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Alicji Stępień-Kuczyńskiej
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Introduction

Dear Readers,

We are presenting you the 10th issue of *Eastern Review*. This issue is still published in formula inaugurated two years ago – entirely in English. Having received funding from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education under the Support for Scientific Journals Program, we aim to strengthen the level of internationalization of both the published content and the editorial team of the journal. Recently, *Eastern Review's* back issues have been made available at Elsevier's Digital Commons publishing and institutional repository platform.

The volume opens with Małgorzata Pietrasiak's article *Russia in the process of constructing regional structures in Southeast Asia* that aims to show the integration processes in Southeast Asia, with regard to the participation of Russia, and to determine the reason why Russia takes part in them and answers the question why its active participation in regional integration is hampered.

Simona Činčalová and Elen Jeřábková (*Employee's perception of corporate social responsibility – Evidence from the Czech Republic*) analyse the activities of social responsibility of a selected company: Bosch, and then propose specific recommendations for further development of the company.

Next two articles – Alexandr Macuhin, *2021 Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova – An attempt at post-election analysis*; Maciej Onasz, Michał Klonowski, Agata Włodarska-Frykowska, *Consequences of changing the electoral system for the model of political competition – The case of the 2018 elections to municipal councils in Łódź Voivodeship* – focus on different cases of electoral process in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. First one analyses the parliamentary elections held in the Republic of Moldova in 2021, as a result of which the right-wing party, formerly in opposition, won, and was able to form its own single-party government with a parliamentary majority, which has not happened in Moldova exactly 20 years – since 2001. Second one, attempts to assess the effects of the 2018 reform of local electoral law on a medium scale.

The main goal is to investigate the consequences of these changes for the model of political rivalry. Through the use of a selection of quantitative methods, the authors verify hypotheses regarding the proportionality of local elections and the mechanical effect of the electoral system.

The following section includes two articles covering problems various socio-cultural phenomena of modernity and social policy. Oksana Nekhaienko (*Patricia Hill Collins' concepts of intersectionality and Stephen Lukes' concepts of power in the sociological understanding of political correctness*) examines the issue of political correctness and the need to develop tools for its further study, through the prism of the concepts of Stephen Lukes and Patricia Hill Collins. Krystyna Kacprowska (*Changes taking place in the contemporary model of family policy in Poland – Analysis of the phenomena*) presents demographic data reflecting the process of the individualization of contemporary culture, which translates into changes in the contemporary family model and analyzes the changes taking place in the contemporary model of family policy in Poland and to analyze these phenomena.

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Russia in the process of constructing regional structures in Southeast Asia

Abstract. The article aims to show the integration processes in Southeast Asia, with regard to the participation of Russia, and to determine the reason why Russia takes part in them. Based on the demonstration of the international process, two theses have been proven: (1) The project of establishing a Greater Eurasia with the participation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and ASEAN is a grandiose and strategic goal for Russia. The project is supposed to recall the traditional policy conducted by Russia, consisting of it playing the role of a bridge between Asia and Europe drawing China's attention to this alternative proposal to the Chinese concept of the Belt and Road Initiative. (2) Russia is a player in the geopolitical game in Southeast Asia, even though it is perceived as the closest ally of China. Under the circumstances, where the relations with the EU have been destabilised, it is in the interest of Russia to further the integration and stabilisation of the region with its more active participation. Russia's more active participation in regional integration is hampered by its low level of economic cooperation with countries in the region and its image: the activities of Russia are still perceived through the prism of the actions and interests of China, its strategic ally both on a regional as well as global scale.

Keywords: international relations, regionalism, Russia, the region of Southeast Asia, ASEAN.

Theoretical assumptions and research hypotheses

The region of Southeast Asia constitutes an attractive cooperation partner for numerous states and international organisations. It continuously expands the institutional framework of the aforementioned cooperation and improves its forms. In the late 20th century the following trends overlapped: the expansion of ASEAN, the diversification of external partners and the enhancement of the prestige of the organisation at the level of the whole Asia-Pacific region. In the 21st century, the principles of ASEAN centrality have been reinforced with multilateral initiatives aimed at enhancing security and maintaining peace and regional safety. The norms governing regional cooperation are based on the “ASEAN way” which means a commitment to the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention in internal affairs, and consensus. ASEAN has institutionalised the role of great powers in the region, but also that the voice of small states is heard in managing regional security (Goh, 2011: 373).

This enabled the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, the East Asia Summits (EAS) in 2005, as well as the ASEAN Defence Ministers and 8 Dialogue Partners Meetings (ADMM-Plus) in 2010, which many experts construe in terms of creating a new security architecture.

In 2012 a regional all-embracing economic partnership and the ASEAN Free Trade Area were launched with the most significant ASEAN partners: China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. As a result of these discussions, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was formed. The agreement (India did not ultimately sign it) was reached at the conclusion of the 37th Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit, held in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi in 2020. Furthermore, trans-regional talks with the European Union are held indicating that ASEAN is becoming a global player.

The aforementioned mechanisms of cooperation ensue from the “ASEAN way”: where the ARF and the Defence Ministers Meetings concern the sphere of security; ASEAN+3 and RCEP are devoted to developing international economic cooperation; whilst the EAS is focused on expanding the areas of cooperation, going beyond ASEAN+3.

All these activities point to new opportunities opening up for ASEAN in the 21st century. ASEAN plays the role of the leader as regards regional processes, including in the context of establishing relations between ASEAN and the dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, European Union, Korea, Russia, and the United States).

Naturally, two out of these partners should be considered as the dominant players: the USA and China. Others, to a lesser or greater extent, see their pursuits in the context of securing the interests of these two major actors. Due to limitations, particularly of an economic nature, Russia cannot counterbalance

the impact of the aforementioned superpowers. It seems appropriate though to depict its role by means of the term *hedging*. It is applicable to minor and medium (regional) powers and consists in seeking balance by employing other tools such as multiplying interests, avoiding direct pressure and employing the tactic of “engage yourself and then refrain”. As K. Cheng-Chwee writes: hedging helps to answer the question: how to act in order to maximize benefits and at the same time protect against unwanted threats from stronger powers! (Cheng-Chwee, 2008). Hedging is a strategy of positioning oneself in the middle and thus refraining from taking one particular side. It is a combination of containment and engagement (Korolev). In the case of Russia and its role in the process of forming and expanding the scope of regional structures, the hedging strategy most adequately describes the way in which its objectives are achieved. Reinforcing its position in the region requires remarkable diligence and particularly fine diplomacy on the part of Russia, since it operates on exceptionally difficult grounds.

The research perspective which will be adopted for the purpose of analysing the subject is a realist outlook (neoclassical realism) emphasising the value of securing the state interest and adhering to the traditional principles of establishing relations between entities based on sovereignty, independence and the concept of the balance of powers. Neoclassical realism assumes that the structure of the international system in the context of domestic factors is an independent variable, whereas the state’s foreign policy constitutes a dependent variable; and also that maximising influence is the aim of states and the manner in which it can be achieved consists of preserving the *status quo*. The research method which corresponds to the assumptions adopted for the purpose of the analysis is process tracing (Czaputowicz, 2014).

The basic theses advanced in the paper are reflected in the following statements:

1) The project of establishing Greater Eurasia with the participation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and ASEAN is a grandiose and strategic goal of Russia. It should not be perceived only in terms of propaganda. The project is supposed to recall the traditional policy conducted by Russia: consisting of it playing the role of a bridge between Asia and Europe and to draw China’s attention to this alternative proposal to the Chinese concept of the Belt and Road Initiative.

2) Russia is a player in the geopolitical game in Southeast Asia even though it is perceived as the closest ally of China. Under the circumstances where relations with the EU have been destabilised, it is in the interest of Russia to further the integration and stabilisation of the region with its more active participation.

A note: it is important to stress that the following names: Greater Eurasia and the Greater Eurasian Partnership are used interchangeably.

The basics of the Russian policy in the region of East Asia

The increase in the economic significance of East Asia was one of the major reasons why Russia's political activity became more intensified in this part of the world in the first decade of the 21st century. This intensification consisted of engaging itself and taking advantage of the benefits of the economic growth ensuing from forming solid regional structures, which in the case of Russia particularly refers to a capital injection and giving impetus to the development of Siberia and the Russian Far East.

This Russian involvement in Asia is often compared to the United States resuming by its active policy in this region and thus the scheme of "Russia's pivot to Asia, Eastern Pivot" is a clear reference to the American strategy announced by President Barack Obama in 2012 called "pivot to Asia". The turning towards Asia by President Vladimir Putin highlights the erstwhile presence of Russia in this region, which also ensued from Russian Cold War traditions (its involvement in the Indochina War, the situation in Korea, the establishment of the security system in Asia).

The goal of Russia is not merely to refocus its relations with the USA and Western Europe (as well as with its traditional allies: the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Belarus and the countries which belong to the Commonwealth of Independent States), but it was clearly stressed, both in practical actions and in diplomatic rhetoric, that without cooperation with the region of Asia and Pacific, Russia's development and security is not possible.

It is important to stress that the aforementioned pivot was not sudden and impulsive. It was in the period of the Cold War when Mikhail Gorbachev, who was paying a visit to Beijing while the Tiananmen Square event was taking place, endeavoured to improve Russia's relations with the major neighbour – China. Deng Xiaoping asserted that the bygone conflicts are absolutely no longer of importance (Fenby, 2009: 803). The process of the normalization of mutual relations thus began and a new non-ideological role for Russia emerged. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Russian Federation, the most often recalled concept is the one put forward by Yevgeny Primakov, who became Prime Minister in August 1998. Bearing in mind "the maintenance of balance" in foreign policy, Primakov devoted more attention to the level of relations with the East. In 1996, when he held the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Primakov put emphasis on the following priorities for Russia in the Far East:

- to develop multilateral and partnership-based relations with the states of the region;
- to ensure stability and security on Russian borders;
- to create favourable conditions for the economic reforms in Russia, including the development of the Far East (Davydov, 1998: 53–69).

The concept of “Russia’s pivot to Asia” was enshrined in the policy papers of Russian diplomacy, among others in Vladimir Putin’s decree of 7 May 2012 “On Measures to Implement Russian Federation Foreign Policy” and the amendment to the “Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation” of 15 February 2013 (Soveshchaniye s chlenami Soveta Bezopasnosti).

The organisations such as EAS and ASEAN, as well as the states in the case of which cooperation with Russia is of particular importance, were mentioned in the said decree. It posited

to reinforce equal trust and partnership and strategic cooperation with the People’s Republic of China; strategic partnership with India; as well as with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; and to develop mutually convenient cooperation with Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand and other key states of the Asia-Pacific region (Podpisan ukaz po realizatsii vneshne politicheskogo kursa).

It was also stated in the decree that Russia would take actions aimed

at working out a new security architecture and regional cooperation based on collective grounds not related to blocks of countries and founded on the principles of equal and indivisible security (Podpisan ukaz po realizatsii vneshne politicheskogo kursa).

The situation changed after the annexation of Crimea, the conflict which broke out in eastern Ukraine and the war in Syria. The sanctions and political isolation additionally enhanced the Asian direction in the activities undertaken by Russia, and Russia no longer had the possibility of diversifying its partners. However, it would be an unjustified oversimplification to assume that the reinforcement of the Asian vector in Russian policy is connected solely with the imposed sanctions.

Taking into consideration the most significant powers in the region: India, Japan, China and the USA, the most striking progress has been made by Russia as regards its relations with China, although the dialogue has not been easy. Russia and China take common or similar positions on numerous issues: the establishment of the multipolar world; refraining from interference in internal affairs; maintaining stability in Central Asia; and their response to the American-Japanese alliance. One of the significant elements of the increasing convergence of interests is the sale of Russian weapons to China. Both countries treat the strategic partnership as a possibility of furthering their own national interests and a chance to exert an influence on third countries, especially the USA. Russian scientists and experts on Asian affairs devote considerable attention to rapprochement with China. They perceive both numerous positive aspects as well as potential threats. It is worth quoting the opinion of professor A.W. Lukin in this regard who emphasises that Russia and China sustain convergent standpoints as regards many conflicts, e.g. in Syria, Iran and Libya. Russia and China are economic partners. China is needed

with regard to the development of Siberia, and the Russian Far East. They conduct cooperation in Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation serves that purpose. Both countries refute being lectured by the West (Lukin, 2018: 296–297).

China has become the most prominent partner in this new situation (by some this situation is spitefully referred to as “Russia’s pivot to China”), however, most analysts point to the fact that the redirecting of the vector of cooperation to China results in the perpetuating of the technological retardation in Russia. Relying on the traditional realist ways of expounding the international order, it may tentatively be stated that presently too many external factors determine the shape of Russian policy and therefore Russia finds it difficult to fully achieve its aspirations and actually accepts it’s entering the Chinese sphere of influence. There exist justified fears that sooner or later Beijing will start dictating its conditions (Braterskiy, Suslov, 2014: 36–38, 41). It is worth taking into account yet another factor. China in its pursuance of the goal of making East Asia its sphere of influence is not likely to foster the active presence of Russia and the reinforcement of its authority in this area. Russia fears the situation in which it is excluded from Chinese global projects and, at the same time, does not want to share its influence where it still prevails (Sinienko, 2016: 128). Therefore the hedging strategy highlighted in the initial part of this paper in the best manner reflects the activities undertaken by Russia.

In August 2015 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov described relations with China as the best ever, however, he noticed that this does not translate into an increase in investment and the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia (Sinienko, 2016: 126–127).

Russia’s potential in comparison to China, Japan and the USA, as well as its influence in the region, are limited. However, the idea of multilateralism comes close to the vision of establishing international order in most Asian countries. Therefore, Russia undertakes attempts aimed at maintaining or reinforcing its relations with Asian allies.

Russia and its integration in the region of Southeast Asia

The region of Northeast Asia is given a definite priority by Russia, which is proven by the founding in June 2001 of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and tight cooperation with China. Nevertheless, Southeast Asia is also relevant for a few reasons:

1) It has well-established consultation and cooperation platforms with the most significant powers, from the point of view of Russia: the People’s Republic of China, Korea, Japan (that is Northeast Asia), India and the USA (Ignatov, 2012: 13–17).

2) It poses an opportunity for getting involved in numerous integration initiatives such as the EAS, the ARF, ASEM, APEC.

3) The region is a crucial partner in terms of security, including arms trade. It is connected with the intense modernisation processes of the army, which are underway.

4) In the era of totalitarianism the region may become a battle arena in connection with numerous dormant and open conflicts between Japan and China over the Senkaku Island; Japan and Korea regarding the Dokdo islands in the South China Sea; and in the Korean Peninsula concerning nuclear conflicts. They are all conceivably in Russia's neighbourhood.

5) It is through that region that Russia's trade routes and the deliveries of goods to its eastern borders pass, which enhances the significance of the underinvested Russian Far East.

6) It offers the possibility of implementing the Eurasian concept of Russia.

The most important formation which spurs integration in the region is ASEAN which was established in 1967. The basic feature of the system of integration in East Asia is the fact that ASEAN always lies at the heart of it. ASEAN centrality facilitates the functioning of various formats of dialogue established on the initiative of ASEAN with third countries and the EU, as well as the ARF, Defence Ministers Meetings, the EAS and ASEM. ASEAN centrality also means the possibility to maintain a security architecture based on protecting one's own interests and enhancing stability.

In 1994 a consultative partnership was set up between ASEAN and Russia. Since July 1996 Russia has been a fully-fledged dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the ARF. The Russia-ASEAN Business Council has been operating since 1998. In June 1997 the ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC) was founded. The Committee initiates the most favourable forms of cooperation between the parties. It is on its initiative that the financial fund allocated to cooperation was established in 2007, functioning under the following name: the Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (RFDPPF); as well as the Joint Planning and Management Committee (JPMC) and other dialogue mechanisms. In November 2004 Russia became a party to the Treaty on Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and expressed its support for the efforts undertaken by ASEAN to create within its borders a nuclear-weapon-free zone and to reinforce regional and global security (SEANWFZ). When the ASEAN Charter was signed, which entered into force in January 2009, Russia started to accredit ambassadors to ASEAN. In Russia, the ASEAN Committee was set up which assembles the ambassadors of the Association residing in Moscow. The ASEAN Centre was founded at the MGIMO University on 15 June 2010, which provides expertise for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, there exists the Center for the Study of Vietnam and ASEAN which operates within the framework of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Network of ASEAN-Russia Think Tanks (NARTT) was also established (Concept Paper on Proposed Network of ASEAN-Russia Think-Tanks).

Russia is a member of the most significant regional institutions: the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); it participates in the dialogue between Europe and Asia, conducted within the framework of ASEM; it has been a fully-fledged member of the East Asia Summits (EAS) since 2010. According to Rodolfo Severino:

it is useful to keep in mind that, as the Russians have emphasized, more important than formal participation in the EAS is the substance of Russian integration with East Asia (Severino, 2007: 1).

The invitation of Russia to ADMM-Plus may be proof of this opinion. The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States, to strengthen security and defence cooperation in the region. The Inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Ha Noi, on 12 October 2010 (About the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus).

Both ASEAN and Russia are interested in tightening and reinforcing mutual cooperation. This may be construed from the declarations made by both parties. In order to make it happen, it is necessary to eliminate particular negative trends which hamper said cooperation. The economic nature of integration constitutes its basis. Meanwhile, Russia evidently lags behind other dialogue partners, which is evidenced by the following listing.

Table 1. The percentage share in commodity trade and in FDI inflows accounted for by the states in dialogue with ASEAN in 2015, 2017 and 2018

Countries	Trade			FDI		
	2015	2017	2018	2015	2017	2018
Australia and New Zealand	2.6	2.7	2.7	1.0	1.5	1.0
Canada	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.3
China	15.2	17.1	17.2	6.8	8.4	6.6
EU	10.0	10.1	10.2	16.7	18.3	14.2
India	2.6	2.9	2.9	1.3	1.3	1.1
Japan	10.5	8.5	8.2	12.1	9.9	13.7
Republik of Korea	5.4	6.0	5.7	4.4	3.7	4.2
Russia	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
USA	9.4	9.1	9.3	11.3	3.2	5.2
Other countries	43.2	42.5	42.5	45.7	52.7	53.7

Sources: Compilation based on: ASEAN statistics: <http://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/AEC-Chartbook-2016-1.pdf>, p. 23 (accessed 25.02.2018); http://asean.org/storage/2015/09/Table-26_oct2016.pdf (accessed 25.02.2018); <https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/asyb-2018.pdf>, pp. 64, 142 (accessed 23.09.2019); https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ASYB_2019.pdf (accessed 12.03.2020).

