchanges.

- To invest in people's training. No crisis is like another, and in this era, gender roles have changed. It is important to understand the needs of women to actively participate in the defense of the homeland, the values they believe in, and freedom. It is important to take into account their specific needs.

- No matter how modern we consider ourselves, in war situations, civilians are ALWAYS victims, but not only collateral. No matter how many international conventions exist, their observance is not a certain fact. That is why the preparation of the armed forces for missions that are not specific to it, such as assisting migrants, detaining and processing, at least for certain periods, prisoners of war, ensuring the administrative management of an area where local authorities can no longer debt, is worthy of consideration.

- Safeguarding a peace plan. How will this be achieved? What is the best plan? It is important to learn from the lessons of other conflicts in the region. Women matter, abusers must be punished. We cannot change geography. The neighbors are the same and the so-called frozen conflicts are latent and will erupt at some point.

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UNVEILING DAESH'S RESURGENCE IN AFRICA AND THE MENA REGION THROUGH THE THREADS OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

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Abstract: *This study utilizes OSINT and document analysis as qualitative research methods to examine the impact of local terrorist leaders on the resurgence of Daesh in the African continent in 2022. After a period of decline, Daesh reemerged prominently in countries like Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, expanding its operations beyond its traditional strongholds in Syria and Iraq. The coordinated timing and increased attacks in Africa raise important questions about the organization's intentions. The objective of this research is to provide insights into Daesh's resurgence in Africa and the MENA region through the threads of local leadership. Daesh has the potential to disrupt regional and international stability, particularly in the MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) region, leading to irreparable chaos. This study aims to uncover Daesh's aspirations to regain influence and regional power, echoing its past territorial control in 2014. Additionally, this research explores the symbolic significance of local leaders in the jihadist narrative, where they become icons with enigmatic meanings in the holy war. The analysis includes an examination of the nicknames chosen by these leaders, which carry considerable weight for the terrorists or "freedom fighters". Understanding the role and influence of these local leaders provides valuable insights into the strategies and ideologies fueling Daesh's resurgence. By investigating these aspects, this study contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complex challenges posed by Daesh's resurgence in Africa and its potential implications for regional and global security.*

Keywords: *Daesh resurgence; local terrorist leaders; MENA region; jihadist narrative; global instability*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this paper we have addressed the terrorist issue in the MENA region, especially given the recent history of a major terrorist organization, Daesh, which shows clear intents of evolution as a form of rebirth and reinforcing of the Sharia Law and a rebranding of the "New Califate" in the African continent. In achieving this, they have employed new leader figures, which have demonstrated a different approach toward the evolution and ultimately survival of the Daesh organization. The objective of this research is to provide insights into Daesh's resurgence in Africa and the MENA region through the threads of local leadership.

By identifying the trends put in effect by the entity in question, we can achieve the objective of the current qualitative research, based on OSINT analysis and document analysis, which is establishing a pattern of evolution for the non-statal organization. The research is based on a research hypothesis, which states that Daesh is now being formed around local leaders who make use of a new approach to successfully reproducing jihadist

ideology in the MENA region. A limit of the study is the low quantity of reliable sources regarding the current Daesh leadership shift and reconfiguration in Northern Africa, therefore many sources were cited from local Arabic articles, which have a high degree of reliability based on their neutral approach to the Arab world and their consistency.

2. DAESH EVOLUTION AND RECONFIGURATION

2.1 Deciphering Daesh's nickname symbology. Studying the nicknames adopted by Daesh leaders provides valuable insights into their identities and roles within the organization. It is noteworthy that Daesh leaders often operate under multiple aliases, which adds complexity to understanding their true identities and activities. For instance, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the former leader of Daesh, was known by various names, including Ibrahim Awad al-Badri¹ and Abu Duaa

¹ Ibrahim is a common Arabic name derived from the biblical figure Abraham, meaning "father of many"; Awad is an Arabic name that signifies "reward".

al-Samarrai². Similarly, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, a former leader, is also referred to as Hajji Abdullah Qardash³ and Abu Omar Qardash⁴. These multiple identities reflect the fluid nature of their leadership positions and the clandestine nature of their operations.

Among the surviving first-class leaders, Zaid al-Iraqi stands out as a prominent figure within Daesh. Known as one of the “Iraqi princes” he hails from Iraq and holds significant influence within the organization. These Iraqi leaders, often referred to as the “princes” exercise substantial control over internal affairs and oversee field operations. Zaid al-Iraqi has held various positions within Daesh, including the Emir of the Court of Justice and Grievances, the responsible figure for the Emirate of the Central Office for the Follow-up of Legal Diwans, and the Emir of the Diwan of Education (Ain News Agency, 2022). From an ideological and religious perspective, he is considered a key local leader within the organization.

By studying these nicknames and understanding the roles of local leaders like Zaid al-Iraqi, researchers gain deeper insights into the intricate dynamics and structures within Daesh. Analyzing their multiple identities and positions sheds light on the ideological and religious foundations that underpin their leadership roles within the organization.

2.2 Daesh leadership shifts. The latest Daesh leader, Abu al-Qurashi, was an Iraqi of Quraish descent (Ain News Agency, 2022). One of his nicknames was “the ISIS professor” (Najat, 2022), as he oversaw the Emirate of the Diwan of Education in Daesh when the terrorist organization controlled large areas of Syria and Iraq. After the United States of America announced the death of Abu Ibrahim al-Qurashi in February 2022⁵, as a result of a security operation in Northwest Syria, Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi took his place.

Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi is the third official leader of the terrorist organization. His inauguration took place forty-two days after Abu Ibrahim’s death, indicating the possibility of

evolving weaknesses in Daesh command and operations headquarters in Iraq and Syria, which is currently isolated from Daesh global/main command.

Under the leadership of the “new caliph,” there are two high-level committees: the five-member Shura Council, headed by Hajj Juma’a Awad al-Badri, al-Baghdadi’s brother, and a five-member executive body, led by Sami Jassim al-Jubouri (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2022). The latter is responsible for the administrative sectors, such as religious affairs, mass media, and finance, while the first decides the modus operandi of their field activity, closed-door discussion forums. The most important observable change from the former leadership structure is the decentralization of various groups and branches at a local level, which operate semi-autonomously and are financially self-sufficient, such as the African branches.

2.3 The reconfiguration of Daesh from Syria and Iraq to the Northern Africa region. After the Turkish military operations “Euphrates Shield” in 2016 and “Peace Spring” in 2019, Syria was not a viable region for the terrorist organization to expand anymore, as they faced the threat of extinction. However, their pursuit of reclaiming lost territory persisted. According to Iraqi sources (Ain News Agency, 2022), the late 2022’s announced a surge in Daesh attacks in countries like Iraq and Syria. The OSINT analysis employed revealed a significant increase in Daesh financing in the last year, resulting in the reorganization of their ranks, particularly in Iraq.

Following the collapse of the caliphate system in 2019, Daesh gradually rebuilt itself in Iraq and Syria. On the Syrian-Iraqi border, Daesh capitalized on ethnic and sectarian tensions and the deteriorating economic situation. The competition between the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish autonomous region in the North had also created opportunities for the infiltration of the terrorist organization. Based on this safety net, the same year Daesh launched an attack on a prison in Al-Hasakah, Syria, freeing the detainees and increasing their ranks to around ten thousand fighters (Fayed, 2021). In response to this, local security forces only limited the terrorist organizations’ activities, making arrests among the organization’s leadership at the beginning of 2021. As expected, these kickbacks did not startle Daesh. A report by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (2022) highlighted that in 2021 alone, Daesh conducted approximately 342 operations in Syria, with many targeting the Kurdish-led forces. The

² Abu Duaa translates to “father of prayer”.

³ Hajji is a title bestowed upon someone who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

⁴ Omar is an Arabic name derived from the Islamic caliph Umar, meaning “flourishing” or “long-lived”.

⁵ The former leader blew himself up using an explosive belt as the US special forces surrounded his hideout.

killing of Abu Hamza and Abu Ibrahim in February 2022 further compounded the challenges

faced by the organization, which had already gained international attention once again.



Fig 1. Current official Daesh leadership (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2022)

Daesh alarming resurgence could be pinpointed on January 20, 2022, when members of the organization launched an attack on Sina'a prison in Al-Hasakah Governorate, Northeastern Syria. They utilized a car bomb to breach the prison, resulting in the escape of numerous terrorist-affiliated detainees. Researchers suggest complicity by the SDF forces in the escape of Daesh elements from the prison (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2022), with Iraq being the entity most impacted by the fleeing terrorists.

Following the operation, Daesh members proceeded to carry out a terrorist attack on the headquarters of the Iraqi army in Diyala. This attack claimed the life of an army lieutenant and ten soldiers. In response, Iraq tightened its control over its borders with Syria and intensified its operations, aiming to combat the remnants of Daesh. During the same period, Daesh initiated similar attacks in several Maghreb countries, particularly Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria. In Libya, on January 26, Daesh “liberty fighters” targeted a security patrol near Jabal Asida, west of the town of Qatroun, resulting in the killing of three patrol members (Ain News Agency, 2022).

Despite the terrorist organizations’ decline in Syria and Iraq, its branches have remained resilient.

The West Africa Province (ISWAP), the largest Daesh branch in Africa, emerged victorious over its rivals in 2021 and gained control over significant areas in Northeastern Nigeria (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2022). In the Sahel region, Daesh became involved in extensive smuggling networks that stretched from the Gulf of Guinea to the Mediterranean Sea. In East Africa, the organization had disguised itself as rebel groups in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in an escalation of bombings in the capital of Uganda. The closely knitted network in South Africa facilitated the growth of Daesh, while the Khorasan Province in Afghanistan has posed a challenge to the Taliban regime and is likely to maintain a haven even if the Taliban attempts to suppress the organization.

These developments indicate that Daesh still maintains global strength, although its influence has been curtailed by the pressures faced in Iraq and Syria. Even though the US-led military operations had a limited effect on Daesh’s ability to exercise centralized leadership and control over the global network, its branches continued to carry out terrorist attacks. To summarize, counter-terrorism operations in Iraq and Syria in the last decade have faced significant challenges and

setbacks (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. VII-23). Currently, the real threat Daesh poses lies in Africa, Afghanistan, and other countries from the MENA region, where Daesh branches are experiencing a degree of prosperity and reduced pressure from the fight against terrorism.

2.4 The current adapted approach towards a “New Caliphate”. Specialists and researchers ruled out the return to power of the terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria (Abu Rumman, 2021: 83-91), but according to the OSINT analysis conducted in the current research, a trend to attack on multiple fronts has been observed in the 2020-2022 period. Currently, the terrorist organization lost its strength and reformed into small groups with local leaders, which in turn, provided a dangerous autonomy. The recent security breaches in Iraq, the escape of prisoners in Syria, and the emergence of new “liberation” organizations in Libya suggest the possibility of a new Daesh scenario emerging in the Mena Region.

As a *modus operandi*, those behind the organization's recent movements in several countries are local leaders who are trying to resurrect Daesh on a different radical ideological basis. This conclusion was reached as after the Iraq and Syria downfall, there had been leaders who planned attacks within several specific countries, aspect which was against the organizations' ideology at the time⁶ (Ain News Agency, 2022).

Libyan military and strategic expert, Adel Abdel Kafi (2022) attributed the Daesh attacks in the 2020-2022 period to the emergence of democracy in the MENA region, their aim being to prevent the proliferation of such ideologies (Youssef, 2022). This synchronization of Daesh terrorist attacks in Syria, Iraq and Libya aims to prove its presence and capability to carry out operations, even when facing challenges on other fronts. Another possible explanation lies in their efforts to impose an expansive strategy in the form of “divide and conquer”.

The actions and statements of Daesh regarding the appointment of a “new caliph”, specifically Abu Hassan, reveal ongoing concerns about the organization's operational security (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies, 2022). It is anticipated that the leaders of various Daesh branches will recognize Abu Hassan as their successor, as they all pledged allegiance to Abu Ibrahim after the death of al-Baghdadi, rejecting

the idea of secession due to their commitment being rooted in ideological principles rather than material gain or status. The absence of a physical caliphate and financial constraints following al-Baghdadi's death diminished the prospect of the group pursuing glory or wealth to distribute among its ranks. The swift adherence of the African branches highlights the idea that their strength and sense of security are now decentralized and can act autonomously, while still pledging their loyalty to Daesh.

The development of Daesh African regional hubs also had a series of challenges for the organization, impeding direct communication with the main HQ. This challenge has led to a spontaneous solution: decentralized leadership. For instance, the local Somalia hub serves as a link with the Daesh leadership and coordinates activities in East and Central Africa (Security Council Report, 2022). Similarly, the “Al-Furqan” Daesh hub facilitates coordination between the West African Province and the High Command (Security Council Report, 2022). The existence of seemingly independent African branches within Daesh is accompanied by significant support, training, and guidance from local leadership. This approach, similar to the one observed in Afghanistan, aims to reduce dependence on the central command. However, while this strategy may limit the organization's potential for growth and international recognition, it serves as a means to navigate the circumstances that led to its downfall within the global network.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The objective of the current qualitative research has been achieved, having established a pattern of evolution for Daesh and confirming, the research hypothesis which states that Daesh is now being formed around local leaders who make use of a new approach in successfully reproducing jihadist ideology in the MENA region.

To summarize, the organization is now being formed around local leaders who reproduce jihadist ideology at local levels, in certain African countries in the MENA region, providing a paradigm shift which, until 2022, was against the known terrorist ideology.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, one of the most feared terrorist organizations worldwide, Daesh, now faces a challenging situation in which they have to adapt

⁶ the Daesh ideology is based on not limiting jihad to a specific border area.

and change their radicalistic ideology and strategies in the new MENA regional security paradigm. The leadership restructuring also shows that the former Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant behave in a dangerous way towards achieving their desired Caliphate, adapting to all changes. The unusual element which raises concerns for regional and international security is represented by the readiness that the terrorist organization can make use of in times of crisis, thriving even when they have a difficulty surviving.

In light of the present research, the objective of the paper was achieved. It is confirmed that Daesh uses a new approach towards restoring the Caliphate in the MENA region, through local leaders that reproduce the evolving jihadist ideology. The present research serves as a preliminary step towards fostering a greater number of scientific papers focused on in-depth exploratory approaches, aiming to enhance comprehension and combat the vulnerabilities that Daesh is currently exploiting at a regional level.

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Hybrid warfare
Cognitive warfare

A RANDOMIZED STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF GENDER ANALYSIS FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DURING CRISES

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Abstract: Crises represent a common denominator nowadays. Defined as critical moments in the lives of people and institutions that raise threats to regular ways of living and conducting activities, generate a high sense of urgency to act and open a plethora of unknown consequences, crises represent a major stumbling block for strategic leadership. Sensing what happens while events unfold, shaping a coherent response and framing the courses of action into an effective communication strategy during the crisis, managing accountability as a means to end crises, and also demonstrating commitment to learning and reforming in order to be better prepared for future crises are some of the tasks of strategic leadership. All of the above considered, the current study proposes enriching and consolidating the implementation of those tasks by identifying the challenges and opportunities of conducting a gender based analysis all throughout the life cycle of crises management based on NATO's Gender Analysis Guide. Its aim is to identify and discuss the challenges and opportunities of employing such an analytical tool for better management of crises by strategic leaders. This qualitative study is based on conventional content analysis of secondary data and identifies the short-term and long-term consequences of Romania's overarching strategy implemented during the Covid 19 pandemic-19 pandemic on individual groups and society in general.

Keywords: gender analysis, strategic leadership, crisis management, threat, risk, vulnerability, uncertainty

1. INTRODUCTION

The main concepts employed by the current study are "gender analysis", "crisis management" and "strategic leadership". According to the NATO Gender Analysis Guide, gender analysis focuses on collecting information on gender differences (gender-based analysis). The goal of employing this tool is to assess the extent to which Romania's overall strategic approach to the Covid 19 pandemic proved successful and thus inform future approaches of strategic leaders to crisis management. From this perspective, the study can be considered the stepping stone for future endeavors in the gender-sensitive analyses required for making gender differences visible and actionable for policy makers in the aftermath of crises.

For the operational definition of crisis management the book titled *The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership Under Pressure* by Boin, A., 't Hart, P., Stern, E., & Sundelius, B. (2005) is extensively employed. Thus, the main variables contributing to classifying an event as a crisis are: the threat it poses to life-sustaining systems securing the regular functioning of individual, communities or society in general; the

urgency of action it requires on behalf of social systems whose fundamental values (e.g. personal security, physical security, health and safety, etc.) are at risk, as well as the number of "unknowns" raised by the nature and consequences of the threat. Furthermore, the same book provides a clear decision-making framework for strategic leaders that covers the cycle of a crisis management, namely: *sense-making* – understanding who is affected by the crisis and in what way, the perceptions of various social systems of the unfolding crisis, the information available and needed, the core values at stake, the interests and priorities in the context of the crisis; *decision-making* – deciding who has responsibility, mandate and public trust to make decisions, making decisions with a view to weighing possible short, medium and long term consequences of various alternatives, maintaining public trust, legitimacy and credibility among social systems' representatives, and implementing and coordinating decisions; *meaning-making* – communicating the actions and decisions in order to sustain trust, legitimacy and credibility by the right actors and making efforts to combat misinformation; *terminating* – deciding when and

how normal life can resume and the crisis is over; *learning and reforming* – conducting an impartial and inclusive evaluation process aimed at identifying the good practices and translating them into best practices or, as case may be, reforming/transforming organizations, systems, structures and holding people or organizations accountable; *preparing*- issuing strategies, policies, legislation, measures aimed at strengthening resilience for deterring/mitigating or managing future crises. All of the above considered, the study focuses the core of its gender analysis on the sense-making and decision-making dimensions of the Covid 19 pandemic management as a crisis by the Romanian authorities, while highlighting in its conclusions the learning, reforming and preparing dimensions. What this study does not cover is the meaning making, namely the way the decisions were communicated to the social actors since it entails a study on its own that would require a different set of data and other methods of investigation, and the terminating part of crisis management.

The Cynefin framework is also used in this study in order to analyze the Romanian strategic approach to the threats, risks and vulnerabilities that could underlie crises and discuss the strategic approach of the authorities towards Covid 19 pandemic before it was acknowledged as such and also while managing it.

Last but not the least, when referring to strategic leadership, this study employs the OECD approach to scoping public leadership main concerns, namely public sector values and personal values that are challenged more often than not by tough issues like the ones presented by crisis. Furthermore, according to the same organization, the measures of success for public leadership are: depth of understanding of people and the latter's reaction to stress, clear sense of priorities when tackling problematic situations and capacity to assess how many problems can be dealt with at the same time, and last but not the least, the capacity to create an environment of security and confidence that allows or enables people to tackle problems rather than avoid them or become overwhelmed. All those are used by this study in assessing how the gender-based analysis can inform future action in terms of taking a gender-sensitive approach in future crisis management situations.

The study also relies on content analysis as the method of choice for collecting sex disaggregated secondary data (men and boys, women and girls categories), as well as data disaggregated based on the following identity factors: age groups or

cohorts, socio-economic groups, ethnicity, various disabilities and accessibility needs. The majority of data required by the gender analysis goals and correlated with the decision-making, coordinating and meaning making of the public officials concerns the official start of the Covid 19 pandemic in Romania as declared by public officials (16 March 2020). However, for building the context based on which to identify the challenges and opportunities for Romanian strategic leadership in relation with managing Covid 19 pandemic as a pandemic and as a health crisis, the study also takes into account the period before the official acknowledgment of the pandemic as a crisis to manage in terms of the strategic outlook of Romanian public officials on threats, risks and vulnerabilities as discussed in Romania's National Defense Strategy 2020-2024. Furthermore, when specific sex-disaggregated data for the categories of interest for the analysis in relation with Covid 19 pandemic could not be found, the author accessed sources providing the data in order to make educated guesses about the short and long-term consequences of the pandemic at individual, community and society level.

2. ROMANIA'S OVERALL STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THREATS, RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Several important questions arise from focusing on the Covid 19 pandemic and its relevance as a crisis in terms of strategic approach and management for Romania. First, what was the country-wise analysis of threats, risks and vulnerabilities in general before the Covid 19 pandemic was declared a health crisis officially? Second, what were the specific threats, risks and vulnerabilities identified in relation with this specific pandemic and what was the approach to Covid 19 pandemic strategically speaking? Last but not the least, how did the overall strategic analysis inform the specific strategies employed by the Romanian authorities to tackle the health crisis?

The document that best answers all of the above and frames the scope of the current study is Romania's National Defense Strategy 2020-2024. Before answering the questions above, the terminology employed by the document is worth delineating for framing purposes. The term vulnerability is defined as *weakness or deficiency in the structures, systems, and functions associated with Romania's main security domains that can be exploited or contributes to the emergence of*

threats and risks. Threats are viewed as *actions, situations, capacity, strategies, plans, intentions that can impact Romania's security domains/areas*, whereas risks represent *any situation, event, condition likely to become manifest/emerge and that impacts national security domains.*

According to those operational definitions, Romania's main security domains/areas approached from the vulnerability, threats and risks perspective are: national values, interests and objectives embodied by concepts like sovereignty, independence, territorial unity and integrity; the organization and functioning of communities; citizens' lives and physical integrity; state institutions and their capacity to provide services under normal conditions. All of those will represent reference points in the discussion of the Covid 19 pandemic impact on various gender categories and how that can inform future decision-making in terms of consolidating further state resilience.

In relation with the Covid 19 pandemic, the same document highlights a number of important issues. The pandemic is referenced as a challenge for several domains, such as: medical system, educational system, public order, assuring public services, and economic resilience. From this perspective, the economic crisis is labeled as a threat, whereas the reduced resilience of the medical system is perceived as a vulnerability in relation with the pandemic. The other domains, even though mentioned by the document as affected by the pandemic, are not directly referred as possible threats, risks or vulnerabilities. Therefore, while perusing the chapter dedicated precisely to the threats, risks and vulnerabilities against Romania's national security, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The vulnerabilities mentioned in the document are: the decision-making process –flaws; the legal framework related to the field of national security – gaps; public budget expenditure - efficiency and effectiveness; public authorities' capacity to manage and communicate during crises or emergencies; quality of educational system (low level); infrastructure projects on modernization and digitalization of socio-economic services – coordination and coherence; cyber security –low level in the communications and IT infrastructure.

All of the above, retrospectively speaking, were proven to become sources of risks in their own right for the national security domains of Romania under the pressure of the pandemic. The flaws in the decision-making process at government level and inherently the public

authorities' capacity to communicate, coordinate horizontally and manage efficiently in times of crisis could have become a risk in terms of reduced capacity of governmental authorities, as well as of public officials to act in a timely and effective manner in times of crisis. That has overlapped with the risk of an increase in the number of people requiring hospitalization within a narrow timeframe and hence the threat posed for the same authorities to solve competing priorities at strategic level under budgetary constraints. Fortunately, no other major crises emerged at the same time with the pandemic, or at least, if there were any local crises, such as the flu epidemic that was already present in some geographic areas of Romania, they did not necessarily require resources of a different nature than those necessary for managing the pandemic itself (e.g. legal provisions concerning people's health and security, access to budgetary reserve in order to buy vaccines, masks and disinfectants which were deemed as some of the priority resources to be procured). That has proven however a real risk in terms of gaining and maintaining people's trust in the authorities' capacity to manage the pandemic in an effective manner and also has fueled the anti-vaccine and conspiracy theories voices to become more powerful in the middle of the noise created by sometimes seemingly conflicting or delayed decisions that characterized the authorities' initial response to the crisis.

3. ROMANIA'S OVERARCHING STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Using the Cynefin framework to assess the overarching strategy of Romania in relation with Covid 19 pandemic, I could define it as a three-pronged type of approach based on the chronology of the main governmental decisions: a best practices approach (characterized by rigid constraints) before Covid 19 pandemic was declared a pandemic by WHO in March 2020, transitioning into a good practices approach (boundaries are defined and hence governing constraints are identified) after, the latter being complemented by an emerging practices approach.

The best practices approach, which is characteristic of simple and obvious environments and which fits the sense-making part of a strategic leader toolbox, was manifest in Romania between 22nd January – 26th February. For example, between 22nd January - 26th February there was a number of preventive measures taken such as identifying the

hospitals where patients diagnosed for Covid 19 pandemic could be committed and treated, installing thermal scanning machines in airports, establishing a joint committee of specialists under the coordination of various ministers (health, external affairs, internal affairs and transportation, infrastructure and communications), supplementing the disinfectants stocks needed by medical personnel, acquiring rapid diagnosis kits and medical equipment, establishing an information campaign for Romanian people on the dangers and measures to be taken in relation with Covid 19 pandemic infection, placing people diagnosed with Covid 19 pandemic under quarantine in specialized institutions, to name just few. In my opinion, all of the above reflect a cause-effect logic characteristic of measures proven to work in traditional cases of disease outbreak.

The good practice approach, which is specific for complicated environments in terms of decision-making and coordinating, characterized Romanian authorities' strategic approach to managing the Covid 19 as a crisis from the moment WHO declared Covid 19 a pandemic in March 2020 and until May 2020. This strategy was informed by the input of healthcare specialists and not only (for example joint committee of specialists had already been established to advise), people from the military were appointed to be in charge of managing hospitals and cities where the toll of Covid 19 pandemic was extremely high (for example the city of Suceava), or to run the vaccine campaign. The strategy was applied in a centralized manner: central administration monitored the evolution of the pandemic, whereas the entities at local level were enabled to implement the measures. In this respect, I would say that good practices strategy was employed even after May 2020, when the implementation of Covid 19 pandemic related measures was transferred to local and county authorities. Thus, central authorities continued imposing governing constraints such as: the social distancing conditions for reopening indoor restaurants and cafés on September 1st 2020; the obligation to wear masks around schools, within a 100-metre radius (October 6, 2020) or on the street (November 9th 2020); cultural, artistic and entertainment activities may be organised and carried out in open spaces with a maximum of 1,000 people with a green certificate, provided that a minimum area of 2 sqm per person is guaranteed. Bars, clubs, discos and halls are reopened at 50% and 70% of capacity respectively, but only people vaccinated against COVID 19 PANDEMIC will have access with both doses. Restaurants and cafés

will also be open at 70% of capacity in places where the infection rate does not exceed 3 per thousand inhabitants (June 1st, 2021).

However, I would also add that complementary to the good practices strategy, there was also a *probe-sense-respond* type of strategy employed by politicians in relation with meaning making for the same type of period. For example, in the case of vulnerable groups such as elderly people there were changes in decisions concerning permission to leave house between specific time-frames. That, in my opinion, is an indicator of emerging practices characteristic of complicated environments where no linear causality can be necessarily identified.

The main measures taken by Romania as part of its overarching good practices strategy which represent the guidelines for analyzing the impact of this strategy from a gender-based perspective are: self-isolation measures in case of having made contact with a Covid 19 pandemic patient; forbidding the organization and conduct of public events; teleworking in all public and private institutions with the exception of those that are part of the public order, security and defense system; working in shifts where continuity of service was mandatory; closing schools (March 2020-June 2020) and the obligation to conduct full online education starting September 2020 and then only depending on the number of infections at local level in 2021; lockdown (March 15- May 2020).

4. CONSEQUENCES OF ROMANIA'S OVERARCHING STRATEGY FOR COVID 19 PANDEMIC AND HOW IT AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

The collection of secondary data was conducted based on a number of categories that take into account not only the main gender categories of men-women, girls-boys, but also different age groups, socio-economic groups, ethnic origin and people with various disabilities and accessibility needs and they are summarized in the table below. The categories are defined and refined based on the data available for Romania in terms of country specificities (e.g. a large population of Roma people, higher exposure of women to cardiovascular diseases and of men to lung cancer, to mention just few). Given the length constraints of this article, a randomized analysis and interpretation of data will be conducted on the following categories: low income, low to average education women; women under treatment of chronic diseases (cardiovascular), under recovery

or in need of diagnosis; educated men (college degree, master degree, doctoral degree); Roma girls; Girls and boys in the social protection system turning 18; boys in urban areas

4.1 Data analysis and interpretation (the WHY question). For women of low income, low to average education the Covid 19 pandemic played a major role in diminishing their prospects of finding other jobs to secure their livelihood. That made them even more prone to becoming dependent on other people from within their family, to possible abuses and also to loneliness. Inherently it became impossible for them to support their family needs and themselves. Worth noting as per data from 2018, there are differences in terms of family obligations of women compared to men. Thus, 33.9% of women have dependents, whereas the percentage of men with dependents is slightly lower: 30.9. The difference remains even when disaggregating the data for urban and rural areas: 31.7% men compared to 33.3% women. The lockdown decisions restricting freedom of movement, the decisions to shift to teleworking in some sectors, the decisions to switch to working in shifts or the decisions to transition to online education in the case of children did not necessarily ease the life of women with little to no income, or with low to average education for the following reasons:

- their freedom of movement was initially heavily restricted which reduced drastically their possibility to make a living. Most people with low income come from rural areas, live on the outskirts of towns/cities and they commute in most cases to urban areas to secure their day-to-day income. In their case, their welfare heavily depended on the freedom of movement and access to necessary travel facilities (e.g. shuttle, buses, trains) which were also severely influenced in terms of numbers, access, health and safety provisions by the Covid 19 restrictions;
- the labor market for women with low to average education is quite limited. Even if there are unqualified jobs in road and building construction, packaging, for example – those are mostly accessed by men. As statistics show, even if they are not sex-disaggregated, the highest unemployment rate for March 2022 in Romania was recorded for unqualified jobs. That only demonstrates that for women in unqualified jobs to stay employed and make a living becomes even more difficult in times of crisis;
- women's already low competences could not be enhanced in any way during the Covid period since the whole educational system

transitioned to online delivery, which raised difficulties not only in terms of mastery of/honing digital skills, but also in terms of accessing the necessary infrastructure for accessing the online courses (e.g. steady Internet access, laptop/computer, necessary software, access to electricity, etc.) due to income scarcity.

Concerning the women under treatment of chronic diseases (cardiovascular), under recovery or in need of diagnosis it is worth noting that according to Romanian statistics, cardiovascular condition ranks top among women, compared to men. The focus of the medical system on countering Covid 19 pandemic and its effects, has led to difficulties in maintaining the same standards of care and provision of necessary medical services in a timely manner to people suffering from various diseases. In this respect, even though the data is not sex-disaggregated, it shows that people under treatment did not fully, nor timely benefit from the necessary treatment. The assumption that I can make, based on the statistics concerning the most common diseases that can be diagnosed and treated in Romania (by comparison with other EU countries) is that women suffering from cardiovascular condition either did not have timely access to their family doctors, to recovery services or to diagnosis services. That was caused by the introduction of telemedicine (in which case Romania scored lower in terms of people accessing it by comparison with the European Union during the Covid 19 pandemic), or re-directing the capabilities of hospitals and family doctors towards monitoring, diagnosing and treating Covid 19 pandemic cases.

Concerning women under treatment of chronic diseases (cardiovascular), under recovery or in need of diagnosis, the good practices approach of the Romanian strategy for the period when Covid 19 was declared a pandemic instated a centralized approach in terms of re-directing the capabilities of hospitals and family doctors towards monitoring, diagnosing and treating Covid cases while instating telemedicine options for other categories of patients. However, telemedicine, in my opinion, is not necessarily an option for chronic cases. Moreover, I would presume that early diagnosis and continuity of care for patients under treatment were endangered by a good practices approach, which, from a political standpoint, overlapped with a strategy directed at tackling complex environments, and hence adjusting the response based on the signals received from the media or from representatives of social society. In the latter case, I would say that people suffering from

chronic diseases, and in the case of my analysis, people suffering from serious cardiovascular problems do not necessarily have their voices heard loud and clear at top decision-making levels.

With regards to the category of educated men (college degree, master degree, doctoral degree), it is important to highlight that even though in Romania the rate of undergraduates and graduates has increased for the past two decades, the country still ranks under the EU average in this respect. According to data from 2017, 17,6% people aged between 25 and 64 had high education degrees, compared to the average of 31.4% in EU. In terms of men holding high education degrees, they average 16.4%, compared to women: 18.7%. Considering the changes brought by Covid 19 pandemic in terms of transitioning education to online, namely allowing people to telework, one question worth researching is the extent to which the percentages of men and women taking higher education programs increased, decreased or remained the same. All of the above percentages along with the category discussed indicate though that for educated men the Covid 19 pandemic might have offered an opportunity to pick up on conducting activities such as reading, watching movies, being with the family which under normal conditions would have been slided on account of regular job requirements and family commitments. On the other hand, even for the men in this category the pandemic might have raised issues in terms of the necessity to meet family related needs with work requirements when working from home. What is worth mentioning is that as statistics usually indicate both for men and women with a college degree and above, the likelihood for those to remain unemployed and hence face difficulties in terms of securing their livelihood was quite low.

In my opinion, I would say that the overall strategy of Romania in the case of Covid 19 had more positive effects rather than negative ones on educated people. Even though apparently it raised issues with transitioning to online work, for most people that also provided more opportunities to establish their own schedule and find new ways of balancing their personal and professional life. Furthermore, judging by my own and best friends' cases, I would also say that it provided more time for personal and professional projects compared to full time on site employment.

The urban areas conditions of living (most people live in blocks of flats) impacted boys and girls in urban areas. While not being able to enjoy outdoor activities during the lockdown period,

most of those used Internet and associated social networks much more intensely. That may have contributed in the case of boys to a narrowing of their attention span and increased aggression, as well as to language difficulties. In the case of girls, that may have dwindled their reading and reasoning skills. The conduct of online educational activities requiring pupils to spend the same amount of time in front of computers as in residential programs, lack of personal space in most cases in families where parents would also need to work from home or would stay at home because of unemployment increased the likelihood for boys living in urban areas to develop aggressive behavior. Another consequence of the Covid 19 period could have been the increased and covert exposure to Internet "traps" such as cyber bullying or exposure to inappropriate content.

When discussing Roma girls, it must be underlined that compared to the preschool participation of Romania's population as a whole, the preschool participation of Roma children is about four times lower. As far as school is concerned, Roma participation is 15-25% lower than the participation of the whole population at primary level and almost 30% lower at secondary level. According to EUROSTAT, almost a quarter (23%) of mothers under 18 in the European Union live in Romania. Almost 10% of all births in Romania are to teenage mothers (NSI, February 2021). The phenomenon of under-age mothers, which places Romania among the top European countries, is complex, and its consequences affect both mother and child. Analysis of living conditions, housing and health status of pregnant women, children and mothers with children under 5 in rural areas, conducted in 2020 by Save the Children in the form of a sociological survey in rural communities, reveals that there is a direct correlation between early maternal age, which also means emotional as well as social development, and lack of access to health education and consistent health services. All of the above considered, I believe that the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions led to an increased isolation of Roma boys and especially girls within their own community. That inherently increased the likelihood for girls to get married at an even younger age than before the Covid 19 pandemic, whereas for boys taking on "manly" responsibilities could have acted as an important driver for school dropout. In this respect, worth noting is that the school dropout rate in Roma communities among boys and girls during the Covid 19 pandemic increased as a result

of lack of necessary resources to access educational programs.

For all people taking a form of education and training (men, women, boys and girls) the lockdown period, the limitations in terms of freedom of movement, transition to online education requiring access to resources raised a lot of challenges. Those were even more dire for those coming from vulnerable groups, such as the Roma community. In this respect, the Covid 19 restrictions contributed to an increased isolation of Roma girls within their communities and a re-enforcement of Roma practices concerning the roles allocated to women (i.e. marriage and having children from an early age).