Despite numerous declarations pledging an increase in turnover, trade is continuously scarce. Only Canada has a comparable trade value. All the other ASEAN+ countries definitely display a higher rate of commodity trade. The Russian level of investment in ASEAN countries is close to nil. The trade structure is obsolete and does not change and the Russian exports to ASEAN countries are limited and monotonous. Metallurgical products, chemical products, paper and cellulose constitute the majority of the exported commodities. The share accounted for by highly processed products such as machines and appliances does not grow. Russia traditionally buys rubber, latex, coconut oil, everyday consumer goods and household electronics from ASEAN countries.

There is a possibility, which is slowly materializing, of diversifying the forms of cooperation, e.g. by attracting the ASEAN capital to the service sector, industry, petroleum refining, the construction industry and to the implementation of the development programmes of Siberia and the Russian Far East (Voronin, 2010: 316).

For ASEAN, Russia plays an important role in strengthening ties within the Association, including relations with superpowers. As Russian experts note, Russia's strategy is vague and often developed on an *ad hoc* basis rather than in a long-term manner. Engaging the Russian Far East in that cooperation opens a whole new dimension and the RFE may become a member of the integration structures. Meanwhile, up till now the capital of the states in the Asia-Pacific Region has been predominantly allocated to those branches in the case of which such capital injections are not necessary, e.g. trade, restaurants and hotels. There are prospects for cooperation in the fields which require state-of-the-art technologies, including nuclear power, medicine, nanotechnology, and nanomineralogy; however, the implementation of these projects progresses at a very slow pace. In order to ensure that there is adequate personnel to put into practice regional cooperation in Vladivostok, a School of Regional and International Studies has been established at the Far Eastern Federal University, in the FEFU Institute of Oriental Studies. It is here where students from the ASEAN countries are supposed to study. Vladivostok has the necessary development facilities and has taken the initiative to mark its presence as a player in, or even an initiator of, regional integration processes. A new possibility of economic consultations is guaranteed by the Eastern Economic Forum, which has been held since 2015 in Vladivostok, in which ASEAN member states participate, as well as the representatives of companies based in this region.

ASEAN leaders point to the fact that it is impossible to apply the European model in the region of Asia-Pacific; in this regard, they fully agree with Russia. In the face of these challenges, ASEAN is trying to affect the global system and come up with its own solutions. The number of free trade agreements is growing. Southeast Asia is considered the obligatory target of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region and therefore the Regional Comprehensive Economic

Partnership, RCEP (Żołądkiewicz, 2016: 335–344), which encompasses major regional powers such as Australia, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand, has become an additional development instrument and may have an impact on boosting the economic situation. This direction of regionalism, so different from the strict rules imposed by the WTO, is becoming, as K. Żołądkiewicz puts it, “one of the key instruments of global trade liberalisation” (Żołądkiewicz, 2016: 335). The said direction matches the specific character of the Asian region and it could be added that it matches the specific character of Russia as well. However, Russia remains apart from the RCEP initiative and this fact, besides the Chinese concept of the Belt and Road Initiative, encourages Russia to work out its own strategy towards Southeast Asia.

Greater Eurasia

Not only the initiatives undertaken by ASEAN serve the purpose of “integrating the integrated”. In order to answer the question posed in the initial part of the paper which regards the way in which the dialogue states affect integration processes, one may come up with the Chinese concept of the Belt and Road, which so far has been the most advanced. In 2013, President Xi Jinping, in a speech made in Kazakhstan entitled “Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future”, endorsed the concept of the Silk Road Economic Belt (President Xi Jinping proposes to build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian countries). At the same time in 2013 strategic partnership relations were established between Russia and China. Russian scientists have come up with divergent opinions on the advantages for Russia ensuing from the Chinese concept. They have ranged from very positive or even enthusiastic ones: assuming that Russia may benefit from the implementation of the idea, especially with regard to expanding its infrastructure and the inflow of investment capital; to less favourable ones: suggesting that China intends to supersede the USSR in Central Asia (Timofeev, Lissovlik, Filippova, 2017: 62–77). Relying on realist assumptions, it is possible to formulate a conclusion that rivalry between Russia and China is inevitable; however, on the other hand, if we take into account the interests of the USA in the region it may be stated that cooperation with China may only jeopardize them and help Russia in integrating Eurasia.

Thus Russia has committed itself to the Chinese project regarding it as beneficial in terms of reinforcing Eurasia, but at the same time, it asserted that its interests should be more intensely emphasized and more effectively protected. In December 2015, in his address, Putin recommended consultations on a possible economic partnership with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as well as with the countries

which are members of the Organisation. A few statements were issued in this regard which culminated in the Sochi Declaration which promoted the idea of free trade between ASEAN, the SCO and the EAEU (Sochi Declaration).

During the summit in Sochi, in May 2016, it was decided to upgrade the status of the relations with ASEAN. The parties signed a joint declaration which provided for the development of cooperation. As regards Russia, it entailed the implementation of the concept of creating the Eurasian macro-region, and as for ASEAN, it was connected with the fulfilment of the objectives adopted in the ASEAN Community Blueprint 2025 and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025. In the view of Russian strategists, the plans related to “integrating the integrated”, creating macro-regions, including the Belt and Road Initiative, Greater Eurasia or even the North-South International Transport Corridor remain in the interests of ASEAN. If this wide-ranging concept turns out to be successful, Russia could achieve its aspirations. It could engage the most concerned regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East, gain the support of new partners and thus correct its excessively pro-China course. It should be highlighted at this point that integration projects play an additional role. They not only assume the integration of Siberia and the Russian Far East with Asia, but an emphasis is also put on internal integration and reinvigorating the less developed regions of Asia. The projects which are devoted especially to the RFE prove that this region is treated on special terms (Diesen, 2017: 67).

Moscow is convinced that integration macro-projects are beneficial for all the involved parties, since only together are they able to constitute an asymmetric power and enhance their bargaining potential in relation to other countries. They can introduce collective privileges which will not apply to others, e.g. customs tariffs or barriers directed at “non-members”. They can create politically favourable conditions for development with regard to entering third countries’ markets (Diesen, 2017: 21). From this ensues the determination to convince potential Eurasian partners to these projects. Kazakhstan is the most eager supporter. President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced the concept of Eurasian integration as early as 1994 and it can be acknowledged that, after a few stages of talks, it has taken the form of the Eurasian Economic Union. It is the EAEU that is a starting point for the next stages of Eurasian integration.

Some experts, including the Russian ones, consider to be justified the fears that, despite the “strategic partnership”, China will not want to help Russia to become a fully-fledged participant of the integration process in the Asia-Pacific region. From the Chinese perspective, it is most significant that Russia is the supplier of strategic raw materials and it is not in the interest of China to facilitate the process of Russia conquering new markets. Russian experts express their scepticism about China’s support for the Eurasian project. In 2017 Chen Yu, a renowned researcher from the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), in his comment on Eurasian integration, stated that

As regards the prospects of China's joining the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) I think that in reality, such a possibility does not exist. On the one hand, I believe that the EAEU is an integration mechanism for the countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States which earlier constituted the USSR. China does not belong to this category. At the same time, Russia plays the central role and even if China wanted to join the EAEU Russia would not agree to it. On the other hand, Beijing conducts a policy consisting of not joining any blocks of countries. Although the EAEU constitutes an economic block we can find political overtones in it as well (Chen Yu).

However, official assurances and actions taken by both parties point to the existence of a will for, and the necessity of, cooperation.

The common neighbourhood is perceived by Russia and China as a source of different resources and possibilities which mean labour force in the former case and space for investment expansion in the latter one. However, both countries have a vested interest in regional security and stable political regimes (Luzyanin).

A.V. Lukin, an expert in the field of East Asia, advises not to go to extremes. It is recommendable for Russia to, on the one hand, take into account the necessity to expand its range of allies, to diversify partners and not to limit itself only to cooperation with China, but to reinvigorate the relations with geopolitical friends such as Vietnam, India, Iran and even with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and, on the other hand, to conduct talks with China and to pursue the goal of putting into effect common integration initiatives.

The question remains as to what the project of Greater Eurasia is supposed to consist of. It is founded on the rapprochement of Russia and China yet on terms based to a larger extent on partnership. Other non-Western organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, ASEAN and even BRICS have enhanced their role in the said rapprochement. Thus, returning to the question concerning the role of the ASEAN dialogue partners in integrating the region, it can be asserted that Russia puts forward a proposal addressed to the Association to expand integration towards Greater Eurasia. For the time being Greater Eurasia is not an organization but an idea of partnership that comprises the interests of non-Western states. Two kinds of the convergence of interests are possible: the political one, connected with the response to the USA's hegemony and the struggle against the unipolar world, reinforcing the role of the UN and the Security Council and respecting selected cultural trends and differences. This is very close to the Bandung Declaration of 1955. Economic interests constitute the other kind, and encompass first and foremost the establishment of a free trade zone within the framework of the EAEU, resembling the one which exists between China and ASEAN. Creating new trade corridors, including the Maritime Silk Road connecting Eurasia with ASEAN, is an important undertaking not only

for Russia. It is also emphasized that Greater Eurasia will be constructed not in the old Europe but in the new Eurasia and pluralism will constitute the basis for integration (Lukin, 2018: 318–319).

After the USA had withdrawn from the TPP project, the chances of mega-blocks initiated by China and subsequently Russia enhanced. For Russia, this step was a favourable one as it perceived the TPP in terms of China's isolation and ensuing from it Russia's isolation. As, among others, Anton Tsvetov indicates, another stimulus is provided by the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership initiative, ASEAN+6 FTA. China and ASEAN occupy a central position as regards the RCEP negotiations, whereas Russia remains on the margins. According to Anton Tsvetov, in order to enable Russia to be an active participant in the free trade talks, the process should be carried out through the Eurasian Economic Union, EAEU (Tsvetov). A. Tsvetov, however, points to the following problem – the idea of Greater Eurasia, which could stimulate integration processes, is relatively vague. He claims that it is a display of Russia's ability to engage in global projects. Unfortunately, Russia's economic ties with Southeast Asia are weak and apart from the traditional spheres such as crude oil, gas, heavy industry and nuclear technology, Russia does not have anything to offer.

Regardless of arising doubts and the scepticism of some potential participants, the Russian idea remains in the political game. In a joint communiqué issued after the last summit in Singapore ASEAN+Russia (14 November 2018) it was stated that there is a need for further consultations between ASEAN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and independently between ASEAN and the EAEU (Joint Statement of the 3rd ASEAN-Russian Federation Summit on Strategic Partnership). In April 2019, within the framework of the session of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing, Nursultan Nazarbayev put forward a proposal of creating a new political reality which he called “Three D”, which means the need of establishing three dialogues. The first is supposed to concern the following great powers: the USA-the EU-China-Russia, the second is supposed to focus on the security issues in Asia and Europe and the third is to centre around the economic dialogue between the EAEU-the EU, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and ASEAN. The Fourth Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Countries, Parliaments in Nur Sultan was devoted to the leading subject i.e. Greater Eurasia (“*Wielka Euroazja*”. *Na drodze do wspólnej przyszłości*).

In conclusion

Southeast Asia is significant for Russia due to strategic as well as economic reasons, although the latter ones lag behind in comparison to other ASEAN dialogue partners. The activities of Russia are still perceived through the prism of the actions

and interests of China, its strategic ally both on a regional as well as global scale. Being aware of the international determinants of the Russian policy, many Russian experts, nevertheless, alert the decision-makers to the fact that by engaging itself only in the actions which are beneficial for China, Russia may lose its traditional allies in the region and maybe deprived of its major asset which is the balancing of the influence of the two most significant players: the USA and China.

The article cites evidence for the theses posited in the introduction. Russia participates in almost all integration structures in Southeast Asia and propounds the expansion of such structures by creating macro-regions. The project of establishing the Greater Eurasian Partnership, with the participation of the EAEU, the SCO and ASEAN, is a gigantic and strategic goal of Russia's and it should not be perceived only in terms of propaganda. The project is supposed to recall the traditional policy conducted by Russia, consisting of it playing the role of a bridge between Asia and Europe and to draw China's attention to this alternative proposal to the Chinese concept of the Belt and Road Initiative. However, it should not be considered that it in any way competes with the Chinese initiative, which ASEAN leaders do notice. Its role is rather to remind all the parties concerned that Russia is still in the game as regards Southeast Asia and to highlight the attractiveness of Russia's Asian part: Siberia and the Russian Far East. So far the programmes devoted to their development have not been effective in terms of expected results, although the targets concerning the enhancement of the role of the RFE in the integration processes are very ambitious.

The project of the Greater Eurasian Partnership is still at the concept stage. Russian experts point to numerous advantages of integrating the regions which are already integrated. ASEAN leaders are rather detached, although willing to discuss this issue. In the Singapore Declaration, a reference was made to the idea put forward in Sochi by President Putin, however, the concept was slightly diluted. The said diluting consisted of, among other things, separating the talks between ASEAN and the SCO and the EAEU and devoting two separate sections to them, thus ensuring the continuation of talks in this regard but not on such a scale as proposed by Russia.

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Employee's perception of corporate social responsibility – Evidence from the Czech Republic

Abstract. The importance of social responsibility has an evermore prominent position. This is since the world is increasingly interconnected and globalization is constantly moving forward. The aim of the paper is to analyse the activities of social responsibility of a selected company: Bosch, and then propose specific recommendations for further development of the company. It is based on analysis of company reports, interviews with managers and a questionnaire survey. The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. We focused on the plant in Jihlava, in the Czech Republic. The findings show that most employees know the concept of CSR and perceive it as a positive matter and want their employer to behave according to this concept. According to them, the greatest attention should be paid to the social pillar. The survey shows that the employees know the values of the company in which they work. In terms of communication with employees with regards to the activities of CSR, it is at a high level. Finally, recommendations are proposed, including ones concerning problems with transport, eco-labels, communication and employee support.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, employee satisfaction, a Czech company.

Introduction

The idea of corporate social responsibility began to take shape as early as the 19th century when employers start taking an interest in their employees beyond the usual requirements of the time; however, this behaviour was not yet called social responsibility. The turning point came in the 1950s when Bowen first tried to define CSR in his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman* (Carroll, 2009). Since then, various authors have attempted definitions, but none of them is generally accepted (Kašparová, Kunz, 2013; Barauskaite, Streimikiene, 2021). The topic of social responsibility is constantly evolving and there are more and more possibilities and areas for its application, it only depends on the companies themselves how they use this “opportunity” to their advantage. There are several definitions and recommendations regarding social responsibility, as such, it is a broad topic that is not fully defined and it is up to each business entity to implement it in this regard. Activities related to social responsibility are supported by the European Union, which promotes the ideas of this concept and sees it as having huge potential in the future (Kašparová, Kunz, 2013). As stated by the National Information Portal on CSR (2015), social responsibility is not significantly regulated in the Czech Republic (Vrabcová, Urbancová, 2021).

Today many companies carry out activities related to social responsibility, trying to contribute to the well-being of the whole society, which they influence by their behaviour. However, perhaps understandably, companies want this initiative not to be one-sided and expect activities in this direction to return to them in the form of good financial results. It is important to reconcile the social and environmental activities of the company with the business’s purpose and values (Rangan *et al.*, 2015; Ahmed *et al.*, 2020). The aim of the paper is to analyse the activities of social responsibility of the selected company, Bosch, and then to propose specific recommendations for the further development of the company. This work is based on the analysis of company reports, interviews with managers and a questionnaire survey.

Theoretical background

The authors have been trying to define CSR for several decades. As a result, many definitions describe the broad scope of social responsibility (Kunz, 2012). Š. Hronova and V. Kunz (2015) state that a short definition can be simple but misleading, and that a long definition can be more precise and descriptive. According to A. Dahlsrud (2008), some of them are focused only on a certain area and thus hinder the development and implementation of the concept. These areas are environmental, social and economic areas, as well as stakeholders and volunteers.

According to F. Manni and A. Facci (2020), activities on the topic of social responsibility are defined differently, but we can divide them into certain areas. The basic concept of social responsibility is based on three pillars, the so-called triple bottom line – economic, social and environmental pillars, which can be described as the 3P – profit, people, planet (Pavlík *et al.*, 2010). K. Pícha (2012) mentions that approaches to social responsibility include relations to sustainability and sustainable development, which form the basis for fulfilling aspects of CSR.

No generally accepted standard includes measures for these three areas, this can be considered a strength because it can be adapted to different projects and situations (Slaper, Hall, 2011). Each company adapts the concept to its own needs. It is mainly about improving its reputation with its current and future customers and the public (Zadražilová *et al.*, 2010; Eger, Suchánek, 2020). For the economic pillar, making a profit is one of the main goals of companies. This profit then allows companies to finance their activities (Kunz, 2012). It also focuses on the economic value that the company provides to the environment in a way that includes sustainability and thus supports future generations (Alhaddi, 2015). Companies in this area maintain positive relationships with their stakeholders and pay attention to business transparency. Within the economic pillar, the company's activities are monitored as to how they have an impact on the economy at the local and global levels (Steinerová *et al.*, 2008; Dušková, 2021). The economic area focuses mainly on the requirements of stakeholders, which include owners, shareholders, investors, customers, suppliers, consumers, business partners or the public sector (Zadražilová *et al.*, 2010; Tecl, 2014; Suchý, 2015; Dytrt, 2015; Sherwood, 2019; Westland, 2019; Tetrevova and Patak, 2019).

The social pillar includes the relationship between the company and its employees. How the company takes care of its employees, what working conditions they have and what opportunities it provides them (Kunz, 2012). The company also influences society, the standard of living of citizens, through their health and education to cultural development (Steinerová *et al.*, 2008). It also seems essential that society's CSR initiatives exceed consumer expectations (Schramm-Klein, Zentes, 2008). V. Kunz (2012) includes in the social area activities such as work-life balance, outplacement, equal job opportunities, benefits, the fight against mobbing and sexual harassment, job diversity, job rotation, health and safety, medical examinations, a friendly environment where employees do not have to be afraid of expressing their opinion, and a respect for human rights. Various authors deal with this topic and, for example, M. Steinerová *et al.* (2008) include activities related to corporate giving and volunteering, social integration, care for the quality of life of citizens in the field of cultural or sports activities, employment development, and infrastructure.

Moving onto the environmental pillar. In this area, companies should pay attention to the economic use of natural resources, their protection, investment in clean production and technology, be environmentally friendly and reduce their

negative impact on this area (Sommerauerová *et al.*, 2016). The environmental area is becoming increasingly popular and necessary in the 21st century. Caring for this area also goes hand in hand with the company's financial success (Savitz, 2013). The company must pay attention to the activities it carries out within the company, those that go outside and affect its surroundings, and eliminate the activities that have a negative effect. It is also essential to inform the surroundings in case of any problems (Kunz, 2012).

With the proper functioning of the CSR concept, the company also builds good relationships with its stakeholders. It gains these good relationships and trust by constantly cooperating with key stakeholders (Steinerová *et al.*, 2008). Stakeholder theory is constantly evolving and therefore it is increasingly difficult today to decide who are still stakeholders and who no longer belongs to this group (Kunz, 2012). Among the stakeholders, we can include all those who have both positive and negative influences on the company. Approaches to individual stakeholders may vary, depending on their importance and the activities that are targeted at stakeholders by the company (Tetřevová *et al.*, 2017).

Methodology and data

To fulfil the goal of the paper, the socially responsible activities of Bosch Diesel are have been analysed. The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. It employs around 403,000 people worldwide. The Czech Republic has several independent subsidiaries. Our attention was focused on the plant in Jihlava. It is the largest production plant in Jihlava, producing diesel injection pumps, and at the same time the largest employer in the Vysočina Region. Furthermore, based on the company's internal and external documents, the authors have performed a detailed content analysis; these documents contain information on social responsibility and the various activities that Bosch performs. In order not to rely only on the analysis of documents, a manager who takes care of this area in the company was also interviewed. To determine the social responsibility and the current state of activities, a questionnaire survey with employees was also conducted. The self-administered and structured questionnaire is used as an instrument for primary data collection and to gather data that could be used to evaluate the respondent's beliefs, knowledge, attitude, and behaviour regarding the study variables.

The questionnaire was distributed to 200 employees and 176 of them were returned, representing a return of 88%. The questionnaire, with 23 questions, is divided into several parts. At first, we focused on classical general socio-demographic issues. Other parts of the questionnaire examine how respondents perceive CSR and whether they know what this area means or consider it important.

The following section focuses on the individual pillars of CSR and what impact they have on employees. Here we found out which activities within the individual pillars are important for employees and to what degree. The last part is dedicated directly to Bosch Diesel. Here it is ascertained whether the respondents know the surveyed company and have a relationship with it. What are the attitudes and opinions on social responsibility in the company and to what extent do the activities affect them, or what effect do these activities have on the respondents?

The following research questions (RQ) are set:

RQ1: How do the respondents perceive CSR?

RQ2: How important are the individual activities of the CSR pillars for the respondents?

RQ3: What is the attitude of respondents to CSR in Bosch Diesel?

Results and discussion

Of the returned 176 questionnaires, 106 were completed by men and 70 by women. Employees aged 40–49 most often answered, the least represented group was ≤ 20 . Most respondents have worked at Bosch Diesel for 16 or more years, which is very good in terms of staff turnover. The next highest number of respondents indicated 11–15 years of employment. From these results, it can be concluded that the employees of Bosch Diesel are faithful.

RQ1: How do respondents perceive CSR?

CSR activities are not associated only with benefits, but can also be perceived negatively. For this reason, employees are presented with general questions regarding their perception of CSR. The most frequent answer to the question of whether they know what CSR is was answered by 61.30% of the respondents. Furthermore, 38.70% of respondents answered that they did not know or that they were not sure.

After the definition of CSR was reconsidered, respondents were asked whether they perceived social responsibility negatively or positively. Respondents could answer on a scale from definitely positive to negative. Nobody answered negatively and only 6%, ie 10 respondents, perceive social responsibility rather negatively. We can therefore say that most respondents perceive social responsibility positively.

Based on the results of RQ1, most respondents know what to imagine under the term social responsibility, although the concept is very broad and each person could have imagined something different under this concept, the basis of the concept is the same according to the authors. Those respondents who have some idea of

what CSR means then perceive this concept positively, however, a small proportion of respondents perceive CSR as a negative issue. This negative opinion of CSR can be found in literature, purported by such authors as Milton Friedman, who was one of the biggest critics of corporate social responsibility. It is important for most respondents that their employer behaves socially responsibly because as employees they are among the main stakeholders and are part of the company. CSR affects them very much, for example, the way the employer treats them and whether it respects all their rights; what working conditions they have and whether there is any dialogue between employees and employers. Furthermore, most employees think that CSR gives companies a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is important for companies because it determines what companies offer their customers and other stakeholders, being able to offer a little extra than their competitors. It is something that no one else offers and at the same time it makes the company exceptional. In social responsibility, companies can realize themselves in any direction, because there are no limits to this concept. Companies can focus on an area from any pillar that suits them in meeting their strategic goals.

RQ2: How important are the individual activities of the CSR pillars for the respondents?

Respondents were given a list of socially responsible activities to evaluate. First, we asked the respondents which pillar companies should focus on the most. They could choose one or more answers, so there were a total of 287 answers across the individual pillars, The social pillar which received the most answers was the economic pillar, 69% of employees answered in this way, ie 122. The environmental pillar received 10% less and the smallest number of answers, ie 35% of respondents. However, even if the environmental pillar received the least votes, it does not mean that companies should not be interested in the environment, on the contrary, today this area is very topical and environmental care is part of the strategies of some companies.

The following questions were devoted to the importance of activities in individual pillars, where respondents were given a list of individual activities and further decided according to their preferences on a scale from 1 (least important) to 4 (most important). Table 1 shows the individual activities and their distribution according to which pillar they fall into. The most important activity within the economic pillar for respondents is “innovation and sustainability”, option 67 was chosen by almost 67% of respondents. “Respect for human rights and the prohibition of child labour” is the most important in the social pillar. According to the respondents, the most important within the environmental pillar is “protection of natural resources and the elimination of negative impacts on the environment”. According to the respondents, the most important activity

within all pillars is “Respect for human rights and the prohibition of child labour” from the social pillar. The second place is occupied by the activity “Protection of natural resources and the elimination of negative impacts on the environment” from the environmental pillar. In third place is again an activity from the social pillar “Work-life balance (harmonization of personal and professional life).” According to the respondents, another important activity is “Waste Management”, which concerns the environmental pillar. Only the activity “innovation and sustainability from the economic pillar” took fifth place. We can see that all three pillars are included among the five most important activities. At the other end of the scale, the respondents consider “Outplacement (professional help from the employer to dismissed employees)” to be the least important activity: almost 35% of respondents described this activity as unimportant. Respondents identified “Donations and volunteering” as the second least important activity, ie almost 31% of employees. The third least important activity for the respondents is “Corporate governance – the way of corporate governance.” Another activity of little importance is again from the economic pillar, namely “Relations with owners, shareholders and investors”. Respondents identified “Minimization of traffic load” as the fifth least important activity. As we can see here, all three pillars of social responsibility are included among the least important activities.

Table 1. Importance of activities in individual pillars

Activities	1	2	3	4	Average	Order in pillars	Ranking overall	
	In %							
1	2				3	4	5	
E c o n o m i c	Avoid corruption, behave ethically and be transparent in supplier-customer relations	4.5	4.5	25.6	65.4	3.52	2	7
	Corporate governance	4.0	19.3	40.9	35.8	3.09	7	22
	Supplier-customer relations	2.8	9.1	45.5	42.6	3.28	5	17
	Relations with owners, shareholders and investors	3.4	14.2	52.3	30.1	3.09	6	21
	Intellectual property (patents, copyrights, trade secrets, etc.)	2.8	7.4	43.2	46.6	3.34	3	14
	Innovation and sustainability	4.0	3.4	26.1	66.5	3.55	1	5
	Fair competition	6.3	10.2	30.7	52.8	3.30	4	16

Table 1 (cont.)

1	2					3	4	5
S o c i a l	Work-life balance	4.0	1.1	25.0	69.9	3.61	2	3
	Human resources development (qualifications, education)	3.4	2.8	35.8	58.0	3.48	3	9
	Outplacement	3.4	30.7	35.8	30.1	2.93	10	24
	Benefits for employees	2.8	10.2	30.7	56.3	3.40	7	13
	Equal job opportunities	2.8	4.0	34.7	58.5	3.49	4	8
	OSH	3.4	5.2	38.6	52.8	3.41	6	11
	Donations and volunteering	3.4	26.1	42.6	27.8	2.95	9	23
	Care for the quality of life of citizens	3.4	10.8	42.0	43.8	3.26	8	18
	Respect for human rights and the prohibition of child labour	2.3	1.7	17.6	78.4	3.72	1	1
	Diversity of work and friendly environment	2.3	4.0	32.4	61.3	3.53	3	6
E n v i r o n m e n t a l	Protection of natural resources and the elimination of negative impacts on the environment	3.4	0.6	20.4	75.6	3.68	1	2
	Environmental policy of the company	2.8	5.7	47.2	44.3	3.33	5	15
	International standards (regulating the impact of business on the environment)	4.0	9.6	43.8	42.6	3.25	6	19
	Environmental investments and measures	2.3	5.1	42.0	50.6	3.41	4	11
	Waste management	1.7	4.6	26.1	67.6	3.60	2	4
	Safety when handling various substances	3.4	8.0	26.7	61.9	3.47	3	10
	Minimization of traffic load	4.5	13.1	45.5	36.9	3.15	7	20

Sources: own calculation.

The results show that companies should focus primarily on the social and economic pillars of social responsibility. Based on the respondents' answers, it is important to focus primarily on the social pillar, which mainly concerns the area around employees. Companies should try to keep their employees satisfied and thus achieve their loyalty, and thus avoid large fluctuations, ie. employees will then work for the company for many years. Satisfied employees also create a competitive advantage. According to employees, the environmental pillar is the least important for companies, but because of today's global pressures, companies must also take it into account and address environmental activities.

RQ3: What is the attitude of respondents to CSR in Bosch Diesel?

The aim of this last part of the questionnaire survey was to find out the attitude of the respondents (employees) towards their employer Bosch. The authors wished to determine how social responsibility seem to them and whether they are somehow affected by these activities. Furthermore, it was important to know in what way they were affected.

The survey shows that most employees know the values of the company in which they work. In terms of communication with employees, the message of CSR is successful. According to the results, employees are informed through various channels that are available to all employees in the company. For the most part, employees feel part of the company, so the company can make its employees feel important and useful at every level of the company. If employees do not have this feeling, it can lead to resignation and thus increased turnover, which companies try to avoid. As for the individual claims, the results are more than favourable. The overall attitude of employees towards the company is very favourable. It was also found that the employees themselves behave socially responsibly in their work and personal lives. Most, however, on their initiative. It follows that employees perceive social responsibility very positively and understand this area as an important part not only of their employment but also of their personal life.

Recommendations

CSR at Bosch Diesel is at a very high level as throughout the Bosch Group. CSR activities have been a tradition in the company for many years. However, in this section, we will suggest to the company some recommendations that could be used for the further development of CSR activities.

Based on analysis of company documentation, it was found that the company states that it wants to reduce the burden on the environment, in among other ways, through the transporting of employees to work, but does not state how it wants

to achieve this. Whenever shifts change, the traffic situation is very critical and congestion often occurs. Therefore, we would recommend that the company create a plan for carpooling, where employees working the same shift would carry other co-workers who live in the same direction and at a similar distance. These co-workers could take turns if they own a car or share transportation costs. This should help to improve the traffic situation and also reduce the burden on the environment.

As part of its reports, the company constantly emphasizes the efficient use of materials and the protection of natural resources. It focuses mainly on efficient production, but we also recommend the company to use products with the label “environmentally friendly service” or the label “environmentally friendly product”, which are intended for offices and administrative services. As part of the introduction of this eco-label, the company reduces its negative impact on the environment and at the same time helps to save energy, water and reduce waste. The company could use these products in newly renovated offices, where it purchased equipment with such a designation.

As part of the questionnaire survey, allegations were made regarding the information flow, both concerning that which the company provides about its activities and internally towards employees, as being as the of a low quality. Therefore, we would recommend increasing the communication flow, for example by holding more frequent meetings or various employee training events. Furthermore, as part of CSR communication, it could create simple promotional material that would contain clear and understandable information about various activities of the company. It could include the company’s mission, the values and principles on which it is based, and brief information from individual areas of CSR. This material would be available to employees on shelves in the corridors and to the general public during open days or various events organized by the company for the general public. Another way to strengthen the message and increase the public’s perception of corporate social responsibility, is by promoting these activities in various media, such as radio advertising campaigns or through promotion on social networks. Through the questionnaire survey, it was discovered which activities are most preferred by employees, so it is recommended that the company focus on them:

- Respect for human rights and the prohibition of child labour – this point is the most important for employees according to the results. It is enshrined in the Code of Ethics and the company’s values. If employees are not sufficiently familiar with the code of ethics, we recommend that the company carry out training that would lead to greater awareness of employees, as well as some leaflets or information on bulletin boards, the most important points describing this code would suffice.

- Protection of natural resources and the elimination of negative impacts on the environment – employees are also interested in this area and the protection of natural resources is a very important activity for them. Therefore, it would be appropriate here for the company to submit reports on this topic.

- Work-life balance (harmonizing personal and professional life) – this activity can attract new employees and keep existing ones happy. We recommend focusing the activity on those employees who for some reason cannot work, due to family, health, study or other problems. The company states in its reports that it strives to create an attractive work environment for its employees by introducing changes towards a work culture that takes into account individual interests. Therefore, we recommend supporting them in all activities within their development, as they would imagine. However, it also depends on their occupancy, which the employer must take into account. The supervisor should find out what activities are of interest and, based on an agreement, a solution could be found between the employees and the employer. These activities would lead to employee satisfaction and thus to their loyalty.

Conclusions

Bosch Diesel has a great influence and can affect its stakeholders and the company's surroundings with its activities. The aim of the paper was to analyse the activities of social responsibility of the selected company, Bosch, and then propose specific recommendations for further development of the company. It was based on the analysis of company reports, interviews with the manager and a questionnaire survey.

Even though the company deals with social responsibility and is interested in everything that is happening around this area, it mustn't allow itself to be appeased by the current situation, where CSR is at a high level. They must constantly monitor the trends around them, this can lead to an increase in the level of CSR in the company. Several factors can affect the company and its activities within CSR, so it is necessary to monitor all events around them, both the paths that lead to achieving its goals or the situation behind the company, where it can monitor other companies and industries. Furthermore, they can bring inspiration and impulses that would revive current practices. As this is a very large area, the company can implement strategies in any direction and any pillar of CSR. Social responsibility can also be associated with costs, but it can also be associated with benefits if done correctly. As part of the questionnaire survey, employees stated that they see CSR activities as positive, which also brings competitive advantages.

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2021 Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova – An attempt at post-election analysis

Abstract. This article analyses the parliamentary elections held in the Republic of Moldova in 2021, as a result of which the right-wing party, formerly in opposition, won, and was able to form its own single-party government with a parliamentary majority, which has not happened in Moldova exactly 20 years – since 2001. In this article the basic positions of the “left” and “right” political camps in the Republic of Moldova before the elections are analysed; as well as the mechanics of the electoral campaign and the voting process in different socio-geographical profiles. In 2021 The Republic of Moldova, for the first time in many years, faced the phenomenon of “overturning elections”; understanding the mechanics of which contributes to the development of a much better political and electoral process in general. At the same time, despite the special nature of the 2021 elections, the electoral political process in the Republic of Moldova continues to show several fixed tendencies, such as the geographical polarization of Moldovan voters residing in the EU or Russia, and the overall objective decrease of interest in the electoral process in general, regardless of the degree of the political and social representation of the political parties represented in the elections.

Keywords: parliamentary elections, Republic of Moldova, electoral process, overturning elections, EU, Russia.

Introduction

After the partial resignation of the previous cabinet led by Ion Kiku, which de facto took place on December 31, 2021, the Republic of Moldova “reassembled” the technical cabinet led by the acting foreign minister, Aureliy Ciocoi. Besides the obvious interstate difficulties created by the existence of such a cabinet (inability to sign interstate treaties, to participate in IMF programs, etc.), the existence of a technical cabinet left open the question of the fate of the current parliament. Furthermore, the whole structure of Moldovan state institutions was in an institutional deadlock at that moment, which was provoked by a long internal political crisis based on the confrontation between the newly elected president, Maia Sandu, and the parliamentary majority led by the representatives of the Party of Socialists, represented by Parliament Speaker Zinaida Greceanaya and former Moldovan President Igor Dodon. The latter had lost the election in favour of M. Sandu a little earlier, on November 15, 2022, which was the trigger of a violent internal political confrontation that began to affect the entire institutional system of the country as well (Kandel, 2021: 33).

The main behavioural line of President Maia Sandu was aimed at forcing the resignation of the current parliament through the double non-approval of the new cabinet of ministers (the constitution allow for the dissolving of parliament after two failures to approve a new cabinet of ministers). The parliamentary leadership, which at that time controlled the parliamentary majority consisting of deputies from the Socialist Party, the Shor Party and a group of independent and non-affiliated deputies, in turn, tried to nominate its own candidate for the head of the cabinet, as it had the opportunity to vote in its favour. Thus, starting in January 2021, the President and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova as political actors found themselves in a classic “zero-sum game” (antagonistic game), in which the winning and losing rule for both parties was to get a politically loyal candidate for the new acting Prime Minister (European Affairs, 2021).