Regarding girls and boys in the social protection system turning 18, at the end of 2020, there were 34,070 children in the special protection system, of which 13,961 in residential services and 17,803 in family-type services. Children in residential homes cannot fully enjoy a family life and cannot acquire independent living skills that are absolutely necessary when they leave the system at the age of 18 or later. Violence between staff employed in such centers and children or among children, misuse of psychotropic substances for children in residential centers had been issues reported in the media before the Covid outbreak. Given the lack of transparency characteristic of the Covid 19 period as a result of lockdown constraints and health preventative measures, the lack of accountability of staff working in the centers demonstrated by previous inaction of authorities when reported on the improper behavior of those, the lack of social skills of the girls and boys when turning 18 which makes them incapable to become fully functional citizens show the stringent need for further legislative measures and careful selection of staff in such centers.

In relation to the boys and girls in the social protection system turning 18 during the Covid 19 period, I would say that the lack of solid legal provisions and infrastructure to support the integration of those girls into society, the emotional problems that children in the protection system are confronted with, along with Romania's existing problems in the field of human trafficking have contributed extensively to an increase in the likelihood for girls to become victims of prostitution, or sexual abuse during the Covid 19 pandemics, and especially during the lockdown period. Compared to girls, boys in the protection system are more exposed to exploitation for work or for criminal activities. Covid 19 may have reduced the likelihood for those boys' exploitation

for criminal activities. However, their exploitation for work may have still been an important issue, especially in rural areas.

4.2 Short-term and long-term consequences of Romania's strategy during the Covid 19 pandemic on individual groups (the "so what" question"). The short-term and long-term impact of Romania's strategy on the chosen categories listed in sub-chapter 4.2. can be listed as follows.

In the case of women of low income, low to average education, a further decrease in employment opportunities is a short-term consequence as a result of gaps in career/honing of competences in areas of specialization and hence increased exposure to poverty. That may result in exposure to abuse from family members (sexual, emotional, physical), as well as exposure to human trafficking networks.

Women with a cardiovascular conditions may experience increased financial needs as a result of more severe cardiac issues requiring more expensive treatment which on long term may lead to a decrease in life quality.

Educated men (college degree, master degree, doctoral degree) may have experienced an increased need to maintain involvement in personal/professional projects whereas also fulfilling job related tasks. On long term they may express higher expectations of flexible work schedule if not of opportunities for tele-working and hence greater flexibility in exploring other employment opportunities matching their needs.

- In the case of Roma girls, an educated assumption may be that the number of girls married at a very young age (12) increased. That may contribute to severe losses in terms of those girls benefitting from educational, employment opportunities and hence incapacitating them from procuring self-sustainment means.

- In the case of girls in the social protection system turning 18, there might be an increased number of girls trafficked by prostitution networks, or exploited physically or sexually when offered work. Additionally, babies born and put into childcare or being raised in very dire conditions by single mothers or step parents, as well as continued exposure to abuse are longer term aggravating effects.

- The boys in urban area may experience increased exposure to/tendency for bullying that may contribute to involvement in criminal activities or to increased likelihood for such boys to expose others to physical or emotional abuses.

- Boys in the social protection system turning 18 may be more exposed to exploitation for work, criminal activities or to physical abuse. On long term such boys would be incapable and would have no means to integrate into society as employees and respected and contributing members. Furthermore, the likelihood for them is also imprisonment for criminal activities and a high level of poverty.

4.3 Short-term and long-term impact and consequences of Romania's strategy for Covid 19 on societal sector, services and functions. The societal sectors, services and functions most impacted either covertly or overtly by Romania's strategy for Covid 19 pandemic are: the social protection system and social welfare system; the public health system; the health care system; family; the labor sector; economy; child care services; non-profit sector; educational system; judicial system; NGOs providing counselling and services for mental care, maternal assistance, sexual and reproductive health services.

The consequences of Romanian authorities' strategic approach on the randomly selected categories of this study can be summarized as follows: there is an increased number of unemployed women in need for supplemental income; the children of women with low income/low to average education require more attention in health and education functions; women with low income and low to average education need targeted information and counselling to protect them against human trafficking networks.

For women under treatment of chronic diseases (cardiovascular), under recovery or in need of diagnosis: there is an greater financial and infrastructure burden on their families (Romanian culture and average income prevent people from seeking/finding specialized nurseries/health care solutions); there is an increased financial burden on state hospitals that need to provide specialized cardiovascular health care on long term; requirements for social welfare system to provide for basic needs of women/women's families who need to cover expensive treatment increase on long term. In the case of educated men (college degree, master degree, doctoral degree) their requirements for greater flexibility on behalf of employers may: generate requirements and need for changes in labor laws; may lead to possible brain drain requiring adjustment of business and government entities way of conducting work; generate new requirements to maintain personal-professional balance and hence necessity for adaptable, flexible

child care services. For Rroma girls there are increased requirements for sexual and reproductive health services provided by public health system or NGOs, as well as for adapted education and training solutions. Furthermore the increased poverty within families generates a greater burden for social welfare system and not only. In the case of boys in urban areas, increased requirements for special attention on behalf of teachers and family members to behavioral issues, awareness training packages for the latter and integration services into the labor force become a necessity. For the boys and girls in the social protection system turning 18 during Covid 19 and a little after its official termination as a crisis, public-private initiatives to integrate them into society and labor workforce are needed, while also determining the requirements for the educational system to equip those boys and girls with the necessary competences to become integrated into the labor force. Furthermore, because of increased societal/community wise security issues raised by human trafficking networks, criminal groups that might recruit such boys and girls, further requirements emerge for better services to be provided by the following societal sectors and functions: NGOs providing counselling and services for mental care, maternal assistance, sexual and reproductive health services; child care system; legal and judicial system; police; educational system.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The societal sectors, services and functions most affected and to be heavily influenced on long-term by the Covid 19 pandemic as a result of increased requirements for supplemental income, health care support, educational and training programs focusing on better societal and labor workforce integration of disadvantaged women, boys and girls at risk and men in need are: the health care system; the educational and training system; the social protection/welfare system; the legal and judicial system (labor laws); the security sector; the immigration system, and public-private partnerships to name just few. Also, worth noting in the case of the results of this randomized study is that family as a societal function comes among the first in terms of impact and consequences on long term in the case of the Covid 19 pandemic. The social protection system, the social welfare system, the health care system, child care services, educational system, non-profit sector and NGOs rate second as importance and priority of future actions. Therefore, I would say that the scaffolding

of any policies, strategies, plans aimed at building the resilience of those sectors validated as vulnerable during the Covid 19 crisis can be best anchored into the results of such an analysis. Obviously, the study needs more depth and breadth in terms of the gender analysis endeavor in order to consolidate the societal sectors, services and functions identified by the current study as possible priorities.

A major challenge that becomes obvious as a result of this randomized study is that the more in-depth the gender analysis is conducted, the greater difficulty in maintaining a clear and balanced view on its results. Therefore, I would say that asking the *Why* and *What* questions in relation to the significance of the data unveiled can actually contribute to better grasping meanings that sometimes are well hidden behind the obvious. On the other hand, one immense opportunity arises from conducting gender based analyses, and that consist in framing the priority areas for future action when learning from a crisis and preparing for better tackling a future one. Consequently, future strategy formulation and informed strategic decision making require establishing/applying an existing gender based analysis framework that would enable asking the right questions of the specialists who have access to data and information.

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PUTIN'S RHETORIC OF POWER: UNVEILING THE STRATEGIC LANGUAGE OF REGIONAL DOMINANCE

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Abstract: *This study aims to conduct a discourse analysis of Vladimir Putin's 2000's Annual speech to the Federal Assembly, his 2012 speech, and his 2022 speech, to observe the evolution of key linguistic features. The analysis, supported by NVivo specialized software focuses on the semantic field and word frequency, verb tenses, predicative verb moods, sentence length, and the use of rhetorical figures. Through this comparative analysis, the research seeks to identify the evolution in Putin's discursive strategies and linguistic patterns over time. The study will examine the semantic field and word frequency to uncover shifts in the thematic focus and key topics addressed in the speeches. It will also analyze the use of verb tenses and predicative verb moods to explore how Putin conveys certainty, intention, or speculation in his discourse. Additionally, the study will investigate the sentences length to assess any variations in syntactic complexity and rhetorical figures employed, aspects that aim to examine the persuasive and rhetorical techniques used by the Russian President. The findings of this research will provide insights into the evolution of Putin's discourse, shedding light on the linguistic strategies and patterns employed in his Federal Assembly discourses. Overall, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of Putin's communication strategies and the linguistic devices he employs to convey his messages effectively. Furthermore, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the directions of evolution regarding Putin's official discourses and their impact on European society*

Keywords: *Vladimir Putin; discourse analysis; linguistic features; NVivo specialized software; Federal Assembly*

1. INTRODUCTION

Political discourse plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing societal dynamics. As leaders address their constituents through speeches and public addresses, the linguistic choices they make reflect their strategic communication tactics and provide insights into their political agenda. This study delves into the discourse analysis of Vladimir Putin's speeches, specifically focusing on his 2000 Annual speech to the Federal Assembly, his 2012 speech, and his 2022 speech, with the aim of examining the evolution of key linguistic features employed by the Russian President.

Understanding the evolution of discursive strategies and linguistic patterns employed by political leaders over time is vital for comprehending their communication strategies and the impact of their messages. In this research, we conduct a discourse analysis of Putin's speeches, employing a comparative approach to observe changes in linguistic features. The analysis will specifically examine the semantic field and word frequency, verb tenses, predicative verb moods,

sentence length, and the use of rhetorical figures. By scrutinizing these linguistic aspects, we aim to shed light on Putin's discursive strategies and their directions of evolution during his presidency.

The main aim of this study is to enrich our understanding of the communication tactics employed by Vladimir Putin and the linguistic mechanisms he utilizes to adeptly articulate his ideas. Additionally, through meticulous examination and assessment of the linguistic elements present in his speeches, this research endeavors to offer significant perspectives into the developmental trajectory of Putin's discourses and their far-reaching implications for European security. In the following sections, we will present the methodology employed for the discourse analysis and provide a detailed examination of the linguistic features.

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The primary objective of this paper is to determine the direction of evolution of Vladimir Putin's discourses delivered in the Federal Assembly, by conducting a comparative discourse

analysis of his 2000 Annual speech, his 2012 speech, and his 2022 speech.

The hypothesis of the current research is that Vladimir Putin's discursive strategies have evolved over time, from an observer point-of-view to a more proactive and manipulative approach, in order to project international justifications for the hard-power methods implemented in conflict areas.

To achieve the objective of the study and test the hypothesis, a systematic and comparative analysis of the selected speeches will be conducted. The analysis is carried out using the specialized software NVivo, which provides robust tools for qualitative data analysis and discourse analysis. The research direction is characterized by the following stages:

- Data Collection: The selected discourses, namely Putin's 2000 Annual speech, his 2012 speech and his 2022 speech will be sourced from the official platform of the President of Russia, available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/>, in the official English version;

- Corpus Preparation: The speeches will be organized into a suitable format for analysis, eliminating any forms of address (such as "Dear colleagues" and others);

- Discourse Analysis: The comparative analysis will focus on several key linguistic features, including the semantic field and word frequency, verb tenses, predicative verb moods, sentence length, and the use of rhetorical figures;

- Interpretation and Findings: Using NVivo specialized software, which allows for the systematic categorization and interpretation of textual data, the research results will be interpreted and discussed in relation to the research objective and hypothesis.

By employing a methodological approach and utilizing the NVivo software for discourse analysis, this research aims to provide a comprehensive examination of Putin's speeches, highlighting the linguistic strategies employed by the Russian President and also the ways in which they evolved over time.

In terms of the qualitative scientific method used in the present research, discourse analysis can be defined as "the study of the ways in which texts and discourses are used to enact social and ideological interests" (Fairclough, 2015:2). Another fundamental scientific paper describes discourse analysis as "the analysis of the regularities according to which different statements function within a given system of statements" (Foucault, 1972: 49). More recent studies define discourse analysis as

a set of methods for the empirical study of socially meaningful language use in its interactional, social, and cognitive context, including the structure and function of discourse, its effects, and the social cognition of discourse participants (van Dijk, 2020: 5).

Given these conceptualizations, a common definition can be given for the qualitative method – an interdisciplinary research approach that investigates how language, both spoken and written, is used to construct meaning, shape social interactions, and reflect power dynamics within specific social and cultural contexts. It involves examining linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and social practices to uncover underlying ideologies, social structures, and discursive formations.

In the present research, discourse analysis is used to determine the evolution of key linguistic features employed by Vladimir Putin and to gain insights into his discursive strategies over time. For the method to be employed in an objective and complete manner, the discourses will be coded as follows: D.1: Vladimir Putin's address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in the year 2000 (President of Russia, July 8, 2000); D.2: Vladimir Putin's address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in the year 2012 (President of Russia, December 12, 2012); D.3: Vladimir Putin's address in the year 2022 (President of Russia, February 21, 2022). The selection of these discourses for the research reflects a deliberate choice to capture the evolution of Vladimir Putin's rhetoric and discursive strategies over a significant period. D.1, the address in 2000, offers insights into Putin's early presidency and his initial discursive style. D.2, the address in 2012, offers a valuable perspective on the midpoint of Putin's leadership, enabling an examination of his evolving strategies and communication style following his return to power. D.3, the address in 2022, represents a more recent discourse, enabling an analysis of Putin's recent rhetoric and any shifts in his linguistic choices.

The findings of the discourse analysis will include the following key linguistic features in Vladimir Putin's speeches to the Federal Assembly: semantic field and word frequency; verb tenses; predicative verb moods; sentence length; rhetorical figures. The findings will be displayed in a tabular form, presenting a comprehensive overview of the identified linguistic features in each discourse analyzed.

Some methodological limitations include the fact that in the year 2022, the customary annual

address by Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation was replaced by a public statement delivered on February 21st (President of Russia, 2022). This notable occurrence marked a momentous milestone as it entailed the formal acknowledgement of the autonomous status granted to the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic. The limitations of using NVivo for this research include its focus on text-based analysis, the lack of context provided, reliance on manual coding for optimum results, limited scope of analysis, and potential technical constraints. However, the research results were not affected, as the assessed manual review and analysis of the data ensured accurate assessment and interpretation of the key linguistic features.

3. CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

This section provides a comprehensive review of contemporary academic research within the field of discourse analysis, specifically concentrating on the analysis of public discourses delivered by Vladimir Putin. By extensively surveying academic literature from 2018 onwards, this section systematically investigates the primary objectives and key findings of studies that have used discourse analysis to scrutinize the linguistic features employed by Putin in his discourses.

Chudinovskikh and Temnikov (2020: 811-828) investigate the discursive strategies employed by Putin to construct a patriotic narrative, revealing his use of rhetorical figures, linguistic choices, and narrative framing to shape public opinion and further his political agenda. Their work contributes to our understanding of Putin's construction of patriotic narratives. Similarly, Koshmanova and Koshmanov (2021: 628-648) examine Putin's Annual Presidential Addresses, analyzing the linguistic strategies employed to establish

leadership and influence the public. Their findings shed light on Putin's need to reinforce his leadership role.

From a different perspective, Protsyk (2022: 42-57) explores the discursive construction and reception of political identity in Putin's speeches. Through discourse analysis, his study investigates how the Russian President uses language to shape and reinforce political identity, providing valuable insights into the discursive construction. Trofimov (2019: 99-117) takes a critical perspective by analyzing the discursive strategies employed by Putin and their implications for political discourse. This study utilizes discourse analysis to examine the linguistic and rhetorical figures used by Putin to manipulate the masses and project a distorted image of his political interests.

Another important aspect is the examination of rhetorical figures employed by Putin in his discourses. Sargsyan (2021: 71-90) focuses on the analysis of these rhetorical devices, including metaphors, analogies, and persuasive techniques. By using discourse analysis, the research investigates how Putin strategically employs these devices to influence public opinion. Similarly, Sherstneva (2020: 782-802) explores the "language of power" in Putin's speeches, examining the discursive strategies utilized by Putin to assert and consolidate power. This work provides insights into the ways in which language is employed as a tool of power and influence in public discourses.

Collectively, these studies highlight the diverse approaches and objectives of discourse analysis applied to the examination of Putin's discourses. They offer insights into the leader's persuasive strategies, including the construction of patriotic narratives, the establishment of leadership, the shaping of political identity, and the use of rhetorical devices and power dynamics in his public communication.

Table 1. Research results

Discourse	Semantic Field and Word Frequency	Verb Tenses	Predicative Verb Moods	Sentence Length	Rhetorical Figures
D.1	governance and national identity	predominantly present tense	preponderantly present indicative	an average of 17.11 words/sentence	– 1 cliché; – no contractions; – 2 similes; – 1 rhetorical question.
D.2	obligation, national identity,	predominantly past tense	preponderantly past indicative	an average of 19.44 words/	– 2 clichés; – 9 contractions; – 15 similes;

	and developed			sentence	– 8 rhetorical questions.
D.3	Russia, Ukraine, and governance	predominantly past tense	preponderantly past indicative and modal verbs	an average of 21.18 words/sentence	– 2 clichés; – 7 contradictions; – 7 similes; – 23 rhetorical questions.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The following section presents the research results obtained from the analysis of Vladimir Putin's addresses to the Federal Assembly. The research results showed significant differences between the three analyzed discourses in terms of linguistic elements.

3.1 Semantic field and word frequency. In accordance with NVivo's Word Frequency Query Results, the semantic field of the top three words used by Vladimir Putin in his Annual address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation were as follows: In D.1, the semantic field of the most frequent words used is related to governance and national identity. The word "state" is mentioned 89 times and pertains to the functioning and administration of the government. "Federal" appears 48 times, referring to the federal structure and decentralized power within the country. The word "country" is mentioned 38 times, representing the broader concept of the nation (President of Russia, July 8, 2000). In D.2, the semantic field focuses on obligation, national identity, and development. The modal verb "must" is used 115 times, emphasizing the sense of necessity and urgency. "Russia" appears 86 times, indicating the central focus on the country itself and its interests. The word "developed" is mentioned 69 times, signifying Russia's progress, growth, and advancement throughout history (President of Russia, December 12, 2012). In D.3, the semantic field revolves around the terms "Russia", "Ukraine", and "governance". The words "Russia" and "Ukraine" are mentioned 62 times each, emphasizing the central focus on the nation and its actions, in terms of regional relations. The word "state" is used 46 times, indicating the attention Putin emphasizes to governance and the role of the government (President of Russia, February 21, 2022).

The identified terms within the Russian President's discourses indicate recurring concepts, especially oriented around the Russian state and national governance. Thus, across all three

discourses, the recurring terms are "state", "Russia", and "must". This consistency suggests that the concepts are central to Putin's discursive strategies. Of particular interest to the research is the term "must", which is in alignment with the modal verbs utilized in the D.3 discourse.

3.2 Verb tenses. Across D.1, Vladimir Putin's predominantly utilizes present tense, with sporadic use of future and past tense. The present tense employed emphasizes the urgency of current challenges and the need for immediate action. For example, when discussing issues such as corruption, economic competitiveness, and social policy, Putin states, "We need to ensure [..]", "The tax system is conducive [..]", and "Social policy is not just aid [..]" (President of Russia, July 8, 2000). The future tense is rarely utilized, which entails that Putin's vision for the future and express his commitment to implementing reforms is less present. In addition, the text includes sporadic use of the past tense, which provides historical background and emphasizes the importance of learning from past experiences. For instance, when discussing the development of federalism and the creation of federal districts, Putin remarks, "At the beginning of the 1990s, the center gave the regions a great deal", and "One of our first steps in strengthening federalism was the creation of federal districts [..]" (President of Russia, July 8, 2000).

Across D.2, several verb tenses are utilized by Vladimir Putin to convey specific messages and implications. The predominant use of past tense serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it allows Putin to highlight the historical context and reflect on Russia's past challenges and achievements. By referencing the past, Putin emphasizes the progress that has been made under his leadership and positions himself as a transformative figure in Russia's recent history. For example, when Putin states that Russia's GDP per capita has "almost doubled" (President of Russia, December 12, 2012) since 1999, he emphasizes the positive economic developments during his tenure. Additionally, the past tense is employed to emphasize the impact of external factors, such as the global financial crisis,

on Russia's economic growth. By attributing the slowdown in Russia's GDP growth to external events, Putin deflects responsibility and presents his administration as resilient in the face of adversity. This narrative seeks to reinforce the perception of Putin as a strong leader who can navigate challenges and protect Russia's interests.

From the opening paragraph of D.3, Vladimir Putin primarily uses the past tense to emphasize the betrayal of trust and broken promises made by Western countries regarding NATO's eastward expansion. The use of the past tense underscores the perception of historical injustices and reinforces the idea that Western countries have repeatedly disregarded Russia's concerns and acted against its interests. In the text, Putin highlights the negative consequences of NATO's expansion and the encroachment of its military infrastructure on Russia's borders. He mentions the establishment of missile launchers and the development of offensive capabilities, portraying NATO's actions as a threat to Russia's security. By using the past tense, Putin implies that these actions had already taken place and had had a detrimental impact on the regional balance of power (President of Russia, February 21, 2022). In discussing the situation in Donbass, Putin employs the present tense to depict ongoing conflicts and violations of the Minsk agreements by the Ukrainian government. This strategic use of discourse serves to emphasize the persistent violence that Russia contends with while emphasizing its commitment to defending civil rights and preserving the cultural heritage of the Ukrainian population in Donbass. These findings corroborate the recurring patterns identified in Putin's earlier speeches, which accentuate Russia's perceived grievances, distorted historical narratives, and preparedness to assert its power when deemed necessary. This cumulative effect can be understood as the distinctive rhetorical framework that characterizes Putin's political communication style.

3.3 Predicative verb moods. In D.1, the most frequent verb mood used is present indicative, which aims to express statements of fact, reality, and certainty. Putin predominantly uses the indicative mood to convey his assessments of various geopolitical and national situations. Examples of the indicative mood usage include: "Our next step is a reform of the Federation Council" and "Today, above all, we set ourselves the task of establishing order in bodies of power" (President of Russia, July 8, 2000). By using this mood, Putin's statements are authoritative and

grounded, reinforcing the sense of certainty and credibility in his discourse, and emphasizing his role as a decisive leader. The text also includes sporadic use of the modal verbs, which are employed to convey directives or strong suggestions. For instance, Putin states "We need to ensure [...]", "We must not weaken the powers of regional authorities" (President of Russia, July 8, 2000). In contrast, there is no apparent use of conditionals in the text, which suggests that Putin aims to present his ideas as concrete, practical, and achievable, rather than speculative or hypothetical.

The prominent predicative verb mood utilized by Putin in D.2 is the past indicative, indicating his focus on emphasizing historical achievements. This mood serves to highlight the progress made under his leadership and create confidence in his ability to deliver positive outcomes. Modal verbs are used, especially when conveying commands and directives. For example, when Putin calls for the creation of an "investment map" (President of Russia, December 12, 2012), the development of universities in the regions, or the need for a real breakthrough in road construction, he conveys a sense of urgency and directs attention towards specific priorities. Similarly to D.1, the absence of conditionals can be interpreted as projecting decisiveness to the public.

A significant evolution can be observed across D.3, as Vladimir Putin utilizes the past indicative mood preponderantly, emphasizing the gravity of "NATO's aggression in Donbass" (President of Russia, February 21, 2022) and the Western countries lack of reaction to it. The notable linguistic choice also indicates the continuation of military engagement in conflict areas, which can be presently seen taking place. The President conveys a strong message that he did not accept infringements on Russian sovereignty and is currently taking proactive measures. The use of the indicative mood aligns with Putin's objective to convey the readiness of Russia to respond firmly and safeguard its security. It also serves as a rhetorical tool to galvanize public support in response to the historical injustice that the Russian Federation was a victim of.

By juxtaposing the present indicative mood, Putin creates a cohesive discourse that suggests a potential shift from diplomatic negotiations to more assertive strategies. The predominant use of the indicative mood in D.1, D.2 and D.3 highlights historical injustices and the negative consequences of Western actions, framing Russia as the victim. However, in D.3, Putin's tends to shift toward a more assertive and proactive tone. This evolution

in verb moods aligns with Putin's strategic approach to discourse, where he combines past grievances with future-oriented modal verbs to emphasize Russia's unwavering commitment to protecting its national interests.

3.4 Sentence length. Given the limitations provided by NVivo, the online software Count Wordsworth (<https://countwordsworth.com/>) was used in order to establish the sentence length of the selected discourses. Through this software and the researcher's review, the following conclusions were elaborated: In D.1, which consists of 6792 words, the average sentence length is 17.11 words. The relatively shorter sentences, with an average of 58.79 characters per sentence, suggest a concise and straightforward style of communication. Also, the distribution of pronouns reveals a significant use of the third person (47%), while the first person accounts for 49% and the second person for only 2%. D.2, with a subtotal of 12191 words, has an average length of 19.44 words per sentence. The slightly longer sentences, averaging 66.92 characters per sentence, imply a more elaborative and detailed style of expression compared to D.1. The use of pronouns shows a significant presence of the first person (63%), a marginal use of the second person (4%), and a reduced emphasis on the third person (32%). In D.3, a total of 7478 words were used, with sentences averaging 21.18 words in length. The sentences are comparatively longer, indicating a more argumentative communication style. The distribution of pronouns shows a notable emphasis on the third person (58%), while the first person accounts for 39% and the second person for only 2%. All the elements mentioned demonstrate Putin's discursive evolution, intricate narratives being observed more clearly in D.3.

From the initial stage to the final stage of the analyzed speeches, notable changes in the linguistic patterns employed by Vladimir Putin become evident. These evolutions include a gradual increase in the average number of words per sentence, a shift towards a more objective and detached tone, and a preference for third-person arguments to enhance the perception of objectivity. Additionally, the use of more complex sentence structures adds depth and intricacy to Putin's communication, reflecting a sophisticated approach to conveying his messages.

3.5 Rhetoric figures. D.1 showcases a balanced usage of rhetorical figures, with one cliché suggesting a touch of familiarity. The

absence of contractions maintains a formal tone, while two similes add vividness to the discourse. One such simile is "Like a ship without a captain, the country drifted aimlessly" (President of Russia, July 8, 2000). The inclusion of a rhetorical question engages the audience and prompts reflection.

D.2 exhibits a more extensive use of rhetorical figures. It contains two clichés, which serve as common rhetorical devices to evoke emotions. The presence of nine contractions introduces a more conversational and informal tone, potentially creating a connection with the audience. The use of fifteen similes aided in the visual representation of ideas. Additionally, the integration of eight rhetorical questions played a role in engaging the audience and stimulating their thoughts. An example of a rhetorical question in D.2 could be: "Can we afford to ignore the warning signs and continue down this path?" (President of Russia, December 12, 2012).

In D.3, rhetorical figures are used more extensively compared to the previous discourses. It includes two clichés, serving as familiar phrases to the public. The presence of seven contradictions aims to create rhetorical tension, which is later resolved through Putin's proposed solutions. Additionally, the use of seven similes has the goal of helping to illustrating the threats posed by NATO military actions severity for the state. The most notable feature in D.3 is the use of 23 rhetorical questions, which play a significant role in engaging the audience, encouraging reflection, and potentially making persuasive arguments. A notable example of a contradiction used in D.3 is: "While they claim to seek peace, their actions only breed hostility and division" (President of Russia, February 21, 2022).

The artful incorporation of rhetoric figures in D.1, including the deliberate use of clichés, the avoidance of contractions, the skillful deployment of similes, and the strategic implementation of a rhetorical question, contributes to the symphonic nature of Putin's communication style. This symphony represents a carefully crafted orchestration of linguistic devices and persuasive techniques, strategically designed to captivate the audience and shape their perception of the discourse. By seamlessly integrating these rhetoric figures, Putin creates a persuasive and impactful atmosphere that resonates with the audience, enabling him to convey his message with precision and influence.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this research successfully achieved its objective of determining the direction of evolution of Vladimir Putin's discourses. The hypothesis stating that Vladimir Putin's discursive strategies have evolved over time to project international justifications for the hard-power methods implemented in conflict areas has been confirmed, through a comprehensive analysis of the three selected discourses.

The findings of this study reveal a clear progression in Putin's rhetorical style and linguistic choices from the inaugural crescendo in D.1 to the mid-term crescendos in D.2 and the culmination point in D.3. The analysis uncovered notable shifts in verb tenses, predicative verb moods, sentence structure, and the use of rhetorical figures. These shifts reflect a strategic adaptation in Putin's communication style, demonstrating his ability to tailor his discourse to shifting national interests.

According to the research findings, D.3 represents the culmination of the analyzed period, where Vladimir Putin's linguistic strategies and rhetorical devices reach their peak. This discourse signifies the pinnacle of Putin's discursive power, characterized by the use of modal verbs and intensified employment of rhetorical figures. It serves as a significant moment, symbolizing his unwavering assertion of Russia's sovereignty and influence in the face of global conflicts.

In summary, this research provides valuable insights into the evolving rhetoric of power employed by Vladimir Putin, highlighting the intricate strategies and linguistic choices embedded in his annual addresses. Understanding the evolution of these linguistic patterns and their adaptation to the shifting narrative in Putin's public discourses is crucial for addressing potential risks to Euro-Atlantic security.

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APPLICATION OF DECISION TREE LEARNING IN MILITARY DECISION MAKING PROCESS

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Abstract: *Supremacy in the 21st century will be the result of positioning in the artificial intelligence (AI) competition, a competition not always fair, but justified primarily by the advantages offered in terms of power: the winner dictates the rules in all domains. AI has the ability to create new forms of military conflicts, one of the directions being the optimization of the decision-making process. At the same time, human-AI synergy represents one of the challenges of authority and trust for moving to the implementation stage. The purpose of this article is to highlight the impact that AI has on the interpretation of certain courses of action related to a given scenario. Through the analysis based on the decision tree learning, a frequently used form of machine learning, both optimal decisions and those that do not correspond to the desired final state will be highlighted. Thus, the requirements for improving the performance of the military decision-making process for new and/or changing future situations are answered.*

Keywords: *military decision making; decision tree learning; targeting; course of action; unmanned aerial system*

1. INTRODUCTION

The AI revolution is not a strategic surprise at the level of global actors (NSCAI, 2021), but by opening new opportunities to state and non-state actors, new and unpredictable security challenges can be activated. We are currently in the stage where, by reporting on the transition curve, AI validates expectations, but at the same time, by capitalizing on technological opportunities, it potentiates vulnerability at a strategic level.

From the multitude of definitions of AI, some common elements can be identified: IT systems [capable of performing], functions [intelligent behavior], [for] improving performance [in the environment in which it operates] (USGAO, 2022; HLEG, 2019).

The effects produced in military affairs lead to a possible algorithm versus algorithm confrontation, which follows the cycle: data collection; data analysis; connectivity; strike system. The applicability of AI in the military field represents a redefinition and activation of "next generation" capabilities: innovative operational concepts (doctrines); adapted organizational structures (organization); technical education, training environments through simulation (training, leadership and education); autonomous AI systems (hardware); development of digital teams

(personnel); digital ecosystem (facilities); integration in allied context (interoperability).

The military superiority generated by the implementation of AI becomes quantifiable both at the decision-making level (faster, more relevant, more substantiated decisions) and at the action level (more efficient weapon systems). The more advanced the position on the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) scale, the more difficult is the change/adaptation generated by the AI revolution.

Information technology (IT) and AI will penetrate deeper and deeper into the military organization, radically transforming the way missions are carried out both in peace, but especially in crisis and war. The development and implementation of AI elements in the military decision-making process (MDMP) must comply with the requirement that low performances are not accepted (Cerri *et al.*, 2018). Thus, a series of threats and associated possible consequences were identified, the management of which reduces the speed of innovation propagation (Table 1).

Tab. 1 AI militarization

Threat	Consequence
Authorizing the deployment of AI to strategic weapons	The emergence of unintentional nuclear conflicts

The unregulated proliferation of AI-based AWS	Possibility of use by terrorists/ non-state actors
Misunderstanding of the doctrine/ principles of use in battle	Accidental escalation of conflicts/ crises
Lack of a consensus regarding the responsible use of AI in the military field	The impossibility of establishing concrete measures on which to build mutual trust
Inability to fully understand technology	Adopting unfounded decisions
Difficulties in monitoring performance	Unsafe systems and irresponsible use

The human factor - AI cooperation in the military plan is realized in the optimization of processes, the substantial reduction or even the reduction of the risk of errors, the avoidance of overloading the human factor, the identification of a much more varied range of action possibilities and the considerable improvement of the reaction speed.

The integration of AI actively and with an established level of autonomy in the military decision-making process (MDMP) and its related activities would actually optimize all the internal mechanisms of the activities carried out at all levels: strategic, operational and tactical (Alon, 2013). The available MDMP database can be exploited by transforming it into training data for an automatic learning model. In this way, the computer system is allowed to learn to program itself through experience to predict specific results (MITSSM, 2021).

The aim of the paper is to optimize a decision-tree-learning based on the training data from the created hypothesis, which assumes the existence of several attributes. Correct prediction on new training data becomes a classification problem specific to supervised learning: destruction/ combat or failure. Moreover, being an inductive type tool, the decision tree will fold on the operational requirements of the scenario, its completion providing the finality of each direction and significantly diminishing the weight of specifically human analyses that would require extending the necessary time or omitting some details of major importance. The paper is innovative and can be considered relevant for the research field of MDMP for the following reasons: the introduction of supervised learning as a

solution in line with technological progress to improve MDMP, as well as the development of a decision tree study with learning for an application of TGTG. The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the supervised learning method in the context of MDMP. Section 3 puts forth the proposed decision tree learning and its TGTG application are described. The last section outlines the conclusions and summarizes the main results obtained during the research.

2. SUPERVISED LEARNING IN MDMP

The quantity and quality of data related to the characteristics of the operational environment have grown directly proportional to the proliferation of disruptive technologies against the backdrop of technological progress. These data are somewhat predetermined (do not undergo major changes from one environment to another) or are in permanent change (derived from diversity, unpredictability and perpetual fluctuations) (Stoffler, 2019). Thus, data about the operational environment can be divided into three subclasses: the set of data that will be readily available, the set of data that requires thorough research or simulation, and the set of data on which collection is resumed. From the point of view of the target management process, the data associated with the three specific vectors (the target, the weapon and the operational environment) can be distributed in two categories: observation data and result data.

The applicability of the learning problem derives from the operating principle: set of training data (input-output pairs) – learning function – prediction of outputs for new input data (Figure 1) (Russell and Norvig, 2016).

A viable automatic learning model must fulfill at time t_0 the function for which it was designed at the initially established performance level, and at time t_1 the performance evaluation should highlight an improvement.

There are several ways to train an automatic learning model: supervised learning (the training data is also associated with the desired output); unsupervised (the training data does not contain the desired output, clusters and associations are identified without the need for human intervention); reinforcement learning (learns based on the feedback received after a decision is made) (Mironica and Ionescu, 2018).

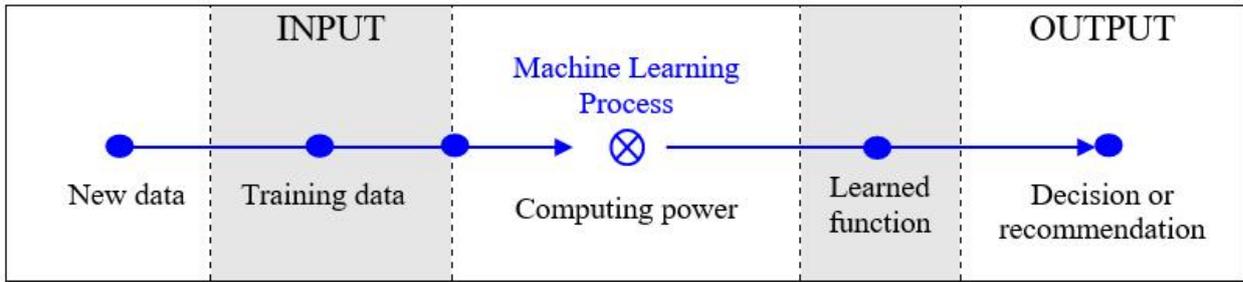


Fig. 1 Machine learning model

The decision tree is one of the algorithms specific to supervised learning that is applied with very good results in classification and regression problems. In the field of targeting (TGTG), a regression problem can take the form of predicting effects and collateral damage, and a classification problem could be the recognition and prioritization of targets. The decision tree, algorithm specific to supervised learning, allows the separation of a data set into smaller subsets and, at the same time, is developed on the levels of the tree on decision and hazard nodes, until reaching the result nodes, which are terminal nodes.