The main problem with this situation was that in all possible cases, the personal and managerial qualities of any of the candidates would thus inevitably take second place to considerations of purely political loyalty (both to the presidential administration and the parliamentary leadership). In this respect, any cooperation that would be technically possible (such as the formation of a cabinet of ministers based on political quotas, etc.) was impossible in this confrontation, since both sides acted within the framework of the “dilemma of the prisoner”, that is, they rationalized their actions to the maximum, being in the strict conviction that the other side of the hypothetical deal would always violate this deal. As a result, motivated primarily by the incentive of comprehensive political gain, when the other side loses completely, both sides “raised the stakes” to the maximum, continuing to act strictly in the “or nothing” paradigm. This kind of aggressive political confrontation focused first on

various purely legal aspects of the Moldovan prime minister's candidacy procedure, as well as on the ways to approve or reject the candidacy, lasted 86 days, from January 1 until April 28, 2021.

The end of the confrontation was marked by the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova of April 28, 2021, which ascertained the existence of circumstances enabling the current parliament to be dissolved by the president of the country (*Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova*, Decision #15 from 28.04.2021). In the process of institutional confrontation, the current parliament declared a state of emergency in the country, thus blocking most political procedures – this very provision was declared unconstitutional and annulled, which in fact allowed the president to dissolve the parliament. The official decree concerning the dissolution of parliament was signed on the same day: April 28, 2021, ending the four-month political confrontation of the two powers in Moldova, and in turn resulting in the victory of the presidential side (all the declared goals of the confrontation had now been achieved, while the opposing side had not gained anything). The path to the parliamentary elections in 2021 was thus opened (*Presidency of the Republic of Moldova*, Press-Releases, 2021).

This paper involves testing two consecutive hypotheses. The first is the assumption that the number of political parties officially registered in Moldova does not contribute in any way to an increase in party representation in the parliamentary elections, nor does it contribute to an increase in voter turnout – moreover, the tendency for a decrease in active interest in elections does not depend at all on the “length” of the ballot.

The second hypothesis is that the voting preferences of Moldovan voters outside of the Republic of Moldova is directly connected with the geographic distribution of voters; in particular – Moldovan voters in EU countries tend to vote for “right-wing” and “centre-right” and “right-populist” political parties, while Moldovan citizens in Russia are much more likely to support “left-wing”, “centre-right” and “left-populist” parties.

The party and political system in Moldova in 2001: A retrospective analysis of historical electoral records

The Republic of Moldova in 2021 was a country with an extremely high level of political representation, based on the number of political organizations officially registered in the country. According to the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), 53 parties were admitted to the parliamentary elections; while according to the Moldovan Ministry of Justice there were 68 officially registered political parties in the country at that time, but at the moment of editing this article, that figure was 69 (The Central Election Commission of the

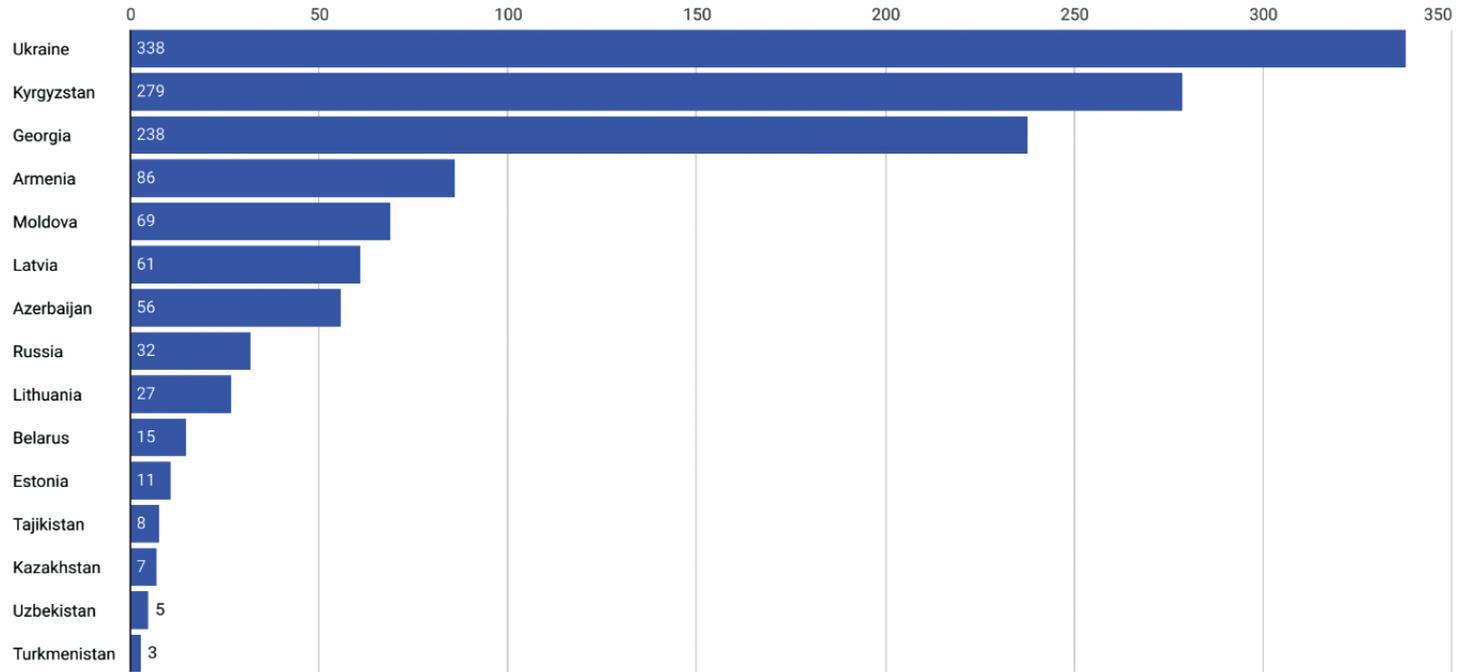


Figure 1. The number of political parties, officially registered in post-soviet countries as of 1.01.2021
Source: Author, based on official statements of the Ministries of Justice in post-Soviet republics.

Republic of Moldova, 2021). Some parties were not formally registered at that time because they did not have the necessary documentation, which had not been submitted to official bodies for several years. And this state of affairs is in many ways typical of elections in post-Soviet countries, excluding countries that can be characterized as “electoral autocracies” or even “authoritarian states” (EIU, Democracy Index 2020, 2021).

Despite the indirect link between the large number of registered political organizations and the level of accessibility and freedom of electoral processes, nevertheless, we can state that most of the political parties in Moldova are formed not on an ideological basis but according to socio-economic (and only partially, linguistic) similarity. Based on this definition, we can explain retrospectively, for example, the phenomenon of the return to power of the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) in 2001–2009.

At that time the basis of the socio-economic program and the focus of electoral interests of PCRM was directed to the broad masses of the population who perceived the 1991–1999 period primarily as one of a personal socio-economic collapse (or very big losses). Because of several extremely unsuccessful reforms carried out by the first governments of independent Moldova during that period, a large part of the population automatically fell into this category and naturally put the notion of “socio-economic stability” as their priority. This category also included the old party and political nomenclature, including representatives of the army and police, and large masses of industrial and agricultural workers, who were the largest part of the population at that time; additionally, there was a certain part of the educated layer of the population, which in post-Soviet countries is traditionally very dependent on the state of the public sector of the economy – those are workers in medicine, the social sector, science, and education (Furman, 2007: 97–99). As for the large sector of people directly dependent on the state – beneficiaries of pensions due to age or medical restrictions, PCRM offered a set of symbolic retrospective practices, such as laying flowers at monuments to Soviet political figures, inserting symbolic phrases about the “socialist society”, “capitalist pressure”, etc. into the official rhetoric. This set of electoral benchmarks offered to the diverse Moldovan society, turned out to be close enough to obtain a record result for the PCRM (and even more so today) at the parliamentary elections of February 25, 2001, when they achieved 50.07% of the votes of those who came to the polls, or 794,808 votes counted (*Alegerile parlamentare anticipate în Moldova...*, 2001). This big result, combined with the small number of participants who passed the electoral threshold of 6%, let the PCRM get 71 mandates out of the maximum 101 and become the sole manager of the parliamentary majority for the next four years. Never again in the electoral history of the Republic of Moldova from 1991 to 2021 has any party, including the PCRM itself, been able to obtain such a result.

Party political system in Moldova in 2021: “second electoral record”

However, in 2021 a completely different party stopped just one step away from this historical record. In the July 2021 parliamentary elections, the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS) was able to come as close as possible to this result, winning 52.8% of the votes of those who came to the polls, or 774,753 votes; a mere 20,055 votes short of the historic record, bringing the party 63 deputy mandates out of 101. Here it is worth adding a few important technical details that explain why the quantitative and proportional share of the vote is so drastically different in 2001 and 2021.

Firstly, during the 20 years of the chronological period under consideration, the population of Moldova decreased, according to the official estimates of the National Bureau of Statistics, from 3,635.1 million people (in 2001) to 2,597.1 million people (in 2021). Thus, the weighted average loss of population for 20 years was about 1.038 million people, which naturally had a significant impact on the number of voters as well (Macuhin, 2021: 67–69).

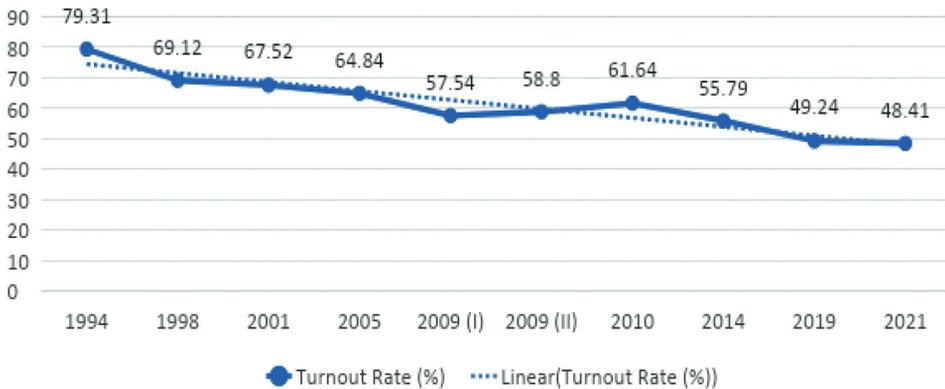


Figure 2. Turnout Rate at Moldavian Parliamentary Elections (1994–2021)

Source: Author, based on data of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova, 2021.

Secondly, even without considering this serious drop in the population, the average voter turnout in all parliamentary elections in Moldova has traditionally been falling for 20 years, and except for right-wing small surge of interest during the two electoral cycles in 2009, the drop in turnout demonstrates a steady trend that is likely to continue in the future.

Thirdly, such comparisons of results must consider the procedural contexts of the two electoral processes. For example, the cutoff electoral barrier in the 2001 elections was 6%, while in the 2021 elections it was only 5%; if this threshold

had been 5% in 2001, then consequently not only 3, but 5 parties would have entered parliament at that time – the Revival and Consent Party with 5.79% and the Democratic Party with 5.02% of the results. Thus, the distribution of seats in the Parliament in 2001 would have been very different and would not have allowed the PCRM to control 71 MPs, and, therefore, to obtain the constitutional majority. The converse is also true – if the electoral threshold of 6% had been applied in the 2021 elections, the PSRM with 5.74% would not have got into the current parliament and this would have naturally increased the representation of the PAS, the winner of the elections, to 67 seats.

From “action” to “solidarity”, or another “golden action” in Moldovan political history

There is a long-standing historical and political stereotype in the perception of Moldovan elections that are based on the statement that the political system of the country is very clearly divided into right-wing – pro-European and left-wing – pro-Russian parties (Calus, 2020). The development of such a stereotype is also triggered by the belief that the geopolitical vector, in its most simplified form: “Pro-EU” or “Pro-Russia”, is the main motivator of the majority of Moldovan voters. Accordingly, through the prism of this assumption, the post-election analysis of the winning result of the PAS party in Moldova can lead to exactly one conclusion, for example – “the pro-European geopolitical vector has crushingly beaten the pro-Russian geopolitical vector”, and on this, it seems, one can put a firm end.

However, if we move somewhat away from this very popular and actively broadcasted belief, we can notice that the geopolitical rhetoric and argumentation during the 2021 election campaign was conducted primarily by the main opponent of PAS – the electoral bloc of the Socialists and Communists Party (BECS). The most obvious markers of this agenda are the regular verbal acts of “selling threats” from the main list of basic problems and fears of the Moldovan population, namely statements about the high probability of renewal of the frozen conflict around Transnistria, about the imminent breaking of political and most importantly economic relations with Russia, which must directly affect the large market for agricultural products, as well as the large (but steadily decreasing) market for Moldovan citizens’ migration to Russia, etc. BECS also actively proposed, in public statements and topics of discussion in Moldovan society, to “not to allow the registration of same-sex marriages in Moldova”, while no other political force brought up the possibility in public discussion of registering same-sex marriages, given the high level of social penetration of the Orthodox Church in the country (Necsutu, 2021).

However, the most paradoxical characteristic of the past electoral campaign was precisely the behaviour of the future winner. In general, this campaign can be described in several categories – first, it is the almost complete abandonment of debates of public confrontation with any opponents. Second, the introduction into the public political rhetoric of a doctrinally right-wing party (PAS officially identifies its platform as liberal-democratic) despite many social-economic elements traditionally characteristic of social-democratic parties, such as – the promise of raising the minimum pension level, developing medical infrastructure outside the capital, increasing the minimum guaranteed wage, etc. Thirdly, it is a powerful anti-corruption message that included an electoral promise of a total renovation of all the main state governance structures – from the central apparatuses of all ministries and law enforcement bodies to representatives of control and revision structures at all levels, all this to take place against the background of a qualitative deepening of Moldova’s integration into the European political and economic space.

It is this combination of rather simple, mostly socio-economic, rather than geopolitical promises voiced by the representatives of the right-wing of the Moldovan political field that became an extremely important factor that ensured the victory of the PAS party. Thus, the theoretical “formula of success” in the parliamentary elections of 2021 was the formula proposed to the Moldovan voter, a pro-European foreign policy combined with a socially-oriented economy with a minimum of geopolitics. In turn, the main opponent, the electoral bloc BECS, on the contrary, placed their main bet on the formula “maximum geopolitical orientation combined with the market selling fears and threats”, and this proposal was not too popular with Moldovan voters (Răileanu Szeles, 2021).

Table 1. Results of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova in 2021

Party	Elections 2021 Result	Number of elected MP
PAS	52.80% (774,754)	63
BECS electoral block (PCRM+PSRM)	27.17% (398,678)	32 (10 PCRM + 22 PSRM)
Shor party (PPS)	5.74% (84,185)	6
R. Usatyî “Our Party” electoral block	4.10% (60,100)	0
Other 19 parties	10.19%	0

Source: Author, based on data of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova, 2021.

Political Projects “Shor” and “Our Party” – competition for the title of a third force in the parliament of two political projects with Moldovan specificity

The previously mentioned “Shor” party (hereinafter – PPS), named after its founder and chairman, businessman Ilan Shor, was the only political force, except for the two major parties, which managed to pass the electoral threshold in the 2021 elections. At the same time, the party did not demonstrate any geopolitical or foreign policy platform and, at first glance seems to be a typical political project for many post-Soviet countries, speculating only on the nostalgic feelings of the most vulnerable social strata and the very old population, most of whose life was spent in the conditions of the Soviet reality. For example, in its electoral program, the Shor Party proposed “measures to restore agriculture through the reconstitution of state farms,” as well as “the nationalization of industry”.

Nevertheless, post-electoral analysis shows that this party gained its third place in the country not through any massive, total presence in several regions, but through gaining third place in almost all regions of the country, except for voting outside the Republic of Moldova, where the party has only 0.59%. The party has a clear advantage only in Orhei and Taraclia districts where the district centres are headed by representatives of the Shor party, but even these advantages do not form so-called “electoral strongholds” – the maximum result obtained in any one district is 36% of all voters who came to the polls, with an average of 11%.

However, there is another factor that was very clearly revealed by the results of the post-election analysis. This is a clear overlap between the electorates of the “Shor” party and the leftist-populist “Our Party” of another Moldovan businessman, Renato Usatii. Their biographies are similar even in terms of administrative and political backgrounds; both positioned themselves as strong administrators and managers from the regions, who will go to the level of the central government and “put things in order there”. Thus, for a long time, Ilan Shor was the mayor of Orhei, with his party completely dominating the city council, and Renato Usatii similarly served as the mayor of Balti, also with his party completely dominating the city council.

Paradoxically, the electoral campaigns of the Shor and Our Party during the 2021 elections did not overlap each other – neither at the level of competition, nor the level of open conflict, nor even at the level of mutual black PR – candidates from these two formations did not notice each other, and in general were not perceived as competitors at all, focusing on the confrontation between PAS and BECS. The only factor of similarity during the campaign was the claim to be a third force in the future parliament (however, it is not that these were the only ones to make such claims, but they did it statistically more actively than others).

The post-election statistical analysis shows that the conditional voter in the category of choosing the third force most often chose between “Shor” and “Our Party”, which went to elections as a part of the electoral block under the official acronym BERU. And quantitatively more often this choice was made in favour of “Shor” than “Our Party”. The proportion of votes cast for the third force, in this case, was 1 vote for “Our Party” against 1.4 votes for “Shor”. It was this rather small proportion, resulting in a final difference of only 24,000 votes cast, that determined the entry (and non-entry) into parliament of both parties.

Heatmap: 3rd places by districts

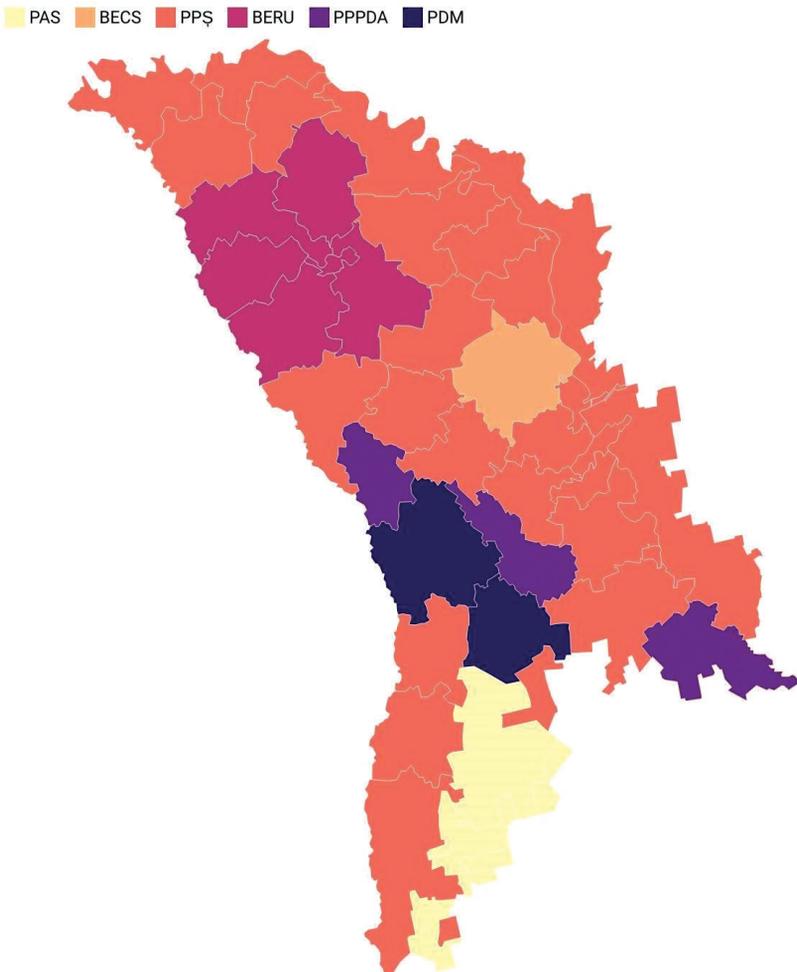


Figure 3. Third places by districts, Republic of Moldova parliamentary elections in 2021
 Source: Author, based on data of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova, 2021.

“Non-European” voting for a European view of the world – separate results of voting by Moldovan citizens outside the European Union

The large loss of the Moldovan population in the form of labour migration determines a specific, but critically important aspect of any Moldovan electoral process – with ex-patriate citizens voting at polling stations abroad. According to the electoral legislation of the Republic of Moldova, voting outside the country is legally possible for anyone who can prove his/her citizenship and age from 18 years old, which ensures a rather high level of voting for Moldovan citizens living (permanently or temporarily) outside the country.

In the case of European Union countries, the dominant trend, over 80% of votes, to vote for the PAS party, positioning itself as a liberal-democratic party and aiming at the integration of Moldova into the European space, was obvious. Among the main reasons are the purely rationalistic expectations of such voters, such as a tighter integration in the field of readmission agreements, joint social security (possibility to get pensions and benefits based on work record), the continuation and extension of a visa-free regime up to an imminent accession of Moldova to the EU in the distant future, which is expected by such voters.

However, in this perspective the results of the voting in the countries, which are not members of the EU, but traditionally attract mass migration of Moldovan citizens, and first is the Russian Federation, also seem to be interesting. According to official data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, in January – June 2021, 84,264 citizens of the Republic of Moldova entered the territory of Russia and stayed (in different legal statuses, but without conflict with the possibility to vote in Moldovan elections). However, this figure means only those Moldovan citizens who have exclusively Moldovan citizenship while staying in Russia. At the same time, every year, according to statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, about 11–12 thousand Moldovan citizens also acquire citizenship of the Russian Federation, without losing, mostly, their first citizenship, and therefore – potentially also have the possibility and right to vote in Moldovan parliamentary (and presidential) elections (*The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2021*).

Thus, potentially, even the number of Moldovan voters only officially present in Russia exceeds by itself even the minimum required 5% of the electoral threshold. Thus, the quantitative calculation of this threshold for the 2021 elections can be estimated in the range of 65–70 thousand votes, and the lower the final voter turnout will be – the lower, respectively, the “electoral value” of the electoral threshold at the elections. There are also many statistically unsupported stereotypes around this part of the electorate. In practice, the electoral structure of Moldovan citizens’ voting in Russia becomes more and more Eurocentric year by year, on the one hand, and less and less significant in the whole voting process, on

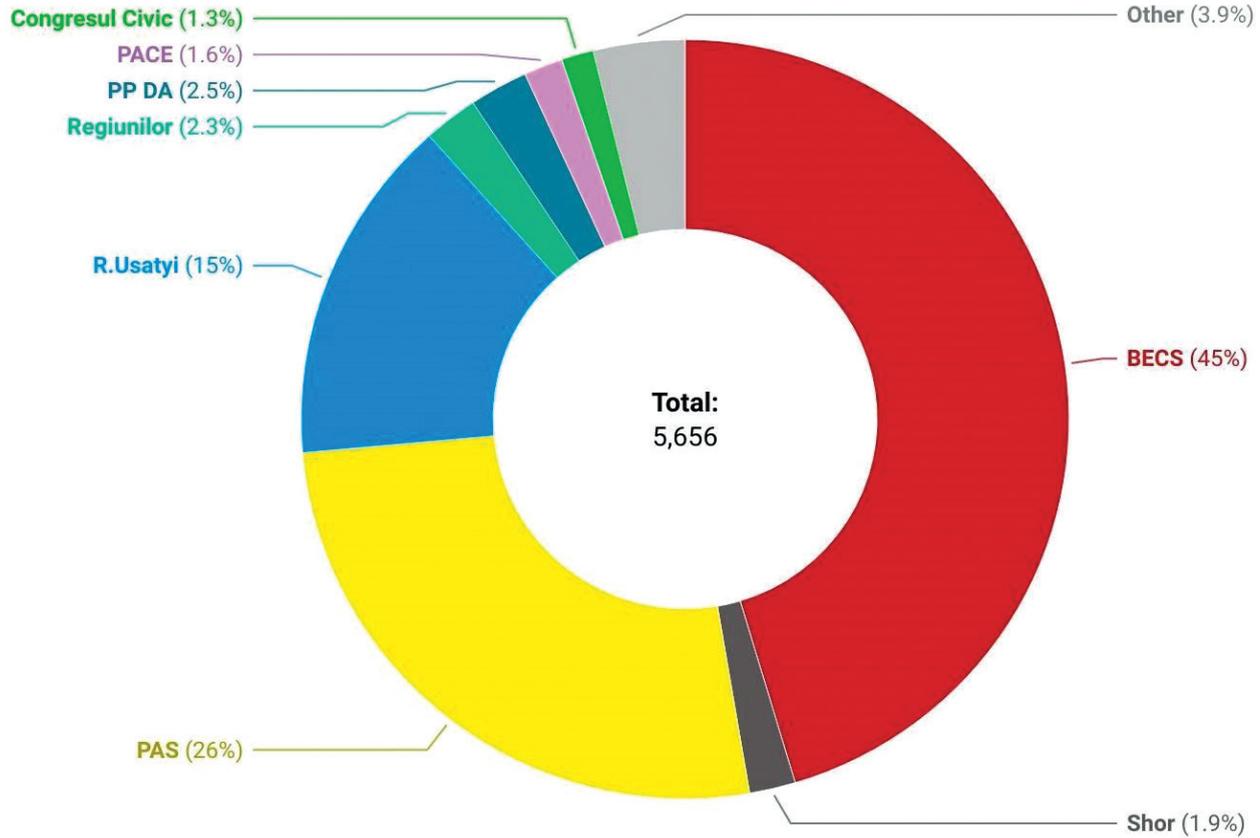


Figure 4. Voting the Moldavian citizens at Russia at the Parliamentary Elections one-quarter Conclusions in the Republic of Moldova in 2021
 Source: Author, based on data of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Moldova, 2021.

the other hand. So, for example, according to the results of the elections of 2021 at the polling stations opened for Moldovan citizens in Russia slightly more than 5.5 thousand voters or about 7% of all officially residing in Russia people who are citizens of the Republic of Moldova only voted.

The voting structure of Moldovan voters in Russia also differs significantly from both European voters and the voting structure within Moldova. It is still dominated by the conditionally left-wing parties for 2021 – BECS and Our Party attracted 60% of the voters. But at the same time, PAS accounted for one-quarter of the votes, which is more than in any previous parliamentary elections in Moldova. The remaining quarter of the vote represents a highly dispersed distribution among the small parties, both on the left and the right. In many respects, these results of Moldovan voters in Russia reflect several specific trends. First, it is the extremely high level of political escapism characteristic of this region, associated with the integration of Moldovan citizens into the Russian political field, which subsequently dominates the Moldovan political scene. Secondly, a high share of political nihilism is also evident, which is associated with a high level of disappointment in the centre-left and centre-right political spectrum of Moldova and the low quality of its electoral campaign (Borisov, Yushkova-Borisova, 2021).

Conclusions

The positions of Moldovan political parties traditionally differed primarily in socio-economic and ethno-political processes (Zdaniuk, 2014). The main feature of the party system was the inability to significantly limit the electoral potential of the left and right forces, which, until 2016–2017, predetermined the existence of favourable institutional conditions for them: indirect presidential elections and a proportional electoral system. Flank parties were much more stable than centrist parties because voting for them had an ideological character. The atypically high, for the post-Soviet space, level of influence of conditionally “left-wing forces” (PCRM and PSRM, united in the BECS bloc in the 2021 elections) was largely explained by the economic policy aimed at the relatively poor strata of society, as well as appeals to social protection. Right-wing political forces traditionally adhered to the economic model described by the classical formula “the state is a night watchman,” which greatly limited their electoral field. The second such factor of the division was the “national question”, in Moldovan realities its most accurate description is the “linguistic question”, which touched upon the problem of both the name of the state language and interethnic politics, as well as closely related issues of history and ideology.

By 2021, even before the parliamentary elections, as well as during the election campaign, one could observe how the conditional “left” and “right”

political flanks in Moldova had largely swapped places – towards the geopolitical and socio-cultural agenda of the “left” and the dominating socio-economic agenda, without using the national-cultural issues of the “right” parties. In many respects, such a sharp division, along with several accompanying factors, for example, as active support of the EU on the one hand, and the actual self-exclusion of Russia on the other hand (Ejova, Eșanu, 2021).

The first proposed hypothesis that the number of political parties officially registered and participating in parliamentary elections does not affect the turnout was fully confirmed for the case of the 2021 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova. Thus, the participation of 22 political parties and one independent candidate ensured the lowest electoral turnout in the history of parliamentary elections in the Republic of Moldova since 1994, while the number of political parties was also the highest since 1994.

The second proposed hypothesis, that in the case of foreign voting in Moldovan elections, the geographical position of foreign voters directly affects their preferred choice in the voting process, can be considered to be confirmed only partially; as the structural and quantitative analysis of Moldovan citizens’ out-of-country voting in 2021 shows that most of the political parties voted for by Moldovan citizens staying in Russia do belong to the political spectrum of “left-wing”, “centre-left” or “left-populist” parties. Nevertheless, two factors – the second place in the region won by the “right-wing” PAS party, together with the presence of a large “left-wing” electoral bloc of Socialist and Communist parties, which does not allow calculating the exact distribution of votes for each of these parties separately, in general, allow one to conclude only a partial role of the geographical location of voters as a factor in determining electoral choice.

In the end, all these factors described above have equally shaped the “overturning election” effect at the parliamentary elections of 2021 in Moldova and as a consequence – the formation of a mono party cabinet of ministers and a mono party right-wing parliamentary majority for the first time since 2001.

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Consequences of changing the electoral system for the model of political competition – The case of the 2018 elections to municipal councils in Łódź Voivodeship

Abstract. The article is an attempt to assess the effects of the 2018 reform of local electoral law on a medium scale. The main goal is to investigate the consequences of these changes for the model of political rivalry. Through the use of a selection of quantitative methods, the authors verify hypotheses regarding the proportionality of local elections and the mechanical effect of the electoral system. The overall aim is to establish to what extent the new electoral system deforms the voting results when distributing seats among

the electoral committees. Apart from the hypotheses, the authors also verify whether Łódź Voivodeship is a suitable case study and representative of national trends.

Keywords: electoral system, Łódź Voivodeship, municipal councils, proportionality of elections, electoral formula.

Introduction

Łódź Voivodeship is located in the very centre of Poland, which means it is equally influenced by any of the other regions. From the electoral perspective it is situated between the eastern-south-eastern part of the country, which is generally more conservative and for some time has been voting for right-wing parties, and the western-north-western part, which is generally more liberal and in the recent elections showed more support for the liberal and left-wing parties. It is also reflected in the Łódź Voivodeship itself, with the capital (3rd biggest city in the country) strongly preferring liberals and social-democrats in the last decade, while the rural areas are characterised by an increase in conservative voting. Furthermore, on its territory, one may find the municipality of Wieruszów, which is generally regarded as one of the most representative municipalities of the whole country as its electoral results are very close to national ones and therefore it has held trial votings before general elections for many years now. All the above suggests that the Voivodeship could be an adequate case study in order to analyse any changes in the electoral law and the practical effects. As most of the researchers agree that the electoral system is the key determinant of the final electoral result, especially when it comes to the distribution of seats (see Rae, 1971; Taagepera, Shugart, 1989; Rule, Zimmermann, 1992; Lijphart, 1994; LeDuc, Niemi *et al.*, 1996; Norris, 1996, 1997) and the 2018 electoral reform made significant changes to the rules of the game, the authors have decided to have a closer look at the Łódź Voivodeship.

Literature review

Local elections are one of the predominant issues for political science research. Their analysis is both general (Oliver *et al.*, 2012) and specific (Michalak, 2021; Urbaniak, 2018). Even though they are regarded as second-order elections (Reif, Schmitt, 1980; Schackel 2014; Schmitt, Teperoglou, 2017; Pallarés, Keating, 2003; Bechtel, 2012; Majcherkiewicz, 2018) still they are of utmost importance.

The impact of the electoral system, with particular emphasis on the electoral formula, on the result of the election process remains in the centre of interest of researchers. To list only the most important publications devoted to this area, one

should point out those focusing on the legal and political conditions (Duverger, 1951, 1984; Rae, 1967; Rokkan, 1968; Rae *et al.*, 1971; Gallagher, 1991, 2005; Lijphart, Gibberd, 1977; Lijphart 1990; Benoit, 2000; Baldini, Pappalardo, 2009; McGhee, 2014, 2017; Shugart, Taagepera, 2017a, b), on political consequences (Benoit, 2007), devoted to social significance (Blais, Carty, 1991) or related to the size of polity (Dahl, Tufte, 1973; Denters *et al.*, 2014).

Changes in the electoral system used in local government units in Poland have also been the subject of numerous studies. In recent years, they initially focused on the effects of changes to the system that resulted in the adoption of the Electoral Code (Dz.U. 2011, nr 21, poz. 112), which were applied in practice for the first time in the 2014 elections (Gendźwiłł, Żółtak, 2016; Flis, Stolicki, 2017). The changes introduced in 2018 enjoyed no less research interest, which should also be related to their scope (going beyond the electoral system in the strictest meaning of local government units). They mainly remained in the field of legal sciences, such as analysis of the legal and constitutional grounds regarding both the content of the changes and the procedure for their adoption by the Polish authorities (Rakowska-Trela, 2018a), compliance with the principle of the democratic state of law (Rakowska-Trela, 2018b) or with standards functioning at the pan-European level (Rulka, 2018).

The reform introduced in 2018 was also the subject of numerous studies in political science and interdisciplinary studies, with the leading role of political science (Michalak, 2018, 2019, 2021; Gendźwiłł, Żółtak, 2020; Neumann 2020; Urbaniak, 2018). A research perspective similar to that used in this article was used by K. Glinka (2021) in relation to the municipalities of Lower Silesian Voivodeship. The reform introduced in 2018 was also the subject of earlier research by the authors of this article, both from the perspective of forecasting its effects and the subsequent verification of the effects on a national level (Klonowski, Onasz, 2018, 2021).

2018 reform

The local administration in Poland has undergone numerous changes since the fall of the communist regime. When it comes to the local elections, two moments require special attention. First of all, the year 1990, where the first self-governing units were created (at the municipal level only) and then the year 1999 when the administrative reform took effect and the self-governing administration was created at the county and Voivodeship level, and the municipalities were redesigned. It finally gave us three types of councils, which are elected directly; while the executive is elected directly only at the municipal level (since 2001). Throughout the next decades, the electoral law changed on a couple of occasions

alternating between proportional and relative majority methods. The last reform took place in 2018 and was one of the deepest reforms since 1999. First of all the electoral method moved from relative majority to proportional with the use of d'Hondt system to calculate the seat distribution, with the threshold settled at 5%. Simultaneously the structure of the constituencies changed in municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants from 1 seat per constituency to 5–8 sets. While in the case of city counties (CCS) it was reduced from 5–10 to 5–8. There were also other changes like the prolongation of the terms of the councils and executive from 4 years to 5, or the limiting of the maximum terms allowed for a person occupying the mayoral position to two terms only, however in this article we have just limited our interest to the electoral method and the size of constituencies.

Research design

The goal of this article is to investigate how the change of the electoral system in the municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) has influenced the conditions of political rivalry there. Focusing on the effects of the change of the electoral formula, the authors have put forward the following research hypothesis:

1) The reestablishment of the proportional system in the municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) will result in changing the model of political rivalry through the increase of the degree to which the electoral results (measured by the number of seats obtained) reflect the real political attitudes of the local societies.