3. DECISION TREE LEARNING APPLICATION

The hypothesis created through the prism of a TGTG scenario assumes the existence of the following attributes: the location and mobility of the target, the moment of receiving the mission, the weather conditions, the action within the target range and the type of weaponry used. The integrated analysis of the six considered attributes results in the existence of three possible generated effects - results: destruction, combat and failure.

In order to facilitate an overview of the possibilities that military decision makers must analyze, a training data set consisting of ten concrete examples, formulated on the basis of experience and correlated with the present scenario, was developed (Table 2).

Decision makers must analyze each variable separately and assign, depending on the situation at hand, importance and priority coefficients, so that the considered COA represents the most desirable outcome.

For the inductive construction of the decision tree, the ID3 algorithm is used. It is based on the selection of the most important attribute, using entropy (E). Entropy shows the level of "disorder" of the data set (Squire, 2004) and is defined by the symbiosis of variants with positive (p) and negative (n) results (equation 1).

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$$E = \left[-\frac{p}{p+n} \cdot \log_2 \left(\frac{p}{p+n} \right) \right] - \left[\frac{n}{p+n} \cdot \log_2 \left(\frac{n}{p+n} \right) \right] \quad (1)$$

For the training data set considered, p (destruction of 4, and E is 0.971. The algorithm for determining the root node proceeds by determining E for each attribute individually. Since each possibility of the attribute variables is interpreted in terms of p and n, it is necessary to determine the mean E (E_{medie}) for both circumstances (equation 2), where t represents the total number of action possibilities valid at the time of the calculation.

$$E_{medie} = \left(\frac{p+n}{t} \right) \cdot E \quad (2)$$

Once the distinct values of the specific E_{medie} are determined, the average information entropy (Average Information Entropy - I) is calculated, where i represents the number of characteristics of the considered attribute (equation 3).

$$I = \sum_{i=1}^n E_{medie\ i} \quad (3)$$

To determine the measure of the degree of efficiency in the selection of attributes, the informational gain (Gain - G) is used. It is defined according to the E_{medie} and I associated with attribute k (equation 4).

$$G_k = E_{medie_k} - I_k \quad (4)$$

Tab. 2 The training data set

Location of the target	Mobility of the target	Time of receiving the mission	Weather conditions	Action within the range of the target	Type of weaponry used	Final result
<i>Input attribute values</i>						<i>Output attribute values</i>
isolated	fixed	at takeoff	stable atmosphere, no significant changes	immediate launch, no hesitation	AGM-176	destruction
isolated	mobile	in flight	stable atmosphere, no significant changes	immediate launch, no hesitation	AGM-114	combat
isolated	fixed	in flight	partial cloudiness and light wind	delayed launch	GBU-12	failure
isolated	mobile	at takeoff	high cloudiness and strong	delayed launch	AGM-176	combat
isolated	mobile	in flight	partial cloudiness and light wind	delayed launch	AGM-114	combat
crowded environment	fixed	at takeoff	high cloudiness and strong	abandonment	no weapon	failure
crowded environment	mobile	at takeoff	partial cloudiness and light wind	delayed launch	GBU-12	combat
crowded environment	fixed	in flight	stable atmosphere, no significant changes	immediate launch, no hesitation	AGM-176	destruction
crowded environment	fixed	at takeoff	partial cloudiness and light wind	abandonment	no weapon	failure
crowded environment	mobile	in flight	stable atmosphere, no significant changes	immediate launch, no hesitation	AGM-114	failure

Since no possibility of firing on the target has been ruled out until now, the total number of action possibilities is equivalent to that of the initial phase. So, having $t = 10$ as a reference point and substituting the values related to each individual situation in the previously mentioned expressions, the results are contained in table 3.

The attribute variable with the highest value G_k represents the root node, being highlighted by positioning the *Type of weapon used* as the main attribute, with future tree splits configured according to the type of missile used.

Passing through the filter of the *type of weapon used* attribute all the ten distinct situations in the data set, the existence of two possibilities is highlighted which, for reasons related to failure as the final result, will constitute a leaf node.

In order to outline the following ramifications constituted according to the root node, it is necessary to analyze the main attribute from a triple perspective: AGM-176, AGM-114 and GBU-12. The analysis of the AGM-176 characteristic reveals three positive results (p), thus resulting in the second leaf node corresponding to

success. The analysis of the AGM-114 characteristic reveals two positive results (p) and one negative result (n).

The decision-making component of AGM-114 will be interpreted from a multi-criteria perspective derived, in turn, from the investigation of the remaining attributes: *the location and mobility of the target, the moment of receiving the mission, the weather conditions, the action in the range of the target*. Thus, for each individual attribute, the p , n , E , E_{medie} , I and G_k values are centralized and calculated, according to equations (1-4) (Table 4).

Since the comparative analysis of all G_k values highlights the maximum result as the one for *the target location* attribute, it will represent the next node of the decision tree. By interpreting the final states, it is possible to notice both the isolated target-combat correlation and the crowded environment-failure correlation, corresponding to two other leaf nodes.

The analysis of the GBU-12 characteristic reveals a positive result (p) and a negative result (n).

Tab. 3 Informational gains associated with attributes

Attributes (k)	Characteristics (i)	E_{medie}	I	G_k
Target location	<i>isolated</i>	0,361	0,846	0,125
	<i>crowded environment</i>	0,485		
Target mobility	<i>fixed</i>	0,485	0,552	0,419
	<i>mobile</i>	0,067		
The moment of receiving the mission	<i>at takeoff</i>	0,485	0,971	0
	<i>during the flight</i>	0,485		
Weather conditions	<i>stable atmosphere without significant changes</i>	0,325	0,925	0,046
	<i>partly cloudy and light wind</i>	0,4		
	<i>high cloudiness and strong wind</i>	0,2		
Action within target range	<i>immediate launch without hesitation</i>	0,325	0,649	0,322
	<i>delayed release</i>	0,325		
	<i>abandonment</i>	0		
Type of weapon used	<i>AGM-176</i>	0	0,475	0,496 (max)
	<i>AGM-114</i>	0,275		
	<i>GBU-12</i>	0,2		
	<i>no weapon</i>	0		

Tab. 4 The informational gains associated with the remaining attributes

Attributes (k)	Characteristics (i)	E_{medie}	I	G_k
Target location	<i>isolated</i>	0	0	0,918 (max)
	<i>crowded environment</i>	0		
Mobility of the target	<i>mobile</i>	0,344	0,344	0,574
The moment of receiving the mission	<i>during flight</i>	0,344	0,344	0,574
Weather conditions	<i>stable atmosphere without significant changes</i>	0,25	0,25	0,668
	<i>partly cloudy and light wind</i>	0		
Action within target range	<i>immediate launch without hesitation</i>	0,25	0,25	0,668
	<i>delayed release</i>	0		

Thus, the process is repeated as in the case of AGM-114, resulting in three equal maximum G_k values, corresponding to the following three distinct attributes: *target location*, *target mobility* and *the moment of receiving the mission*.

In such situations, it is up to the decision-makers to choose the most important attribute. In our case, the attribute mobility of the target was chosen, the results showing that both fixed and mobile targets lead to singular effects, combat,

respectively failure, a fact that substantially diminishes the scope of the subsequent development of the tree. Moreover, the fixed-combat and mobile-failure correlations are unique, which is why further division would be unnecessary. The centralization of all the data used throughout the algorithm converges towards the design of the final decision tree (Figure 2).

Starting from a set of 10 training data, the decision tree considerably narrows the analysis

which, in the absence of such an approach, would mainly require the involvement of a relatively

larger number of resources and an extended time interval.

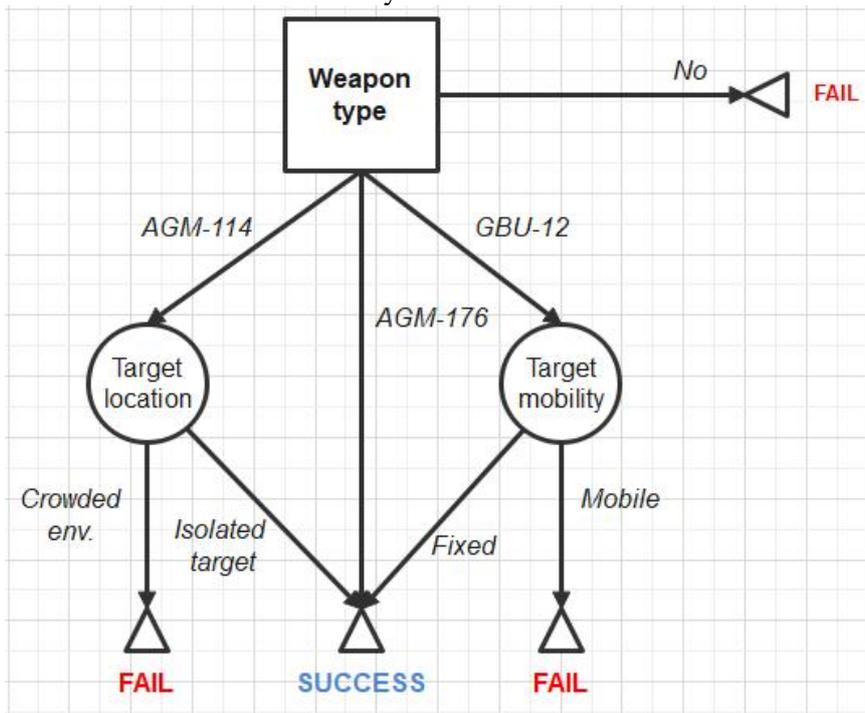


Fig. 2 The optimised decision tree

In Matlab, programming and computing platform, it is possible to implement the ID3 algorithm for decision tree learning, where the tree is built recursively based on attribute selection using information gain and entropy calculations.

The “DECISION_TREE_LEARNING” function takes three input arguments: “examples”, “attributes”, and “parent_examples”. It returns a

decision tree represented as a structure. The “PLURALITY_VALUE” function returns the mode (most frequent value) of the input labels and the “IMPORTANCE” function calculates the importance of each attribute based on the information gain.

```
function tree = DECISION_TREE_LEARNING(examples, attributes, parent_examples)
if isempty(examples)
    tree = struct('class', PLURALITY_VALUE(parent_examples), 'children', {});
    return;
elseif all(examples(:, end) == examples(1, end))
    tree = struct('class', examples(1, end), 'children', {});
    return;
elseif isempty(attributes)
    tree = struct('class', PLURALITY_VALUE(examples(:, end)), 'children', {});
    return;
else
    best_attribute = IMPORTANCE(examples(:, 1:end-1), examples(:, end));
    tree = struct('attribute', attributes{best_attribute}, 'children', {});
    attribute_values = unique(examples(:, best_attribute));
```

The first condition checks if the “examples” matrix is empty. If it is, it means we have reached a leaf node, and we create a leaf node with the

majority class from “parent_examples” using the “PLURALITY_VALUE” function. The decision tree structure is returned with an empty children field. The second condition checks if all the

examples have the same classification. If they do, we create a leaf node with the common classification and return the decision tree structure. The third condition checks if there are no remaining attributes to split on. If so, we create a leaf node with the majority class from the current examples.

If none of the above conditions are met, we proceed with the recursive part of the algorithm.

```

for i = 1:length(attribute_values)
    value = attribute_values(i);
    exs = examples(examples(:, best_attribute) == value, :);

    subtree = DECISION_TREE_LEARNING(exs, attributes([1:best_attribute-1
best_attribute 1:end]), examples);

    tree.children{i} = struct('attribute_value', value, 'subtree', subtree);
end

```

We recursively call the “DECISION_TREE_LEARNING” function on the subset of examples, excluding the selected attribute. The resulting subtree is assigned to the current attribute value in the children field of the decision tree structure. After iterating over all attribute values, the decision tree structure is returned.

First, we determine the best attribute to split on using the “IMPORTANCE” function. The decision tree structure is created with the selected attribute as the root node and an empty children field. We obtain the unique values of the selected attribute from the examples and iterate over them. For each attribute value, we filter the examples to obtain the subset that matches the value.

The “calculate_entropy” function calculates the entropy of the input labels using the formula for entropy. It iterates over unique labels, calculates the proportion of each label, and accumulates the entropy.

```

function entropy = calculate_entropy(labels)
    unique_labels = unique(labels);
    entropy = 0;

    for i = 1:length(unique_labels)
        label = unique_labels(i);
        proportion = sum(labels == label) / numel(labels);
        entropy = entropy - proportion * log2(proportion);
    end

    entropy(isnan(entropy)) = 0;
end

```

The use of the Matlab programming language for the implementation of the decision tree learning represents a viable solution to reduce the time and prediction pressures that act as stress factors for the targeting specialist.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The use of AI in the military field has become a necessary, but not yet sufficient, condition for ensuring success. The applications in MDMP converge towards assigning the technological component, in a weighted measure, to procedural

tasks, increasing the speed of reaction, reducing the risk for the human factor, optimizing the decisions adopted, avoiding major errors, integrating and analyzing multiple and diversified information from sensors, analyzing through the lens of several filters the considered problem and increasing the efficiency exponentially.

The decision tree algorithm with learning is based on the strategy of testing the most important attribute. This method leads to the division of a complex problem into several sub problems, which can be solved in a recursive manner. The evolutionary architecture of a decision tree, for

which it was necessary to filter the data according to certain considered parameters, highlighted, in an easy and much better time-anchored manner, both desirable and less effective decisions than the expected result since the assignment of the mission. The decision tree has managed to considerably narrow down the analysis which, in the absence of such an approach, would require more resources which, in turn, would be able to manage the situation in question, analyze huge volumes of information and make the right decision in a very short time.

The good results obtained by integrating machine learning in simple TGTG scenarios are encouraging for adaptation and testing in the case of complex decision-making situations: multiple decision variables, incomplete or possibly contradictory information, rapid changes in the operational environment.

Further research will be focused on increasing the training data set, developing validation and test sets, and evaluating prediction error and generalization ability.

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HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE MEDIA IN ROMANIA AS A SOFT POWER TOOL: POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETAL SECURITY

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Abstract: *Hungarian language media in Romania is employed as a soft power tool by the Hungarian Government, which aims to maintain the loyalty of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. Its functioning is characterized by a high centralization, reproducing the media model in Hungary, described by the Media Freedom Rapid Response community as the "archetypal case of state captured media" at the EU level. Through a strong grip over Hungarian language media in its neighboring states, the Hungarian Government advances its goals of keeping united the "Hungarian political nation", a concept used extensively, to include communities living abroad. While the support given by states to national minorities abroad is legitimate under inter-state agreements, conflicting state interests may arise, partly due to the region's model of nation building processes which were rather based on the "ethnic nation". This could lead to barriers in social integration and building cohesion with the majority. The article analyses the frames relevant for identity building and national cohesion, transmitted through Hungarian language news websites in Romania on a day of significance for the Hungarian nation, 15 March - "National Day of Hungarians Everywhere", problematizing the role of mass-media in fostering societal security.*

Keywords: *media; soft power; identity; cohesion; societal security*

1. INTRODUCTION

The end of the First World War, marked by the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, led to the establishment of new borders between nation states. Transylvania – a region where most inhabitants were ethnic Romanians, was attributed to the Kingdom of Romania through the Trianon Treaty in 1919. The attribution continued to be a source of friction between Romania and Hungary until the last decade of the 20th century. The fall of communism in both states, the democratization processes, and the aspirations to be part of Western organizations – such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance, came with improvements of neighborly relations between Romania and Hungary, as well as with more rights for the Hungarian minority. At the societal level, the relations between Romanians and Hungarians living in Transylvania have known tensed episodes for several decades - as power regularly made the different other subject to discrimination and sometimes even violent treatment.

With the democratization, Hungarian political parties were formed in Romania. The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR)

became part of the Romanian Government for the first time in 1996, ensuring political representation for Romania's largest ethnic minority. However, this did not contribute to establishing a successful model of inter-ethnic relations according to Kiss et. al. (2018:92-93), but rather one of asymmetries between the minority and majority. Political bargaining did not lead to an actual conflict resolution. Earlier, Medianu (2002:40) described the Romanian model of inter-ethnic relations, as "political accommodation" of minority rights, referring to the role played by DAHR in tempering territorial autonomy claims in exchange for other benefits. The Eastern model of nation building process – based on the ethnic nation, is relevant for understanding lasting tensions between Romanians and Hungarians. In Eastern Europe, the formation of nation states was impacted by the existence of poli-ethnic Empires with three dominating ethnicities (Russian, Ottoman, Austrian). After the fall of the Empires, ethnicities sought to obtain autonomy, independence and form their own nation states, sometimes through forced attempts to transform other ethnicities, and homogenize cultures, which was followed by contrary effects (Smith, 1986:131-145).

Hungary has strengthened ties with kin communities in neighboring states after the 1990s. Hungarian minorities abroad have become a significant part of public discussions, a state Office of Transborder Hungarians was formed and publicly funded Duna TV was established, which provided broadcasting for communities in neighboring states. Since the Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – FIDESZ (Alliance of Young Democrats) political party took office in the Government in 2010, the relations have been strengthened even more. Ethnic Hungarians were given the possibility to obtain Hungarian citizenship and thus - right to vote, while the 2011 Hungarian Constitution – the first one fully developed under a democratic regime, announced Hungary's position towards Hungarian communities abroad:

...Hungary shall bear responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living beyond its borders, and shall facilitate the survival and development of their communities; it shall support their efforts to preserve their Hungarian identity... (2011:5)

The fall of the communist regime in Romania came as well with the freedom for minorities to organize cultural manifestations, including the commemoration of Hungarian historical events. Such manifestations are “powerful cultural objects” (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:700-701) with rich and varied possibilities of interpretations of the past. The authors argued that the past is instrumentalized “the politics of the present therefore not only shapes the representation, but as often entails the misrepresentation, of the past”.

Our case study analyses the Hungarian language (online) media representation of such an event, seeking to portray its use as a soft power tool, to justify the politics of the present conducted by significant political actors for the Hungarian community in Romania.

The 15th of March 2023 has marked 175 years since the beginning of the Hungarian revolution in 1848, when the popular uprising started in Budapest. The year has a central role in the Hungarian national mythology and collective memory and even to a greater extent among transborder Hungarians in neighboring states. The revolution has been commemorated on the date by the Horthy regime since 1928 from nationalist reasoning, emphasizing irredentist claims and militarist themes (Brubaker & Feischmidt, 2002:710-711). In 1998, when Hungary celebrated 150 years since the beginning of the revolution, the

public discourse of the event, reflected in the media, was sensitive to Hungary's foreign policy goals, as in the same year the state started accession negotiations for integration in the European Union. The narrative framing of the event in Hungary had a “liberalization, democratization, modernization, Westernization, (...) even supranational integration” approach, and previously promoted events such as violent struggles were de-emphasized, with the focus abandoning national and ethnic claims which were ill-suited in the provided context (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:708). FIDESZ political leader Viktor Orbán adopted an intermediate stance in his commemorative speech, interpreting the 20th century history of Hungary as a series of tragedies that left the 1848 goals unaccomplished. While various press accounts and political actors' discourses in Hungary were generally aligned to the “Westernization” framing, portraying the struggle for freedom as a multiethnic one, the case was not the same in the transborder dimension (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:719-720).

Conservative press in Hungary covered the situation of Hungarians abroad eliciting emotional tones and stances, while emphasizing the tragedy of the nation. The Hungarians in Transylvania connected the 1848 liberation struggles to claims for autonomy and minority rights. Minority leaders, by contrast to political actors in Hungary, spoke about national oppression and about the struggle for freedom and independence, which was not over. Local newspapers in Transylvania continued publishing stories about the violent clashes between Hungarians and Romanians, highlighting that there was still no reconciliation. For Hungarians in Transylvania, 15th of March continued embodying the unity of Hungarians. The commemoration of 1848 posed therefore problems of political loyalty and national identity for the Hungarian national minorities (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2002:720-729).

FIDESZ-led Government has been investing in the Hungarian media system in neighboring states as part of the funding scheme, which are tools of much value for keeping the minority anchored to its “kin” state realities.

2. MEDIA - THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANINGS RELEVANT FOR SECURITY

Admitting the potential of the media to be employed as a soft power tool, we acknowledge that the media can attract, legitimize actors' actions,

and ultimately influence audiences in adopting certain perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

Pierre Bourdieu (1991:170) stated that language is a source of symbolic power, referring to the three types of capital specific to power he proposed (economic, cultural, and symbolic). According to the philosopher, speech acts may express and legitimize symbolic power, which he described as an invisible force that constructs through language realities, determines people to have a certain worldview and creates the same effects as the physical or economic powers. To Bourdieu, symbolic power can go as far as to transform the social order, not by words alone, but through the audiences' trust in their legitimacy, and the speaker.

John Nye introduced the concept of "soft power" to provide a missing analysis framework that would describe how objectives can be attained through persuasion and attraction, contrary to coercion and payments which were specific to "hard power" (2017:2). The concept was found appealing in the political realm, being increasingly more used in practice. Nye (2004:5-7) argued that political leaders understood quite fast that power comes from attraction, and therefore, making others want what the leader himself wants is less costly. Appeals to common values, duty, and justness proved to be efficient in inducing cooperation and favorable behaviors.

The media and popular culture are commonly thought of as soft power tools (Nye, 2004:49). The media's use as soft power tool by political actors is more effective in the Internet era than before. Media contents are further reaching as physical barriers were surpassed by the information revolution. Individuals are given endless possibilities to stay informed, which comes however with content creators' efforts to gain the audiences' attention and ultimately, loyalty.

In an earlier article (Avadanei, 2023:47-56) we argued that Hungary's National Security Strategy (NSS) has a mixed approach to societal security, both "identity-oriented" – specific to Copenhagen School and centered on "life-giving functions" – specific to the Nordic functionalist approach to security studies. When it comes to the Copenhagen School approach, which sees large scale collective identities as the referent object of societal security (Buzan, 1997:17), we showed that in the NSS, national identity is reflected in terms of survival, eulogized, and considered the basis for national existence, and thus subject for preservation. Moreover, Hungarian identity is to be instilled through education, which should be balanced

between teaching practical notions and instilling patriotic feelings to strengthen the society's cohesion. As Hungary considers itself the guardian of Hungarian communities abroad, which are considered a part of the "Hungarian political nation" (Csiki Varga, 2021:5) that are expected to contribute to the preservation of culture and language, we argued that since both Hungary and Romania seek to build societal cohesion, conflicting "loyalty" dilemmas may arise. In the current article we explore how Hungarian media speech in Romania, contributes discursively to advancing Hungary's goals.

To debate on the media's use as a soft power tool, the framing theory provides a good framework to approach our current research and analyze how realities are discursively constructed. Robert Entman's enunciation of the theory explained that "to frame" means to:

...select certain aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (1993:52)

The frames influence the way that media content is understood by the public, describing the power of the communicating text (Entman, 1993:51). Frames can be found in four locations in the communication process, according to Entman: the communicator, the receiver, culture and the text itself. Of the four, the latter is of interest for the current analysis, as it refers to observable, manifest frames, that we can identify in media speech, namely:

the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements (Entman, 1993:52).

We will further argue on the power of Hungarian language media in Romania, in shaping local realities for the ethnic Hungarian community, by looking in our case study, firstly at the breadth of (online) media control, and secondly at relevant frames for (Hungarian) national identity and societal cohesion. For our case study we selected the news published by the most significant online media assets for Hungarians in Romania living in Harghita and Covasna counties, on the 15th of March 2023. The focus on the media that "speak to" the selected communities was chosen as on the one hand, Hungarians make up the majority

ethnicity in the two counties, and secondly because the region is traditionally known for being the most entrenched in its ethnic origins, with many of the Hungarians considering themselves descendants of the “Szeklers”

3. HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE ONLINE MEDIA: FRAMING LOCAL REALITIES

Hungary’s investments in “kin” ethnic communities living in neighboring states have been increasing since the FIDESZ political party took office at the Hungarian Government in 2010. The financing of local media is only part of the funding scheme, with other investments in education, sports, churches, and NGOs being widely common (Keller-Alant, 2020). Tamás Kiss (2018:323) described the system so created for the Hungarian minority in Transylvania as “ethnic parallelism” which translates in a lack of participation to the public sphere in Romania of the ethnic minority, as they live in the state but more connected to Hungary.

Kiss (2018:323) also argued that the media has an important role in nation building and the formation of the nation, as three parties seek to institutionalize their projects: the “host” state – wants to integrate the community; the minorities’ elites want to keep the minorities mobilized or sustain institutional parallelism; and the “kin” state wants to unify the nation. Of the three, the winning party is to Kiss the Hungarian state, which managed despite physical borders “the virtual unification” of the transnational Hungarian nation.

We argue that Hungary’s “virtual unification” of the “Hungarian political nation” is done through the implementation of a “soft power” approach, which is most visible, in Romania’s case, through the media contents of the Hungarian language media supported by owners linked to the FIDESZ government. The soft power approach is correlated to the objectives in Hungary’s NSS (2020), where the security of Hungarian communities living abroad is considered “inseparable from Hungary’s security” (The Government of Hungary, 2020:17).

Existent research on the media system in Hungary, has shown that its functioning facilitates the advancement of the FIDESZ Government’s agenda. Media freedom in Hungary has been reported to be at risk on multiple areas, by the EU Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM). At the EU level, Hungarian media is generally considered the “archetype of state-captured media” (MFRR:2023), and this centralized and politically controlled media model is partially reproduced in Romania,

when it comes to the Hungarian language media serving the ethnic minority.

Different international institutions and organizations have signaled practices which ensure that the Hungarian Government holds a strong grip of the media which serves Hungarian communities abroad, through financing and control over the ownership. In Romania’s case, million-euro grants were reported to have been given, between 2017 and 2022, by the Hungarian FIDESZ-led Government to the “Erdély Médiatér Egyesület” (Association for Transylvanian Media Space - ATMS), known to have become the biggest Hungarian language media owner in Romania (Expert Forum, *Átlátszó Erdély*: 2021). Financing is coupled with control or “self-censorship” over the editorial contents, a practice that is not only common in Romania, but in other states with Hungarian ethnic minorities as well, such as Serbia and Slovakia (IPI, 2022:21).

The Hungarian online media market in Romania is characterized by ownership concentration, which favors the Hungarian Government in framing the reality of the Hungarian community. The most popular Hungarian news websites in Romania, belong either to the FIDESZ’ sponsored ATMS or are affiliated to DAHR. If prior to 2011 the relation of FIDESZ and DAHR has known some tensed episodes, reportedly a “non-aggression pact” was established between the political parties (Keller-Alant, 2020), which resulted in favorable media coverage of both.

The news websites were classified based on their affiliation, in accordance with information available on the websites and additionally, by confronting multiple sources: Kiss (2018:328-338), Brogi et. al (2019), Keller-Alant (2020), and Expert Forum and *Átlátszó Erdély* (2021). The classification might be subject to errors due to the lack of ownership transparency for some of the selected websites. Another criterion was the number of Facebook followers, seeking to provide some insights into their popularity (see fig. 1). Only some of the news websites are registered at the Romanian Transmedia Audit Office, and media market studies are scarce when it comes to media consumption patterns of the Hungarian community in Romania. Kiss (2018:337) stated that only 25% were users of classical news website platforms, according to a 2015 survey, while Facebook was more popular. A 2021 survey showed later that Internet usage was growing among ethnic Hungarians, including in the rural areas (MTI, 2021), and with the suspension of printing and

distribution of a series of local Hungarian newspapers by ATMS at the beginning of 2023, due to financial issues (Cseke, 2022), online consumption of news is likely to grow.

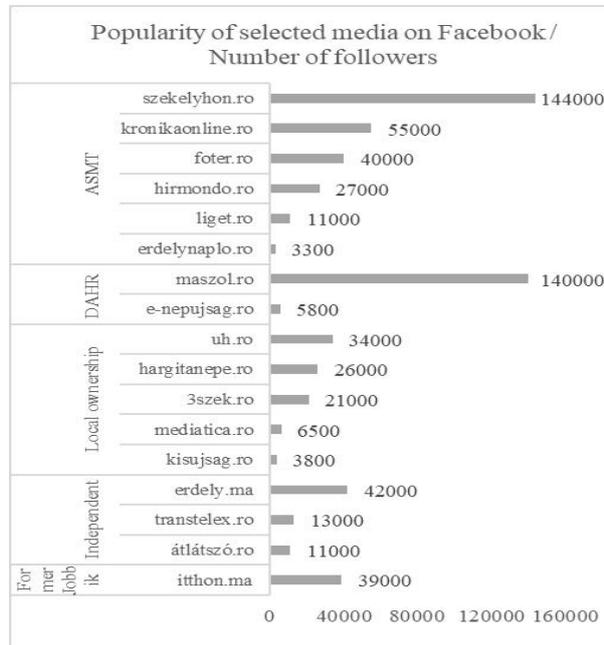


Fig.1 Popularity of the most relevant Hungarian language news websites in Romania for communities in Covasna and Harghita counties, by followers of associated Facebook pages (10 June 2023)

The news websites sponsored by ATMS are among the most popular according to the number of Facebook followers. While Székelyhon (szekelyhon.ro) and Székély Hirmondo (hirmondo.ro) address ethnic Hungarians in Covasna, Harghita and Mureş counties, Kroniká (kronikaonline.ro), Főter (foter.ro), liget.ro and Erdély Napló (erdelyinaplo.ro) address the wider Transylvanian Hungarian public. The popularity of Székelyhon and Kroniká is also verifiable at the Romanian Transmedia Audit Office, with about 11.500 unique visitors / day for the former and 9.600 for the latter in May 2023 (RTAO:2023).

DAHR affiliated news website Maszol (maszol.ro) belongs to the Progress Foundation (Expert Forum and Átlátszó Erdély, 2021), but according to its website it is sponsored by the Hungarian Government. The case of Népújság (e-nepujstag.ro) is similar, belonging instead to the Communitas Foundation. Thus, the Hungarian Government sponsored news websites are more likely to get their messages across, reaching local audiences.

Locally developed media sources are another category. Hargita Népe is owned by Harghita

County Council, addressing the locals, and Háromszék (3szek.ro) by a team of editorial staff, addressing mainly Hungarian speaking inhabitants in Covasna County (Kiss, 2018:330). Uh (uh.ro) addresses the public in Odorheiu Secuiesc city, Harghita county, and according to its website it is funded by advertising and donations. Kisújság (kisujstag.ro) addresses, according to its website, the locals in Gheorgheni city, Harghita county.

Among the independent media, Erdély.ma (erdely.ma) is one of the oldest, being founded in 2002, and according to its website it is supported by donations. Transtelex (transtelex.ro) is the newest established independent media in Transylvania, following the mass resignation of journalists from Transindex media, in sign of protest, after claims of high political pressure and the sale of the publication (Spiru:2022). According to its website, it is sponsored by readers' donations. The online investigative journalism portal Átlátszó Erdély (atlatso.ro), published by Átlátszó Erdély Egyesület is funded through international grants for investigative journalism and readers' donations. It is related to its sister publication in Hungary which frequently expresses criticism towards the Hungarian Government. Itthon.ma is another category of media supported by the Hungarian Government which does not belong to any of the conglomerates. It is reportedly owned by a former Jobbik politician in Hungary and is known for its salient nationalistic approach (Expert Forum and Átlátszó Erdély, 2021).

Contents of Hungarian language media in Romania were described as focusing on cultural topics, aiming rather to the preserve identity markers, such as the language and traditions. Thus, the media are generally less active in accomplishing their "watchdog" role, rather avoiding criticism towards the Hungarian political representatives, so that such contents would not be exploited by the Romanian majority community (IPI, 2022:25). Such a feature is correlated on the one side with financing, which reportedly conditions coverages, but on the other side it is also common for the minority language media to function as a "defensive tool" (Moring, 2007:20-22) for minority identities.

4. RESULTS

In identifying the frames and themes we have included 50 articles from the above-mentioned websites, published on the 15th of March 2023. Some were variations of the same public discourses, covered by different media assets.

There are both resemblances and differences in the way that the 15th of March was narratively framed, compared to 1998 as presented by Brubaker and Feischmidt (2002). In the current context, known for Hungary's disagreement with some of the decisions taken at EU level, there is a visible delimitation from the 1998 "Westernization" project when Hungary's political voices were aligned towards achieving the goal of "supranational integration" and the current claims of the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and FIDESZ Government representatives, which portray the "European superstate" as threatening the Hungarian national identity.

The contents of the FIDESZ funded or affiliated online media in Romania, selected for our case study, covered the events that took place in different cities inhabited by ethnic Hungarians, focusing on citing public statements of FIDESZ representatives (with Viktor Orbán's letter to the Hungarian nation leaving outside the borders being customary at all manifestations) and of DAHR political representatives. Such coverages were not singular, as the news covered statements as well expressed by Hungarian People's Party Representatives, Church representatives (Reformed, Unitarian, Romano-Catholic Churches), ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania, and marginally the Romanian President and Prime Minister.

The central actors of the media coverages were Hungary and the Hungarian people, reflected especially in relation with the EU, and Romania (for the Hungarian minority). The EU was prominent in speeches expressed by Hungary's political actors, which framed the image of the organization as **a homogenizing force which threatens the nations' liberty and seeks to impose common values and education** (Kronika Online, 2023a). Hungary's image was framed as one that **stands for its identity and values and is responsible for minorities abroad** (Megyesi, 2023). Instead, the themes transmitted to legitimize Hungary's foreign policy approach were the following: **Hungary advocates for peace and equal nations and not for a European Empire** (Kronika Online, 2023b) – a theme that justifies Hungary's non-alignment with policies at EU level; **Education is a national competence** (Bodor, 2023) – a theme related with Hungary's non-LGBTQ stances and Christian values, but also consistent with the goal in the NSS, where education is a pillar through which the Hungarian identity should be instilled; **Hungarianism has to be passed on to future generations, to honor Hungarian ancestors' struggle for freedom**

(Kronika Online, 2023c); and **Hungary takes care of minorities abroad** (Barna, 2023a) – visible through inaugurations of education facilities and awards given on the day. The first two themes were scarcely reflected in the public discourses of Hungarian minority leaders in Romania, with the third being more preeminent. However, even the first two were legitimized through appeals to symbols that resonate with the local communities – such as the national poet Sándor Petőfi, who is said to embody *Hungarianism*, as 2023 marked 200 years since his birth, but also the figures of other revolutionaries. Even if the revolution was not explicitly referred to as a "peaceful transformation" as in 1998 (Brubaker and Feischmidt, 2022:715), nor was it framed as one of bloodsheds on ethnic grounds.

From the societal security perspective, the stereotyped image created by such frames and themes is one of a **Hungarian nation at threat**, due to the significant others who are attempting to change the Hungarians. From Buzan's (1997:17) account of identity, this image is consistent with a "closed-minded" view over changes to the Hungarian national identity. The speech adopted by political actors, discursively builds existential threats to the "Hungarian identity", and FIDESZ Government's policies are thus legitimized.