2) The reestablishment of the proportional system in the municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) will result in the decreasing of the power of the mechanical effect of the electoral system.

In order to verify the thesis put forward, the authors used the voting results and elections results to the municipal councils from 2014 and 2018, both at the Łódź Voivodeship level as well as the national one. The municipalities where the election was run on a different date or no election took place were excluded from the study. It refers to two kinds of cases: 1) elections to the municipality council of Zielona Góra (CCS) in 2014, which were run on a later date due to the changes in the borders of this municipality; 2) elections to the municipality councils where no voting took place, as the number of candidates was equal to the number of seats.¹

For the purposes of the study, the municipalities have been categorized into 3 groups:

Research group: the municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) within the Łódź Voivodeship. In 2014 the electoral system applied in this group

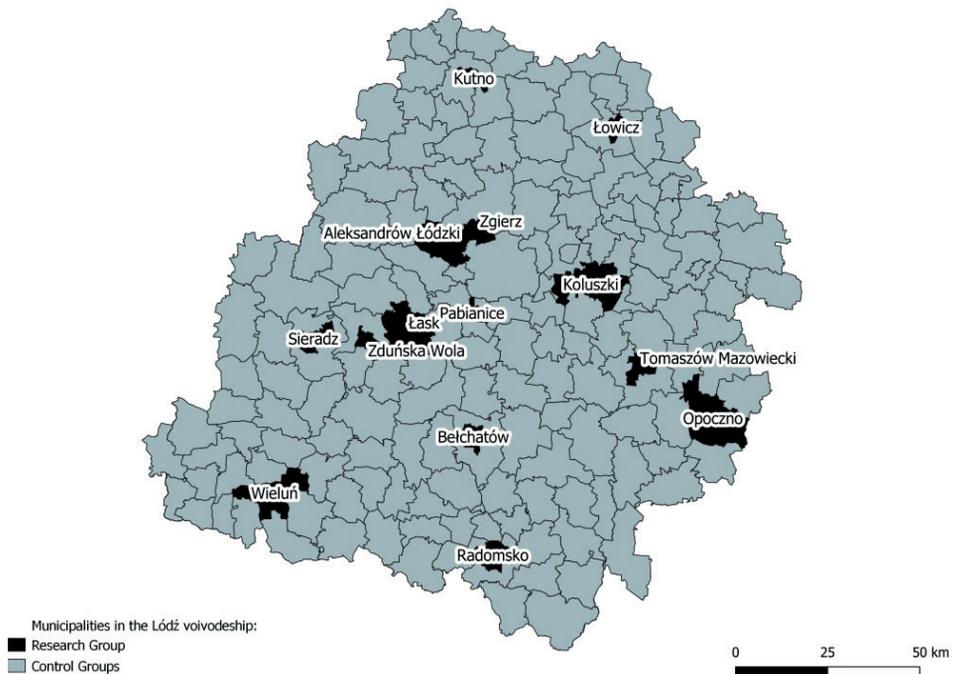
¹ There was 1 municipality of this kind in 2014 and 14 in 2018.

was identical to that in the first control group. Afterwards, the system was greatly changed and in 2018 it was identical to that used in the second control group. The municipalities included in the research group are presented on Map 1.

First control group: the municipalities with below 20,000 inhabitants within the Łódź Voivodeship. The electoral system applied there in 2018 was identical to the system applied in 2018.²

Second control group: the municipalities possessing city-county status (CCS) within the Łódź Voivodeship. The electoral system applied has undergone only limited changes between the 2014 and 2018 elections.³

In order to compare the state of political rivalry and its changes in the municipalities within Łódź Voivodeship and in the overall set of municipalities in Poland, the same categorization into three groups was applied at the national level.



Map 1. The municipalities included in the research group

Source: Map prepared by Paweł Stepień (Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Lodz).

² There were only minor changes in some municipalities (eg. changes in the borders of the constituencies) which were caused for example by demographic processes. Nevertheless, the framework of the electoral system remained unchanged.

³ The major change was the decrease of the maximum number of candidates allowed in one constituency. The limit was lowered from 10 to 8.

The model of political rivalry was studied with the use of a series of quantitative indexes:

For measuring the level of the mapping of the set of individual electoral decisions of the voters the authors applied a Proportionality Index (PI), basing it on the Loosemore–Hanby Disproportionality Index (Loosemore, Hanby, 1971: 467–469). The value of this index is calculated using the following formula:

$$PI = \left(1 - \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{|v\%_i - s\%_i|}{2} \right) * 100$$

Where $v\%_i$ relates to the percentage of votes obtained by party i , $s\%_i$ refers to the percentage of seats obtained by party i and n to the number of parties that obtained at least 1 vote or 1 seat. The indicator ranges from 0 to 100. The value of 100 means full proportionality (the percentage of seats in each grouping is equal to the percentage of votes obtained), and the value of 0 represents extreme disproportionality (all seats were obtained by the party that did not get any votes).

For measuring the number of relevant participants of political rivalry, both on the voting and the municipal council composition levels, the Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera's Effective Number of Parties Index was applied. The index is calculated using the following formula:

$$ENP_v / s = \left(\sum_{i=1}^n p\%_i^2 \right)^{-1}$$

Where $p\%_i$ refers to the percentage of votes (for ENP_v) or seats (for ENP_s) obtained by party i and n refers to the number of parties that obtained at least 1 vote (for ENP_v) or 1 seat (for ENP_s). The higher the value of the ENP index, the higher the number of relevant parties in the competition for power.

For measuring the power of the mechanical effect of the electoral system (in separation from the psychological effect) a modified ENP index, Effective Number of Parties Reduction Index (ENPRI), was applied. The index is calculated using the following formula:

$$ENPRI = 1 - \left(\frac{ENP_s}{ENP_v} \right)$$

Where ENPs refers to ENP at the seats level whilst ENP_v to ENP at the votes level. It indicated how strong the mechanical effect of the electoral system is when referring to the number of relevant participants of the rivalry – how strong the system reduction of the effective number of parties between the voting and the council composition is. The value 0 means no reduction, while the value 1 (purely hypothetical) means a full reduction (there is no effective player on the voting level – none of the voters have their representation). High scores of the ENPRI index mean that the mechanical effect is very strong – a significant part of electoral committees that are relevant at the voting level (and therefore they are important in the eyes of the voters) do not keep that status at the seats level.

Data sources and methods of their presentation

The data used in the research comes from the generally accessible webpage of the National Electoral Commission in Poland, as well as the Polish National Electoral Bureau, and was made accessible at the request of the authors.

Fundamental data, especially the values of indexes used in the article, together with their descriptive statistics, have been presented in tables and box-plots. That particular type of chart allows to depict a wider spectrum of data, compared to its simpler alternatives. Box-plots are used for the graphic demonstration of the locality, spread and skewness of groups of numerical data through their quartiles. Box-plots present the data through the use of a couple of elements. First of all the box contains the main part of the data, where its lower edge equals the value of the 1st quartile (lower quartile), and while its upper edge equals the value of the 3rd quartile (upper quartile). Therefore the length of the box presents the interquartile range (the distance between the 25th and 75th percentiles of the data). A longer box means the greater diversification of the values presented in the chart. Inside of the box, one can find two additional markings: the horizontal line indicates the value of the median, whilst the “x” the arithmetic mean. The box is also accompanied by two vertical lines – whiskers (the upper and lower ones). Each of them has a length of 150% of the value of the interquartile range. The values, which are out of the range of the whiskers are presented by dots – they are treated as outliers (DuToit, Steyn *et al.*, 2012).

Analysis

Based on the data from the National Electoral Commission, one can indicate several significant changes between the 2014 and 2018 elections.

Table 1. Averaged values of the ENPs, ENPv and PI index (2014 and 2018)

Type of municipality		ENPv 2018	ENPv 2014	ENPs 2018	ENPs 2014	PI 2018	PI 2014
Municipalities below 20,000 inhabitants	Łódź Voivodeship	3,20	3,80	2,36	2,70	78,68	77,96
	Poland	3,14	3,74	2,31	2,67	78,86	77,98
Municipalities over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS)	Łódź Voivodeship	4,11	5,84	3,14	3,09	86,30	66,53
	Poland	3,69	5,03	3,03	3,05	89,53	72,64
CCS	Łódź Voivodeship	3,00	4,21	2,29	3,24	85,94	86,64
	Poland	3,95	4,63	2,93	3,25	85,43	83,22
All municipalities	Łódź Voivodeship	3,27	3,97	2,42	2,74	79,40	77,20
	Poland	3,22	3,91	2,41	2,72	80,19	77,54

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

Analysis of the data in Table 1 shows that the Łódź Voivodeship is following the main national tendencies, but also shows some specific regional characteristics. First of all, we may notice an increase in the proportionality of the elections, as the PI index has risen in both the study group and the first control group. The only exception here is the city counties (CCS), but as we have only 3 such cases in the voivodeship, those results may be misleading. That PI increase is most visible in the research group, especially when one has a look at Chart 1. The median in 2018 is significantly higher than in 2014. Actually, the lowest PI results from 2018 are just a bit lower than the highest results in 2014 (this is not confirmed on a national scale, where the difference between the minimum PI value in 2018 and the highest value in 2014 is $-36,28$). The span of the results has also significantly decreased in comparison to the 2014 election and it is worth noting that this tendency is not repeated in the 1st control group. Slight changes in the values of this index can be explained by the consolidation of the local political scene or other factors, but such a huge shift is definitely caused by the change of the electoral formula.

Table 2. Number of municipalities according to changes of ENP, PI indexes (2014 and 2018)

Type of municipality	ENPv 2018		ENPs 2018		PI 2018	
	increase	decrease	increase	decrease	increase	decrease
Municipalities below 20,000 inhabitants	49	111	61	94	84	76
Municipalities over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS)	3	11	6	8	14	0
CCS	0	3	0	3	2	1
All municipalities	52	125	67	105	100	77

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

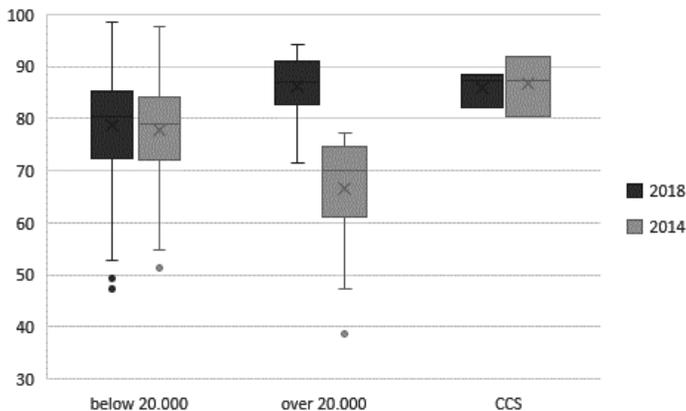


Chart 1. Aggregated values of PI (2014 and 2018) – scope of changes

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

When it comes to the effective number of parties at seats level we have most of the municipalities following the national decreasing tendency, with the exception of the research group. The ENPs increase in the research group is not very significant, but it is worth noting that within the group there have been more municipalities that actually showed higher values (check Table 2). That led us to analyse a bit deeper the municipalities of that kind.

The change is far more visible when we have a look at the ENP at the votes level. The ENPv change within the research group between 2014 and 2018 corresponds with the national tendencies (clear decrease). The degree of this change is even higher than the one observed at the national level (29.66% decrease in Łódź Voivodeship versus 26.66% decrease in the whole country [respectively -1.73 and -1.34 in absolute values]). Still, the values of the index observed for the research group in Łódź Voivodeship are higher than at the national level: +11%

in 2018 and +16% in 2014 (+0.42 and 0.81 respectively in absolute values). One may also notice that the distance between those values has decreased.

Deepening the analysis it is worth noting how the system change has influenced the relations between ENPs and ENPv. It will allow one to indicate the mechanical effect of the electoral system (taking into account the psychological effect which is crucial in shaping the ENPv values).

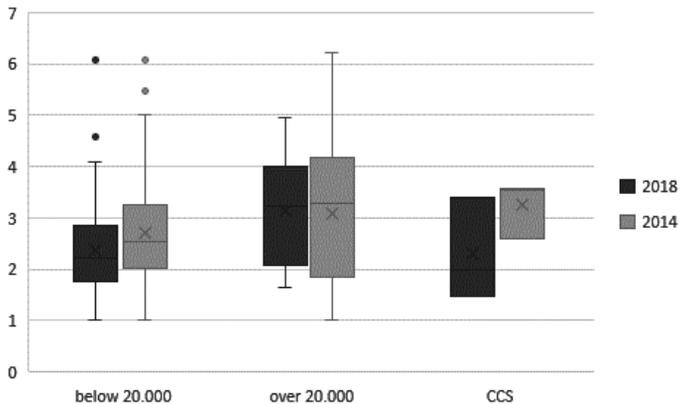


Chart 2. Aggregated values of ENPs (2014 and 2018) – scope of changes

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

In both the research group and the first control group there have been higher absolute differences observed between the ENP on the votes level (v) than on the seats level (s). It means that in the Łódź Voivodeship the electoral systems applied had a greater influence on the reduction of the number of relevant players in the councils (ENPs) than on the number of players relevant from the voting perspective and therefore also the social one. In the absolute values, there has been a visible reduction of the effect in all types of the municipalities – stronger in the research group and first control group. It should be underlined here that in the case of the first control group it is a sign of the adjustment of the electoral players to the changes (2018 was the second election in a row run with the use of the same system, which allows to presume that participants of the electoral process have used the knowledge and experience gained in 2014). While in the case of the research group it shows the mechanical effect of the electoral system applied. The value of the index for the research group in 2018 is very similar to the one observed in CCS (where the electoral system in 2018 was nearly identical to the system in previous elections).

Between 2014 and 2018 there were important changes in the ENPRI index. When referring to the overall set of municipalities in Łódź Voivodeship there has been a significant reduction of the mechanical effect of the system change (–5.03 percentage points [–16.24%]), which corresponds with both the tendency and the power of the effect on the national level. In particular types of municipalities, the tendencies and

the power also correlate between Łódź Voivodeship (LV) and the whole country. It has been strongest in the research group (−23.52 percentage points [−49.92%] for LV versus −21.49 percentage points [−54.54%] for Poland). It was still quite visible for the first control group (−11.21 percentage points [−20,84%] for LV versus −9,53 percentage points [−20.30%] for Poland). While in the second control group it remained nearly unchanged in Łódź Voivodeship (+0,65 percentage points [+2.82%]), which does not fully match the changes on the national level in this group (−3,95 percentage points [−13.29%]). The values for CCS may be misleading due to the very limited number of cases within the group (3), which makes any change in any of those municipalities far more significant. Still, it is worth underlining that the ENPRI values in the research group (and their equivalent at the national level) have undergone huge changes, as one should describe its reduction by more than a half. While one could explain the identical direction of changes (although with reduced power) in the first control group and in the second one at the national level by the adjustment of the actors to the electoral rules and the consolidation of the local party systems, the immense change in the research group may be elucidated only by taking into consideration the electoral system change. The shift of that index should be interpreted as the reduction of the power of the mechanical effect of the electoral system by at least a half. Still one should remember about other consequences of the system change that cannot be epitomized by the ENPRI value like the *de facto* elimination of one-man committees (or committees competing in one constituency only).

Table 3. Mechanical effects of the electoral system according to the effective number of parties

Type of municipality		ENPv-ENPs 2018	ENPv-ENPs 2014	ENPRI 2018	ENPRI 2014
Municipalities below 20,000 inhabitants	Łódź Voivodeship	1.75	3.14	in %	
	Poland	1.38	2.36	42.58	53.79
Municipalities over 20.000 inhabitants (without CCS)	Łódź Voivodeship	0.97	2.75	23.60	47.12
	Poland	0.66	1.98	17.91	39.40
CCS	Łódź Voivodeship	0.71	0.97	23.67	23.02
	Poland	1.02	1.38	25.78	29.73
All municipalities	Łódź Voivodeship	0.85	1.23	25.94	30.00
	Poland	0.81	1.19	25.16	30.38

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

Table 4. Values of the ENPv, ENPs and PI index (2014 and 2018) in municipalities with over 20,000 inhabitants and the CCS

Municipality	ENPv 2018	ENPv 2014	ENPs 2018	ENPs 2014	PI 2018	PI 2014
Over 20,000 inhabitants (study group)						
Bełchatów	5,80	5,70	3,92	2,01	81,01	57,49
Kutno	2,76	4,39	2,11	1,00	84,38	38,66
Łask	4,44	5,82	3,59	3,47	90,38	67,13
Łowicz	4,58	8,40	3,71	4,2	89,29	73,51
Koluszki	2,43	4,17	2,01	2,55	91,03	74,28
Opoczno	5,11	6,44	4,37	4,74	91,21	77,19
Pabianice	1,77	5,20	1,63	2,46	94,29	69,18
Radomsko	5,75	5,52	4,28	3,37	86,3	75,83
Sieradz	3,58	5,38	2,85	3,17	87,56	73,39
Tomaszów Mazowiecki	3,88	4,97	2,67	1,31	81,57	47,26
Wieluń	6,73	8,00	4,96	6,21	83,06	75,52
Zduńska Wola	3,65	6,86	2,00	3,37	71,36	70,74
Zgierz	4,19	8,56	3,60	4,17	91,61	69,01
Aleksandrów Łódzki	2,89	2,37	2,24	1,21	85,13	62,29
CCS (second control group)						
Łódź (CCS)	2,23	3,92	1,47	2,59	82,1	80,55
Piotrków Trybunalski (CCS)	4,27	4,47	3,41	3,55	88,44	87,48
Skierniewice (CCS)	2,50	4,24	2,00	3,59	87,28	91,88

Source: Authors' own compilation on the basis of the data of the National Electoral Commission.

Case studies

The most extraordinary case, both on the regional and national level, is definitely the municipality of Kutno. It is the only municipality of its type in which one committee managed to win all the seats in the council in the 2014 elections. The committee in question was a committee organized by the long-lasting president

of Kutno – Zbigniew Burzyński. Even though they managed to get only 39% of the votes they won 100% of the seats. Such a disproportionality was possible only because of the electoral formula applied. Thanks to careful planning, good organization and a significant bit of luck they achieved such a result. 4 years later that committee got more votes (slightly over 50%), but managed to win only 57% of the seats.

A slightly similar case was the municipality of Tomaszów Mazowiecki. The results of the 2014 elections also proved to be highly disproportional with one committee (Law and Justice) winning 87 % of the seats with the support of only 34% of the voters. The low PI in this municipality is further strengthened by the existence of committees which managed to get around 10% of the votes (both in 2014 and 2018), but 0% of seats.

Quite the opposite situation happened in the municipality of Wieluń. This municipality is characterized by the high fragmentation of the local political scene, which results in a high number of electoral committees both at the seats and votes levels. No committee managed to win more than 5 seats in the council in both elections. Surprisingly the municipality is also characterized by a relatively high proportionality. The PI could have been even higher in 2018 if the SLD/Lewica Razem committee had gotten just a couple more votes and would be included in the distribution of seats (0.01% below the threshold). We have a similar case in the municipality of Opoczno, with the main difference being the strongest committee winning more seats (7 in 2014 and 8 in 2018).

One of the main tendencies in the 2018 elections was the mobilization of the non-conservative parties, which in many places (mainly big cities) have competed as one committee, counterbalancing the conservative bloc ruling on the national level. In Łódź Voivodeship this pattern was not only applied in CSSs, but also in smaller towns; with Pabianice being perhaps the best example here. In 2014 10 committees were competing and this fragmentation together with FPTP mechanics allowed the Law and Justice committee to win 56% of the seats with the support of only 27% of votes. In 2018 only two committees were competing and even though the Law and Justice committee managed to convince more voters (31.8%) they got only 26% of seats. The reduction of competing committees was also visible in the municipalities of Zgierz, Łowicz and Zduńska Wola, although the reduction was less extreme. The case of Zduńska Wola possesses another characteristic. In the 2018 elections, 7 committees were competing, but only two of them managed to participate in the distribution of seats, even though there were another three committees that managed to get electoral results above the threshold.

Summary and conclusion

The research carried out by the authors allowed for the verification of the initial hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the article.

First hypothesis: “The reestablishment of the proportional system in the municipalities over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) will result in changing the model of political rivalry through the increase of the degree to which the electoral results (measured by the number of seats obtained) reflect the real political attitudes of the local societies” has been verified positively. The change expected is directly confirmed by the increase of the Proportional Index values. Both the PI average and the median in the research group has recorded a significantly higher increase than in the control groups (while in the second control group it was quite the reverse and the values decreased). The span of the results and the extremely low results have been reduced. It should be underlined that the lowest values observed in 2018 are only slightly lower than the highest ones observed four years earlier. Even though the PI values increased also in the first control group, there has not been observed any electoral system change, the limited power of the change allows linking it with the adaptation of the actors of the political process to the functioning system. The power of change in the research proves that it is a consequence of the electoral system change.

The second of the hypotheses: “The reestablishment of the proportional system in the municipalities over 20,000 inhabitants (without CCS) will result in decreasing the power of the mechanical effect of the electoral system” has been also verified positively. It is confirmed by the shift of ENP indexes, in particular by its variant allowing to directly show this phenomenon – ENPRI. The value of this index for the research group has been immensely reduced (nearly by a half, which corresponds with the change on the national level). The shifts recorded in the other groups haven’t had that power, which is particularly significant in reference to the first control group, where the electoral system remained unchanged.

On the margin of the verification of the hypotheses, one should notice that the research carried out by the authors proves that Łódź Voivodeship is a suitable example to epitomize the general tendencies of the effects of the electoral system changes. The results observed do not vary much from the national ones. The only exception being the municipalities with county status (CCS), which should be rather studied on the national level due to the very limited cases available in the region.

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Patricia Hill Collins' concepts of intersectionality and Stephen Lukes' concepts of power in the sociological understanding of political correctness

Abstract. The article actualizes the issue of political correctness and the need to develop tools for its further study. Political correctness is considered in the context of gender studies and power relations. The concept of attitudes towards political correctness is revealed, and an attempt is also made to reveal the mechanism of the formation of linguistic attitudes in the mass consciousness through the prism of the concepts of Stephen Lukes and Patricia Hill Collins. The historical and theoretical foundations of the formation of intersectionality are also considered. Intersectionality is focused on the study of hierarchical differences between individuals and groups, depending on the complex intersections of their position in society, determined by many parameters. Respectively, the intersectional approach to the analysis of power and language allows us to solve a number of methodological difficulties associated with the combination of macro and micro levels, which makes possible the further empirical analysis of political correctness directly as a social phenomenon, while taking it out of the linguistic sphere. Political correctness is studied as a formal embodiment of intersectionality, taking into account all the features of cross-identity in linguistic practices. The use of the intersectional method makes it possible to reveal political correctness not only as speech prescriptions, but as a multi-component phenomenon that must be considered in close connection with various kinds of discrimination. The role of power, as the main element, in the mechanisms of interiorization of attitudes towards political correctness is revealed. We highlight the role of symbolic power in ensuring voluntary consent, which is the basis for political

correctness and ensures its relatively stable nature. The possibility of using discourse analysis as one of the main methods of studying political correctness is substantiated.

Keywords: political correctness, discrimination, power, intersectionality, discourse.

During recent decades, a special emphasis among linguists and sociologists has been given to the issue of so-called political correctness.¹ Originating in the United States in the struggle for the rights of Afro-Americans and subsequently picked up by feminists, the process of spreading political correctness every year encompasses more and more spheres of public life and goes far beyond the boundaries of American culture. At the same time, the concepts regarding the functioning of political correctness as a social phenomenon, if considered in sociological science, are rather superficial, and not independent, but are more related to other social phenomena and processes (Ionin, 2012; Ostrouh, 1998; Lakoff, 1975). The same applies to the mechanisms of assimilating attitudes towards political correctness and studying its possible social effects, which, although less pronounced in Ukrainian society, can be easily recorded in American and European societies. Political correctness, while not being an institution as such, acquires an institutional character: for example, in American universities, “language codes” are created that are designed to normalize language interaction at universities and on campuses, and non-compliance entails administrative sanctions, suspension from teaching, or even dismissal. This influence of political correctness on social reality has long remained unnoticed, but in our opinion, this problem is socially significant and requires further scientific understanding.

Moreover, the relevance is largely due to the need to determine the status of political correctness in the (de) formation of public consciousness. It is important to note that when we speak about political correctness, we are not speaking about vulgarisms and the need to adhere to language tact or the avoidance of statements that offend many people. Political correctness permits the use of such words. The words condemned by political correctness include the whole groups of words and meanings that affect gender, racial, and ethnic themes. The words “negro”, “colored”, “Indians”, “gypsies” are already habitually withdrawn from the lexicon; but they are followed by those words that until quite recently did not seem offensive to anyone: “poor”, “indigent”, “sick”, “paralyzed”, “beautiful”, “smart”, “healthy”, “foreigner”, “emigrant”, etc.

¹ More details about the phenomenon of political correctness O. Nekhaienko (2018).

The sociological appeal to the problem of political correctness, firstly, is due to the fact that the niche of the sociological study of this phenomenon remains empty against the background of the growing interest that political correctness arouses among foreign and domestic linguists, philosophers and culturologists. Secondly, the problem of political correctness can be attributed to the most pressing problems that are being developed by Western socio-political thought. This is explained by the fact that it is the idea of linguistic correctness that underlies the implementation of the policy of pluralism and solidarity, which dominates the political orientations of the states of the conventional West; this applies both to national states and determines the features of the functioning of institutions within the international community. This fact is already confirmed at the level of the highest legislative authority. For example, in the founding documents of the European Union as a general principle, non-discrimination and a tolerant attitude towards a person and a citizen, as well as the principle of equal opportunities are enshrined. The proclaimed principles were actually manifested in the form of political correctness, while the question remains: is the implementation of the above principles purely formal.

Taking into account the fact that Ukraine is now on its way to European integration, we are faced with the need to accept and cultivate European values, one of which is political correctness as a manifestation of tolerance. There is a need to study political correctness as a tool for shaping the agenda in European society.

Thus, the need to reflect in sociological science the most important social processes taking place in a modern multi-ethnic liberal democratic society is directly related to the phenomenon of political correctness: we are speaking, first of all, about the liberalization of society and the proclamation of the values of tolerance as the European integration guidelines for Ukraine. However, despite the existence of the need to study political correctness, so far there is no toolkit with the help of which such a study would be possible.

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is the theoretical analysis of the concept of intersectional power as one of the possible tools for studying political correctness.

Political correctness is intended to indicate value parameters, criteria for assessing certain political phenomena, events, processes, thereby helping to prevent social contradictions and conflicts, as well as ensuring the ideological and value consensus that is needed for the smooth functioning of the social system. It is important to find out how political correctness is capable of influencing public relations, and to determine (or at least justify hypotheses) the consequences of this influence on society.

It is necessary to outline the possible vectors of the empirical analysis of the phenomenon of political correctness. For this, it is proposed to consider attitudes towards political correctness, which are formed with the help of language and can affect the formation and deformation of mass consciousness, and it is they that are the focus of our attention in this article.

By “attitudes” we mean such

a social quality of a person, which expresses their readiness for a certain social activity and actions in a certain sphere of reality in accordance with their value orientations, as well as with socially accepted methods of behaviour prescribed to them as a member of a certain group or society” (*Sociologicheskij slovar' IAC “SOCIUM”*).

This special “vision” underlies the selective activity of a person, and their behaviour. It regulates conscious and unconscious forms of activity in all spheres: motivational, emotional, social. Attitudes are based on a person’s life experience, they create both huge benefits and huge limitations.

A person prepared for a certain action has the ability to carry it out more quickly and accurately, that is, more efficiently than an unprepared person. However, the installation may be triggered by mistake and as a result, may not correspond to the real circumstances.

The concept of attitudes is closer to psychology, and in this regard, difficulties arise in theoretical analysis in the sociological field. As a theoretical basis, several concepts are proposed that can sociologically explain the mechanism of the formation of attitudes, and how their stability is ensured. To analyze the formation of attitudes towards political correctness, it is proposed to consider them through the prism of ‘the concept of power’ by Stephen Lukes, as well as from the point of view of intersectionality, which can act as a methodological basis. This article is a revision of these concepts in order to derive a voluminous theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of political correctness.

The need to turn to an intersectional approach and gender studies is dictated by the fact that they lie at the origins of the formation of political correctness; a retrospective approach will allow us to explore the phenomenon in more detail.

After the Second World War, under the pressure of liberal ideas and the destruction of the systems of colonialism and totalitarianism, a theory of minorities was formed that pays attention to precisely those identities that have been repressed for a long time, it is at this time that such a concept as “black identity” appears. The concept was actively developed by Patricia Hill Collins, whose work primarily deals with issues related to feminism and gender in the African American community. P. Collins first established herself in 1990 with *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (2000). The book is widely known for laying the foundations for racial, class, and gender studies, and for developing the concept of intersectionality.

The concept of intersectionality arose in the 1970–1980s. The first study of the intersectional approach was carried out by Kimberly Crenshaw, *Mapping Boundaries: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Non-White Women* (Crenshaw, 1994), where she looked at the issues of non-white women experiencing domestic violence. Crenshaw stated that “In the context of violence

against women, ignoring differences is a fundamental problem because the violence experienced by women is often defined by other dimensions of their identities, such as race or class..." (Crenshaw, 1994). Both the work of activists to politicize women's experiences, and that of activists in the fight against racism to politicize the experiences of people of colour, ignores other discrimination. Although racism and sexism regularly intersect at the level of everyday life, they ignore each other in feminist and anti-racist practices.

This thought served as a powerful impetus for the development of intersectionality as a separate approach, which gradually began to go beyond purely gender studies. The main idea was that different forms of oppression existing in society are not only closely related to each other and can sometimes condition each other, but also intersect everywhere (Collins, 2000). It was the first comprehensive attempt to address discrimination, claiming the status of an idea that unites all minority rights movements. The intersectional approach focuses on the study of hierarchical differences between individuals and groups, depending on the complex intersections of their position in society, defined by many parameters (from gender to class and ethnicity). P. Collins devoted the first series of her studies to the dominant representations of masculinity and femininity in American society. As part of this research, she introduced the term a "matrix of domination" (sometimes "matrix of power"), which denotes a historically specific complex system of power relations in society. Each dominance matrix is characterized by two parameters.

First, it is characterized by its own mode of intersectionality, that is, a special combination of intersecting systems of oppression (for example, based on race, class, gender, sexuality, civil status and age).

Secondly, the specifics of the matrix have different effects on different levels of the system – interpersonal, organizational, structural (Collins, 2000).

Collins shows how the domination matrix creates controlling patterns of masculinity and femininity. The sociologist identifies such patterns, and further studies their representation in the media, where combinations of positions in racial, gender and class structures of power distribution are presented in different ways.

All representations of femininity that P. Collins explores are brought out through the intersectional analysis of media products and are actualized in the symbolic context of American society, where collective memory readily mobilizes the knowledge of the mechanisms of racism, sexism and class exploitation. Feminist studies and political projects strive not only to deconstruct such representations, but also to promote the subversion (undermining) of the power structures that generate them (Collins, 2000).

Accordingly, P. Collins proposes a solution: "in order to challenge the power structures from within, to eliminate cracks in the system, you need to learn to speak convincingly in several languages of power" (Collins, 2000). In fact, she insists on the need to create a language that will allow the establishment of an order that is more beneficial for the minority.

P. Collins sees the main problem is in the domination of “white knowledge” and the ignorance of the experience of black women. This experience, according to the author, can be understood only when the researcher (and society) begins to think in similar categories. And the way of thinking can be changed through language correctness. What P.H. Collins describes can be called a battle for the right to be nominated. Various groups and their fractions are involved in a symbolic struggle to impose their own definition and understanding of the social world, which is most consistent with their specific interests and goals. P. Bourdieu noted that they can wage this struggle either directly, through symbolic conflicts in everyday life, or “by proxy”, that is, through a struggle in which specialists of symbolic production (full-time producers) are already entering (Bourdieu, 2007). The goal of these specialists is to have a monopoly on legitimate symbolic violence, and to provide the authorities with the opportunity to impose arbitrary (convenient) means for the cognition and expression of social reality. And here, in an indirect way, we come to the problem of the constructive potential of political correctness as a way to combat discrimination. In fact, P. Collins came close to the question of the relationship between identity and linguistic norms, but this idea was poorly developed by her.

And in this sense, the works of Robin Lakoff may be interesting, in whose works the main subject of consideration is the socio-cultural aspects of the speech behaviour of the representatives of different genders. The study of the features of the speech behaviour of women and men began quite a long time ago: already in the second half of the 20th century, various theories appeared regarding the gender aspects of language and speaking. Studying the features of female speech behaviour, Robin Lakoff came to the conclusion that this behaviour is characterized by insecurity, less aggressiveness (certainly, compared to male behaviour), with a women expressing more humanity and focusing on her communication partner (Lakoff, 1975). This is expressed in indecisive intonation, the frequent use of euphemisms, introductory expressions.

Feminism has significantly influenced the creation and development of gender linguistics. Supporters of the movement introduced the concept of “sexist language”, which meant the linguistic manifestation of the traditionally subordinate position of women in society. Proponents of this approach sought to exclude “sexist” words and expressions from everyday life, suggesting instead lexical units devoid of discriminative connotations, and emphasis on the equality of women in modern society.

The development of an intersectional approach has provoked the expansion of the boundaries of feminist vocabulary. And here it becomes necessary to speak not only about the need to avoid “sexism”, but also “racism”, “ageism” and other -isms that arise in modern language (primarily in English). Originally born around the race-class-gender triad, Collins later extended intersectionality to social dimensions at different levels, such as nation, disability, sexuality, age and ethnicity.

Intersectionality is not so much a model as it is a lens through which race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. should be viewed as mutually constitutive processes (in other words, these categories do not exist independently of each other; they strengthen each other) and social relations, which materially manifest themselves in different ways in everyday life. For the theory of intersectionality, social positions are not separate categories, but overlapping, complex, interacting, and often contradictory configurations. It was – and often remains – centred on identity. According to the logic of the intersectional approach, all people are subject to politically incorrect behaviour and statements, but there are groups that are more vulnerable than others, which is explained by a set of specific characteristics (for example, Afro-American representatives of the LGBT community). At the same time, the intersectional approach claims the status of a universal (general) theory of identity, which indirectly addresses the issues of dominance and the distribution of power in society (primarily symbolic), while power itself is not included in the sphere of interests of the supporters of the intersectional approach.

It is useful to highlight the activist and academic (or scientific) dimensions of intersectionality. From an activist point of view, there is no better scenario for minorities than joining their attempts with close and friendly forces, which are also discriminated against on any grounds. However, this association has many “pitfalls” and is not only unable to satisfy the interests of all participants, but itself is built on internal inequality and leads to inequality. For example, intersectional feminists are opposed by TERF – Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist. This movement denies the right of transgender women to be called directly women; accordingly, this implies the impossibility of visiting “only female spaces” by trans women. The TERF ideology contains the idea that society is divided into men – oppressors and women – oppressed; they also reject the concept of gender identities, believing that the bearer of male genitals a priori remains a man, and, accordingly, the role of the oppressor is still preserved. The movement is represented by the leader of feminist literature, Chimamanda Adichie, the BBC’s Four Women’s Hours host Jenny Murray, and one of the most important feminists of the 20th century, Germaine Greer. Intersectional, trans-inclusive feminists reproach them for oppressing transgender women by denying access to health services, women’s self-help groups and women’s restrooms. That said, in this case, it is more important for the author to mention the contradictions that arise in the activist component of intersectionality.

The example of trans-exclusive radical feminists as a conflict between minority movements is not unique. The adherents of intersectionalism are forced to find a certain balance between misogyny and Islamophobia (taking into account the attitude of Islam towards women), between homophobia and ageism (regarding the minimum age for transgender transition). Thus, intersectionalists are forced to partially close their eyes to their own doctrine, to justify discriminatory actions and the actions of some people and sharply condemn others for the same.