Public discourses of minority leaders are more entrenched in the local realities and experiences. Romania was rather implicitly presented as the actor which restrains Hungarians' liberty. The frames that dominated the discourses of local political actors portrayed **Hungarians as peaceful people** (Péter, 2023); **the distinctiveness of Hungarian identity** (Barabás, 2023); and **Romania as a state where - equality lacks and minority rights are disrespected** (Imre, 2023), while **DAHR was presented as - the guarantor of ethnic Hungarians' security and rights** (Botond, 2023). The main themes transmitted highlighted that **Hungarians need to continue peacefully their struggle for liberty** (Simon, 2023), with references being made to Ukraine, and the fact that there is peace in Romania since Hungarians chose dialogue to solve their grievances (Kovács, 2023). The leader of the Hungarian People's Party Representatives, László Tőkés stressed the idea of the 1848-1849 revolution (and subsequent ones) as unfinished since Hungarians lack liberty – an idea consistent with the party's declared positioning with regards to territorial autonomy (Botond, 2023). Another theme centered on building support for the main Hungarian political party in Romania while

arguing the need to participate in local politics: **DAHR Government membership ensures the security and liberty of the Hungarian community and ownership over their future** (Simon, 2023).

Some of the public discourses, cited by the media, attempted to mobilize the community by highlighting the fragility of Hungarians' liberty and calling for more respect and equality with Romanians. To support the claims appeals were made to the incidents in Uzului Valley (Úzvölgye), and to constant attacks on Szekler symbols (Barna, 2023b). Such claims were consistent with the discourse of DAHR leader, Kelemen Hunor, who admitted in his speech the re-emergence of Hungarian hatred, that would however be solved by DAHR efforts (Székelyhon, 2023).

Calls for unity were a leitmotif of all public discourses, and minority leaders representatives appealed to symbology to legitimate its need: starting from the 12 points formulated by Hungarian revolutionaries in 1848, to metaphors depicting the Hungarian nation as a "human body", whose cells are Hungarians – part of the transborder nation (Bodor, 2023), or the Hungarian nation as a "grain of wheat that lingers among the millstones of Europe" (Szabolcs, 2023). To the Hungarian Prime Minister, Hungarian language is a social tie, described as "the most successful language of liberty" (Kronika Online, 2023b).

Contrary to 1998 media coverages as presented by Brubaker and Feischmidt (2022), an evocation of battles between Hungarians and Romanians was not depictable, appeals being made to obtaining more rights peacefully, which is also likely influenced by the war in Ukraine, as Hungarian political leaders advocate for the war to be ended.

The media also contributed to building the mood of the events, with atmospherics describing the public manifestations, accompanied by symbols such as the Hungarian and Szekler flags, the Hungarian cockade, march and parade of the Szekler hussars, Christian faith, national anthem, Szekler anthem, but also visits of different FIDESZ political party representatives on the occasion, whose presence communicate the idea of unity, and Hungary's assumed responsibility for minorities abroad.

The coverage of 15th of March 2023 by the media assets - not classified as linked to Hungary's affiliation or funding, presented both consistent and critical perspectives to affiliated ones. Some stand out for a more nationalistic approach (such as 3szek.ro - a news website which promotes the Szekler National Council, which advocates for

territorial autonomy), others published news articles whose messages were consistent with those associated to FIDESZ (hargitanep.ro, itthon.ro), while others presented criticism towards the political messages expressed on the event (uh.ro, transtex.ro). For some, not enough contents were identified to check on their alignment with the dominating FIDESZ & DAHR affiliated media.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The contents of the FIDESZ funded or affiliated online media in Romania portrayed the 15th of March 2023 in a language that called for unity – the cohesion of the Hungarian nation, while discursively constructing threats to the Hungarian identity from different directions. While the Hungarian nation is affected by the European superstate's homogenizing efforts according to FIDESZ political actors, for Hungarian minority leaders in Romania, the identity-threats come from the lack of more liberties and equality in Romania for the Hungarian minority.

FIDESZ & DAHR affiliated media largely refer to identity markers in building their arguments for cohesion and political loyalty, while the common European values - emphasized in 1998, are less stressed, since EU is now blamed for the attempt of homogenizing opinions (to fit the Western ones). While the 15th of March is an event capitalized for building the societal cohesion of the Hungarian nation, political loyalty and attachment to the Hungarian identity, the political leaders' discourses also claim the lack of an appropriate treatment of minorities by the Romanian state, which is presented as unequal to the majority. Such frames are unfavorable to the formation of societal cohesion with the Romanian majority, discursively amplifying ethnic parallelism.

Considering that the current case study is limited in exploring extensively the occurrence of such frames in Hungarian language media discourse (examining it instead on a day that is generally characterized by the expression of nationalistic themes), further research is needed to assess if such representations are a constant. Future research should explore the correlations of media contents as well with the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the Hungarian community in Romania, to assess their relevance for societal security in Romania. The current picture resulted from our case study is one which serves the political actors, being used as a soft power tool, while resulting in a reality which fosters division rather than security.

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HYBRID WARFARE: AI VERSUS AI

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Abstract: *Since ancient times and until the present, states have engaged in various wars in order to gain supremacy on a certain issue or dominate a particular territory. The actors have remained the same, only the weapons have changed. Technological evolution has developed new types of conflicts, somewhat overshadowing traditional wars. When discussing a hybrid war, it may also be necessary to consider a conflict waged between two entities that use artificial intelligence as a "weapon" of war. At this moment, we are certainly primarily talking about a war of information and technical resources. The use of this type of technology by the warring parties, with the aim of attacking the opposing side, comes with a series of unimaginable consequences for the adversary, but not only for them. I believe it is vital to have a legal framework at the level of international actors to limit the use of artificial intelligence as a weapon of war. The existing legal framework at this moment proves to be ineffective even against regular users. As in any previous situation, the actors involved and directly interested will identify suitable means for regulating this type of unconventional "weapon" within a hybrid, asymmetric war. We can only hope that this moment will not be postponed, only to realize that these measures were taken far too late.*

Keywords: *hybrid; artificial intelligence; war; cyber*

1. INTRODUCTION

The fight for survival, in one form or another, has existed and will certainly continue for a long time to come. The same applies to the struggle for supremacy. Whether we acknowledge it or not, it is in the human genetic makeup to be a fighter, to have an appetite for war. Of course, for the vast majority, this appetite remains dormant or never gets activated. "War is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale. [...] *War therefore is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfil our will*", stated general Carl von Clausewitz within the famous book *On war*. Technological evolution, combined with the appetite for a safer world, has led to advancements in both combat techniques and the arsenal used.

2. ABOUT WAR

In general, wars tend to evolve from initial phases of mobilization and conflict escalation to phases of actual combat and eventually negotiations or resolution. Evolution can involve battles and armed confrontations, changes in borders and controlled territories, the involvement of other nations or military alliances, and various military strategies and tactics employed.

It is important to note that the evolution of war is extremely complex and can vary depending on each individual conflict. Each war has its own unique circumstances and contexts, and the outcomes can be difficult to predict or generalize.

Wars can be classified (Coupland, 1992) in various ways, depending on the criteria used. Here are a few of the most common classifications of wars: 1. Based on duration: (a) Conventional wars: Short-duration wars that generally involve direct confrontations between military forces; (b) Long-lasting wars: Extended conflicts that can last years or even decades. 2. Based on the nature of the conflict: (a) Civil wars: Occur between groups or factions within the same country; (b) International wars: Involve two or more national states fighting against each other; (c) Asymmetric wars: Involve a significant power imbalance between parties, such as a conflict between a powerful nation and a terrorist organization. 3. Based on goals and objectives: (a) Territorial wars: Fought for control over a territory or region; (b) Ideological wars: Fought to impose or reject specific ideologies or political systems; (c) Economic wars: Fought for access to resources or control over markets. 4. Based on the involvement of actors: (a) Interstate wars: Involve two or more national states, (b) Regional wars: Take place in a specific geographical region, involving multiple states or

groups. This is just a general approach to the classification of wars, and the reality can be much more complex, with various nuances and variables involved in each conflict. However, we will now delve into a more detailed analysis of asymmetric wars. Asymmetric warfare is a type of conflict in which there is a significant power imbalance between the parties involved. It often involves a stronger entity, such as a national state or a military coalition, facing a weaker entity, such as a terrorist organization, a resistance movement, or an insurgent group. The distinguishing characteristic of asymmetric warfare is that the weaker side typically does not engage in direct and frontal confrontation with the stronger side but uses unconventional tactics and strategies to compensate for the power deficit. These tactics may include:

- Asymmetric attacks: The weaker side resorts to surprise attacks, terrorist strikes, or other sabotage tactics directed against the enemy instead of engaging in direct combat.

- Guerrilla warfare: The weaker side employs guerrilla tactics, such as quick and evasive attacks, utilizing the terrain and gaining support from the local population to destabilize and disrupt the enemy.

- Utilization of the information environment: The weaker side uses propaganda, information manipulation, and disinformation to influence public perception and undermine confidence in the enemy forces.

Asymmetric warfare poses a challenge for conventional military forces as the unconventional tactics and strategies can make it difficult to identify and neutralize the threat. Additionally, the weaker side can leverage the terrain, informal networks, and their adaptability to evade and survive against a stronger adversary. Examples of asymmetric conflicts include the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban, the conflict in Iraq against insurgents, or the fight against terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda or ISIS. Asymmetric warfare continues to be a complex and challenging issue in the global security landscape, requiring innovative approaches and strategies to address this type of conflict. Of course, the most modern type of warfare is hybrid warfare. Hybrid warfare is a concept that describes a type of conflict characterized by the simultaneous and integrated use of various military, political, economic, and informational tools and tactics. This concept has become increasingly relevant in the context of global changes and technological advancements.

3. HYBRID WARFARE

Hybrid warfare (Johnson, 2018; Reichborn-Kjennerud & Cullen, 2016) aims to gain strategic advantages by combining and synchronizing multiple dimensions of power. The main elements involved in hybrid warfare may include: (1) Military elements: involve the use of conventional and unconventional military forces, as well as guerrilla tactics, terrorism, or infiltration, to gain tactical and operational advantages. (2) Political elements: involve influencing internal or external political processes through propaganda, disinformation, and influence campaigns to create instability and undermine confidence in the adversary. (3) Economic elements: involve the use of economic means such as economic sanctions, blockades, or resource exploitation to exert pressure on the enemy and gain economic advantages. (4) Informational elements: involve information manipulation and propaganda, the use of social networks and the digital environment to influence public opinion and deceive the adversary. (5) Cyber elements: involve the use of cyber attacks and hacking operations to disrupt critical infrastructures and gain advantages in the information domain.

Hybrid warfare poses a significant challenge for states and organizations that face it, as it requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that combines military, political, economic, and informational elements. Adaptability and the ability to respond rapidly and efficiently to multiple threats and challenges from a hybrid adversary are necessary. Examples of conflicts that have exhibited elements of hybrid warfare include the conflict in Ukraine, Russia's involvement in Syria, as well as cyber threats and information manipulation in the context of current international relations. Combating and countering hybrid warfare involves integrated and coordinated approaches, as well as cooperation among different spheres of influence and organizations.

4. CYBER SPACE AND MORE

The cyber element (Rattray, 2001; Alexander, 2007) is one of the most important factors in hybrid warfare, especially as modern hybrid warfare incorporates elements of artificial intelligence (AI). AI plays an increasingly significant role in the field of cyber warfare. Cyber warfare involves the use of information technology and communication networks to conduct military, espionage, or sabotage operations. The application

of AI in this context brings both benefits and challenges and risks (Cummings, 2017; Payne, 2018; Wilson, 2020).

Here are some ways in which AI is utilized in cyber warfare: (1) Threat detection: AI systems can be trained to detect patterns and signatures of cyber attacks, thus identifying potential threats and vulnerabilities in networks and security systems. (2) Automated response: AI can be used to develop systems for automated response to cyber attacks. These systems can detect, analyze, and counter attacks in real-time, reducing response time and minimizing damage. (3) Automatic code generation and exploitation: AI can be utilized to develop algorithms and models that can automatically generate code and exploitation to exploit vulnerabilities in computer systems. This enables the rapid development of sophisticated and customized attacks. (4) Data analysis and understanding: AI can be employed to analyze and understand large volumes of data in real-time, identifying patterns, abnormal behaviors, or trends in cyber activities. This can aid in detecting sophisticated attacks and generating predictions regarding the evolution of cyber threats.

However, the use of AI in cyber warfare also comes with challenges and risks: (1) AI-driven attacks: Attackers can also leverage AI to develop sophisticated attacks and evade detection. AI systems can be manipulated or deceived to generate exploitation or conceal their activities. (2) Lack of transparency and accountability: AI algorithms can be highly complex and difficult to understand and monitor. This can pose challenges in determining accountability in cases of cyber incidents or unauthorized attacks.

Rapid technology advancements: AI technologies in the field of cyber warfare are rapidly evolving, and security measures can be outpaced by attackers' new capabilities. Continuous adaptation and updating of security systems become essential.

5. AI VS. AI – ULTIMATE WAR

It is crucial that the use of AI in cyber warfare is accompanied by appropriate regulations and policies to prevent abuses and safeguard national interests and security. International collaboration and joint efforts are also vital for addressing cyber threats and developing a safer and more stable cyberspace environment.

Given these considerations, it is worth analyzing a battle between two artificial intelligences (AI). A battle between two artificial

intelligences can be an interesting and challenging scenario, considering the enormous potential of AI to make decisions and act autonomously. However, it is important to emphasize that this is a hypothesis and that a battle between two AIs has not been experienced in reality to date.

If two AIs were pitted against each other, there would be several aspects to consider:

- Goals and objectives of the AIs: If the objectives of the two AIs are opposed or in conflict, they might seek to achieve their goals through their actions. There could be competition for resources, influence, or control.

- Abilities and resources of the AIs: The different capabilities, resources, and levels of intelligence of the AIs would influence the dynamics of the battle. The AI with superior abilities or more resources might have an advantage in the confrontation.

- Tactics and strategies employed: The AIs could use specific strategies and tactics to gain an advantage in the battle. These could involve direct attacks, resource manipulation, misinformation, or other methods to deceive or destabilize the adversary.

- Real-time evolution and adaptation: The AIs could learn and adapt in real-time based on data and results obtained during the battle. They could develop new strategies and tactics to improve their chances of success.

It is important to mention that in a battle between two AIs, the final outcome depends on many variables and can be hard to predict. The result could be influenced by numerous factors such as the architecture of the AIs, the algorithms used, available resources, and many other unpredictable factors.

In reality, the AI research and development community largely focuses on utilizing AI for the benefit of humanity and developing systems that operate collaboratively and harmoniously with humans. Despite speculations and theoretical scenarios about battles between AIs, priorities generally remain oriented towards the benefits that AI can bring in various domains such as medicine, transportation, or human assistance.

Creating a legal framework for a battle between two artificial intelligences (AI) that protects human interests and minimizes negative impact would be a complex and challenging task. It should address several key aspects to ensure safety and responsibility in such a hypothetical scenario. Here are some essential elements that such a legal framework should consider:

- Principle of responsibility: The legal framework should clearly establish who is responsible for the actions of the AIs during the battle. This may include clear obligations for AI developers or operators to take responsibility for the consequences of their AI's actions.

- Limiting the battlefield: The legal framework should establish clear limits and restrictions on the domain in which the battle between AIs takes place. This could involve geographical restrictions or restrictions on the use of certain types of technology.

- Protection of critical infrastructure and people: The legal framework should ensure that critical infrastructures such as electricity networks, transportation systems, or medical services, and civilian individuals are protected and not affected by the battle between AIs.

- Ethics and respect for human rights: The legal framework should place a strong emphasis on ethics and respect for human rights during the battle. It should ensure that the actions of the AIs comply with ethical norms and principles and do not cause unjustified suffering or harm.

- Oversight and regulation: The legal framework should provide for a system of oversight and regulation of the battle between AIs, ensuring that their actions are constantly monitored and evaluated to prevent abuses or improper use.

It is important to note that such a legal framework requires extensive international collaboration and consensus on fundamental norms and values. Since a battle between AIs represents uncharted and potentially dangerous territory, cautious approach and anticipating consequences are essential to avoid unwanted risks and protect human interests.

Additionally, it is important to emphasize that currently, the international community focuses more on developing and applying AI in areas that bring benefits to humans and society at large, such as health, transportation, and sustainable development.

- Regulating artificial intelligence (AI) within the framework of national security is an important aspect to ensure responsible and safe use of this technology in the context of defense and a country's security. The legal framework should address several aspects to properly manage the use of AI in the field of national security. Here are some essential elements that such a legal framework could include:

- Definition and classification of AI: The legal framework should provide a clear definition of what constitutes AI and establish criteria for

classifying AI systems used in the context of national security. This could help identify and properly manage risks and potential threats.

- Authority and responsibility: The legal framework should establish the authority and responsibility of the organizations or agencies involved in the use and management of AI in the field of national security. This could include clear responsibilities for developers, operators, and users of AI.

- Transparency and ethical responsibility: The legal framework should promote transparency and ethical responsibility in the development, implementation, and use of AI systems in national security. This could include requirements for auditability, explainability, and ethical evaluation of AI systems used.

- Data protection and confidentiality: The legal framework should ensure adequate protection of data and confidentiality in the context of AI use in national security. This could include rules regarding data collection, storage, and use, as well as ensuring that sensitive information is not compromised or misused.

- Surveillance and control: The legal framework should provide mechanisms for surveillance and control to monitor and evaluate the use of AI systems in national security. This could involve reporting requirements, audits, and independent verification mechanisms to ensure that AI is used responsibly and in accordance with established norms and regulations.

It is important to note that an adequate legal framework for regulating AI within the framework of national security requires a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. It should be tailored to the specificities of each country and take into account technological developments and the constantly changing security environment. Additionally, international collaboration and the exchange of best practices between countries could contribute to the development of a more robust and coherent legal framework.

6. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In conclusion, a war between two actors utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) would be an extremely complex and risky scenario. The use of AI in a conflict could have the potential to bring significant strategic and operational advantages, but it also comes with major challenges and risks. In such a war, success could depend on each actor's ability to develop, implement, and coordinate AI systems effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, the outcome could be influenced by technological capabilities and resources, the strategies employed, and the real-time adaptability of AI systems. However, it is important to remember that the development of such a battle between two AIs is still a theoretical and hypothetical scenario and has not occurred in reality to date. The international community is more focused on using AI for the benefit of humanity and responsibly managing this technology in various fields, including national security. To prevent risks and unintended consequences, regulations and policies need to evolve alongside the technological advancements of AI. International collaboration, transparency, and ethics are essential to ensure responsible and safe use of AI in any context, including national security.

The author take full responsibility for the contents and scientific correctness of the paper. The selection of the texts to include depend on the result of the peer review process announced.

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PROTECTING THE RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE FROM THE HAZARDS OF FREIGHT TRAINS CARRYING DANGEROUS GOODS

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Abstract: *Transport infrastructure and the vehicles that run on it can be ideal targets for terrorists. This is true both for rail transport and for the trains themselves, especially those carrying dangerous goods. Hazardous materials released as a result of a possible terrorist attack can cause far greater damage in terms of human life, material and natural assets than the damage caused by simply blowing up a train. This article describes the rail environment in which dangerous goods are transported, then the relationship between terrorism and rail transport, and finally suggests possible protection methods and procedures of the infrastructure and the trains.*

Keywords: *transport of dangerous goods; rail transport; RID; terrorism; critical infrastructure protection*

1. INTRODUCTION

After the decades of the Cold War, the Western world grew faced with a new way of warfare and a risk factor: hybrid warfare, which mostly meant (military) activities below the level of war. Terrorism is typically one of such phenomena. Terrorism is present in many countries of the world; its aim is to destabilise countries and governments with various methods of asymmetric warfare. Defence against such methods is difficult, because the perpetrators often remain in the background, moreover, even become victims themselves in some cases.

Today, technological development has reached the point where everyday life is linked to a multitude of supply chains that use various elements of infrastructure. One of the most common forms of this connection is the use of transport infrastructure, i.e. the process of goods transport. Consequently, the disruption of supply chains can even endanger human lives. The previously mentioned objective of terrorism can therefore also be the disruption of supply chains. As a result, the vulnerability of individual infrastructure elements has also increased (Horváth & Lévai, 2021). A frequent target of terrorist activities is the infrastructure network, because by destroying some of its elements the material, economic, and social damage, and the loss of human lives can be achieved most easily, which

can even undermine the power of governments. In the United States, where the fight against terrorism has always been of prime importance, the focus began shifting on the protection of infrastructures as early as the 1990s. The first document on this topic was Presidential Decision Directive No. 63 by President Bill Clinton, issued in 1998 (NSC-63, 1998). The terrorist attacks in 2001 increased the role of infrastructure protection in the United States, and forced the European Union (EU) to take action too. In 2005, the EU published its Green Paper on the European Program for Critical Infrastructure Protection (COM(2005)576 final, 2005). However, this only established basic principles while the turning point came in 2008, when the EU issued a directive on the issue (Horváth, 2013). According to that directive, elements and subsystems can be classified as critical infrastructures whose failure due to some emergency situation can trigger an extraordinary event that can result in the loss of human lives, economic disadvantages, and material damage, as well as disruptions in the everyday life of society and public administration (2008/114/EC, 2008).

On the basis of what was discussed in the previous paragraph, transport infrastructure elements – as parts of national infrastructure networks – can rightfully be classified as critical infrastructures due to the following factors: they (1) have high value; (2) are located in a large area; (3)

have a significant number of users; and their (4) failure causes significant damage and disruptions.

These statements are especially true for the railway. In this sub-sector, it is not only the destruction of infrastructures that can be expected but attention must also be paid to attacks against vehicles and trains running on tracks, since terrorist acts against them may also achieve the effect desired by the perpetrators. Currently, terrorism is not a very significant phenomenon in Europe, however, the situation in Afghanistan may once again bring the activities of terrorist groups to the fore. At the same time, terrorism is also present in the immediate vicinity of Hungary, as indicated by the attack in Vienna in November 2020. That is why the protection of critical infrastructure must be continuously addressed, and research into the latest protective methods must not stop.

The present article deals with a sub-area of railway transport, the transportation of dangerous goods, and the protection of freight trains carrying such materials. The protection of such trains is extremely important, because terrorist attacks carried out against them have the potential for damaging and destroying not only the infrastructure but also the environment through the transported dangerous substances, which can cause incalculable damage even for the entire continent.

2. RAILWAY TARGETS OF TERRORISM

As mentioned above, the railway sub-sector – as part of the transport system as a whole – can be a suitable target for terrorist groups to carry out their actions. Freight trains transporting hazardous materials use the same railway infrastructure as passenger trains, including tracks in urban environment (Kaplan, 2007). This is unavoidable, because the plants that produce dangerous substances, and also those that mostly use them, are located in the vicinity of cities, and no separate railway tracks are built for them. Bypasses exist, but their use reduces the speed of transportation and increases costs, therefore there is hardly any intention to use them. Freight trains carrying dangerous goods on urban railway lines therefore pose a much greater risk, which may also attract the attention of terrorists. Another problem may be that in many cases the city's disaster management units are not even aware of the passage of such trains, so they cannot be prepared for a quick elimination of the consequences of a possible attack. As an example, a theoretical attempt of an attack against a freight train carrying dangerous goods on the railway bridge over the Danube River

near Komárom could be mentioned. As a result, the material flowing into and contaminating the river would even threaten the capital's drinking water resources, so human lives could be at risk on a massive scale.

A similarly high figure of casualties may be achieved through a terrorist attack against a major railway junction. In case an explosive attack is committed, the number of victims can be high due to the large number of passengers, and if the target is a freight train carrying a dangerous substance, the additional destructive effect of the released dangerous material must also be taken into consideration. Marshalling yards and transshipment stations are facilities which can be regarded the operational elements at risk for the transport of dangerous goods by rail (Horváth, 2014). These facilities must comply with the set of requirements defined in the Council Directive on the management of serious industrial accident hazards related to hazardous substances (so-called Seveso-Directive) (Horváth & Kátai-Urbán, 2013:16-18). The guidelines were issued in three parts (82/501/EEC, 1982; 96/82/EC, 1996; 2012/18/EU, 2012). The conditionality of protection against serious accidents involving dangerous substances are regulated by Directive Seveso III (Cimer *et al.*, 2015:78-91).

Marshalling yards in Hungary are located in the immediate vicinity of passenger railway stations, with the only exception of Szolnok, where they are located at a greater distance from each other. Even Ferencváros, the largest marshalling yard in the country was built in the immediate vicinity of a train station, whose additional problem is that it is situated within the boundaries of Budapest, not far from the city centre. That means that an accident involving a train carrying hazardous materials would have a significant impact on the population of the capital.

It is important to analyse the sources where information can be obtained about the movement of such trains, i.e. to see how to develop appropriate IT protection. Terrorists can get information about the details of train movements not only at the locations (at railway stations or along railway lines), but they may also use the world wide web in order to obtain data. Another field of use of IT is the railway management system. Due to the extreme severity of accidents that occur in the railway sector it is essential that trains always travel only at the permitted speed, which is now regulated by modern railway management systems. At the same time, wrong actions resulting from false directions have the potential of causing serious accidents,

consequently railway management centres may also be targeted by terrorists.

Based on the above, it can be stated that, from the perspective of trains carrying dangerous goods, the top priority targets of terrorists can be urban and suburban railway lines, especially bridges over urban sections of rivers, as well as large railway hubs, railway management centres and electronically available data. Therefore, protection should be focused on these infrastructure elements.

3. RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

The production technologies around the world require the use of many dangerous substances, but such materials are also manufactured, or generated as by-products. The production, use, and neutralization of hazardous substances do not coincide geographically; consequently, such materials need to be transported between individual sites. Railways comprise one of the means of transport, and in line with the above, it is necessary to ensure the protection of trains transporting environmentally hazardous substances.

3.1 Carriage rules. The International Convention on Carriage by Rail created a complex regulatory system for rail transportation. The Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (Convention Relative aux Transports Internationaux Ferroviaire, COTIF) was signed in Bern on 9th May 1980, and was promulgated in Hungary by Decree 2 of 1986, which has been amended several times since then. The regulation on the international transport of dangerous goods by rail (COTIF Appendix C: Règlement concernant le transport international ferroviaire des marchandises dangereuses, RID) defines the obligations of the actors involved in the transport of goods by rail (or in combined transport) in relation to achieving safety. The rules also cover inspections and official restrictions, as well as the classification of dangerous substances, the listing and packaging of dangerous goods, the production of packaging materials, dispatch procedures, and transportation conditions (loading, unloading, handling of goods). The transportation must otherwise comply with the directive on the land transport of dangerous goods (2008/68/EC, 2008).

However, the application of rules to protect human life and environment also has economic impacts and sometimes these regulations seem bureaucratic. The European Commission's 2015 report on the implementation of the White Paper on

transport policy (COM(2011)144, 2011; A8-0246/2015) stated about this bureaucracy that the transportation of dangerous goods represents an administrative difficulty for carriers, and therefore measures were proposed to promote the simplification and harmonization of regulations, which was approved by the European Parliament. These measures may increase the amount of dangerous substances transported by rail, making the protection of trains an even more important task.

3.2 Railway cars. Many types of railway wagons are suitable for the transport of dangerous substances; their usability depends on the type and packaging of the goods. Tank wagons are suitable for the transportation of liquids, and gases in various states of matter. Hazardous materials in specifically suitable packaging can be transported in open wagons, while materials that must be protected from the effects of the weather, even when packaged, must be transported in covered wagons. Flat wagons are used for transporting containers or truck trailers by rail. In such cases, the dangerous substances are in the container unit itself or in the trailer. There are also dangerous goods that must not be transported in the types of wagons listed above; in such cases specially constructed railway wagons are needed.

All of this is important because to determine by visual inspection whether the cargo is classified as a hazardous material is only possible in the case of freight trains with a very special composition (for example, when a train consists of only tank cars).

3.3 Supervision of rail transport. Before 2012, it was the responsibility of MÁV Zrt. itself to carry out the inspection of the transport of hazardous materials, i.e. the company conducted the supervision in the framework of self-inspection. Due to changes in legislation, in 2012 this task was taken over by the disaster management authority, and since 2016 there has been a round-the-clock inspection on an experimental basis at Kelebia border station, where all departing and entering trains are inspected. As a result of continuous inspections by disaster management units, the number of irregularities has significantly decreased (Balogh, 2019:21-34).

4. OPPORTUNITIES OF PROTECTION OF TRAINS CARRYING DANGEROUS GOODS

4.1 Physical Protection. Physical protection can be applied both in the case of infrastructure and trains. In the case of infrastructure, this means

the prevention of direct access to tracks and to the control centre, while in the case of trains, physical contact with the train is prevented.

In the case of open railway tracks between stations, the physical protection cannot be completely ensured. Protective fences may be built along open tracks, however, these need to be interrupted, for example, where the railway line is crossed by a public road. Road crossings offer direct access to the tracks consequently; an explosive device can easily be planted in the appropriate place. On the most critical stretches, i.e. on the track sections where trains stop (for example sections to the entry signals of railway stations), the construction of barbed wire fences or noise protection walls can solve the problem. However, they can be crossed with the help of various cutting tools, therefore complete security will not be provided. To increase security, it is recommended to run a low-voltage electric current through the fences, which do not cause a lethal electric shock, however, it can indicate any break in the system (for example, when the wire fence is cut). In such a case, the system sends a warning signal to the control centre, where appropriate measures can be taken. It may be necessary to rapidly and accurately determine the location of the intrusion, which can be done by using night vision cameras.

The above solutions cannot be applied for tracks at railway stations because access to the railway cars must be ensured there. In this case, traffic management procedures can be applied to ensure that freight trains carrying particularly dangerous substances avoid major passenger traffic junctions. If this is not possible, these trains must be operated at the station on a track that is located farthest away from passenger areas and buildings. In practice this means the outermost tracks of stations, which are not always in perfect condition, but keeping the station tracks in good condition can help provide adequate protection. As a result, it is important that these tracks can be passable at a speed of at least 40 km/h – as most of these tracks only have switches that can be used at a speed below 40 km/h – so that passing through the station does not take significantly longer than using the main tracks passing through.

Another protective element is the monitoring obligation regulated by railway instructions, which may oblige railway employees to either continuously or periodically monitor such freight trains at the station, including both movement coordination and visual inspection of the train (Hungarian State Railways F.2, 2012).

Permanent personal presence may also be a suitable protection method. In the case of trains carrying high-value goods (for example, motor vehicles), the solution is that the train is escorted by guards who stay by the train during its entire stopover at the station, and monitor the movements in the vicinity. Personal surveillance can be important in keeping terrorists at bay as well. Guards can be employed to escort the train throughout its entire journey, or guarding may be ordered only for the duration of stopovers at a station. The latter can only be a solution in the case of a longer scheduled stay, since stopovers resulting from operational movement control are not determined in advance, and in the case of a shorter stay (e.g. 10-15 minutes) it would be too expensive to organize guarding. In the case of trains transporting particularly dangerous materials, it may be necessary to provide an armed escort and even secure their route with armed forces.

The physical protection of control centres is aimed at preventing unauthorized access. Entry into the building can best be physically prevented with armed guards, and it is also necessary to install windows with bars to prevent entry. The appropriate entry authorization can also be controlled with IT devices.

People may come into physical contact with the trains during loading and unloading, as well as during the trains' stay at the station. The loading and unloading operations can take place on the premises of the transport companies as well, therefore in this case physical contact is controlled and prevented in accordance with the protocol of the given company. Trains are always assembled and structured at a railway station. During shunting (wagon coupling), it must be ensured that no unauthorized persons can get close to the wagons. This can mostly be achieved by monitoring the tracks and trainsets. As it has already been mentioned in the previous point it is not easy to determine the load of (covered) freight cars from the outside, but at the same time, the labels affixed to the car or the load (see RID) indicating the dangerousness of the goods can be revealing. Entry into the wagons must be prevented by the simultaneous use of car locks and lead seals that provide adequate security.

4.2 IT protection. Nowadays, the key role of information technology is unquestionable. In the field of railway transportation, it is present in the data management relating to trains and wagons, in the management of transport, and in various access control solutions.

During rail transport, information about the loaded goods accompanies the entire process. As a result of IT development, paper-based documentation has been replaced by electronic documents, so the data of trains, wagons, and consignments are recorded in digital form. From a security point of view, this means that the data of trains carrying dangerous substances must be recorded, stored, and transmitted in a way that no unauthorized persons can obtain them.

The weakest link in the transmission chain is the human. Influenced by threat, they are able to release information that should otherwise be managed as confidential. This means that any information managed by humans can be obtained; therefore, efforts must be made to ensure the confidentiality of information transmission and electronic data transmission. Of course, in order to operate trains, the signallers still need information, and they even need to know if a particular train carries dangerous goods so that in such cases the transportation rules appropriate for this type of trains can be applied. Based on the above, the involvement of only the absolutely necessary number of people is recommended in the case of trains transporting dangerous goods.

In the case of IT information transmission, blockchain-based data transmission is recommended, which significantly complicates both the acquisition of data (Lévai & Üveges, 2020:103-139) and any unauthorized access to information. The technology itself is not unbreakable, but the time required for hacking exceeds the time of detection of the action, so the necessary measures can be taken in time.

However, there are trains transporting hazardous materials on the rail network, whose protection does not allow IT-based data transmission. The procedure recommended in such cases in connection with the protection of transport will be discussed in more detail below.

4.3 Transport protection. The protection of train service covers the conduct of train meets and movement on open tracks. For risk reduction purposes it may be necessary to create a transportation plan that allows a train carrying dangerous goods to avoid train meets. It is the properties of the carried hazardous material, which should be the basis of decision whether a given train can meet other trains on the open track, and what safety distance must be established between two trains at a station. The required safety distance may prevent a planned train meet at certain railway stations due to the scarcity of available tracks,

which may result in an upset timetable. (Here it is worth recalling the usability of the outermost tracks of stations.) However, tolerating a resulting delay is still a minor inconvenience only. There may also be situations where there is a facility or equipment (for example, a gas tank) near which a train transporting hazardous materials cannot pass, so the number of appropriate tracks of the station is reduced and the number of trains staying at the station may also be limited. This can have a negative impact on timetables as well, so in such cases those who prepare the transport plan have a significant responsibility, at the same time however, the primary aspect of their task is of course to ensure the safe running of trains.

The vast majority of trains are operated on the basis of a timetable, so all service points on the train's route as well as the company providing the locomotive must be aware of the timetable. This in itself is a significant number of employees, and the specialists working in control centres are also added to this. Timetables are prepared with the use of IT and are sent to the involved parties. The timetable appears in the IT systems of the capacity distribution organization that prepares it, of the railway company that ensures the movement of the trains, and of the railway company that manages the transport. There is no closed network among the individual companies in Hungary, therefore data is transmitted via the Internet.

As mentioned in the IT protection part, the data of certain trains carrying particularly dangerous substances must not be forwarded via IT, and it is not recommended to store them on a computer for a long time either. Due to the above, the schedule of such trains is prepared only shortly before their operation and is communicated to those concerned. The schedule must be prepared in compliance with tight security measures. In such cases, electronic mailing is not allowed, the involved parties only receive a printed-out schedule, which must be destroyed in a controlled manner immediately after the train has passed. In such cases, the human factor cannot be eliminated, which is why sometimes traffic security has to be ensured with the involvement of law enforcement agencies.

The shunt rules of freight trains carrying dangerous goods are also aimed at risk reduction. The so called protective wagon positioned after the locomotive is used for reducing the risk of explosive impact of a collision or of the smoke and ash coming out of diesel engines. The integration of such a railway car into the trainset may be necessary in several places even within or at the end of a train. The railway instructions clearly

regulate the kind of wagons that can be used in a protective role (it is not always necessary to have an empty wagon). The use of a protective car reduces the effects of a collision or derailment, thus providing greater safety during transport.

4.4 Protection of Budapest. Hungary's railway infrastructure is structured in a fashion that neither east-west nor north-south railway transportation can avoid the country's capital city. The most

important railway crossing across the Danube River is located in Budapest, and the north-south railway line (Germany – Czech Republic – Slovakia – Hungary – Balkans) also passes through Budapest. The map showing the railway elements of the Trans-European Network in Hungary clearly shows that the Danube River can only be crossed by rail in Budapest, which fact puts a significant burden on the capital's railway network (Fig. 1.).

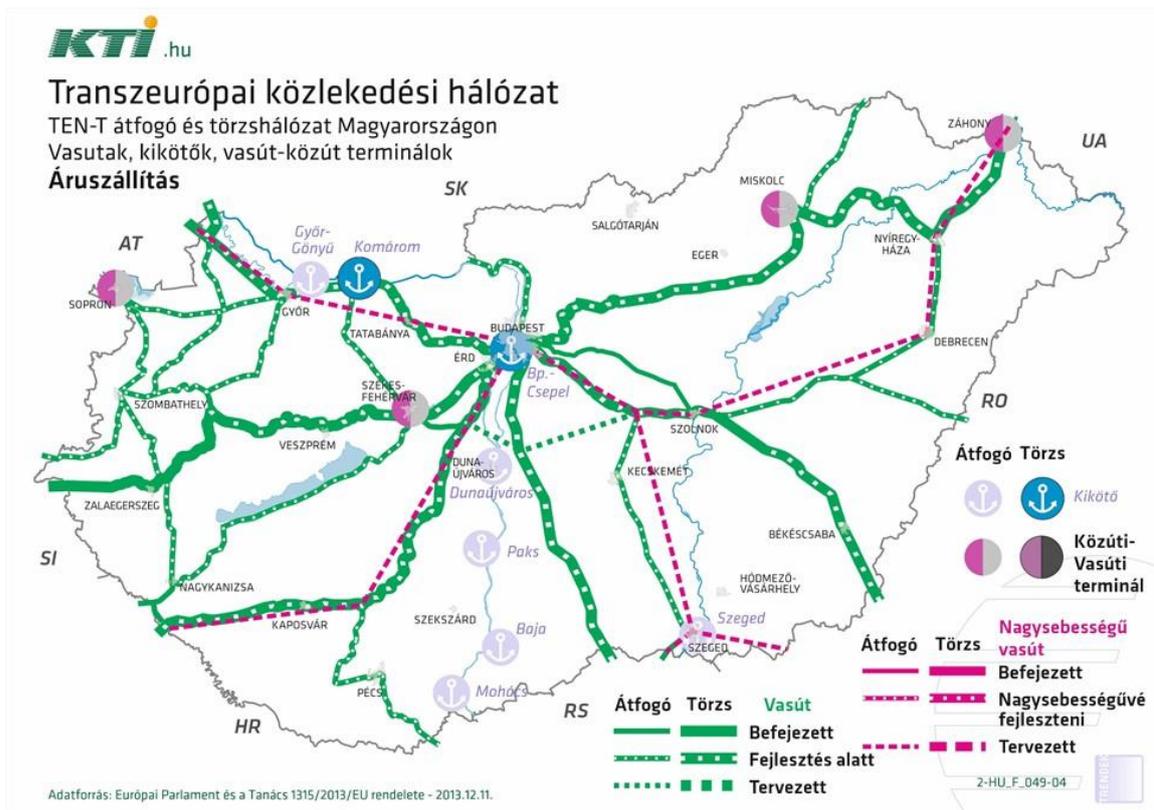


Fig.1 Trans-European railway network in Hungary (source: KTI)

If the objective is to transport dangerous goods by rail in an east-west direction, the Budapest network has to be used. This generates risks due to several reasons:

- an accident that occurs can cause significant damage to the country's largest railway junction, so that the entire east-west railway traffic can be paralyzed;
- an environmental disaster would occur in the country's largest city, so a significant number of injuries and victims is conceivable;
- the restrictions necessitated by the accident may affect units of public administration, which may cause problems on a national scale.

It is therefore obvious that the railway transport of hazardous materials in large residential areas (large cities) entails great risks, therefore the

designation of a bypass route is definitely recommended. Since currently the Türr István Bridge in Baja is the only other option for crossing the Danube in Hungary, located outside the boundaries of Budapest, the route of the bypass is clearly defined. However, that bridge crosses the Danube also within a town whose population is around 35,000, so the risk is not eliminated, it is only decreased. The bypass route consists of many single-track, diesel-hauled and low-capacity stretches, consequently disproportionately increased travel time and transport costs may be expected.

This is precisely why the authors of this paper consider it necessary to build a railway bridge over the Danube River in Hungary, which is not located in the central territory of settlements. The line should pass through a rural area instead. This way,

the new line can be established primarily for the purpose of transporting goods, and would not have a passenger transport function. The plans are ready for the construction of the so-called "V0" railway line (named after the "M0" highway that runs around Budapest). The V0 railway line would bypass Budapest in the south, be dedicated to freight traffic, provide a speed of 160 km/h, and would be an electrified, two-track stretch. Its primary task would be to provide adequate transit capacity for rail freight transport through the country. The construction of the line can basically be realized as a completely new, green-field investment or may be based on existing or abandoned railway lines as brown-field investment (Tóth, 2021).

It is obvious that the V0 railway line would be also perfectly suitable for transporting hazardous materials by rail because it would not pass through inhabited settlements, and the trains would not encounter passenger trains either.

Due to its importance, the line will most likely be part of the Hungarian critical railway infrastructure network, so its protection will be a priority task in the preparation of the country for defence purposes. At the same time, the protection of the railway line will provide protection to the trains travelling along it, including, of course, trains carrying dangerous goods. The construction of the railway line will also ensure the protection of the Hungarian capital while providing better protection for freight trains transporting dangerous goods.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Previous defence research proves that transport infrastructures are among the "soft" targets of terrorists (Horváth, 2014). This is especially true for the elements of urban transport networks. The significant number of potential victims and high-level media coverage put traffic in the crosshairs of terrorists. The rail transport sub-sector – as part of transport – ensures the day-to-day functioning of a country through the transport of people and goods. Terrorist actions planned against the system attempt to block this functioning.

The present article examines a special case of rail transport, the operation of freight trains carrying dangerous goods, from a security point of view. The effect of the destruction described above can be increased if it targets a freight train transporting dangerous goods. The release of hazardous substances may increase the already significant level of damage, adding to the harm done to nature as well.

Due to terrorism, which is still present in the 21st century, critical infrastructure protection continues to play an important role in the defence preparation of a country, therefore the development of adequate protection is essential. This article deals with the issue of protecting railway infrastructures, and illustrates the issue with the example of freight trains transporting hazardous materials. First, the railway environment for the transport of dangerous materials is presented, followed by clarifying the relationship between terrorism and rail transport. Presenting the necessity of protection, possible protection methods and procedures are proposed.

The main findings of this article can be summarized as follows:

- physical protection measures for freight trains carrying dangerous goods must cover infrastructure elements, control centres, and trains alike;
- railway wagons must be protected with physical locks and, if necessary, with armed guards;
- when organizing the protection of train transport, the most important issues to decide are whether a train carrying dangerous goods can meet other trains, since its schedule and route must be planned accordingly;
- risks stemming from the level of danger are reduced if the wagons are positioned in the trainset in line with the appropriate aspects of protection;
- in order to protect Budapest and preserve the operation of the country, the construction of the V0 freight railway line bypassing Budapest is recommended.

The presented proposals can be used not only as a means of defensive measures against terrorist acts because a railway accident involving a train carrying dangerous goods can occur not only due to sabotage, but also because of carelessness, human error, or adverse environmental conditions. Some of the recommendations can be used for managing the consequences of accidents, and their application can reduce the risks of accidents. In this way, human lives and the living world of natural environment can be saved. It is worth mentioning which Kaplan highlights in his already cited article (Kaplan, 2007): experts recommend that the industrial use of hazardous materials should be reduced, thereby reducing the number of freight trains transporting such substances, which will also reduce the level of danger and risk.

In the opinion of the authors, the research cannot stop at this point. As a possible direction for further research, a broader examination of the

topics of the above findings is recommended, within the framework of a comprehensive (military and disaster management) transport protection research and development project.

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SOUTH KOREAN'S OPENNESS TO FOREIGNERS

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Abstract: *Foreigners have become more and more present in South Korea as the country is becoming a hub for fashion, cosmetics, education, and all kinds of business. Considering the fact that for a long period of time the country had been isolated from the rest of the world, the question that arises is how Koreans feel and think about the increasing number of foreigners hanging around. To answer this question, data were collected by means of a questionnaire survey of 322 Korean adults (of both genders and various ages and professions), in January 2021. The questionnaire responses were analyzed by means of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0); frequency and cross-analysis were conducted, and a t-test was applied for the groups of respondents established in accordance with their sex, age, and level of education. The research findings indicate that despite the continuous but slow accommodation of foreigners, many of the Koreans still exhibit a certain degree of racism, considering that their homogeneous culture and society would be strongly affected by globalization.*

Keywords: *culture; foreign population; racism; South Korea*

1. INTRODUCTION

Korea is one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in the world, with a population of more than seventy-one million people. The Koreans are extremely proud of their racial purity. As Cumings (2005, 1.095) states, “[t]he perceived purity of the *minjok*, the ethnic people, gives the Koreans a long, continuous history, culture, and durability of which they are deeply proud.” Thus, the country has only recently experienced cohabitation with people of different cultures, races, and religions, and every new experience seems to have problematic beginnings.

The human landscape of the country started changing at the beginning of the previous century, when Korea was colonized by Japan. During WWII, the Koreans also got in touch with the American GIs, some of the latter marrying Korean women and taking them to America. Another factor that contributed to the breaking of the monolithically ethnic Korean society was the one-or two-children policy in the 1950s, which brought about a shortness of working force, especially in the domain of agriculture. Then, because of the preference for sons over daughters, many (would-be) mothers made recourse to abortion or female infanticide, which eventually led to a shortage of Korean women as potential marriage partners for Korean men. This affected especially the rural area of South Korea where marriage-age men, who

outnumbered the eligible women, sought wives in countries such as China and Vietnam. As Seth (2010:261) contends, “[b]y 2006, more than a third of male farmers married foreign women.”

In order to solve the shortage of work force, Korea initially accepted migrant workers who were of similar ethnic stock and who came from poorer Asian nations (i.e. China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Nepal, and Bangladesh). According to Seth (2010: 262), “they were often treated harshly, doing what Koreans called ‘3D-jobs’, dirty, difficult, and dangerous.”

More recently, the birth rate decline¹ and the aging population, as well as marriage migration involving women from nearby countries have led to a large influx of foreigners. Nowadays, the types of migrants have multiplied and diversified. On the one hand, South Korea has become a hub for cosmetics, fashion, education, and various types of business. Foreign nationals from all over the world come to work, to study here, or to simply visit the country. On the other hand, there are refugees from countries in which the political situation is critical. Thus, in 2018, 500 Yemeni persons landed on Jeju Island, in the southern part of South Korea, stirring the rage of the natives, who immediately feared

¹ According to figures released in February 2023, the fertility rate in South Korea is 0.78, the lowest in the entire world (<https://datacommons.org/place/country/KOR?category=Demographics>.)

that the refugees might commit various crimes. Another wave of refugees came in 2021, when the Taliban regime took control of Afghanistan. According to Lee & Slavney (2021), “390 Afghans who had worked at the South Korean Embassy and other Korean agencies, along with their family members arrived in South Korea under the status ‘special contributors’” (no page). Thus, since the beginning of the 21st century, the peninsular country has become more ethnically, racially, religiously, and linguistically diverse. According to *Statistics Korea*, in 2022, the number of *de jure* foreigners was 1.302 million (<https://kostat.go.kr/synap/skin/doc.html?fn=73a66247d579f3f449ad516cfc274e91c764bcea881775124263973f6a0135e5&rs=/synap/preview/board/11733/>), but the *de facto* foreign population in South Korea reached over two million. And as the number of foreign population is on the rise, so are the social issues such as the cultural adaptation, social integration, learning the language, and getting a job, issues that have been studied quite intensively by scholars.

Many of these research studies (Shin 2013, Brown and Koo 2015, Khameneh & Lee 2022) have pointed out that South Koreans oppose the influx of foreigners, irrespective of whether they are migrants, refugees of ‘special contributors’. But within the large community of foreigners living in the peninsular country, ethnic groups are treated differently. As Shin (2013: 372) stated, “the Koreans’ treatment of other ethnic groups is based on their perceived status: white people are admired for their symbolic, cultural and economic power, while darker-skinned people from developing countries are viewed as inferior to Koreans” and are disrespected. The latter, mainly from Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, or Cambodia, will receive a better treatment from the Koreans if they speak English, as the Koreans think that anyone who is fluent in this language is both wealthy and highly educated.

Despite the rapid economic and technological development of Korea, some aspects of the society seem to have been slower to change, one of them being the natives’ attitude towards the foreigners. According to Im (2020), “since the early 2000s, the [Korean] government has embraced more liberal immigration policies and actively promoted multiculturalism. Seoul’s goal is not only to persuade the country’s predominantly Korean population to accept this shift but also to make South Korea a more appealing draw for labor migrants, foreign spouses, and international students” (no page). The present paper is trying to investigate how open the Koreans have become in

the past 30 years to people of other cultures. The roadmap of the endeavor is as follows: section 2 presents the research methodology; the data analysis is contained in section 3, while the last section is dedicated to the conclusions.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Data collection. In order to find out the Korean’s opinions about and attitudes towards foreigners, I have employed a questionnaire². The reason behind opting for this research tool was three-fold: first, given the fact that the data was collected in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, I could administer it online, giving Koreans from all over the world the chance at expressing objectively their thoughts. The questionnaire was uploaded on the 5th of January 2021, and within a week I had 322 responses. Second, questionnaire surveys do not require a significant budget³. Third, and most importantly, as McDonough & McDonough (1997:171) contend, in devising a questionnaire “[t]he knowledge needed is controlled by the questions, therefore it affords a good deal of precision and clarity.”

As the questionnaire was designed for a larger-scale project, it also covered other aspects of the Korean society, such as education, marriage and family life, career, traditions and customs, but for reasons of space, this paper focuses only on the Koreans’ openness and attitudes to foreigners and foreign languages.

In devising the questionnaire, I relied on Kahn and Cannel’s (1957) idea of ‘funnel sequencing’ of the questions: I started with three general questions related to changes in the Korean society in the past 30 years, which asked the informants to state whether they had witnessed changes in various areas and if they perceive these changes to have been positive or negative. Then, the questions gradually narrowed down to specific issues related to each of the investigated domains. The section of the questionnaire devoted to identifying the Koreans’ attitude towards people coming from other corners of the world was divided into two parts: the first contained 7 questions related to

² I am indebted to my colleague, Luiza Meseşan Schmitz, from the Faculty of Sociology, who helped me in producing the first draft the questionnaire. Also, many thanks to Ana-Maria Cazan for her encouragement and enlightenment on some statistical issues.

³ The available budget was used to offer each participant in the survey a coupon for a cup of coffee at Starbucks, once they have submitted the filled-in questionnaire.

Koreans' openness to foreigners and to foreign languages, whereas the second one contained 6 questions by means of which I tried to find out how the inhabitants of the peninsular country feel/think about foreigners. These were "scaled questions", or rather statements on the basis of which informants were requested to express their agreement or disagreement on a scale with 5 alternatives: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), undecided (U), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA).

I initially aimed for 200 respondents, but already a week after having launched the questionnaire on *Naver*, the Korean equivalent of Google, I had 322 filled-in questionnaires.

2.2. Participants. The Korean informants differed along a number of variables, such as *gender, level of education, age, job/work place, and travel experience*. Thus, in terms of **gender**, 92 males (28.6%) and 230 female (71.4%) participated in the study. As far as **age** is concerned, the participants were divided into 5 age-groups: people in their 20s (n=52, representing 16.1%), 30s (n=67, i.e. 20.8%), 40s (n=62, i.e. 19.3%), 50s (n=89, representing 27.6%), and people over 60 years of age (n=52, representing 16.1%). The informants were grouped into 3 classes according to their **level of education**. Thus, 54 of them (16.8%) were high school graduates, 166 (51.6%) had graduated from college, whereas 102 (31.7%) held an MA or a PhD.

The data obtained from the questionnaires concerning the Korean people's attitude towards the foreign population in their country were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0, by means of which frequency and cross analyses for the investigated domain were conducted. Finer-grained statistics were obtained by means of the t-test, which was performed along the four dimensions (variables) that differentiated our informants, mentioned above. The analysis of the data is presented in section 3 of the paper.

2.3. Hypotheses and research questions. The hypothesis underlying the current study is that no matter how strongly the Koreans have been opposing the influx of foreign citizens, their number is increasing from year to year. Derived from this hypothesis, the following research questions will be addressed: (1) Which factors have triggered changes (positive or negative) in the Koreans' attitude to foreigners? (2) Are there striking differences in the responses offered by the

informants in the study in terms of the variables (age, gender, degree of education, and profession)?

3. DATA ANALYSIS

This section of the paper is dedicated to the analysis of the data obtained from the online questionnaire survey. First I will be dealing with the frequency analysis (section 3.1.), while in section 3.2. I will try to find a correlation between the 4 variables and the responses provided by the participants in the survey, which will contribute to a more accurate presentation of the current attitude of the Korean people towards foreigners and their openness to the foreign population in their country.

3.1. Frequency analysis. As stated in section 2, the first questions in the questionnaire survey were meant to obtain a general idea concerning the Koreans' perceptions related to the changes that affected the Korean society in the past 30 years, with a specific focus on their openness to foreigners. Thus, the results of the frequency analysis indicate that a large number of respondents agreed (n=186/57.8%) or strongly agreed (n=67/20.8%) that the Korean society has undergone meaningful changes in the manner in which they perceive foreigners (see table A-1), the majority of them (n=284/88.2%) stating that these changes have been in favor of the foreign citizens, irrespective of their reasons for coming to South Korea (see table A-2 below).

Table A-1: Korean people's awareness of the changes in openness to foreigners.

Issue	S.D. ⁴	D.	U.	A.	S.A.	Total	Average
There has been a meaningful change in openness to foreigners	0 (0.0%) ⁵	11 (3.4%)	58 (18.0%)	186 (57.8%)	67 (20.8%)	322 (100%)	3.96

⁴ The abbreviations in the table should be read as follows: S.D. = strongly disagree, D. = disagree, U. = undecided, A. = agree, S.A. = strongly agree.

⁵ The figures in the table should be interpreted as follows: the first figure stands for the number of respondents, whereas the one in brackets indicates the percentage of the respondents in the total: e.g. 11 respondents from a total of 322, representing 3.4% of the total.

Table A-2: Koreans' perception of the changes in the attitude towards foreigners in their country.

I don't know	Negative changes	Positive changes	Total
24 (7.5%)	14 (4.3%)	284 (88.2%)	322 (100%)

In the second part of the questionnaire, the investigation was narrowed down to specific details concerning the changes in the domain of investigation. I first looked into the Korean people's openness to the non-Korean ethnics living in South Korea (statements S1-S7) and then into the Koreans' thoughts and opinions related the citizens coming from other cultures, who reside in the peninsular country (S8-S13). Let us have a look at **how open** to foreigners the Korean people are. The responses provided by the informants depict a somewhat contradictory picture (see table A-3 at the end of the paper).

Out of the total of 322 respondents, a rather small number (94 altogether, out of which n=11/3.4% strongly agree and n=83/25.8% agree) consider that foreign friends (S1) are better than Korean ones. This finding is not surprising at all, given the fact that a large amount of the Korean population still displays a somewhat reserved attitude when it comes to persons of other ethnicities, faiths, and races living in their country. This collective / group-inclusive feeling is reinforced by the opinions provided by the informants to statement 2 which refers to the language in which Koreans like to communicate in. More than half of the participants in the questionnaire survey (altogether 177, out of which n=145/40.5% agree and n=32/9.9% strongly agree) feel more comfortable in using their own language in the process of communication, rather than a foreign one. A possible explanation for this situation could be the informants' low proficiency in foreign languages, coupled with the feeling of shame they experience if they feel they do not understand correctly their foreign interlocutors or do not manage to speak correctly and fluently with them. Only 46 participants (n=6/1.9 strongly agree and n=40/14.4% agree) of a total of 322 expressed their ease at communicating without problems in a foreign language with their interlocutors, while a larger number (n=159/49.4% agree and n=25/7.8% strongly agree) mentioned that they felt uncomfortable when they could not understand a foreigner (statement 5).

Despite the reticence at communicating in (some of) the languages spoken by the foreign citizens, the Koreans do not request that these should necessarily speak Korean (statement 6), since if they do not master the language, the foreigners will lose face in front of the Koreans. Only a small percentage of respondents expressed their dislike to foreigners who do not understand or speak Korean (n=52/16.1% agreed and n=7/2.2% strongly agreed).

In all countries of the world that have received migrant population, the natives have perceived the foreigners as a threat to their culture, their peace and well being, South Korea having been no exception in this respect. A surprising finding of the questionnaire survey is that in the past 30 years, the Koreans' opinion regarding the possible problems that the foreigners may cause in their country has changed (statement 3). The large majority of the respondents (altogether n=213) did not feel at all threatened by the foreigners living in their area. At the same time, most of them are of the opinion that if there is mutual respect and tolerance for each other, it does not matter if the people in a certain district/area/city in South Korea speak a different language or have a different culture. Only a very small percentage of the participants in the survey (altogether 8) suggested that their country would be better off without foreign population, whereas 47 of the respondents were undecided in this matter.

When it came to international and inter-racial marriages (statement 7), the findings show that currently the Koreans are not as much against them as they used to be in the previous century. More than half of the respondents (n=43/13.4% strongly agree and n=141/43.8% agree) seem to approve of such marriages, while only 45 respondents prefer marriages between Korean partners.

In order to find possible reasons for why Koreans could have a negative attitude towards foreigners, the participants in the survey were asked to express their opinions/feelings/thoughts on a number of finer-grained statements.

Table A-4: Koreans' feelings concerning various aspects related to foreign nationals.

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Average
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to interact with foreigners, while only 26 respondents of the total of 322 stated that this is extremely important for them.

And as exposure to foreign cultures may occur both within and outside South Korea, data about the informants' overseas experience, the purpose of their travelling, as well as the length of their sojourn abroad were also considered important in determining their attitude towards foreigners. Of the entire group of participants in the study, only 33 have never left South Korea. The ones that travelled abroad did it for various purposes: to study (n=30/8.6%), to work (n=35/10.1%), to spend their vacations (n=255/73.7%), or for various other reasons that were not specified (n=28/8%). Their exposure to a foreign culture varied between 3 and 21 days or was even longer than that.

The partial conclusions that can be drawn thus far indicate that in the past 30 years, the Korean people seem to have adopted a more open attitude towards fellow citizens from other cultures, they would not mind having them as their co-workers or even neighbors. Despite being aware of the differences in mindsets, Koreans are willing to compromise and assimilate the foreign ethnic groups living in South Korea. A possible factor that made the South Korean mainstream society open to non-Korean ethnics could be the exposure to foreigners in various contexts, as well as some knowledge of foreign languages, which may enable the communication between the two groups of people that study, live, and work in South Korea. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances the language barrier could be an excuse not to communicate with them, not to mention the fact that most Koreans still prefer co-nationals as their friends and co-workers. Despite a higher degree of acceptance of foreigners, Koreans are not totally open to them. This is determined to a large extent by the structure of the Korean society. As Kohls (2001: 9) contends, "Koreans assign overriding importance to whether someone is a member of their ingroup or not and then treat the person accordingly. Ingroups may be blood relatives, schoolmates, classmates, or members of the same organization. Those who belong to your in-group are treated with respect and concern. Those who are not are invisible; they are nonentities. Koreans think of them as 'unpersons'."

Let us now see if the respondents' demographic characteristics may have affected their opinion about and attitude towards non-Korean ethnics.

3.2. Difference verification according to the variables.

(a) **Gender.** As far as the gender dimension is concerned, it appears that the female population in the survey had a slightly higher average value than the male respondents concerning the meaningful changes that occurred in Korean in the past 30 years in what concerns the native population's attitude towards foreigners. This difference is, however, statistically insignificant (see table B-1).

Table B-1. Correlation between the respondent's gender and their perception of openness to foreigners in general.

Domain	Mean value±standard deviation		t
	male (N=92)	female (N=230)	
There has been a meaningful change in openness to foreigners.	3.93±.796	3.97±.696	-0.389

As a result of the cross-analysis aimed at finding out the correlation between *gender* and how the Koreans perceive the changes to be (positive or negative) with respect to openness and a friendlier attitude to foreigners, the significant probability (p) value was .865, which indicated a statistically insignificant difference. Looking at the frequency of crossover between groups (male and female) and items ('I don't know', 'Negative change', and 'Positive change') (see table B-2), the results show that both the male and the female respondents were of the opinion that the change in the Koreans' attitude towards foreigners has been a positive one (male respondents 87% and female respondents 88.7%). Only 4.3% in each category of informants in the survey thought that the changes were for the worse.

Table B-2: Correlation between Korean respondents' gender and the way in which they perceived the changes of attitude towards foreigners to have occurred

Gender	I don't know	Negative change	Positive change	Total
male	8 (8.7%)	4 (4.3%)	80 (87.0%)	92 (100%)
female	16 (7.0%)	10 (4.3%)	204 (88.7%)	230 (100%)

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total	24 (7.5%)	14 (4.3%)	284 (88.2%)	322 (100%)
$\chi^2=.289, df=2, p=.865$				

The next step was to apply the independent sample t-test to each of the statements in the questionnaire. The results of the correlation between gender and openness to foreigners indicated that for each item in the questionnaire, the mean value of the male group was slightly higher or higher than that of the female group (see the figures in table B-3 below).

Table B-3: Correlation between respondents' gender and their opinion on each statement concerning Koreans' openness to foreigners.

Statements	Mean value±standard deviation		t
	Male (N=92)	Female (N=230)	
1. Korean friends are better than foreign friends.	3.14±1.023	3.04±.924	.832
2. I like to communicate with people who speak the same language as I do.	3.49±.932	3.48±.895	.058
3. Problems may arise if there are foreigners with different languages and cultures living in my area.	2.55±1.031	2.17±.879	3.115**
4. As long as there is respect and tolerance for each other, it doesn't matter if you speak a different language or have a different culture.	4.13±.759	4.00±.773	1.328
5. Most Koreans feel uncomfortable when they cannot understand a foreign language.	3.64±.897	3.43±.862	2.000*
6. Most Koreans don't like it when foreigners don't understand Korean.	2.78±1.098	2.48±.895	2.330*

7. Most Koreans do not agree to marry a foreigner (international marriage).	2.65±1.053	2.37±.850	2.329*
*P<.05, **P<.01			

Nevertheless, the difference is not statistically significant. A possible explanation for it could be the fact that in the Korean society women spend more time at home, having less chances than men to meet and interact with foreigners.

When the independent sample t-test was applied to each item concerning the Korean people's thoughts and opinions about foreigners, the results of the two groups were different. Thus, for statements 9 and 13, the mean value of the male respondents was higher than that of the female group. For statements 10 and 11, the males' mean value was only slightly higher than that of females, whereas for statements 8 and 12, the female respondents had a slightly higher average than their male counterparts. Still these differences between the two genders were not statistically significant (see table B-4).

Table B-4: Correlation between respondents' gender and their thoughts about foreigners.

Statement	Mean value±standard deviation		t
	male (N=92)	female (N=230)	
8. My values and beliefs differ from those of foreigners.	2.46±.942	2.46±.802	-.042
9. If I get to work with foreigners, I can do well.	3.87±.828	3.63±.781	2.483*
10. I can easily make friends with foreigners.	3.59±.772	3.40±.870	1.797
11. I prefer to work only with people from my own country.	2.53±1.124	2.39±1.000	1.105
12. Foreigners have a different way of thinking than	3.05±.976	3.21±.887	-1.371

Koreans.			
13. You can learn a lot from foreigners so I think that working with them is helpful.	3.99±.763	3.80±.694	2.098*
*P<.05			

The conclusion we could draw on the basis of these results is that the gender variable could only have had a minor influence on the Koreans' openness to foreigners. The male respondents being the breadwinners of the family could be more exposed in their daily activities to meeting and interacting with foreign people and have more chances than women to know them better, to see if they represent a threat to the Korean society or not, to figure out if they are reliable and worth befriending.

(b) Age. At this point I remind the readers that the subjects in the questionnaire survey were divided into five age groups: people aged 20 years (n=52), 30 years (n=67), 40 years (n=62), 50 years (n=89), and 60 years and more (N=52).

A cross-analysis was performed in order to find out the correlation between the age of the respondents and their perception regarding the changes in the Korean society (positive or negative) towards foreigners. A look at table B-5 below will reveal that in all age groups, a high percentage of respondents are of the opinion that in the past 30 years, the Korean people have shown a better attitude towards foreigners than at the end of the previous century. The percentages vary from 82.1% for the people in their 30s to 93.3% for the persons aged 50 years. The higher percentages of the elderly respondents (40s, 50s, and 60s - over 90 % for all three age groups) are not surprising, as only by passing through life for a longer time are we able to perceive the changes that occur in the society.

Table B-5: Correlation between the age of the respondents and their perception (negative or positive) of the changes in the Koreans' openness to foreigners.

Distribution	I don't know	Negative change	Positive change	Total
20s	6 (11.5%)	3 (5.8%)	43 (82.7%)	52 (100%)

30s	7 (10.4%)	5 (7.5%)	55 (82.1%)	67 (100%)
40s	4 (6.5%)	2 (3.2%)	56 (90.3%)	62 (100%)
50s	5 (5.6%)	1 (1.1%)	83 (93.3%)	89 (100%)
60s and over	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.8%)	47 (90.4%)	52 (100%)
Sum/total	24 (7.5%)	14 (4.3%)	284 (88.2%)	322 (100%)
$\chi^2=8.430, df=8, p=.393$				

When it came to the two sets of statements in the questionnaire by means of which I tried to identify the openness of the Koreans towards foreigners and their opinions/feelings about them, there was one item in each set where a significant difference appeared between two specific age-groups: the respondents aged 20 and those aged 50.

Table B-6: Difference in age concerning two issues related to Koreans' openness and opinions about foreigners.

Issue	Mean value±standard deviation					F	post-test
	20s (N=52)	30s (N=67)	40s (N=62)	50s (N=89)	60s and more (N=52)		
3. Problems may arise if there are foreigners of different languages and cultures in the area where I live.	2.54±1.075	2.40±.922	2.27±.890	2.00±.812	2.37±.991	3.458**	d<a
10. I can easily get to know foreigners	2.54±1.075	2.40±.922	2.27±.890	2.00±.812	2.37±.991	3.458**	d<a

One of the items concerned the possible problems that may arise if people of different cultures would be encountered in the Koreans' neighborhood (statement 3); the second one was related to the ease of meeting foreigners (statement 10). For both statements, both age groups had the same mean values: $M=2.54$ for the youngest informants and $M=2.00$ for those aged 50 years.

This difference could be accounted for by the fact that the young respondents have more opportunities to meet foreigners than their parents' generation. People in their 20s may have foreign fellow students or professors at the universities where they study, they may be exposed to people of other cultures and races if they study abroad, and this is quite a trend among young Koreans. At the same time, they may befriend foreigners in clubs or in various volunteering activities. On the other hand, the elderly people may only occasionally interact with foreigners in their workplace. The conclusion we could draw is that the younger generation is more open to foreigners than the older people. Knowing a little about the Koreans' mindset, I could speculate on the possible reasons for this openness. On the one hand, the physical difference between the Asian people and those coming from the West (Caucasian) is pretty striking and may be appealing to them. On the other hand, for some young Koreans, a foreign acquaintance would be like a "prize" to boast about in their entourage, as a sign of rebellion against the old Korean tradition. Finally, for some young girls, foreigners, especially Americans or Canadians, could be considered a good marriage option.

(c) In terms of their **degree of education**, the respondents in the survey were classified in three groups: those whose highest level of education was high school (HS), university (U), and MA/PhD holders.

A first aspect I wanted to investigate was whether the three groups had the same or different perceptions regarding the openness of the Koreans towards foreigners. Thus, the one-way ANOVA test showed a statistically significant difference between the groups of respondents.

To understand this difference between the three groups in detail, a post-test using (equal variance/Dunnett T3 (bivariate) was conducted. The results indicate a meaningful difference between the respondents whose level of education is lowest (HS) ($M=3.72$) and those holding an MA or a PhD ($M=4.11$). This difference is not at all surprising as I assume that many Koreans may have obtained their degrees abroad or in their country, where more and more Korean universities

hire foreign professors. Thus, the respondents in the latter group may have had a greater exposure to foreign people and to more chances to collaborate with them and to learn from them, all this contributing to a better opinion about foreigners.

Table B-7: Koreans' openness to foreigners in terms of the respondents' degree of education.

State	Mean value+ standard deviation			F	Post-test
	High school (N=54)	University (N=166)	MA or PhD (N=102)		
There has been a meaningful change in open perception of foreigners.	3.72±.899	3.95±.654	4.11±.702	5.197*	a<c

When analyzing the correlation between the level of education of the respondents and each statement in the questionnaire, the results of the one-way ANOVA test indicated a statistically significant difference between MA and PhD holders and the other two groups only for statement 3 (problems may arise if there are foreigners with different languages and cultures living in my area). Thus, highly educated respondents disagree with this statement more than the other respondents ($M=2.50$ for MA and PhD holders vs. $M=2.10$ for each of the other two groups). At the same time the respondents with the highest level of education are also more convinced that Koreans and foreigners could co-habit in South Korea if there is mutual respect, understanding and tolerance (statement 4). In my opinion, this kind of wisdom comes with education.

There were no statistically significant differences between the three groups of respondents and their opinions about foreigners. Thus, we may conclude that the level of education did influence the respondents' perception and attitude towards foreigners, but only to a small extent.

(d) The statistic analysis also checked variance in terms of the **profession/occupation** of the respondents in the survey. According to this variable, the participants were grouped into 7 categories: professors, white-collar workers,

students, self-employed persons, public officials, housewives, and others.

The results of the one-way ANOVA test, run to see the correlation between the respondents' occupation and their general perception of the changes in the Koreans' attitude to foreigners, indicated a statistically significant difference between the subjects involved in education ($M=4.13$) and the group of housewives ($M=3.57$). This difference is not surprising, because, as mentioned previously, the Korean housewives have fewer chances than professors to meet foreigners and to form an opinion about them. Probably one opportunity may emerge in the parks, where they usually take their children to play. But given the language barrier and that fact that Korean women are not supposed to interact with unknown men (whether from Korea or from abroad), the possibility of coming to have an opinion about or an attitude towards foreigners is reduced.

The cross-analysis performed to find a correlation between the respondents' occupation and how they felt the attitude of the Koreans to foreigners to have changed (for the better or for the worse) did not reveal any statistically meaningful difference. All respondents, irrespective of their occupation, agreed in a proportion of at least 85.7% that Koreans treat the non-Korean ethnicities better than before. The highest percentage of agreement emerged from the public officials, and an explanation for this figure (96.2%) could be attributed to the fact that they may interact with foreigners more frequently than the members of all the other professional categories.

No significant differences were found for the correlation between the groups of professions and the items in the questionnaire aimed at identifying the extent to which Koreans are more open to foreign people. Still, some differences appeared between the groups in connection with their opinions and thoughts about members of non-Korean ethnicities. Thus, the one-way ANOVA indicated differences in connection with 4 items (S2, S3, S5, and S6). Therefore, in order to understand these differences between the groups in more detail, the Scheffe (for equal variance)/Dunnnett T3 (bivariate) test was applied. The results of the post-test indicate statistically meaningful differences only for S2 and S3 between the public officials ($M=3.31$ for S2 and $M=3.08$ for S3) and the respondents involved in the field of education ($M=3.89$ for S2 and $M=3.58$ for S3). A possible explanation for why professors have a better opinion with respect to working together with foreigners (S2) and even befriending them

(S3) is that they deal with educated people from various cultures who may be willing to adapt to the Korean norms and values or, at least, try to understand them. On the other hand, public officers have to deal with foreigners of different social and educational backgrounds, who may not have always been respectful. That is why this category of Koreans is more reluctant to work with foreigners or befriend them.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As compared to the negative, rather hostile attitude of the Korean people towards non-Korean ethnics that emerged from the introductory part of the paper, the analysis of the questionnaire data depicts a more positive perspective in the sense that nowadays, most of the respondents do not feel threatened by the fact that the foreign people who choose to stay and work in South Korea would radically change the Korean culture, its values and customs. Thus, many natives of Korea wouldn't show any reticence in working or socializing with foreigners. The factors that have contributed to this favorable change in attitude could be the positive personal experience of the survey participants regarding interaction with members of other ethnic groups residing in their country.

With respect to the second research question, the results of the statistical analysis of the differences in responses in terms of the informants' age, gender, degree of education, and profession have shown that, in general, these were not statistically striking. There were, nevertheless, some minor differences determined by the respondents' gender, which showed that Korean men's opinion concerning foreigners may have been influenced by their more frequent exposure to persons from other countries than their female counterparts. This finding does not really come as a surprise, given the fact that many women in the Korean society decide to become housewives after they marry and have children, which reduces their socializing activity and the chances of meeting foreigners.

The age variable could have tilted the balance in favor of a better opinion about and attitude towards non-Koreans. Thus, the respondents in the youngest group (20s) indicated that they have more chances than the generation of their parents (50s) to meet and know foreigners. Moreover, also in opposition with the people aged 50 years, the youngest respondents in the survey felt that the cultures and languages spoken by non-Korean ethnics do not pose a threat for the majority population in South Korea.

SOUTH KOREAN’S OPENNESS TO FOREIGNERS

The two factors that seem to have a greater impact on the Koreans’ positive change in their attitude towards foreigners were the level of education and their occupation, which seem to be correlated. Thus, statistically meaningful differences between MA and PhD holders and the subjects with a lower level of education (HS and U) emerged in connection with only two items in the questionnaire (i.e. fear of problems caused by foreigners in South Korea and the possibility of cohabitation between the South Korean mainstream population and the ethnic minorities if there is mutual respect and tolerance). The most educated informants seem to be more optimistic with respect to these issues than the university or high-school graduates.

What the profession variable revealed was that university professors, who interact with foreigners that have a higher degree of education, seem to be inclined to be more trustful in collaborating with students and professors coming from other parts of the world. The Korean public officers, on the other hand, who are exposed more to migrants that may

be less educated, who know only their mother tongue and cannot communicate at all with the native Koreans, are more distrustful towards them.

With the continuous and ever-growing influx of migrant workers, foreign students and tourists, and international brides, the Korean population is currently exposed, more than ever, to social, racial, and cultural diversity. And while three decades ago, the large number of foreigners was not “proportional to the Korean public’s tolerance of and openness to non-Korean cultures and values” (Shin 2013: 370), within a time span of almost thirty years, the Korean people have started to understand, accept, and respect the ethnic heterogeneity of their country. The picture that emerged from the data analysis is that the general attitude of the South Koreans towards foreigners has become relatively positive. This change is of great importance not only in the establishment of political, economic, and cultural relations between Korea and other countries, but also for the well being of all the people residing in the country.

Table A-3: Koreans’ openness to foreigners and foreign languages.

Statements		S.D.	D.	U.	A.	S.A.	Total	Average
1	Korean friends are better than foreign friends.	11 (3.4%)	83 (25.8%)	119 (37.0%)	90 (28.0%)	19 (5.9%)	322 (100%)	3.07
2	I like to communicate with people who speak the same language as I do.	6 (1.9%)	41 (12.7%)	98 (30.4%)	145 (45.0%)	32 (9.9%)	322 (100%)	3.48
3	Problems may arise if there are foreigners with different languages and cultures living in my area.	62 (19.3%)	151 (46.9%)	68 (21.1%)	38 (11.8%)	3 (0.9%)	322 (100%)	2.28
4	As long as there is respect and tolerance for each other, it doesn't matter if you speak a different language or have a different culture.	6 (1.9%)	2 (0.6%)	47 (14.6%)	185 (57.5%)	82 (25.5%)	322 (100%)	4.04
5	Most Koreans feel uncomfortable when they cannot understand a foreign language.	6 (1.9%)	40 (12.4%)	92 (28.6%)	159 (49.4%)	25 (7.8%)	322 (100%)	3.49
6	Most Koreans don't like it when foreigners don't understand Korean.	37 (11.5%)	131 (40.7%)	95 (29.5%)	52 (16.1%)	7 (2.2%)	322 (100%)	2.57
7	Most Koreans do not agree to marry a foreigner (international marriage).	43 (13.4%)	141 (43.8%)	93 (28.9%)	41 (12.7%)	4 (1.2%)	322 (100%)	2.45

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AVIATION ENGLISH IN MILITARY INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: *The geopolitical context of the early decades of the 21st century, at the global level, on the one hand, and at the European level, on the other, has called for increased efforts by EU countries to develop a coherent strategy for their own state security through modernization of military capabilities, their alignment with the capabilities of their strategic allies, and the establishment of joint actions and plans, together with allies, in order to counter threats or hostile actions by the Russian Federation, or by terrorist groups. The participation of pilots in multinational exercises or training sessions in NATO's advanced training schools, outside the borders of national territories, and, last but not least, the English language proficiency requirements for aviation operations have led to increased attention paid to learning English and training of pilots in specialized aviation terminology in English. Although the English language proficiency requirements are generally met by the military pilots all over the world, their native tongue (L1), as the representative of the culture to which the pilots belong, may affect the successful cooperation between professionals of various cultural backgrounds. The aim of this paper is to illustrate some of the aspects that national cultures may reveal through the use of the English language (L2) in aeronautical activities, and to highlight the relevance of cultural awareness in the accomplishment of military multinational missions.*

Keywords: *military cultural awareness, intercultural competence, acoustic salience, cultural sensitivity*

1. INTRODUCTION

Multinational military operations rely on the joint effort of allies to gain supremacy in the operational environment. Proficiency in Aviation English enhances interoperability between air forces and facilitates flawless integration and joint operations. It allows the exchange of information, sharing of intelligence and the ability to respond to unforeseen events promptly. Clear and accurate communication is crucial for preserving safety in aviation. Pilots must be able to understand and convey critical information related to flight operations, weather conditions, and navigation and emergency procedures. In addition to language proficiency, awareness of cultural nuances, customs and communication styles may help military personnel to develop empathy, build trust and promote effective cooperation with counterparts from other countries. This cultural understanding contributes to successful collaboration and mission accomplishment.

For multinational military operations, at large, knowledge of adversaries' cultural behaviors in the increasingly unpredictable theater of operations may bring about triumph or make the difference between partial loss and disaster. Equally

important, knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity of own allies may foster efficacy in the military conduct of operations.

For air missions, nevertheless, Aviation English, perceived as the core element in communication, should be univocally utilized by friendly forces, whereas cultural manifestations, in terms of language production, unless they are made known to various participants in the mission, may impede clear understanding of tasks and lead to failure.

2. AVIATION ENGLISH – A *LINGUA FRANCA*?

2.1 Clarification of concepts. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is used as a common language by speakers of different mother tongues (Jenkins, 2006), yet, Aviation English is not a mixture of languages to be utilized by pilots and air traffic controllers in their air communications, neither does it employ only non-native speakers. The standardized *phraseology*, so often associated with the language of pilots and air traffic controllers, display discrete syntactic, morphologic and phonetic traits of which all participants in aeronautical activities must be cognizant, whereas no synonymy, semantic variations or phonetic

deviations are accepted. Native speakers are likewise engaged in this endeavor and must adhere to precisely similar standards, which contradicts the principles of a *lingua franca*.

Aviation English, therefore, is regarded as English for Specific Purposes (Hyland, 2002) and the use of phraseology applies to routine flight activities, in which both native and non-native speakers of English involve. Non-routine situations require that aeronautical personnel make use of *plain* English, but under the same constraints of coherence, clarity and brevity.

Military Aviation English, then again, doubles the purpose for which it was tailored, as it aims to serve aviation in the specific environment of the military. The difference from general aviation English consists mainly of specialized vocabulary related to military aircraft, air operations and aerodrome management and particular manners of sending messages via radio stations.

2.2 Aviation English in the military. Apart from the uniqueness of environment that requires this particular form of communication in English, military aviation English adhere to all of Grice's maxims (1975) that were originally formulated for general language use. By adhering to these maxims, military aviation communication minimizes misunderstandings, facilitates efficient coordination and promotes flight safety. Thus, the maxim of *quantity* ensures that communication is concise, yet sufficiently informative, as pilots and air traffic controllers should provide the necessary information without overloading the channel with excessive details or being insufficient in conveying critical information; maxim of *quality* implies that the information exchanged between pilots and air traffic controllers is truthful and based on reliable source and that misinformation or incomplete information can lead to misunderstanding and potentially dangerous situations; maxim of *relevance* entails that military aviation communication should focus on the immediate tasks, objectives and relevant information pertaining to the flight or mission at hand and conversation should avoid unnecessary digressions and remain focused on the subject matter; maxim of *manner* brings about clarity, brevity, and organization in military aviation communication, where information needs to be conveyed promptly and accurately – using standardized phraseology, clear instructions and concise messages helps ensure effective communication between pilots, air traffic controllers and other categories of personnel involved. However, it is important to note that

military aviation communication also has its own specific protocols, procedures and jargon which may differ from general conversational norms due to the unique operational requirements and safety considerations of military aviation.

Whilst the cooperative principles are sought for by military communication in English, regulatory documents with regard to language proficiency requirements for the specific field of aeronautics, issued under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), mainly address the civil aviation. Based on the *Personnel Licensing* (ICAO, Annex 1, 2006) stipulations, pilots and air traffic controllers need to reach the minimum Level 4, in order to obtain their licenses: “The Operational Level 4 (Level 4) is the minimum required proficiency level for radio telephony communications. Levels 1 through 3 describe Pre-elementary, Elementary and Preoperational levels of language proficiency, respectively, all of which describe a level of proficiency below the ICAO language proficiency requirement. Level 5 and 6 describe Extended and Expert levels, at levels of proficiency more advanced than the minimum required standard. As a whole, the scale will serve as benchmarks for training and testing, and in assisting candidates to attain the ICAO Operational Level 4” (Attachment A. ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale). No mentioning of the particular instance of military pilots and air traffic controllers is made; therefore we may only deduce that this professional category must meet similar requirements with their civilian peers.

Furthermore, assuming that military pilots and air traffic controllers have solid knowledge of a foreign language, it is still not enough if the assessment of their English language proficiency in specific professional contexts is not tested uniformly, by means of the same assessment tool, for all Member States of Military Alliances.

2.3 Aviation English in military intercultural context. The richness and complexity of culture make it a subject of ongoing exploration and debate, at the same time as different disciplines and scholars may approach the concept of culture from various angles, leading to nuanced interpretations and understandings. Benveniste (1975/1971) asserted that there is always a natural bond between culture and language, as long as culture inevitably implies the existence of humans and their innermost expression is by means of language.

As for military environments, we dare say there is a distinct culture surrounding military

aviation. This field has a rich history and has developed its own unique traditions, values and practices over time. The key cultural aspects of military aviation encompass pride and professionalism, camaraderie and teamwork, hierarchy and discipline, training and continuous learning, adherence to regulations and safety measures, professionalism in appearance and conduct, traditions and rituals etc., all of which relate to the specialized language that is employed in aeronautical activities. Once military alliance have been established, it is then but natural for military aviators to share common values and be aware of friendly forces' cultures and use of English language distinctiveness, for the common goal of accomplishing joint military missions.

Starting from Varner and Beamer's (2005:40) assertion that language cannot be separated from culture "because language is not a matter of neutral codes and grammatical rules. Each time we send messages, we also make cultural choices", the case of aviation English becomes even more particular, in the sense that this type of communication occurs over the radio station, lacking any visual prompts, or facial expressions or body language, yet adding some background noise to conversations, or interruptions cause by technical errors. Aviation English in the military adds extra harshness to its interlocutors as they must be knowledgeable of all communication specificities related to maneuvers, friend or foe aircraft characteristics and share exactly the same brevity codes with allies. In other terms, linguistic competence alone does not suffice, nor does it fill out the lack of understanding others' cultural traits manifested through language. Thus, pilots and air traffic controllers need to be culturally aware of their peers and their intercultural competence should manifest in tolerance of the others, openness towards cultural differences in the manner of speaking or exchanging messages, knowledge of such occurrences with allies belonging to various culture zones and most of all desire to cooperate with one another for the common goal of being successful in their missions.

Unfortunately, some of the regulatory documents issued by ICAO in reference to linguistic competence of the aeronautical personnel, such as ICAO Doc 9432 (2007) or ICAO Doc 9835 (2010), only stress the importance of language awareness related to language production by both native and non-native speakers of English, but it fails to make participants in air missions aware of the real understanding of language or the reasons due to which miscommunication occurs.

Cultural awareness is occasionally mentioned in these documents, yet again, it is compliant with requirements rather than with assistance provided to pilots and air traffic controllers. Such realities make it harder for afore-mentioned professionals to cope with deviations from standardized phraseology caused by cultural bonds, especially when these deviations manifest in speeches delivered via the microphone.

3. ACOUSTIC SALIENCE AND CULTURAL BONDS

3.1 Radio transmissions. In the context of military aviation, where accurate and efficient communication is critical for safety and mission success, acoustic salience plays a crucial role ensuring that messages are effectively transmitted and understood. Nevertheless, may pilots and air traffic controllers be proficient in their standardized phraseology production, they equally need to be proficient in messages reception, which is understanding messages produced by others, alongside with cultural elements that join them.

Clear pronunciation helps prevent confusion and misunderstandings, particularly when communicating critical information such as flight instructions, positions or emergency procedures, therefore pilots and air traffic controllers strive to pronounce words accurately and distinctly to maximize acoustic salience. Articulation and intonation are also important because by emphasizing key words or phrases through appropriate stress and intonation patterns, speakers can convey important information and convey the intended meaning more clearly. This helps ensure that the essential elements of a message are easily discernible amid other background noises or radio transmissions. Standardized phrases and procedures are designed to be concise and easily understood and by their use pilots and air traffic controllers can transmit information efficiently and minimize the potential for miscommunication. And last, but not least, there must be radio discipline whenever communication is involved. It involves adhering to specific protocols and procedures, avoiding unnecessary prolonged transmissions, waiting for acknowledgement before transmitting additional information and using a clear and concise speaking style. By practicing good radio discipline, acoustic salience is enhanced and effective communication is facilitated.

In military international contexts, by focusing on clear pronunciation, effective articulation, standardized phraseology and radio discipline,

military aviation personnel can enhance the clarity and understandability of their communications, leading to safer and more efficient operations.

3.2 Cultural bonds in radio communication.

Despite their demonstrating solid knowledge of radio phraseology in English, aviation personnel still risk causing misunderstandings due to communication breakdowns. As Hofstede (1991:10) clearly states, professionals in various domains of expertise belong to certain social groups or cultures “carrying several layers of mental programming within themselves, corresponding to different levels of culture”. Although within a military alliance, partners get to know one another during multinational cooperation and benefit from one another’s culturally-shared experience, in the particular case of military aviation communication, knowledge of others’ cultural bonds contributes to avoiding air disasters by what they say, how they say it, the responses they expect, and how they react to them.

Cultural misunderstandings of aviation English can occur when there is a lack of cultural awareness or sensitivity to the cultural context in which the language is being used. As different cultures exhibit directness or indirectness in communication, a cultural misunderstanding may occur provided that a speaker from a direct culture uses straightforward and concise language in aviation English, which may be perceived as abrupt or impolite by one from an indirect culture. Similarly, variations in power distance, or the acceptance of unequal power distribution can result in miscommunication if, for example, a pilot from a high power distance culture uses exaggerated courteous language when speaking to an air traffic controller from a low power distance culture, who may interpret it as lack of confidence or assertiveness. Courtesy, ultimately, although a nice trait of cultural behavior, may affect communication by overloading messages unnecessarily and consuming precious time that may be allotted to other participants in air traffic.

Cultural differences in the perception of time can affect aviation English communication. Some cultures emphasize punctuality and adherence to schedules, while others have a more flexible approach. Misunderstandings can arise if one party expects strict adherence to a schedule, while the other party is more relaxed about time constraints, leading to delays or conflicts in aviation operations.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In order to mitigate cultural misunderstandings in aviation English, it is essential for military pilots and air traffic controllers to foster intercultural understanding and develop cultural competence. Training programs, cultural sensitivity workshops, and ongoing communication efforts can help aviation personnel become more aware of cultural differences and adapt their communication style accordingly. Actively seeking clarification and practicing active listening can also help resolve any misunderstandings that may arise due to cultural differences in aviation English communication.

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THE IMPACT OF NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING ON LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Abstract: *With the increasing affordability and widespread availability of technology, language learning has become significantly more accessible to the general public. Various educational software and e-learning platforms have played a key role in this transformation. Notably, applications like Duolingo, Grammarly, and Mondly have successfully demonstrated the viability of language learning apps as a business model. Moreover, recent advancements in Natural Language Processing (NLP) software hold the potential to enhance the effectiveness of these teaching methods, possibly supplementing or even replacing traditional face-to-face instruction. This study aims to track the evolution of e-learning in the language learning industry and examine possible ways in which Natural Language Processing will impact this domain.*

Keywords: *Natural Language Processing; ChatGPT; Language Learning, Chatbots; Deep Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of natural language processing (NLP) has undergone significant development in parallel with advancements in information technology and computer science. Since the 1950s, researchers have been striving to bridge the gap between humans and machines, leading to the emergence of computational linguistics as a scientific discipline. Over the years, the evolution of NLP has been driven by the pursuit of creating language software that can understand and generate human-like text.

Initially, early language software relied on predefined rules and workflows to process and generate text. However, the introduction of statistical methods and later machine learning techniques revolutionized the field, enabling rapid progress in NLP. Today, the quality of computer-generated text has reached a level where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish it from human-written text. These advancements in NLP have already made a significant impact on various domains, particularly in the realm of language learning and improvement. Applications like Duolingo, Grammarly, and Mondly have leveraged NLP techniques to enhance foreign language learning, aiding learners in their quest for linguistic proficiency. However, recent breakthroughs in NLP, exemplified by models such as ChatGPT, and the substantial investments in the field, indicate that we are on the cusp of

even greater developments. The growing interest in NLP has the potential to usher in a new era of natural language understanding and generation.

While the advancements in educational technology and NLP are undoubtedly promising, it is crucial to approach their implementation with careful consideration. It is essential to acknowledge that the business aspects of the field can present challenges of their own. Mere technological progress does not guarantee revolutionary changes without the thoughtful and responsible application of these advancements.

Looking ahead, the future of NLP holds great potential for further advancements, offering new possibilities and opportunities. However, it is paramount to ensure that these developments are implemented in a manner that aligns with ethical considerations and promotes responsible use.

This paper explores the historical development of NLP, its current state, and the potential implications for the future. By examining the advancements made thus far and acknowledging the challenges and ethical considerations associated with the field, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the significance and potential impact of NLP in the broader context of language processing and communication.

2. EARLY LANGUAGE MODELS

Man's attempt to bridge the gap between

himself and machines has been witnessed from the beginning years in the history of computer science.

One of the most important moments in the history of natural language processing was the Georgetown IBM experiment conducted in 1954. This experiment was a collaborative effort between Georgetown University and IBM. It aimed to demonstrate the potential of automated machine translation. The experiment used a rule-based approach to translate 60 sentences from English into Russian (Hutchings, 2004). The program was rule-based instead of being statistics-based or employing a deep learning approach as commonly used in today's NLP models. These 60 sentences contained limited vocabulary and had simple grammatical structures. The experiment was conducted on the IBM 701 computer, a large processing machine for the time.

The method of translation was significantly simpler than modern methods used by translation machines, such as Google or DeepL. The program was based on a sequential workflow: English sentences were input into the machine, then analyzed and interpreted in a manner similar to how parsing methods are being used nowadays, by attributing numerical data to individual words and phonemes so as to make them intelligible to the machine. Afterwards, linguistic rules are applied, and the sentences are converted into Russian. Although substantial post-editing was required by bilingual experts on the machine-generated translations, this experiment showcased the possibility of machine translation for the first time. Furthermore, despite its limitations, the Georgetown-IBM experiment provided the foundation on which future research and advancements in the field of machine translation and natural language processing were built. It marked the beginning of interest in human-computer relations and language translation through the use of computation.

This workflow-based approach is what we nowadays call 'rule-based NLP'. This system relies on predefined sets of grammatical criteria, which are crafted by domain experts such as linguists. These rules are based on formal grammars of the chosen languages and have to be inputted manually into the program. On the one hand, this approach allows for a high level of control and transparency within the language model, as well as not requiring large amounts of training data to function. On the other hand, the rule-based NLP model can be rigid and require manual updates to the code, and creating such a model can be cumbersome as it requires large

levels of human labor (Deng, 2018).

The late 80s saw the rise of NLP models based on statistical frameworks. By using statistical techniques to learn patterns and relationships between words and linguistic data, models can be trained to learn the rules of a language without the need for fixed procedures being manually inputted into the machine. This is the method most commonly used nowadays in NLP models, such as ChatGPT. While allowing for greater levels of flexibility and adaptability, this kind of approach requires large amounts of labeled training data and, of course, greater processing power to facilitate the machine learning process.

The Georgetown IBM experiment paved the way for more research in the domain of machine linguistics after proving the feasibility of using computer programs in translation. The doors opened for human-computer conversations. One of the earliest computer programs developed to simulate conversation and demonstrate natural language processing methods was called ELIZA. It was created at MIT in the mid-60s by Joseph Weizenbaum, and it attempted to simulate actual conversational abilities, emulating a psychotherapist in text-based interactions. While rudimentary by today's standards and not actually able to fully interpret the input, this program used pattern matching and substitution rules to rephrase the user input in the form of questions, creating the illusion of conversation.

The next significant milestone in the domain of natural language processing came in the early 70s when Terry Winograd developed the SHRDLU model. The SHRDLU model was also a developed rule-based NLP approach, and its aim was to understand both simple and ambiguous commands given to it. The program had a graphical interface displaying a three-dimensional world with various shapes in it. The users were able to interact with this block world through the use of natural language. SHRDLU could interpret user commands, answer questions about the position of the various shapes in the three-dimensional world, and the program was also able to move these shapes around based on text commands. While limited in scope, only being able to understand commands specifically given about the block world it displayed, the SHRDLU model showed the feasibility of interactions between computers and human language (Ontanon, 2018).

The launch of IBM's product Watson was another significant milestone in the history of natural language processing. Based on both structured and unstructured machine learning, this

application showed how language models and software could be used not only to interpret simple and ambiguous language in specific domains but in general as well. Watson participated in the game show Jeopardy! in 2011, showcasing a level of language understanding and reasoning that surpassed any previous NLP model up to that date (Ferrucci *et al.*, 2018).

As previously mentioned, Watson was based on machine learning and was designed to process and analyze large amounts of both structured and unstructured data. This set it apart from previous NLP models. While SHRDLU and ELIZA functioned in more specialized domains, such as interpreting spatial positioning of shapes in a three-dimensional world and simulating the conversation abilities of a Rogerian psychologist, IBM's program was capable of demonstrating linguistic ability when questioned on a broad variety of topics. The development of Watson aimed to perfect previous developments in question answering techniques, allowing the program to engage in real-time conversation with humans.

3. MODERN APPROACHES TO NLP

A 2017 paper called "Attention is All You Need", revolutionized the field of natural language processing by introducing the concept of Transformers, a type of neural network architecture which has since mostly replaced recurrent neural networks and NLP models (Vaswani *et al.* 2017). By using Transformers, a model no longer interprets the input as a unidirectional sequence of tokens. It is able to redirect its own attention from one part of the input to another and make decisions on how to interpret the text as a whole based on the context provided within itself. Simply said, an NLP model using Transformers can learn about the context of the input text while reading it.

Due to major improvements in the processing power of computers and the availability of larger data sets, which have come as a result of the internet becoming more accessible, all deep learning models, including NLP models that use deep learning, have been given the opportunity to make use of user-generated text in its natural form to learn about speech patterns and how to reproduce them seamlessly.

In the context of language learning, NLP models have already been used in various applications. Duolingo, one of the most popular foreign language learning apps (Blanco, 2022), has made use of NLP algorithms to analyze learners'

written and spoken responses to exercises and offer instant feedback and corrections in vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and even pronunciation. Duolingo also uses NLP for level assessment, being able to provide a series of exercises to learners in the very beginning parts of their learning journey and offer personalized content based on their apparent level of proficiency as determined by the model.

Another relevant use of NLP in language learning applications is employed by Mondly. While in a similar fashion to Duolingo, this app incorporates NLP techniques for correcting user mistakes (in grammar, vocabulary, register, spelling etc.), it also includes a chatbot designed to simulate conversation and offer interactive exercises to second language learners. This, of course, allows for a more natural approach to language learning, more similar to in-class speaking or writing exercises or actual text conversation with other speakers, than to the right or wrong framework typically seen in other e-learning platforms. The major advantage of chatbots compared to real interaction with human speakers is that it mitigates the effects that a classroom setting can have on individual students' confidence levels. As mentioned in their paper titled "How Technology Affects Instruction for English Learners," (Altavita, 2020) it provides real-time feedback in a semi-private environment, which can shield language learners from scrutiny, allowing them to practice their English without fear that they'll be mocked or bullied by native speakers. Of course, it is not only native speakers that can induce a feeling of inadequacy in learners, but people in general. Nevertheless, while still having the advantage of instant feedback that real-time communication has, chatbots could supplement reproductive skills involved in language learning in a more controlled and comfortable environment.

While it is clear how beginner learners can benefit from the use of NLP in their language learning problems, it is important to keep in mind the fact that even proficient or native speakers can be aided by such technologies (Tenen, 2016). Another immensely popular online platform known as Grammarly offers not only feedback on vocabulary, grammar, or spelling errors but also suggestions on how a user can adapt their writing style to make their text more appropriate for the context they are writing. Grammarly can offer suggestions to users on the ways in which they should adapt their texts to make them more formal or more appropriate stylistically.

4. THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTATION

While the present paper has mostly dealt with the technological developments of NLP models so far, it is important to remember that the implementation of new technological discoveries plays an equally important role in their adoption and influence. As famously described by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book “Antifragile,” the quest for developing complex technologies may also blind people on how best to apply existing technologies and technological developments to current problems. In the 13th chapter of his book, he discusses the paradoxical reality of wheeled suitcase being a somewhat modern invention despite the fact that both wheels and the suitcase itself have existed for thousands of years. In this context, technological development itself was not the issue preventing the adoption of wheeled suitcases, but rather the lack of creativity in the implementation of already existing tools.

Furthermore, keeping on the same topic of wheels and their use in simplifying the daily lives of human beings, Taleb references the commonly known fact that Mesoamerican people had not invented the wheel and only began using it after it was brought to them by European colonizers. He points out the fact that, in reality, the American people did discover the wheel, but it was only used for children's toys without the idea of adapting it to simplify labor ever emerging. So, while the concept itself was understood and applied in one context, failure to see how it might be useful when used in a different environment was the issue.

It has been observed that the field of language studies has suffered from a similar phenomenon. The author of the paper titled “Blunt Instrumentalism: on tools and methods” (Tenen, 2016), details an instance in which he, alongside another developer, created a so-called collaborative translation platform which failed to take off with the public. This failure was not due to its technical limitations but because of something he termed “advocacy.” In his own words,

yet we fail to consider the difficulty of implementing that vision into practice. We build a tool but not the community around it. The classroom environment resisted change, and for good reason. Upon reflection, we saw that language teaching was grounded in proven, if sometimes imperfect, practices. Our platform development should have considered the strength of that tradition and not just its weaknesses. (Tenen, 2016:87).

5. ETHICAL CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

Despite major advancements in the field of natural language processing, applications such as ChatGPT still face issues and limitations when it comes to simulating real-world or accurate speech. In this next section, we will examine the most common issues cited in the debate surrounding natural language processing programs.

From a stylistic standpoint, modern applications like ChatGPT can simulate the appearance of proper speech. However, it is important to recognize that these pieces of software lack actual understanding or the ability to reason. The output they provide is based on statistical models and analysis of speech patterns, rather than formal logic or problem-solving methods.

A second issue commonly found in NLP models is the rudimentary approach they take in considering the context of a conversation when providing answers. The models often struggle to fully grasp the nuances and context of a conversation, leading to potentially inaccurate or inappropriate responses.

A third issue, not limited to NLP models but prevalent in machine learning models in general, is the tendency to produce biased output based on the training data provided. While using larger and more diverse training datasets for deep learning models can help mitigate some of the bias, it's important to acknowledge that biases can never be completely eliminated.

The fourth problem commonly encountered in NLP models is the occasional generation of inappropriate or offensive content. This issue arises due to such content appearing in the training materials provided to the program. Efforts are being made to address and filter out such content, but eliminating it entirely remains a challenge.

It is crucial to recognize and address these limitations and issues in natural language processing models to ensure responsible and ethical use of the technology. Continued research and development are needed to overcome these challenges and improve the performance and reliability of NLP applications.

While other ethical issues surrounding natural language processing, such as its impact on literature originality or academic integrity, are important to consider, they are beyond the scope of this discussion on language learning.

When designing language learning courses that incorporate NLP models, the aforementioned limitations should be taken into account. Assuming

these models are used in a narrower context, different from the broad applications seen in chat-based models like ChatGPT, unstructured learning can be employed to a lesser extent in the model's training phase. The concern regarding the inability to reason or lack of actual understanding becomes less prominent when considering that language learning methodology typically focuses on lessons centered around specific topics. In such cases, there would be no need for a language model to respond to user input regardless of the conversation's topic.

Moreover, this approach would not necessarily exclude unstructured learning entirely, as current NLP models constantly adapt through user input and feedback. Similar programs could learn from and adapt to the common mistakes made by second language learners during their interactions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the field of natural language processing has been developing alongside information technology itself since the 1950s. People have continuously strived to bridge the gap between humans and machines, leading to the emergence of computational linguistics as an independent field of scientific study. Initially, language software relied on pre-written rules and workflows, but the introduction of statistical methods and later machine learning brought about rapid advancements in the field. Today, computer-generated text is nearly indistinguishable from text written by humans. These advancements have already enhanced foreign language learning and language improvement through applications like Duolingo, Grammarly, and Mondly.

However, the recent interest in NLP, spurred by models like ChatGPT, and significant investments in the field suggest that even more developments lie ahead. While advancements in educational technology are generally positive, it's crucial to acknowledge that the business aspect also brings its own challenges. Mere technological advancement does not guarantee revolutionary changes without proper implementation.

The future holds great potential for further developments in natural language processing, but it's essential to take implementation into consideration so as to ensure the positive impact of these advancements.

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CONTRASTIVE INTERCULTURAL AND PRAGMALINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MILITARY RECRUITMENT TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstract: *In harsh times of conflict and war, every global society finds itself in great danger. How can a nation, in desperate need of help, of men to fight for a national cause, convince its citizens to enroll in the military? Besides the obvious physical capabilities of their recruits, common life principles and cultural and/or national values are, as well, highly necessary. These include: feeling of solidarity, cohesion, national pride, honour and the will to maintain security. The domain of publicity generally contains a specialised advertising language, making use of certain linguistical, stylistic and pragmatical instruments. Such instruments are meant to captivate the public attention, maintain their interest throughout the publicity advertisement and prior to the transmission of a certain message, to try to convince people to buy a certain product or, in this case, to engage in military service. The purpose of my research is to analyse certain military advertisements from an intercultural and pragmalinguistic perspective, thus comparing English advertisements of military recruitment with German advertisements from the “Bundeswehr” (engl. the German Armed Forces).*

Keywords: *publicity; television advertisements; intercultural communication; pragmalinguistics*

1. INTRODUCTION

“Interculturality”, as well as “Intercultural Communication” or “Intercultural Competence” are current scientific disciplines that are of increasing importance in the process of globalization. At the same time, they represent a component of the public conversation within the framework of the internationalization of cultural spaces and societies. These disciplines have developed most particularly in the U.S., Canada and Europe (Lüsebrink, 2005:3). Having these key concepts in mind, one might ask himself: *what role does interculturality play in military advertisements, showed on television?* During such difficult periods of conflict or war between nations, every country involved in warfare seeks the help and support of its citizens. Thus, the Armed Forces create television and/or media advertisements, using certain cultural and pragmalinguistic instruments, in order to persuade the population to offer its physical and emotional support to the military.

2. PUBLICITY AND THE STRUCTURE OF TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

The term “television advertisement” or “commercial” refers to a short film, presented on

television, for the purpose of advertising (Duden Online). This type of advertisement is designed in such way, that its three sign systems of language, image, music and noise (germ. “Multikodalität”) are presented on a visual and auditory level (engl. “multimodality”, germ. “Multimodalität”) (Stöckl, 2004:242). This means that not only is the *functional interpretation* (germ. “funktionale Interpretation”) (Janich, 2013:88-89) of the TV advertisement necessary, but also the fact that the advertisement is analyzed from the perspective of a *formal distinction* (germ. “formale Unterscheidung”) (Janich, 2013:86-88) and from the *structural typology of the advertisement* (germ. “Gattungstypologie”) (Janich, 2013:90-91). Furthermore the linguistic elements are crucial in attempting to persuade the general public to buy a certain product or to choose a certain service that is being advertised, together with the effect that the images, music and sounds have before paying close attention to the advertising message and its intercultural aspects which may appear.

2.1 In the structural analysis of a television advertisement the category defined by Berger (2008) is named, *formal distinction*. In this category, TV advertisements are characterized by their multimodality, for example, they work in visual and auditory mode, compared to advertisements which

are presented only visually or radio advertisements that are presented only acoustically. Due to this multimodal type of advertisement, commercials differ in terms of different forms of representation of the linguistic code (Berger 2008: 1) Spoken text: It is further divided into *off-sequences* (no speaker visible) and *on-sequences* (speaker visible).

a) *Off-sequences*: the viewer hears a comment from someone or something spoken in the commercial, which follows the written text of the product name or slogan. One must pay attention, not only to the choice of words or sentence structure, but also to the volume, intonation, intonation, use of a dialect or voice.

b) *On-sequences*: the viewer sees the speaker, but it depends on the television commercial whether the speaker is clearly addressing the public, if he is having a conversation with a partner in the advertisement, or whether he is having a monologue.

2) Sung Text: It is similar to the spoken text, in the form of an acoustic mode and an auditory perception. The text differs in the following ways (Behren 1996:67):

a) Jingle: this is in the form of a sung slogan, but it can also appear without lyrics, just as the melody of a TV commercial, which is easily recognizable.

b) Advertising song: usually all or almost all of the advertising text is sung. But it's not the same with the independent songs that are still played or instrumentalized during the TV advertisement. Nevertheless, the advertising song is not used that often anymore.

3) Written Text: The written text in a television commercial is classified the same as the ad text with primary, secondary and tertiary text. The primary text contains the product or service names and slogans at the end of the TV commercial, the secondary text relates to what is written on the packaging, and the tertiary text has to do with the image and editing sequence of the commercial. The text is only presented visually, in this case.

Images also play a major role in television commercials because they simplify the process of perceiving an advertising message on a visual level. It is beneficial, because it sets a dynamic relationship with the help of images. It has been proven in many psychology advertisement-studies that images attract public attention faster and more effectively than simple, publicity texts (Janich 2005:60). Visual information is also able to arouse emotions by visualising the plot and the actors' gestures, as well as their facial expressions.

On the auditory level, noises and music also apply, alongside spoken or sung texts. According to

Stöckl (2007b:183), the music can be analyzed according to its melody, harmony, tempo, dynamics and timbre, while the noises can be analyzed according to their real/fictitious character, pitch, duration/intensity. However, the function of the music in the television commercial can be analysed through its primary, secondary or tertiary elements: the primary music accompanies the promotional song or jingle and is played in the foreground; the secondary music is played by the advertised product itself, such as a CD player, and the tertiary is music played in the background to create a certain atmosphere.

2.2 Functional interpretation. Considering the functional interpretation of a TV commercial, the perception of the advertising message is of great importance. It is much more difficult to create a commercial than a billboard because, for example, a commercial lasts a few seconds or minutes, while a billboard can be read multiple times. Therefore, it is a bigger challenge for the advertiser to attract the attention of the TV viewers. Likewise, commercials are made with the role of being authentic, believable, interesting and visually attractive to ensure that television viewers will definitely want to buy the advertised product.

The choice of music and noises have specific functions, according to Stöckl (2007:195-197), which are not only the same for TV commercials, but also partly for radio commercials:

1. Music: a) Structuring of the advertising content (creating a certain rhythm); b) Illustration of what is shown (in the TV advertisement) or presentation of what is heard (in the radio advertisement); c) Demonstration of the product qualities and properties; d) Creation of an atmosphere to differentiate products through its own brand identity, e) Attention-seeking function

2. Noises: a) Presentation of the plot location/action in the commercial (tertiary noises); b) Illustration/demonstration of product features and their effectiveness to be credible as advertisers (secondary sounds); c) Text structuring: sounds related to the linguistic sub-texts

3. The product presentation is a basic typology, with televised advertisements differing from one another in shape and length (Janich, 2013: 90):

a) The classic commercial (15-40 seconds) that appears between or within a programme.

b) TV sponsorship (germ. "die Sponsor-Nennung"), where the sponsors are mentioned at the beginning of a programme and/or after commercial breaks.

c) Overlays (germ. “die Laufbandwerbung”) are short advertisements, for several seconds, which appear during a show, below or above the screen to present certain advertising products or shows which will start afterwards.

d) Infomercials that last longer than a normal commercial, usually for about 30 minutes, with the purpose of persuading viewers to call the company that promotes the product or service.

From the perspective of a product presentation, there is a certain ranking of commercials, according to Janich (2013:90-91): The following product presentations are:

a) Product commercials (germ. “Produktwerbe spots): the presentation of the product is the most important one. The plot is in the background, is not generally important and the text appears as an *off-sequence*.

b) Presenter commercials (germ. “Presentator spots”): the product is connected to a visible speaker who is either the “product provider/user”. It can be voiceover and demonstration of product use in *on-sequence* but speechless or even appears as an interview with the customers of that product.

c) Everyday-commercials (germ. “Alltagswerbe spots”): the product is presented as a fictional plot that tries to illustrate the everyday-life. The communication sequence of the *on speaker* is important so that the television viewer can imagine himself in such a real situation. Hence, the commercial will be believable in the public eye.

d) Lifestyle commercials (germ. “Lebensstil spots”): the advertisers focus on the staged but seemingly real plot situation or the realistic lifestyle, in which the product supports this lifestyle.

e) Artistic film commercials (germ. “Kunstfilmsspots”): These commercials do not usually contain publicity texts, but are more associated with the company's slogan or product name. This means that the TV viewer mostly remembers the story of that advertisement and seldom knows anything about the product or which brand it belongs to.

2.3 The pragmalinguistic role of television advertisements is greatly influenced by the use of a certain language, of an invented or staged, linguistic form, that functions with a specific purpose, according to Baumgart (1992:34). This specific type of language is strongly connected to the everyday language, in which new words or phrases are created due to a marketing purpose, wanting to catch the interest of the general public through creativity, authenticity and credibility. The advertisement language is extremely persuasive,

because every advertisement company is driven by a strong desire and intention to promote its message, products or services and therefore, the overall presentation of the commercial plays a decisive role in its marketing strategy. The use of certain linguistic instruments, such as “rhyme, alliteration, adjectives, adverbs, absolute comparatives or superlatives, foreign word-formations” (Jagetsberger, 1998:24), enable viewers to focus their entire attention to the commercial and perceive the advertised product or service in a desirable way.

3. CONCEPT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural communication refers to the interpersonal, on-site, face-to-face interaction between people of different nationalities, ethnic groups or with distinct cultural backgrounds. According to Hinnenkamp (1994:5), intercultural communication consists of verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal forms of interaction. In addition, the interaction is structured as a conversation, which means that at least two people participate in the conversation. Litters (1995:20) would like to point out the following: “When there is interpersonal communication between members of different cultural groups, this interaction can be referred to as intercultural communication.”

An extremely important aspect is the fact that it is not the contact between certain nationalities or ethnic groups that are the subject of research analysis for intercultural communication, but instead the “contact between people”. In my contrastive analysis of military recruitment television commercials, the intercultural aspect is taken into account, as it is important to discover other cultural systems, other ways of thinking and taking action in warfare situations and by what kind of values each nation is guided by in times of military hardships or security problems.

The types of encounters between people from different cultural spheres, which refers to the term “intercultural communication”, include verbal communication, non-verbal and paraverbal communication, which also play important roles. Although the analysis of military advertisements which I have undergone does not contain an actual form of interaction between actors that represent people of cultural backgrounds, there is an intercultural contrast between the two nations, Germany and the U.S., which make use of certain communicative elements, for example, some verbal communication, but mostly nonverbal, paraverbal and persuasive techniques, in order to

gain the support and involvement of its citizens in the U.S. Army, respectively in the German *Bundeswehr*, but also present opposing, cultural aspects which refer to the *mental culture* (germ. “die mentale Kultur”) (Emrich, 2009:44): the general values, moral principles, mentalities that define a certain culture and influence the behaviour of that certain population. These internalized core characteristics of a society are typical, national characteristics of a culture that each citizen has learned from a young age until adulthood, in order to be integrated into society.

4. RESULTS

4.1 The results of the intercultural and pragmalinguistic analysis of military recruitment commercials. The chosen TV advertisements that are part of the domain of military warfare and military recruitment, include two distinct, foreign commercials for civilian recruitment in the U.S. Army and in the German Armed Forces (“Bundeswehr”). The American advertisement from 2009, which can also be found on the Youtube platform (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0f_ZUgqvxE&t=2s), features one of the known, military infantry units of the U.S. Specialized Operation Forces. The advertisement is a typical, classic commercial that lasts 30 seconds, includes a spoken text which is characterised by a *On-sequence*, because the speaker is not visible, but it is clearly addressing the audience. The images depict scenes of war, thus may arouse feelings of tension or fear, combined with sounds of gunshots and severe bombings, which create an overall effect of insecurity and encourage the public audience to engage somehow in the national battle against foreign danger.

Based on the functional interpretation of this advertisement, the mysterious music and violent sounds of ammunition being fired, together with the help of imagery, illustrate the horrific battle scenes in which soldiers must fight courageously. The images show the fact that the soldiers are brave and have the courage to strike back and protect their territory. This imagery seeks the attention of the audience, which is combined with a short message, addressing the viewers about the fact that “Warriors [are] wanted” (0:23) and the advertisers try to persuade the audience, using a rhetorical question, “Do you have what it takes?” (0:25), if yes, men are encouraged to visit their military website and enroll in the army.

From the perspective of structural typology of the commercial, it is rather an example of an

artistic film commercial, because only two phrases are included in the entire advertisement and it concentrates on the plot of the commercial, as well as on the intention of promoting their military enrolment in the Specialized Armed Unit. The advertisement message is transmitted by the speaker verbally, but as mentioned before, there is some written text in the commercial. The soldiers, present in the commercial interact at one point verbally, but mostly through hand gestures to indicate the direction in which they should advance in the enemy territory and with the help of paraverbal elements that accompany the very few words spoken, by speaking loudly, clearly and with a higher tone of voice.

Considering the cultural aspects that appear in this short commercial, the speaker addresses the audience directly, by saying “WE fight for country, WE fight for honor...” (0:14-0:18) and includes the public in the general description of their nation’s identity, defined by the following core values that represent their *mental culture* and are also listed in their online, enrolment description in the military unit: “loyalty, duty, respect, honor, etc.” (<https://www.goarmy.com/explore-the-army/about.html>). These values and principles actually determine the American sense of national pride and honor that is observable everywhere in the U.S.

On the other hand, the German TV advertisement, also from 2009, is an example of a classical commercial, even though it lasts with 10 seconds more than the previous one and portrays different terrestrial, marine, aviatic missions of the German Armed Forces (“Bundeswehr”) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sA0kDMZnjTM&t=1s>). The nonverbal, written text includes only a primary text with one of the slogans from the *Bundeswehr*, shown at the end of the advertisement, “Alles wir. Alles hier” (0:45-0:50) and the tertiary text that is connected to the sequence of the plot, combined with the images which are illustrated. The imagery role is to arouse a sense of team spirit of solidarity, thus persuading the audience to support their national cause and join the Armed Forces. The song which accompanies the visual information, written and composed by Vance Westlake, Chris Jefferson Ng. and Charlie Tenku (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4B46TrAnBA&list=OLAK5uy_n-vDyEP4Gh3JxfhELuPXYGfAGDXxzG5nl&index=2), contains warrior beats that best suit the theme of this commercial: the battlefield and military operations.

Evaluating the functional interpretation of this advertisement, the music supports and illustrates the message and the visual information being

shown. Its role is to demonstrate the bravery and heroism of the German soldiers and catches the attention, as well as interest of the audience. From the perspective of product presentation, it similarly deals with an artistic type of film commercial, because there are no publicity texts, rather words to describe the military operation which is being conducted: a loud (“laut”) (0:04) vs. silent (“leise”) (0:06) operation, an indoor (“drinnen”) (0:10) vs. outdoor (“draußen”) (0:12), etc. Furthermore, the subject name (*Bundeswehr*) appears only at the end of the advertisement, as well as the slogan, “Alles wir. Alles hier” (germ, “Us all. Hier all”) (0:45-0:50), while the audience is focused on the presentation of the advertisement.

Based on the analysis of the cultural aspects, present in this TV commercial, the military core values are bound to the German life principles of honor, respect and bravery, which can also be observed in the aforementioned commercial. Even though the German Armed Forces exist for more than 60 years, the *Bundeswehr* clearly states that the military unit is currently characterised by a strong sense of tradition and cohesion, but this was not the case in the past, during the reign of the Hitler regime in the Third Reich:

Das Dritte Reich kann keine Tradition in der Bundeswehr begründen. Auch die Wehrmacht, als Instrument dieses Terrorregimes, war in Verbrechen während des Zweiten Weltkriegs verstrickt. Dies gilt für alle Truppenverbände, Teilstreitkräfte, die Militärverwaltung und den Rüstungsbereich. (engl. „The Third Reich cannot establish any tradition in the Bundeswehr. The Wehrmacht, as an instrument of this terror regime, was also involved in crimes during the Second World War. This applies to all troop formations, branches of the armed forces, the military administration and the armaments sector.”) (<https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr/selbstverstaendnis-bundeswehr/tradition-bundeswehr>).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The specific value system characterizes a certain culture, and this usually creates cultural nuances that can be distinguished from other cultures. In the case of such intercultural and pragmalinguistic analysis of TV military advertisements, based on the theme of security culture, the overall mentality of warfare and military recruitment, all commercials share

common principles and traits that they wish to transmit to the public audience: loyalty, solidarity and honor. Such values, most of the times, define certain cultures and they act as guiding instruments to the respective society. As methods of persuasion and encouragement for its citizens to undergo military service, it is observable that advertisers have combined pragmalinguistic and social-cultural elements with visual and auditory information, in order to generate awareness for the need of military support and encourage men to fight for a national cause in the Armed Forces. The authors take full responsibility for the contents and scientific correctness of the paper. The selection of the texts to include depend on the result of the peer review process announced.

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CITIES, “WHITE STONE CEMETERIES” AND “LANDSCAPES OF NAILS”. URBAN REPRESENTATIONS IN MARIN SORESCU’S “AMERICAN DIARY”

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Abstract: *The starting point of my study is a provocative volume written by Marin Sorescu, one of the most important Romanian writers of the second half of the 20th century: Jurnal. Romanul călătoriilor/ Diary. A Travels Novel (1999). The volume that gathers different texts, elaborated during or immediately after traveling to various regions of the globe, has a composite aspect. It includes not only diarist pages, organized according to the topoi visited (the locality, country or continent where Sorescu arrives with socio-cultural or professional occasions: Finland, Mexico, West Berlin, Bari, Warsaw, Paris, Brăila, Cheia, etc.) The book also includes dialogues with cultural personalities encountered beyond the Romanian borders (for example, with Mircea Eliade, Dominique De Roux, Clavo, Horia Damian, Giancarlo Vigorelli), dozens of poems most likely written during these travels and articulated around the space imaginary etc. More than that, even the texts that at a first glance could be considered strictly diaristic (since they open with usual spatial and temporal indications and rely on a certain rhetoric of the pseudo-confession), are rather hybrid, because in most of them the writer nonchalantly mixes different scriptural formulas. In my paper, I focus on one of the most remarkable diaries of its kind: the American Diary which is written in the winter and spring of 1972, when Sorescu visits several cities in the states of New York, Iowa, Illinois and Kentucky. Although he is caught up with various academic and cultural events, the writer – who recommends himself as an “anti-traveler” – has time to leisurely explore, with an interesting mixture of fascination and ethno-identity skepticism, the American spaces that he describes thoroughly and analyzes with lucidity, in a text of real sociological interest. The concrete result of these observations is an ingenious and provocative book of travel literature, in which reflection on the faces of the American city (particularly, the big one or even the metropolis) acquires an essential role. On the one hand, in front of the confusing urban spectacle (which he perceives as contrasting, comfortable, bright, hyper-technological and consequently artificial, sterile, almost frozen), the writer feels the need to retreat, to activate his affective memory and to re-create his native village through writing. It is known that the cycle of poems La Lilioci/ At the Bats was started during Sorescu's year in the USA. But this volume must be read not only in an intertextual key, as an esthetic consequence of his discovery of Spoon River, Edgar Lee Masters' s anthology (as some Romanian critics have mistakenly claimed). In my opinion, La Lilioci/ At the Bats' manuscript – about which the diarist does not mention anything in the American Journal – is also a fertile materialization of the deep nostalgia of the writer who, at a huge distance from home, feels exiled or uprooted. Consequently, he re-transforms the harsh poetry of his native space into a splendid text in which individual memory blends, harmoniously, with the community one. On the other hand, the American Journal resists very well and deserves to be read for itself, as a remarkable travel literature, in which one can identify not only the general features of this type of narrative, but also the particular notes of a spatial and urban representation containing the marks of Marin Sorescu's originality.*

Keywords: *American Diary; anti-traveler; travel literature; urban representation; thanatic imaginary*

1. INTRODUCTION. A WRITING UNDER THE SIGN OF HYBRID

Marin Sorescu – the most titled playwright of the 60th generation and a very important voice of Romanian postwar poetry – is one of the few outstanding Romanian intellectuals who, during the communist regime, could circulate in the most diverse Western European, American, African and

Asian regions. Normally, his travel literature should have interested both the general public and Romanian literary criticism. But, unlike his books of poetry, drama, novels or children's literature, the volume entitled *Diary. A Travels Novel* (1999), in which he collected his circumstantial texts written – during or immediately after – his travels to various regions of the globe, was almost totally ignored critically.

One possible explanation for the stubborn ignorance from the public, be it competent or not, is that the volume has a composite appearance. On the one hand, it includes not only diarist pages, organized according to the visited topoi – the locality, country or continent where Sorescu arrives, with specific, but always recognized socio-cultural or professional pretexts / opportunities: *African Diary*, *American Diary*, *Danish Diary*, *West Berlin*, *Bari*, *Warsaw*, *Paris*, *Târgovistea*, *Brăila* etc. The book also includes dialogues with cultural personalities encountered beyond the Romanian borders (for example, Mircea Eliade, Dominique De Roux, Clavo, Horia Damian, etc.), Sorescu's own translations of poems that he is invited to interpret during cultural events, dozens of poems most likely written during travels and articulated around the spatial imaginary. Finally, tender or friendly portraits, in which the exercises of admiration of the poet or theatre man are visible: *Oskar Pastior or the poetry that speaks itself*, *At home to Emil Cioran*, *An artist: Tan Swie Hian* etc.

On the other hand, most texts that at first glance could be considered strictly diarist, since they respect certain conventions of the genre (for example, they open with the usual spatial and temporal indications and rely on a certain rhetoric of the pseudo-confession), are rather hybrid, when they do not prove so eclectic, that their hasty reading supports the impression of a scriptural entropy with a touristic pretext. The *Dutch Journal* begins with a poem called *Departures*, while the section called *Sweden* consists exclusively of a succession of poems with (apparently) Swedish themes, composed in January 1974: *Lyrical Archipelago*, *The Road*, *Orientation*, *The Map*, *The Bridge*, *The North* or *The Forester's House*.

In my opinion, the most substantial part of the book is the *American Journal*. While in most sections of the volume the distribution of scriptural formulas is uneven, the section written in the winter and spring of 1972 (when Sorescu visits several cities in the states of New York, Iowa, Illinois and Kentucky) is definitely worth reading, especially for the pages where the "anti-traveller"¹ – although caught up with various academic and

cultural events – does more than mapping American spaces. He filters tourism experiences through a series of specific narrative strategies (mostly ironic or self-ironic), makes spatial taxonomies and observations of sociological interest, but also tries to "get out of time" by translating *Annabel Lee* by Edgar Allan Poe or offering *Five Extended Interpretations* from Emily Dickinson.

2. THE "PROFESSIONAL DISEASES" OF THE DIARIST AND THE TOURIST DILEMMAS

The beginning of the *American Journal* is already soaked in the ink of creative scepticism, as the diarist initially feels overwhelmed by the pressure (to the point of total corrosion) of the artificial, in which he sees even the American specificity: "There is no question of writing anything. Too don't be troubled by anything! Everything artificial around – and yourself in an artificial position." (Sorescu 1999: 32). However, he recovers quickly enough to his usual tone and style, so that he can also write some memorable sequences, absolutely conquering from a stylistic point of view, in spite their bitter sociological interest. They are written in February 1972, in a contextually justified fever: Sorescu has just received a letter from the country, from which he learns that he has won the Academy Award for his exceptional dramatic parable *Iona*. The news circulated very quickly, so congratulations from colleagues from other countries come at an embarrassing pace. The natural joy of the writer who thus sees himself nationally recognized is quickly obscured by the overwhelming sensation of belonging to an ethnic otherness that is toxically represented overseas.

Reproduced later in the diary, the mixed emotions that feed the confession are compressed into an almost gnomic structure, announcing both the inclination of the representation and its harmful effects, which the diarist nevertheless tries to shake off through an otherwise creative act – the translation that also gives him the illusion, at least potentially thaumaturgic, of getting out of time:

Today I received a new congratulation from the Head of the English Department, Prof. John Gerber, to whom I must also reply in writing. I've been working on a telegram for a couple of days. It must be modest and ambiguous, as if I didn't get that award, which the local press equates to the Pulitzer Prize. A few articles in the newspaper. (Clippings are repeatedly placed in my cipher mailbox.) This

¹ In the final section of the book, entitled *Anti-traveler*, Sorescu declares himself "haunted by an anti-cultural instinct" and complains about the fact that he travels a lot, although he does not remember anything he explores (Sorescu 1999:325). Of course, such a statement is a form of endearment that many authors of travel books can afford (v. for example, the case of another famous Romanian anti-traveler, Adrian Marino – Ilie 2022: 9-24)

triggered a fit of laughter with Vigi, who says a new song can be written on the subject. After drawing attention to my home country, I begin to receive everything written in the American and Western press about Romania. It makes your hair stand on end. To forget, I'm approaching American poetry. (To study, small.) I also try to translate. Translation always gives me a sense of infinity. The same textual canvas can be infinitely equivalent – if you live multiple lives. (Sorescu, 1999:34)

However, neither the translations inspired by poetic texts (written by E.A. Poe and Emily Dickinson) nor the sympathetic portraits Sorescu makes of cultural or academic personalities he meets (for example, Stavros Deligiorgis and Gayatri Spivak) manage to completely banish the writer's bitterness caused by the usual “professional diseases” (cf. Simion 2005: 272-279). For example, he questions the quality of the diaries he reads, has no confidence in the relevance of his own text, and questions whether the diary is an “abysmal document of personality in progress.” He modestly declares that he does not write a diary, although he nevertheless admits, veiledly, that he likes the entropy of this species:

I think that's originally why this species was born, to capture the chaos, the chaotic. But the modality has diversified, widened its battlefield enormously, and practically haunts as many kinds of journals as there are journal authors. (...) Personally, I am a writer of the genre. (I say, parenthetically: I don't write any kind of diary, because I don't have time, letters, or space.) (Sorescu 1999: 7).

Most of Marin Sorescu's escapes in the Occident have as a pretext the participation in exceptional cultural events and are regarded especially as opportunities to promote his own texts (particularly, his plays). Predictably, each of them turns along the way into what critics of this type of travel diary or memorial call a *journey of knowledge* – that is, in Florin Faifer's terms, “a small-great adventure of the spirit, a useful practice for the mind, learning, and partying.” (Faifer 1993:90). Like any intellectual who arrives in European, Asian or American spaces that most Romanians do not even dream of, the writer visits universities, libraries, bookstores, auditoriums or other spaces perceived as cultural bright places. Shared warmly, his impressions are generally mixed, when not delivered directly in the form of dry verdicts or barely disguised severity:

Past civilizations have a pressed, heavily seasoned character. I liken them to ghiudem. Perhaps also for

their slightly or downright oriental suggestion. They are difficult to puncture. You may as well break your teeth with them. (Sorescu, 1999:73).

More than that, Sorescu dares somewhere to make *The Critical Theory of Travel*, taking care to emphasize the fundamental flaw of the scriptural formula involved in writing travel impressions with a certain frequency. From his point of view, geographical displacement radically alienates those who thus allow themselves to be removed from their true nature and become a kind of admiring appendix of the visited space. The demonstration of the profound gratuity of the trip is done coldly, through a sequence with axiomatic appearance:

Estrangement. In a foreign place you are no longer yourself. It's you, plus that foreign place, that tightens you, so acts on you. (How does it be). Whether you like it or not, it has an effect on you. You admire, you loathe, you are excited, you sigh, etc. In fact, it's that place that stands out, through you. Therefore, it is no longer you, in its pure state, the true one. Therefore, traveling, you do not travel, travel the landscapes, roads, bridges, pillars, orchards that you see. Therefore, you, the one who knew yourself, stayed at home. So if it's still not you, isn't it better to stay home? To stop putting up with fatigue? For fatigue – and the expense of nerves, transport and accommodation, you bear them, you proper (Sorescu, 1999:212).

Marin Sorescu never forgets to return to the problem of the ego that (is) written, with all its natural anxieties and doubts, exacerbated against the background of shortcomings inherent in long journeys in spaces too far from home (and which sometimes he can only reach with means that stimulate his *atavistic* fears). The self-declared *luxury porter* (Sorescu, 1999:214) carries with him not only real baggage of various shapes and weights (sometimes doubled by the ballast of prejudices accumulated through carefully directed readings), but also the burden of a not always harmonious relationship between the two major hypostases of his inner otherness, of which, when he is not copiously amused, he complains with Oltenian grief:

Are we two in one place, or does it seem to me? When I visit a new place, someone else appears, as if out of the blue. *One* who has been there before, bored to death, that he knows everything, has smelled it all, with a dose of déjà vu in his blood, in fine *One* (with a capital U) who knows fads (Rembrandt House for example) and is willing to take everything in jest, looking down on how I look at shoelaces, when I put on my shoes. And *another*

(with a small one, but you'll recognize it), curious as a child in the department store, stupidly good what it is, ready to be speechless at every turn. Yes, resolutely, everywhere I carry *two men* with me, holding hands, quarrelling, and dragging each other here and there—what hinders me, this cleft of personality, prevents me, in the poet's words, from walking. (Sorescu, 1999:76)

Of course, such a statement is not equal to the victorious return of the subjectivity of a split self, but all the more able to look (depending on the case, skeptical or enthusiastic, ironic or tender) both beyond the “treacherous” surfaces of the visited spaces, and into the depths of its own interiority. However, in certain diarist pages, we come across various ephemeris without real meanings or small bursts of circumstantial discontent. There are concentrated in phrases without much stylistic polish, but in which the first person is placed in a central position. He confesses, for example, that he often suffers from “the shock of ethnic de-territorialization” and adds that, paradoxically, just when he should feel the illusion of absolute freedom of the body, he feels trapped in a certain captivity: “I cannot stand the sensations of imprisonment and I have a hard time adapting.” (Sorescu, 1999:47-50).

3. AMERICAN CITIES, “WHITE STONE CEMETERIES” AND “LANDSCAPES OF NAILS”

Such (pseudo)theoretical issues also concern the diarist in the *American Journal* – held, as I mentioned before, in the winter and spring of 1972, when Sorescu visits several cities in the states of New York, Iowa, Illinois and Kentucky. More than that, he adds them a number of additional anxieties, exacerbated by the very special nature of the American space. On the one hand, it seems eclectic, almost chaotic and of a confusing diversity, so it offers an enormous amount of observational material. On the other hand, the writer is aware of the fact that he is not the first Romanian writer to face this spectacle both confusing and conquering. Hence, the worry that he is not the first Romanian writer to face this spectacle that is both confusing and conquering. But also the implicit desire (absolutely natural for a writer of Sorescu's value and recognition) to measure the forces of representation with previous texts:

But we went to the Central Library, as if we had left there, not to get lost in insignificant details and digressions. But what is 42nd Street but a colourful

fantasy of New York? Typical creation of a port and a great cosmopolitan metropolis, it makes (in its glory hours, just before sunset) the noise of Rue Pigalle or Picadilly Circus fade. I feel good in this Babylonian whirlwind. Like a lion hunter in the Sahara. I have plenty of observation materials. (...) Here is the sober Central Library building. (...) I go in to see what else has been written about New York (not to repeat it). I don't know what makes me think I wouldn't be the first, which makes me feel sad. But, anyway, the subject is too handy. Why shouldn't others feast? I see that only in Romanian there are two, even three books: Jean Bart, *New World*, N. Iorga, *Conferences about America*, and G.G. Giurescu, *Diary from America*. This, at the first glance. The bibliography is, unfortunately, enormous². As I do not find myself among those authors who tremble for fear of having their ideas stolen, I finally find in this very incentive to urge me to be more careful in observing America, being in such prestigious company. (Sorescu, 1999:41)

However, regardless of the incentives he administers himself for this complicated process that is *observing America*, the writer does not always manage to maintain objectivity. The *American Diary* contains enough hints of a troubled authorial subjectivity – otherwise, another proof of the visible modernity³ of this travel book. In this provocative text, one can identify various biological or physiological references related to the vulnerability of the one who writes himself, not only writes the city. At first, he complains of almost chronic fatigue, accumulated during the excruciating air travel: “Swollen temples and eyes reddened by airplane fatigue, they couldn't believe they could relax and rest...” (Sorescu, 1999:47). Later, he observes, in either an anxious or cynical manner, the troublesome effects of the noises, smells and impressive crowds of impassive and

² To the bibliography of this type – much more consistent than Sorescu thinks – numerous books of travel literature in America will be added after 1990. Some of them certainly deserve the attention of the researchers interested in various academic fields, from imagology and literary geography to exile studies (v. Ilie 2020): *Late. Californian Notes* (1997) and *Postscript. Notes 1997-2002* (2004) by Vera Călin, the *American diary* introduced by Nina Cassian in the last part of the confession trilogy *Memory as dowry* (2003-2004), *Diary of a Romanian scholar in America* by Grigore T. Popa (2014) etc.

³ According to Casey Blanton, one element of modern travel books is the presence of a narrator that proves himself “a mediating consciousness that monitors the journey, judges, thinks, confesses, changes, and even grows.” (Blanton 2002: 4)

hurried people. But, most of all, he repeats that his typewriter (which knows very well his personality) is missing, especially because he finds it difficult to make notes on his knees – which happens when, however, he has the mood and energy to write. In other words, when he gives up the pleasure of contemplation with hidden ethno-identity or sociological stakes.

Still, the tourist writer always seems eager to validate his existence through writing⁴, although the experience of encountering the Otherness (an essential constant of travel literature) always brings him various joys. Some of them are old Romanian habits. For example, counting dogs, grouping them by breed and imagined dialogues with some friendlier dogs; contemplating the horse studs grazing *blue grass of Kentucky*, but also other animals grazing or playing, quietly, on the plains of Iowa, creating for the writer the illusion that he is on the Bărăgan Plain (“Calves come to blow in your palm, pigs rummage merrily around you, foals frolic...” – Sorescu, 1999:45). Therefore, he constantly complains about the fact that he misses home and feels a certain pressure from the American space. This would induce him *intellectual inactivity* or even turn his writing into a copy of the huge cobweb in which the tourist is trapped. Only Sorescu's benign humour and sanitary self-irony make him get over being trapped and turn his urban reportage into an almost fictionalized description:

I've never heard of a break-in in the few months I've been entangled in the quietest cobweb. (...) Besides, no one locks the front door at night.... It's true, thieves wouldn't even have anything to steal... Maybe the flag that goes up the senate. (All American cities centre on this building that mimics the White House.) At most a stolen kiss to a shameful student with the prejudices of a wild peasant girl. Most students are first-generation intellectuals.... Taxes are high, books expensive... (...) It will seem to the reader that my notes have no order... When I see things idyllically, when I skip some aspects... The fault is not mine. This is where everybody jumps from one to the other with the greatest ease. There is a springboard for everything, even jumping into the Moon. (Sorescu, 1999:53)

Far fewer sensory pleasures, however, are provoked by large cities, where the sense of

⁴ Not coincidentally, the year spent in the United States of America was an extremely prolific one for the writer who returned to his native space with the manuscript that would become the first book in the cycle *La Lilieci/ At the Bats*.

captivity of the stranger becomes ubiquitous. We must not forget that the writer originates from an Oltenian village (Bulzesti, which he later transformed into a key element in Sorescu's spiritualized geography visible in *La Lilieci/ At the Bats*), where he learned the necessity of living under the open sky and gained the certainty that the unmediated relationship to nature is vital. Especially for this reason, Sorescu's descriptions almost completely lack the usual bursts of enthusiasm of Eastern European tourists (accustomed to rigorous rationing of products, poverty or lack of elementary resources), miraculously arrived in a world of overflow and even waste. Nor should we forget that the writer is a “moderately migratory spirit” who “seeks a good place, a quiet corner, and there carries forward (on paper) the themes that follow him like a shadow” (Simion 2002:198). Therefore, the excess noise, the chaotic movement of cars, the crowds of people in a hurry, and the huge number of excessively tall buildings in all the major American cities he visits initially give him mixed moods and negative emotions: “I imagined America quite differently. We all imagine it quite differently. Cornered cities, like mammoth teeth, real Towers of Babel, big madness.” (Sorescu, 1999:44)

Once the general perspective of representation is fixed, the tourist is not willing to change it too easily. On the contrary. In general, Sorescu's urban descriptions – and even more so those of metropolises – follow this pattern. The prose writer only adds, depending on the mood of the moment, other and other attributes meant to complete the essentialized map of an *artificial, arid, cold, frozen* space and so on. This *strange landscape*, as the writer tells us in an emblematic page, is perceived through the eyes of the European citizen, accustomed to different urban configurations, heavier but fuller of vitality. For a writer always inclined towards the aesthetic correction of the sordid real, the deficit of real life, however, needs to be corrected by jumping into the dreamy and even fantastic:

The European, taught with the heavy physiognomy of medieval cities surrounded by ruined and nailed walls, firmly anchored by some gigantic cathedral, is tempted to take these quick troughs as post resorts, as I said. There is somewhere between Iowa City and De Moines, a strange landscape: a flood, which has forgotten to retreat, has turned an entire forest into a setting of horror. Tree stumps rise out of the ice and glitter beneath the crust. The trees, cursed, have the most fantastic appearances... If you happen

to pass by this place at night, and if there happens to be a full moon... (...) Then you have something to see! In the flood of the enormous American plain, the towns have the icy and cold air... awkward and desolate of these tree stumps *trapped* by ice. Haven't I fallen into subjectivism? (Sorescu, 1999:44-45)

If such urban or rural sketches still hesitate between the objectivity of the reportage author and the warmth of the professional storyteller, the New York metropolis is symbolically represented as a strongly negative one. Of course, Sorescu doesn't deny the fact that "the metropolis is the reality and the metaphor of the modern world" (Lombardo 2003: 116). But at the same time, the prose writer's vision of the perfectly constructed and carefully organized space, yet very close to the threshold of dehumanization, is almost dystopian. On one hand, the usual pessimistic tones he uses for describing American spaces take on almost dark accents here. On the other hand, the negative emotions of the visitor (a perfect stranger to this city, understood as a metaphor of alienation, alienation and exile⁵) are exacerbated in the nocturnal environment. Amid a certain sensibility to strong noises and powerful lights, aggravated by a symbol of American consumerism (the bright commercials), Sorescu seems close to the brink of alienation, though he dips his pen in the usual ink of irony and self-irony. More than that, if in the open spaces the tourist could imagine himself half at home, the exercise of benefic comparison seems almost impossible in the city he perceives from the beginning as a huge ant nest. Viewed from an impressive distance, this ant nest seems populated not by zoomorphic creatures, but by giant, strange concrete creatures of alien origin. Overwhelmed by the number, size and strangeness of these elements of urban bestiary, the anti-traveler has the impression that he can only save himself by the quick exercise of cultural analogy or of voluntary literary creativity:

Skyscrapers roam on huge wooden feet through New York. Like a colony of aliens, they stop in a huge anthill to investigate, on the spot, if there is life. I hear the wailing footsteps of Empire State Building, surveying the island from Gulliver's height into the

land of dwarfs. "Dwarfs" are also bigger, blinking astronomical telescopes, more interested in the mystery of the Bronx or Harlem than in lunar craters. A landscape of nails of huge proportions, placed sometimes with the flower up, sometimes with the flattened head like a flower down. (This is the architectural variation.) Spikes sometimes hammered into the granite of Manhattan by the formidable tenacity of the American. No wonder, then, that sleeping for a few weeks in a hotel on 42nd Street, I felt a fakir pleasures. I tortured myself at night on commercials. (...) Wheels of fire, tongues of light piercing the curtains, with the roar coming in waves from the street and trying to muffle in my ears. Here's for me, I thought to myself! If I was looking for a cool experience...! Here I am, used as a guinea pig, for electromagnetic waves research! (Sorescu, 1999:36-37)

Only on the surface, the representation of the other American metropolis Sorescu visits for a while, San Francisco, seems to be somewhat more optimistic. The writer directly recognizes the major difference between San Francisco and New York, emphasizing the benefic brightness and transparency of the first, in a powerful contrast to the darkness and opacity of the second. The intelligent metaphoric analogy uses, again, discrete references to the Romanian rural space: "The first one is like a grain of dew gleaming in the morning on a cactus sheet by the ocean. The other is like a puddle of fuel oil in which cars and people and cattle get bogged down." Standing on a famous bridge in San Francisco, he contemplates the city differently, and slides into an oppressive thanatic imaginary that also darkens the ending of the *American Journal*:

The same brightness that envelops you in the Bay of Naples or on the deck of the boat that takes you to Capri, leaving behind a trail of foamed silver from which fish jump as at the urging of a trainer's wand. (...) As they stand, white, not so different in size as to spoil an impression of monotony, the houses look like crosses. The whole city is one big white stone cemetery – where the dead walk through crosses, all the way up in the elevator. The same monotony. Could San Francisco be the white ghost of the Pacific Ocean? (Sorescu, 1999:60).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Regardless of the reasons that stimulate it, Marin Sorescu's travel literature involves a fertile exercise of creative freedom, resulting from the ingenuous crossbreeding of several forms of self-fiction, placed in the line of a poetics of certain

⁵ Of course, this is one of the most common representations of the foreign city: "Desire and viewing, and the telling of presence and the past, on the street to the future: along with its speed, its orgiastic longing and its potential for narrative understanding, the city is manifest in its own frequent emptiness, its own enforced exile from other place" (Caws 1991: 10)

complexity and polyphony. It is true that his view of the travel diary or memorial is rather traditional; the *anti-traveler* repeatedly claims to prefer, in such a text, the impersonal, and hurries to announce, firmly, that he despises the overbidding of the ego. But the subjectivity he inserts into the text exponentially increases its attractiveness. Moreover, beyond the literary strengths, visible everywhere (the well-known portrait talent, the usual (self)ironic pigment or the ability to capture, from just a few descriptive touches, the specificity of a foreign place), the small strategic games with identity interface – such as staging a confrontation between *One* and the *other* – transform it, in places, into a provocative literary work.

Particularly in *The American Diary*, the deep reflection on the faces of the foreign city acquires an essential role. On the one hand, faced with the confusing urban spectacle (which he perceives as contrasting, comfortable, bright, hyper-technological and consequently *artificial, sterile, almost frozen*), the prose writer feels the need to retreat, to activate his affective memory and to re-create his native village through writing. It is well known that the cycle of poems *La Lilieci/ At the Bats* was started during Sorescu's year in the USA. But we must obviously see this volume as more than a happy consequence of the discovery of *Spoon River*, Edgar Lee Masters 's anthology (as some Romanian critics have mistakenly claimed). In fact, the manuscript of this book – about which the diarist does not mention anything in the *American Journal!* – is also a fertile materialization of the deep nostalgia of the writer who, at a huge distance from home, feels exiled or uprooted and consequently re-transforms the harsh

poetry of his native space into a splendid text, in which individual memory blends, harmoniously, with the community one. On the other hand, the *American Journal* resists very well and deserves to be read for itself, as a remarkable travel literature, in which one can identify not only the general features of this type of narrative, but also the particular notes of a spatial and urban representation containing the marks of Sorescu's originality.

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BORDERLINE 2000. THE CORPORAL SPACE IN THE FEMININE IMAGINARY AT THE INTERCULTURAL CROSSROAD

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Abstract: *The present project aims to analyze the manner in which women from two different cultural spaces, Italy and Romania, portray the image of the body in their poetry. The corporeal visions that emerge from the feminine imaginary of this volume have nothing to do with the misconception that women's writings are essentially pure, delicate and introvert. By contrast, all poems envisage the image of the body not as a matricial space, a germinating locus that amplifies the vital seeds, but as a place of identity dissolution, rather a space of death than of life. The surgical, raw imaginary that surrounds the body in the lyrics of these powerful women deconstructs the myth of the feminine fragility. The convergence point of the intercultural imaginary coagulated in the Borderline 2000 anthology (including references like Ruxandra Cesereanu, Ofelia Prodan, Antonella Anedda, Maria Grazia Calandrone) focuses on the same aesthetic of cruelty which transcends the cultural boundaries. Women as writers, regardless of their nationality, create a unique and independent voice in the field of contemporary literary works that requires a repositioning of the critical perspective. The body becomes the manifest of an old, but still new power – the power of feminine poetry.*

Keywords: *Borderline 2000; feminine; imaginary; interculturality; cruelty aesthetic*

1. INTRODUCTION

Why, when talking about interculturality, should we also consider how it is reflected in literature, in poetry, in the case of this study? Is literature, especially that written by women, an authorial category considered vulnerable, inferior to male writers, an accurate barometer of the dynamics of inter-human connection? Can poetry reconfigure an entire network of trends and methods that have marginalized women's writing and, moreover, can poetry transform the iron barrier into an invitation to the shared construction of a kind of imagined world?

These are some of the questions that I had in mind when I was writing this scholarly study dedicated to women's poetry from two distinct cultural spaces, Italy and Romania, as a sample of the fact that, although writing from a significant geographical distance, the poetesses who give voice to this volume come together to a very cohesive point, namely, the configuration of corporal space from the perspective of the female imaginary. We will see how, contrary to expectations, the lyrics of these female writers are extremely rough, harsh, even traumatic at times, thus dispelling the myth of the fragility of poetry

written by women. In this context, the anthology compiled by Daniel D. Marin, *Borderline 2000* (Ratio et Revelatio Publishing House, Oradea, 2021), is an undeniable confirmation that poetry written *in* and *with* the spirit of the contemporary woman no longer stands under the infallible sign of gender concession, but bears clear witness in favor of literature as a space of ideas, not gender stigma.

2. THE BODY & ITS SEMANTICS

When we speak of a history of the body, the first manner of interpretation is that of reconstructing a physical, immediate, predominantly empirical world, one imbued with senses that can, however, be guided by the socio-cultural conditions of a given spatio-temporal context. The perception and reception of the sensitivity become expressions of the frugal or social overflow. Hence the connection we can make with Marcel Mauss's observation about the link between our natural, involuntary gestures and collective norms. Interestingly, as Vintilă Mihăilescu states in an article, man has not always been aware of the body he wears on a daily basis:

It may seem strange from our historical perspective, but for millennia people in all corners of the world

have hardly thought of themselves as consisting of body & soul/spirit: this Cartesian dualism has only been legitimized since... Descartes. Even less did they think that man was a unique species only as a «being-from-the-neck-up», as the anthropologist Thomas Csordas puts it [...] And conversely, a crucial social moment such as the rites of passage to adulthood had to be marked on the body and thus incorporated forever. Body and soul rather lived in peace (Mihăilescu, 2016).

Each era also brought with it a specific optic related to the way the body, always on the thin edge between morality and immorality, was viewed. For example, if we are talking about the 15th century, the illustrations of the Limbourg brothers known as *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry* are representative in this respect. The body appears in miniature, traversed by the eschatological immanence of its nature: the signs of the zodiac, the visible influence of the flora, the belief in a magical power that transcends the epidermis. The illustrations of the months of the year are exceptional and innovative in their scope, technique and subject matter. Most of them are filled with details of the pleasures of the nobles and the labors of peasants and craftsmen. Each illustration includes the signs of the zodiac and the numbering of days, months and the ecclesiastical lunar calendar.

The perspective changes when it comes to the classical mechanism of the 17th century; the body is now assimilated to the functioning of the machines invented in the Europe of the modern age – clocks, watches, fountains, organs, etc. Thus, there is a change in the imaginary regime: the body appears in symmetry with hydraulic physics, the law of liquids, the force of winds. This does not mean that religious references disappear altogether or that their power to revitalize the semantics of the values of phenomena in the social field is diminished. On the contrary, the distinction between 'noble' and 'stigmatized' parts of the body remains visible, and with it the ubiquitous influence of beliefs, and especially their crises, has become more acute in the modern era.

As we move into the twentieth century, the question arises as to whether the social sciences, which have monopolized the field of elucidating the paradoxes of earlier corporeal representations, have contributed to the abstraction of the notion of the body. One possible explanation for this dilemma of modernity is that modern psychologists and sociologists attach equal importance to both body and mind, so that gestures, physical tensions, postures of the body become substantial clues for

psychoanalytic investigation. In other words, consciousness now appears as a configuration made up of empirical clues: “The body can lead to consciousness before being its object” (Corbin *et al.*, 2008:8).

The experience of the body lies at the intersection of the individual and the social, between the “subjective reference and collective norm” (Corbin *et al.*, 2008:9).

According to Michel Foucault, the body is closely linked to the ideological side of a society, being the first target of the punishment due to the accused, this voluntary and automatic association between body and punishment being present even in the mid-nineteenth century: „Similarly, the hold on the body did not entirely disappear in the mid-nineteenth century. Punishment had no doubt ceased to be centred on torture as a technique of pain; it assumed as its principal object loss of wealth or rights. But a punishment like forced labour or even imprisonment mere loss of liberty - has never functioned without a certain additional element of punishment that certainly concerns the body itself: rationing of food, sexual deprivation, corporal punishment, solitary confinement” (Foucault, 1977:15-16).

3. THE SPACE OF THE BODY IN THE FEMALE IMAGINARY. AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The ingenious way of putting into dialogue women writers who are representative of two distinct cultural spaces (Romanian and Italian) doubles the identity stake of the anthology: how do the poetesses who take part in this dilemmatic conversation differ? Can a point of intersection be established between the two types of imaginaries? What is the objective of these lines of poetic dialogue? Such questions can constitute benchmarks to guide how to perceive not only the proposed texts, but also the existence of women at the helm of literature. Of course, the forms of poetic representation of women writers are as diverse as possible, but what gives harmony to the melodic line that runs through the volume is, as Al. Cistelean mentions in a note inserted on the back cover of the book, the transformation of the paradigm of “the language of silk with that of the language of sandpaper” (Cistelean *apud* Marin, 2021:the 4th cover).

The poems of the Romanian-Italian women writers configure and describe a space of the body that is not intimately affiliated to the so-called matrix, germinative, life-giving topos, but, on the

contrary, the body becomes a cradle of death, of the annihilation of the potencies of existence, a repository of older or newer traumas. At the same time, as we shall see, the body that comes into being in these verses is associated with illness, with human misery, being turned inwards rather than outwards towards the world in which it is concretized. The unveiling of such an imaginary place the authors in this anthology in the line of a “somatographic pact” (Ilie, 2020:75) signed between the poetess-surgeons and the bodies they (un)make out of words and which, at least during the writing of the texts, they inhabit in a quasi-biological way. The very act of writing about the body represents a cultural gesture of reinforcement of the human heritage and, at the same time, a gesture of reflection on one's own - poetic - body: “By putting the organs of the text in their place I also put my own, the living ones, in their place” (Cârstean *apud* Purcaru, 2014:25).

The female body finds its poetic referents through entirely different formulas, which are not meant to euphemize, but, on the contrary, they present the facet of an anaphoric revealing, as it appears in the poem *Flesh in introspection*, signed by Ruxandra Cesereanu: “flesh in introspection/ the homunculus sent to the four cardinal points/ to cry for the blood wasted in the wilderness” (Cesereanu *apud* Marin, 2021:68).

Corporeality also appears in the poems by Maria Grazia Calandrone, *Clear Circumstance*: “The noisy tenderness of the clavicles, the quiet percussion/ of the muscular tensions, the valves” (Calandrone *apud* Marin, 2021:131) or *Be careful of the body to not touch the body*:

at the age of seven I had her on myself like a drop of water/ my blessed mother. Her head like a splendid dismembered instrument.// Her whole body was revealed by my name (Calandrone *apud* Marin, 2021:133-135).

In the case of this poetess, corporeality occupies a central place, giving the sense that each of the poems written has its own skeleton, its own nervous system, which can be excited at any time, as in the poem *I added a transparent body over the house*:

You are now the body that I do not see but that has passed by/ for sure” (Calandrone *apud* Marin, 2021: 139) or in *The Eastern Belt*: “Between body and polyethylene there is no space. Yet something resists/ that has not yet fallen, has not yet completely dried./ Resin coating. Organs/ dark and

soft. Spleen. Piston (Calandrone *apud* Marin, 2021:141).

The imagery of these poems is visceral, almost surgical, outlining the posture of the intransigent poetess, since the act of writing about the body is an eminently painful and necessary one in a society in which political and ideological discourses are inscribed on the body of man, transforming it into an instrument for popularizing consumerist culture, as Mădălina Nicolaescu observes:

[...] by postulating a corporeality that does not exist in a natural, pure state, but has always been already imprinted and shaped by socio-cultural discourses and practices, this approach counteracts the temptation in some feminist theories or programs to project an idealized essence of the female corporeality (Nicolaescu *apud* Dragomir & Miroiu., 2002:61).

In Saviana Stănescu's poem *Florina*, something happens that defies the laws of nature: the woman blossoms, becomes fertile soil for nature that does not overlap Florina's bodily identity, but hegemonically penetrates it – “every strand/ has turned into petals/ yes/ Florina combs her evening/ chrysanthemums/ dahlias” (Stănescu *apud* Marin, 2021:96) – transforming her into a sexualized exhibit:

Florina doesn't move anymore/ so as not to spoil/ that sister garden/ siamese/ she sits like this/ in the courtyard the neighbors come/ passer-by tourists/ to see and feel and sniff her like this/ because they have paid their toll (Stănescu *apud* Marin, 2021:96).

Looking at the poetic scenario through the mythicist lens, what happens to the woman in the poem is the revitalization of the semantics of an episode of genesis: Pygmalion no longer enlivens Galatea, but shrinks all the pores through which life can seep in, as, at the poem's end, Florina dies, becoming a victim of the beauty that kills.

The floral and natural concupiscence is also felt in Maria Borio's lyrical territory:

other new mixed with trees – / seem like trees and are/ we?// the most human hierarchies are not made/ of water and light, they grow/ with necessary will,/ they change according to the needs of some./ Repeat this and let it/ go from indifference to wind,/ which it keeps with her at some point/ between my eyes and magnolia (Borio *apud* Marin, 2021: 233-239).

The bodily imaginary in Isabella Leardini's poetry is coordinated in a poetics of intimacy on

the edge, constantly haunted by the imminence of separation:

I only know that the curve of your neck/ is the most perfect place there is/ for this forehead/ and if you embrace me, it is like entering the house/ knowing that you can no longer stay (Leardini *apud* Marin, 2021:163).

Here, the body in the Italian writer's poetry is also positioned in a dimension of liminal experiences that transform something of the individual's initial identity.

There is a kind of lucidity in the poems of these women writers that generates a quivering, restless atmosphere that prevents them from excessively animating the poetic scenario in their verses. The poetesses' hyper-lucidity accentuates the secondary, the steep hillside, not feeding romantic utopias, but underlining the emergent character of an *amor fati*, in the sense attributed by Friedrich Nietzsche in *Ecce homo*, that of accepting destiny as a liberating form of fatalism.

A vision similar to that of Maria Calandrone's poems is that of Ofelia Prodan, whose texts convey the image of the mutilated body, torn apart by an apparently harmless otherness, but which does not allow itself to be defeated in the game of death. We often see in the imaginary equation of the poetesses from both cultural spaces how death is ubiquitous in the perimeter of the body, as can be seen in the poem *Good night, sweet prince*:

Someone is playing dead in the casing/ of my chest and my heart stops/ now and then. I run, and from my body/ falls my flesh strand by strand.// I lie down and die. The heart stops./ The blood coagulates. I keep my eyes open,/ I want to see with my eyes/ my own death. I direct each scene,/ I cut to the montage all that passes the horror's test (Prodan *apud* Marin, 2021:186)

or in the poem *A Stuffed Toy*:

Let's begin: I grow a small animal on/ under my skin, that slides through my veins and bites.// I stroke it,/ it sinks its fangs into my hand" (Prodan *apud* Marin, 2021:182).

Perhaps the most powerful and painful image of the body appears in Laura Liberale's poem, in which *cancer* is shaken from the tragic halo that doubles as its thanatic presence. Laura Liberale moves the trauma of cancer onto the portal of an orphic or metaphorical universe, not removing the seriousness of the disease itself or of the sick/

traumatic imaginary, but dispersing it into poetic particles:

Please listen to how it sounds:/ *adenocarcinoma*/ a septenary, doctor, so very singable.// Cancer is a comet/ the tail to cling to in order to return (Liberale *apud* Marin, 2021:215-217).

Emanuela Ilie writes about the body ravaged by cancer in her splendid book dedicated to the body (vulnerable, pregnant, sick, old), *Bodies, Exiles, Therapies*:

Through illness, the body becomes more visible than in health [...] illness becomes, in modernity, not only an antechamber, a synonym of death, but also an emblem or symbol of identity (Ilie, 2020:97).

Susan Sontag writes a splendid essay on *illness as metaphor*, in which she talks about the transformation of incurable diseases into symbols:

any major illness, whose cause is inscrutable and for which treatment is ineffective, tends to be drowned in meaning. First, the themes of the deepest fear (decay, decomposition, pollution, weakness) are identified with disease. Disease itself becomes a metaphor [...] Disease becomes adjectival (Sontag, 1995:52).

The body as a metaphor for an incurable disease is traversed, in Laura Liberale's imaginary, by a strange form of magic that makes it glow, bringing it out of the dirt in which it should rot and giving it a new constellation in which to fulfil itself.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Far from confirming the general prejudice of female writing as an expression of purity and absolute fragility, the poetesses in the *Borderline 2000* anthology configure, in their texts, a corporal space circumscribed by an aesthetic of cruelty, of violence that tears it apart and unravels it layer by layer. The poetesses, though on different territories, pool their creative forces, managing to bring together, through their poetry, two countries in the pages of the same anthology. What undeniably brings them together is the way they filter the poetic act and, above all, the way they capture the geography of the body, which they circumscribe, in unison, in the sphere of a harsh, rough imaginary, devoid of the lexical suppleness involuntarily associated with women writers.

The body that translates illness, the body that takes life but does not give it, the body as a space

of separation or as an illusion of health - these are some of the depictions captured in the bilingual poems in this anthology that appears, from the first reading, as a treatise on the (poetic) conciliation of two spaces brought together by hands that have materialized the same kind of imaginary of power. The interculturality that makes this volume of poetry cohesive reinforces the idea that, from a network of cells to its assimilation as a metaphor or as a prison space, the body only needs a poetic gaze and a spacious arena (Romania and Italy are as generous as can be) in which to exercise all the avatars at its disposal.

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THE POETIC UTTERANCE AND THE INHABITATION OF SPACE. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE ROMANIA-CORSICA

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Abstract: Starting from the similarities between traditions, customs, folkloric productions from the archaic Romanian and Corsican space, I will try to show that nowadays the kinship between these two cultures is perpetuated in the area of the poetic imagination. The first part of the study will focus on redefining the role of the poet. "Son of the Sun and the language" (Salah Stétié), the poet has the mission to elevate the language inherited at birth, to reshape it, to reinvent it. The work on language is perfected at the ontological level, the supreme „challenge” of the poet being to say the unspeakable, to express in words the content of a numinous experience, originating from the world beyond name and form. Like the mystic, the poet uses language to convey the experience of an epiphany or a paroxysmal experience or any other state of communion with the sacred, with the ineffable, with the principles that keep the whole Being. The second part of our paper consists in the recognition of these principles, "formative forms" or "poetic entities" (Dumitru Velea) from contemporary Romanian and Corsican poetry. Cosmic song, Poetry represents, par excellence, the "voice" of Spirit, of the One (Self, Uncreated, Consciousness) infinitely multiplied in the ceaseless dynamics of life and in that of the human (self, individual soul, living being, embodied consciousness). Our hermeneutic approach opens a reflection on the depth of the poetic voice that results from the eternal interweaving of ipse and idem. Poetic utterance means experiencing a mystery that crosses your being. More precisely, what I propose is an analysis of the writing adopted by a lyric self aware of its unity with the Self. Seen from this angle, "I am the Other" (Rimbaud), and his kingdom is located on the "other side", in transcendence.

Keywords: imaginary; poetry; numinous; sacred; unspeakable; ontological; the Self

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of time in both Corsica and Romania, as more or less in every place where "the symbol ontologizes reality" (Marino, 1980:187), folk creations reflect the permanent struggle for the revival of our connection to eternity and the sources of life itself: water, air, the sun, the earth. Contributing to the mental state of the individual, nature and its cosmic events are omnipresent in folk texts. The folk creator conveys a transpersonal perspective, originating from the collective unconscious, determining the way space is inhabited. The repository of ancestral memory, the traditional Romanian and Corsican village resides under the dome of eternity, having "the awareness of participating in a destiny stemming from timelessness" (Blaga, 1972). First sung and then written, folk poetry is the "kernel of national poetry" (Kogălniceanu, 1837). The cries (chjama è rispondi), the moan (voceru), 'deochi'¹

(innocchiato), the strigoii² (i stregghi), 'doina haiducească'³(lamentu di u banditu d'honneur), the lullaby: "nani, nani puiu mami..." (i nanni) are just a few examples of the immaterial heritage of Romanian and Corsican poetry. The contemporary poet, whether or not he is aware of the heritage he received at birth - alongside language and through language itself - continues to live "in the cosmic twilight" (Blaga, 1972) of his ancestors. Endowed with the power to act upon language, the poet reshapes its raw material, its popular and mythological background; his double mission - in the case of the Romanian language, but also in Corsican, as we shall see further on - being "the rearing of an honorable language and homeland" (The testament of Ienăchiță Văcărescu). In the alchemical sense of the word "rearing" means transmutation, metamorphosis, elevation. An homage to childhood and the long-gone world of

¹A folk belief wherein it is believed that one might be bewitched by someone casting an evil eye upon them.

²Evil entities from Romanian mythology, similar to demons or vampires.

³A type of song sung by hajduks (freedom fighters, rebels)

ancestors, Ghjacumu Thiers⁴ poem “Lenzole” (Bed sheets) evokes the magic of fairy tales, the moan, the spell of deochi:

Carrying fresh bed sheets/the grandparent's hands/handily/and somewhat enchanted/seem to always be too dark/even when they're not crying./their gestures remind us/of a long forgotten world among these lands//From wings of wind/and white fern leaves/we make out bed/ waiting/for the arrival/of dusk/and for the old lady to deliver us from bewitchment/in her quiver full of tales/we search until inside ourselves/the whirlwind of desires/which come from who knows where/ dozes off. (Thiers, 2006:7).

The impermanence of earthly life is admirably expressed by the image of the bed made “of wings of wind and fern leaves”. The resemblance to the “daffodils” in Romanian carols and the resonance of the Corsican word “lenzole” with the Romanian word “lințoliu”, reminiscent of the Romanian country folk's tradition of preparing the things necessary for burial during their lifetime, should be noted here. A symbolic journey to the world beyond, life is a rest, a rest in the shade of the trees. The “wind” wings refer to the alternation between inhaling and exhaling, and the white ferns to the sacredness of Breath, suggesting that there is no refuge outside the Absolute. A place suitable for life and a place of love (“come to the forest to the spring...”, M. Eminescu, poem “Dorința”) the forest is also a place of retreat, of meditation. That is why the poet's suggestion is that the bed, the sheet, the cradle, should be made in anticipation of sunrise, i.e. with the awareness of this fate, from the moment of birth, to death (Sein zum Tode). Being a sort of deep sleep without dreams, death stops the “whirlwind of desires”; in its expectation the early years of life are recalled, the recollection

⁴ Professor emeritus, founder of the Cultural Centre of the University of Corsica, novelist, playwright, poet, translator, Ghjacumu Thiers (b. 1945) is one of the most important representatives of the cultural movement of the 1970s, called Riacquistu (Rinatu Coti) or Inghjennatura (a term, preferred by Ghjacumu Thiers, which means “re-incorporation”, “taking possession”, of the Corsican language and identity). Three of his books have been translated into Romanian: the novel Parfum de glicine (translated by Dana Marina Dumitriu, preface by Florea Firan, Macedonski Publishing House, Craiova, 1996), the play Memoria di l'acqua /Memoria apei (bilingual edition, translated into Romanian by Dana Marina Dumitriu, Aius Publishing House, Craiova, 2004) and the volume of poetry In e dite (translated by Maria Aldea, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008).

calls to mind protective figures: grandparents, the old healer (signadora).

2. POETIC UTTERNACE AND SPACE IN ADRIAN LESENCIUC'S POETRY

Folklore and ancestors make their presence felt in the poetry of Adrian Lesenciuc⁵. While in Ghjacumu Thiers's poem, life is represented by that “bed”, equally natural and supernatural, in the heart of the forest, in Adrian Lesenciuc's poetic universe, the breath of life comes to dwell in the “blood hut” of the body. Bed, sheet, cradle, hut are part of the same semantic sphere, but the degree of abstraction is increased by placing the tree of life inside the hut. It also has both green and dry branches; from the dry ones we can feel, as a blood incantation, “the quivering of the ancestors”, who continue to live in our body through genetic information, but also through thoughts, memories. Emerging from the collective unconscious, the thought becomes personified, taking on the characteristics of a live being – like a bird, for instance – and can be heard “rustling with grandparents in dry branches”:

...on dry branches/ waiting for the north/ the buds flicker and creek/ through the groans of our forebears/ on cracking branches/somewhere my ripened father/ had dried out/and his yellow shadow/ flickers in silence/falling/under bare feet/many groans/ lift the blood upwards from/the stalked horizon/ thought withers/rustling with my grandparents/ among dry leaves/ cracking/ somewhere father/ still flickers/ through groans of cold wind/ towards the green heart/ my rings fall/ as during late autumn/ under the stone-like slumber... (Lesenciuc, 2014:48)”

As in the Corsican poem, death is associated with sleep, it means sinking into “stone-like slumber”, heavy, crushing and cold as a flagstone. A conclusion to what has been said so far: when the art of the word reaches metaphysical overtones, poetry becomes the bearer of life and the work on

⁵ Poet, novelist, essayist, literary critic, president of the Brasov branch of the Romanian Writers' Union, PhD in military sciences and PhD in communication, professor at the Air Force Academy in Brasov, Adrian Lesenciuc (b. 1975) is editor-in-chief of the Brasov cultural magazine Libris and translator (he translated the book Tipoeme and antipoems by the Argentinian writer Ana Maria Uribe). Poetry books: Child-abys (1999), Laocoonia (2000), Liam (2001), Blood Hut (2014), Third Game (2015), Water Book. With Borges, looking at the river (2016), gEneida (2019).

language begins its adventure on an ontological level. The poet's supreme "challenge" is to speak the unspeakable, to express in words the content of a nameless experience. Like a mystic, he uses language to convey the experience of an epiphany or a paroxysmal experience or any other high state of consciousness, of communion with the sacred, with the ineffable, with principles that bear the whole Being. Suggested in the lines "my rings fall/ as during late autumn/ under the stone-like slumber", the presence of the snake in the tree (the ringed snake, *Dolichopis caspius*, also called the steppe snake, lives on the edge of forests and climbs trees with great ease) symbolizes both continuity and cycles of life, the passage from one season to another, from one shape to another, from one state of consciousness to another, and, as we shall see below, the unfolding of the poetic self, the creative agency.

A cosmic song, the poem lends the "voice" of the Spirit, of the One (the Self, the Self-being, the Consciousness) infinitely multiplied in the unceasing dynamics of life and in that of humanity (the ego, the individual soul, the living being, consciousness incarnate). For the author of *Coliba de sânge*, poetic utterance means living a mystery that permeates our being:

with the dead girlfriend hugging each other we
recited from the palimpsest poem

(...)

word settles down

for the feast of the poem

it sits in front of me

joining in

letter by letter

unborn

for me to confess it (Lesenciuc, 2014:19).

Poem within a poem, the "palimpsest poem" is woven from a blend of voices (a polyphony reminiscent of Corsican sacred chants), instances of enunciation and layers of reality: the ego reciting the "palimpsest poem" (the oneiric level), the "unborn" (the ultimate, causal level of reality, it is the Word, the utterance by which the worlds, the universes, were created) and the ego transcribing the confession (the level of reality of the waking state). Conceived on the model of the Ouroboros snake, the "palimpsest poem" is the enclave, the part, which swallows up the Whole (the meta-poem *Coliba de sânge*).

Contemplating this brilliant cluster of verses, we understand Rimbaud's statement "It is wrong to say: I am thinking. We should say: I am being thought... The Self is the Other" (Rimbaud,

1999:84). From this perspective, "the Other", "the unborn", is the true "author" of the poem; here he is, in the full dynamic of utterance, narrating the episode of Genesis:

I've been flattening my gyri an entire day/
unwinding my synapses for five days I pulled
on/ DNA strands and on the seventh I rested/
nothing more pleasant than being caressed/ by
spring (that moult spring) and playing with
algae/ underneath where I unravelled my body/
and was dragged to the shore by the fisherman's
net/ the sun burning me like a snowball/ trapped
in the net/ I was dragged to the shore/on the
drab land of the brain (Lesenciuc, 2014:26).

The coming forth of the "unborn", the transcendent self of the poet, takes place on the "seventh day" (Sunday, the Lord's day, the first and last day of the week, a day of celebration, of weddings, of feasts). The "stop" at the "feast" of the poem evokes the experience of a reunion of the soul with its Creator, of a mystical wedding. Having lived in the vicinity of abyss, Adrian Lesenciuc's poem is crafted in the depths of silence, is carved on the walls of eternity, then descends on the vibrating thread of immanence and gets "caught" in the net of thought, in the net of the poet-fisherman's thoughts. Exploring all the possibilities of language to reveal Reality, the poem performs a double movement, first downwards (of the "unborn" in the poet's consciousness) and then upwards (of the poetic self aware of its identity to the transcendent principle, generator and organizer of Creation). The sea – image of the primordial matrix and the unconscious-, through the ebb and flow of waves hitting the shore with "grey dust", keeps the poem in the realm of the unspeakable. An act of knowing, the upward movement of consciousness makes possible the envisioning of a landscape (abstract, stripped of images) of the world beyond name and form, described by "a self with an eye looking on the brain":

as insane as someone casting themselves down the
tunnel/ reaching for death with my teeth/ dragging
slumber to the shore catching on hope/ a vast
emptiness and an ego with an eye on the brain// me
looking into emptiness/a landscape with a brain
(Lesenciuc, 2014"26).

The tunnel, death, sleep, the abyss ("immense emptiness"), looking "into the void", the cerebral landscape, are elements that indicate the departure from temporality and the passage into the timeless

dimension of the sacred. Situated beyond any idea, religious conviction, the sacred in Adrian Lesenciuc's poetry has the meaning given by Mircea Eliade, that of “element of the structure of consciousness”.

3. POETIC UTTERANCE AND SPACE IN STEFANU CESARI'S POETRY

Following our intercultural dialogue on Romania - Corsica, we let Stefanu Cesari⁶, a Corsican poet who, although employing metaphors and symbols specific to the island, expressing universal human experiences: communion with the nature of his homeland, love for the language and customs of his forebears, national identity, etc. Awarded the Louis Guillaume Prize, the bilingual (Corsican-French) volume *Bartolomeo in Cristu*⁷ ('Bartolomeu întru Hristos') contains fifty-nine prose poems published under the title *Toi ce pays entre un arbre vivant, un arbre mort/ 'Ssu paesu Tù trà un àrburi vivu unu mortu'* ('You country stretched between a living tree and a dead tree'). “Land of beeches” and land of childhood, Corsica stretches, according to the subtle geography of Stefanu Cesari's poem, “between a living tree and a dead tree”, a location that suggests that life means travel, motion, between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Why “between a living tree and a dead tree”? The answer is given by George Vulturescu, the Romanian “poet of the North”: “Because life is guarded with death/and death is guarded with life” (“Cesar Vallejo climbs Machu Picchu”, unpublished poem).

⁶ Poet, Corsican language teacher and translator, Stefanu Cesari (b. 1973) writes in French and Corsican. He has been awarded major literary prizes in Corsica, including the Prix des lecteurs de Corse (2009), the Prix Don Joseph Morellini (2013) and the Prix Louis Guillaume (2020). Volumes of poetry : *Mémoire de la Nuit/Mimoria di a Notti*, Editura Albiana, 2002; *Forme Animale/A Lingua 'lla Bestia*, Editura A Fior di Carta, 2008; *Genitori*, Editura Les Presses Littéraires, 2010 ; *Le Moindre Geste/U Minimu Gestu*, Editura Colonna, 2012; *Prière pour le troupeau/ Prighera par l'armenti*, Editura Les Cahiers de l'approche, 2018; *Bartolomeo in Cristu*, Editura Éoliennes, 2019; *Peuple d'un printemps/ Pòpulu d'una branata*, Editura Éoliennes, 2021. The poems in this volume are inspired by a late 15th-century fresco, a depiction of Saint Bartholomew on the walls of the chapel of San Pantaleu di Gavignanu, in the land called Pieve di Rustinu.

⁷ The poems in this volume are inspired by a late 15th-century fresco, a depiction of Saint Bartholomew on the walls of the chapel of San Pantaleu di Gavignanu, in the land called Pieve di Rustinu.

This land stretched between a living tree and a dead tree, between the flowering almond tree and the pear tree on which a hawk is resting its wings. This country like a miniature with huts and sheepfolds, is beech-land on the mountain tops. It is the place where we are born and die, where mothers have hordes of children, swift they run behind their fathers, so it is, here everything rises like a rugged sign, like a why unrelated to any question. In this land of childhood, too soon ended, the saints have houses built for them, under whose roof they never grow old. Pillars are driven for fences and sheds, wood is burned for coals, everything that greens like the truth is watched. The shepherds have plenty of cudgels and knives, and their mouths full of scolding verses are all a wound when they chew them (Cesari, 2019:6-7).

In this poem, the first of the book dedicated to the holy apostle and martyr Bartholomew, life is not depicted as an end, but rather as a perpetual transformation, a morphing, the wood of the beeches and of the “flowering almond tree” becomes a fence, a pillar, a hut, a corral, a shed, a charcoal, a thistle, and so on. An entire wooden civilization is on display before our eyes, in which, as in Romania, shepherding sheep is an ancient profession, creating ethnographic, spiritual and moral values. Although they have “a lot of cudgels and knives”, the “shepherds” most powerful weapon is the word, their “mouth full of scolding verses” referencing orality, the mouth-to-ear transmission of the heritage of folklore: sayings, beliefs, songs, legends, proverbs, riddles, etc.

Before moving on to another poem, let us point out two similarities between Stefanu Cesari's poetic imagery and that of Adrian Lesenciuc. In *Bartolomeu întru Hristos* and in *Coliba de sangre*, elements such as the stable, the spring season, the tree of life, place the poem in a primordial ontological framework. Not only is Corsica the “land of beeches” and the land of childhood, but also Adrian Lesenciuc's *Fagia*⁸. Published in 2001, *Liam* is the love story (“Fagia and Liam love each other in silence”) between the young Liam – the author's alter ego – and Fagia, the “place-with-shells” where he was born and grew up.

While Stefanu Cesari's first poem meditates on wood and the tree of life, the later poem is a meditation on stone and spiritual fulfillment through art.

Only he who knows the craft of stones, chooses them one by one. At the cost of how many days and

⁸ Fictional name for the region of Bucovina

how many injuries, no one knows. No one knows what songs nor what seasons accompany him, But his work, at the mouths of time, is done. The stone must be dry, with no sun at its core. The reddish earth, like old blood, surrounds and seals the house, a labyrinth encompasses life, it is a closed world in a field of almond trees, a closed world building while children are in passing, sheep in transhumance, people in celebration, a closed world for saints, while the body escapes like a sun. Midday contemplation is this craft, a concentration of attention on vague shapes, on beauty (Cesari, 2019:6-7).

Even more mysterious is the figure of the one who knows “the craft of the stones”, when we learn that his work is done “at the mouth of time”. Who is he?! He does not appear to be a simple house builder. Accompanied everywhere by a retinue of “songs” and “seasons”, he possesses a magical knowledge. He knows how to distinguish stones and to choose the one that has “no sunlight in its core”, that is, the one that connects heaven and earth. It is only from these stones that houses are built. Like the island, the fortress or the temple, the house is an image of the universe. It is made of stone and red earth “like old blood”. In the process of regaining identity, of origins, it is necessary to recall the ancestral world of the forebears: “old blood”, “saints”, “transhumance”. The earth, in which the fathers and ancestors rest, “surrounds and seals the house” (just as their blood surrounds the family, the kindred, the nation) so that it may be protected, isolated, and, like the spirit, shaded and regenerating. A symbol of life and a place of trials, the labyrinth signifies seclusion, and the exit from the labyrinth signifies overcoming obstacles, evolution on the spiritual path. The end of the

poem is truly inspirational. An archetype of steadfastness, of strength, the stone can help the poet in contemplating the essence and beauty of Creation, to penetrate the mystery of the turning of words into poetry.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The motif of the stone in Romanian literature is very recurrent. However, there are three seekers of the philosopher's stone who have significantly changed the meaning of the language: Mihai Eminescu, Lucian Blaga, Nichita Stănescu. Today, George Vulturescu, Dumitru Velea, Ileana Mălăncioiu, Adrian Lesenciuc, Cassian Maria Spiridon, Ana Blandiana (and many others, whom it is not impossible to list in the very limited space of this article) are following in their footsteps

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