Essentially, intersectionalism obliges activists to limit themselves and their views and prevents them from being completely loyal to their groups.

Our task was to consider specifically the academic level of application, since it is important to deal with the vision of how exactly social relations develop and social positions are formed within the framework of an intersectional approach.

Considering discrimination and power relations in one bundle is necessary, since the phenomenon of discrimination itself implies that certain people, social groups or classes, have limited opportunities in the process of redistributing symbolic power. Discrimination actually leads to the exclusion and rejection of people, deprivation of their social rights, while the privileged group often has quite tangible and easily traceable material benefits from the existence of discrimination. Overcoming discrimination, in this case, is the only way to be included in the struggle for power. In this regard, there is a need for a more detailed consideration of the phenomenon of power. Naturally, one cannot ignore the political dimension of power relations, but we mainly suggest focusing on symbolic power. Despite the fact that the notion of “symbolic power” did not appear in S. Lukes’s categorical apparatus, his approach is close to ours in that his views are based on the understanding of power, which is based on a conflict of interests.

The power relation arises only when there is a conflict between the subject and the object and the subject acts against the interests (desires, preferences, intentions, goals) of the object. The key is that the subject’s action is most effective when it is carried out in a latent form. This latent nature makes the influence of the bearer of power the most effective. By applying the logic of Stephen Lukes to the analysis of political correctness, we can draw conclusions about the possible mechanisms (impact) of action.

Stephen Lukes’ work *Power: A Radical View...* (2005) was part of a debate that became particularly acute in the 1970s in the United States, after the main socio-philosophical postulates of that time were actively criticized. However, what is for us interesting in the context of this topic is Lukes’ idea of voluntary consent. The author largely refers to Foucault, who developed the idea that the one who is placed in the field of visibility and knows about it, takes responsibility for enforcing power; allows them to play spontaneously on themselves; he absorbs an attitude of power in which both roles play simultaneously; he becomes the beginning of his own submission (Fuko, 1999). And in this case, for the analysis of political correctness, with some reservations, the idea can be accepted that such a person is “the one who is placed in the field of the visibility of the authorities, but does not fully realize the power of its influence on himself.” Accordingly, the less political correctness is perceived as a directive norm, the more significant its constructive potential – and the more attitudes towards political correctness deform consciousness and identity. For us, the use of such an approach in relation to political correctness will help to clearly explain how political correctness arises and how its rather stable nature can be explained.

One gender researcher, Sandra Bartky, uses Foucault's idea to analyze one aspect of the current subordination of women. She believes that it is women who practice this discipline in relation to their own body and against it. For example, a woman who checks her makeup several times a day to find out if the powder has crumbled and if the paint has flowed from her eyelashes, who is afraid that the wind or rain will ruin her hair, etc. turns, like the prisoner in the Panopticon, into a supervising subject, immersed in tireless self-observation. This self-observation is a form of submission to patriarchy (Bartky, 1990). Political correctness has a similar mechanism, but in this case, we are speaking about the independent regulation of language and thoughts. But at the same time, in addition to tireless self-observation, the role of social control is great, which in some cases can also spill over into normative acts (speech codes).

S. Lukes uses Foucault's ideas to show that they are beginning to explore subtle forms of voluntary consent, by which people are drawn into broader patterns of normative control. While people themselves often act as "supervising" themselves, considering themselves, sometimes falsely, free in their power, making their own choices, pursuing their own interests, rationally perceiving arguments and coming to independent conclusions.

Arising as a reaction to the polemic between radical and Marxist feminism and ripening from the "theory of two systems", the intersectional approach gained popularity in the 70s and 90s, proposing to understand the phenomenon of oppression as a set of intersecting types of discrimination – mutually conditioned and complementary to human oppression in society. At the same time, a person is understood as a field for the intersection of these types of discrimination, since at the same time he has a number of identities – such as class, race, age, work ability, gender, sexuality, civil status, etc. All these identities can become a pretext for oppression if they do not fully coincide with the imperative normativity of the existing socio-political discourse. This means that absolutely any person can be discriminated against on one or more grounds, which implies the senselessness of searching for the most significant type of social oppression.

On the other hand, most people with symbolic power can also engage in discriminatory practices based on their respective privileged positions. The struggle for power is escalating, but at the same time the distribution of roles in society does not change, intersectionality arises as an attempt to overcome discrimination. One of the main theses of the supporters of the intersectional approach is the idea of observing linguistic norms that will ensure the overcoming of discrimination at the symbolic level.

Political correctness is one of the cornerstones on which modern liberal ideology rests, according to which people are divided into two types: bearers of privileges; and those suppressed on the basis of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health, physical capabilities, etc. The overriding task of the liberal community is to create an inclusive society free from oppression and

that provides equal rights and opportunities to all its citizens, regardless of their characteristics, either personal or physical. Since this requires the elimination of even the smallest prejudices against repressed groups – censorship of speech, actions and thoughts have become an integral part of the project of “social justice”.

We propose a methodological approach and method by which political correctness can be studied. The intersectional method makes it possible to study political correctness not only as speech prescriptions, but as a complex multi-component phenomenon that must be considered in close connection with various kinds of discrimination.

The relationship with the concept of power and language makes it possible to trace how a different social value system is formed. According to F. Frank, language can be used as a weapon by certain groups of people who have the strength and power to legitimize their value system. Thus, language forms the personality of a person: a native speaker; through the vision of the world, mentality, attitude towards people and much more imposed on him by, and embedded in, the language; that is, through the culture of the people who use this language as a means of communication (Frank, 1989).

Discourse analysis is the most appropriate method to accomplish the set tasks. Firstly, discourse analysis as the main method will allow us to reveal the mechanisms of the formation of politically correct thinking, in other words, we will be able to observe how attitudes to political correctness are fixed at the everyday level, since in this case, political correctness is viewed as a social practice closely related to the concept of power, which is exercised through voluntary consent. Furthermore, in the focus of attention of researchers is directly the process of forming attitudes towards political correctness and those discursive techniques that can be used in this case. And, secondly, discourse analysis will allow researchers to overcome the limitations associated with considering political correctness exclusively as a linguistic phenomenon, as it was perceived for a long time. Thus, these points open up new perspectives in the study of political correctness directly.

Intersectionality claims the status of a general theory of identity, acting as a research concept that reveals differences within categories, identifying people living at the “crossroads of identities” and ignored by the established, traditional practice of law. It breaks down the dichotomies of anti-discrimination law – “Subject” and “Other” – and shifts the focus of the law from difference to dominance, revealing the “dominance matrix” (McKinnon, 2007).

At the same time, the intersectional approach is not adequate for every society; sometimes it requires significant adaptations. For example, in Ukrainian society, the intersectional approach is used more often in the feminist sense, which contradicts the foundations of intersectionality, since it cannot be reduced to any one aspect. The Ukrainian “dominance matrix” has some peculiarities. This is due to the fact that discrimination based on race is extremely rare, they have a point character. At the same time, inequalities based on linguistic affiliation and political orientations are more

relevant, this fact is recorded in the discourse analysis of the Ukrainian media and the statements of Ukrainian politicians (more on this topic can be found in the works of Oksana Nekhaienko, Daria Yashkina (2019) *Educational Reform in Ukraine's Election Discourse*).

In the course of the study, group nominations were recorded, which had a clear emotional colouring. In this case, the analysis did not aim to focus on the discovery of linguistic units of political correctness. That said, even at a preliminary stage, it can be assumed that such a juxtaposition of different groups can also be regarded as a certain element of political (in)correctness.

Political correctness acts as a formal embodiment of intersectionality, since it tries to take into account all the features of intersectional identities in linguistic practices, which is especially actualized against the background of the need to form a liberal democratic society, and representatives of academic intersectionality insist on this. At the same time, the principles that govern political correctness as a conditional tool of the intersectional approach remain unclear. Another kind of contradiction arises: that of how the idea of political correctness in liberal democracies is consistent with the other basic constitutional right of freedom of speech. The revealed contradictions can be developed in more detail within the framework of a separate research work. In this case, we focus on the fact that intersectionality provides a theoretical basis for studying political correctness as designed to relieve social tensions that arise in a multi-component society. As noted above, this tension is embodied primarily at the level of linguistic practices, and, accordingly, the main task of the researcher is to reveal the discursive features of the politically correct (and politically incorrect) "language game".

Coming to the issue of power helps us to reveal possible mechanisms for the functioning of political correctness. For example, it can be its appearance in a "ready-made" form in a society where there was no historical context for its consistent emergence; or how attitudes toward political correctness are assimilated, internalized by various social groups and whether there is a place in these processes for social resistance. Based on the concept of S. Lukes, we accept that power belongs to those who form the understanding of which actions and decisions are correct and which are not. The decisive role in relation to subordination is played out by the picture of the world formed in society (one must obey specific attitudes, people or groups). This approach makes it possible to highlight the main indicators for the further practical study of political correctness, and eventually move from theoretical to empirical consideration.

The design of indicators should take into account the already mentioned historical context, in which the norms of political correctness are formed, the main social groups that act as the "conductors" of these norms, and the main channels of transmission, as well as the presence or absence of resistance. The concept of intersectional power in combination with discourse analysis in the study of political correctness makes it possible to strengthen the connection between

theoretical and practical knowledge and brings the studied phenomenon out of the linguistic sphere into the sociological one. Thus, this toolkit will enable researchers not only to outline the main directions for the empirical analysis of political correctness, but also to clarify the basic theoretical premises.

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Changes taking place in the contemporary model of family policy in Poland – Analysis of the phenomena

Abstract. Family policy is a set of legal norms, actions and measures launched by the state to create appropriate living conditions for the family, its formation, proper functioning, and the fulfilment of all its important social roles. Transformation is an intentional process of changing one piece of the environment implemented over a period to create a new and primarily sustainable state of the environment. The author presents demographic data reflecting the process of the individualization of contemporary culture, which translates into changes in the contemporary family model. The main aim of the article is to present the changes taking place in the contemporary model of family policy in Poland and to analyze these phenomena.

Keywords: family policy, social policy, transition period, social institution.

Introduction

A. Durasiewicz claims that the term “family policy” was first used when discussing social policy in relation to family and children during the European period. The term has been combined to describe actions taken by governments on behalf of children and their families. Efforts were made to influence families, especially those who had children, or individuals in their family roles (Durasiewicz, 2009: 57). In 1997, the Family Policy program was created to support the family. The actions taken were treated as an investment in the young generation. In

this way, family policy was to become a key element of the activities aimed at the development of society. It was the duty of the state to provide the family with conditions that would enable the implementation of its tasks, as well as its rights and obligations towards society, and the possibility of choosing the family model, i.e., the number of its members, as well as the rules of intra-family life (Durasiewicz, 2016: 10).

D. Orłowski claims that family policy adapts to the historical, cultural, social, and economic conditions of a given country. Means and methods of operation are subordinated to the population policy, considering the demographic processes taking place in each society. The state, depending on its needs, may, for example, try to increase or decrease the fertility rate through appropriate legal, administrative, and economic solutions regarding marriage and family (Orłowski, 2022: 4–5).

From 2012–2019, there were significant changes in the functioning of the family. Compared to previous years, the average age people getting married increased, more women attained levels of higher education, and the number of marriages also decreased. The main cause of the breakdown of marriage is not the death of one of the spouses, as it was in previous years, but divorce. The article presents the systemic changes that took place in the analyzed period. They concern the process of starting a family, making decisions about divorce, planning children, as well as changes introduced by the state for this social institution.

Divorce process

M. Mynarska (2014: 19) states that the changes related to the process of delaying starting a family first appeared in Scandinavian countries, then they appeared in Western and Southern Europe, and finally, after 1989, also the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. A characteristic feature of the changes concerning the family was their course. The later these changes began, the more rapid they were. Over the last dozen or so years, the age of newlyweds has increased. Although in most cases, men entered marriage before the age of thirty, in 2013, the average age for a man to get married was 29, which is over 4 years more than at the beginning of the 1990s. It was similar in the case of women, in 2013 the average age to get married was 27 years, while in the early 1990s it was 23 years (*Podstawowe informacje...*). Consequently, the age group of the most frequent marriage was shifted from 20–24 to 25–29. In turn, its total share is now 40%, while in 1990 it was 20%.

P. Guja (2016: 41) purports that the level of education of newlyweds has also changed. In 2013, over 47% of brides had higher education, whereas in 1990 this represented only 4%. Women with secondary education constituted about 36%, with basic vocational education 9%, whilst the same group in 1990 represented

35%. According to a report commissioned by the Committee for Migration Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Slany, Ślusarczyk, Krzyżowski, 2014: 17), the number of divorces in the period 2004–2011, following Poland's accession to the European Union, was 519.1 thousand. It accounted for as much as 52% of all divorces from 1990–2011.

M. Skawińska (2013: 21–22) concurs that economic emigration contributed to the dissolution of marriages. According to statistics, in 2013 over 66 thousand married couples got divorced. At the same time, the number of weddings fell by 22 thousand. This number decreased for the fifth year in a row, which resulted in an increase in the divorce rate from 31.6% in 2012 to 36.4% in 2013. Apart from divorce, the main cause of marriage breakdown in Poland is the death of one of the spouses. At the beginning of the 1990s, the death of one of the spouses was the reason for dissolving the marriage in about 80% of cases, in the remaining cases the cause was divorce. In the period 1990–2004, the number of deaths decreased, which was undoubtedly caused by both the extension of the life of the population and the development of medicine.

M. Kuciarska-Ciesielska (2003: 53) pays attention to the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, until 1984, an annual increase in adjudicated divorces was observed (in 1970, 34,600 divorces were pronounced, in 1980 – 39,833, and in 1984 – as many as 52,900).

Three factors can be distinguished that affect the number of divorces (apart from the legal status, as well as individual-environmental and philosophical determinants of the decision of the interested spouses to get divorced):

1) cohort effect – after 7–10 years from the period when a significant number of new marriages were concluded (which, for example, maybe a consequence of reaching “marital age” by people born in the demographic boom period), the number of divorces is significantly increased “even in the situation of constant preferences as to the frequency of the termination of marriage/divorce” (Szukalski, 2013: 117).

2) the spread of acceptance of divorce as a means of ending a failed marriage. This was particularly important when the legal status did not provide for divorce before or contained very significant restrictions on its availability (the change in the legal status is the reason for the increase in the number of divorces from the 1960s onwards) (Cholewińska-Łapińska, 2017: 47).

3) in periods of instability on the labor market, being married is perceived as a kind of “insurance”, because it is easier to deal with the negative effects of unemployment while being in a marriage (family) (Cholewińska-Łapińska, 2017: 48).

According to the CSO research carried out in 2014, the largest number of divorces took place in 2006. Since 2005, the number of separations has decreased. In 1989–2003, the number of divorces was lower than in 2004–2013. Divorce and separation play different roles in the legal order. A legally valid divorce decree results in the dissolution of the marriage, permanent cessation of the obligation to

provide mutual assistance, the possibility of returning to the previous surname and contracting a new marriage.

P. Guja (2016: 44) thinks that separation, in turn, performs a restitution function: it formally maintains the marriage bond, modifying the content of this relationship so that it is adapted to the new realities of the spouses' separation, and, in some cases, it can stimulate a return to cohabitation. In 2019, more than 65,000 marriages were dissolved by courts. The number of divorces in cities is almost three times higher than in the countryside, and the ratio is almost twice as high, and in the case of separation, it is at least half as high. There are also significant differences in the regional system, i.e., the behaviour of the inhabitants of the south-eastern voivodships of Poland is more traditional, while the least traditional in the western voivodships. Divorced spouses have lived together on average for about 14 years. Over the years, the age of spouses deciding to divorce has also increased.

In 2019, the statistically average divorced man was almost 42 years old and a woman over 39-years-old, i.e., they were about 3–4 years older than in 2000 and 5–6 years older than in 1990. The greatest social effect of divorce is on the fate of minors (children under the age of 18), whose number in divorced marriages in 2019 amounted to 55 thousand. This has significant consequences for the functioning of such families and causes an increase in the number of single-mother-families with children. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the court more and more often rules for the joint upbringing of children by divorced parents – in 2019 there were over 62% such decisions; custody given only to the mother represented just 33% of rulings (in 2000 this share was 65%), while sole care being granted to the father amounted to only about 3% of cases (*Sytuacja demograficzna...*).

Procreative behaviours of the population

The values of the fertility rate for urban and rural areas are currently very similar, but in traditional rural areas they are higher – in 2018 they were 1.452, and in cities 1.416; thus, relatively more children are born in the countryside. In 2018, the rural birth rate was 10.4‰, whereas in urban areas it was 9.9‰. According to data from the Central Statistical Office of Poland (CSO), the highest level of live births occurs in voivodships related to the areas of the largest, developing urban agglomerations (Pomorskie, Mazowieckie and Małopolskie, Wielkopolskie – the value of the ratio in these voivodeships was 11.4–11.1‰ in 2018). It is most likely related to the relatively younger age structure of the inhabitants and corresponds to the spatial range of the actual population increase. In turn, the lowest birth rate was recorded in the Świętokrzyskie (8.6‰ in 2018) and Opolskie (8.7‰) voivodships (*Sytuacja demograficzna...*).

The current number of births depends on the number of women at the reproductive age (15–49 years) and on its structure. Another element influencing the number of births is the procreative attitudes and behaviours of the population. The growing and significantly high number of women of childbearing age may also seem to be a sufficient guarantee of many births or its growth. A measurable indicator of these phenomena is the sizes of partial fertility rates, i.e., the intensity of births in individual age groups of mothers in a given year. The values of these partial measures do not depend on the size of the population or its age structure. They reflect reproductive behaviour in each period and make up the theoretical fertility rate (TFR = sum of partial fertility rates) (*Sytuacja demograficzna...*).

A. Durasiewicz (2014: 106) claims that to maintain the continuity of society, as well as to raise the fertility rate to such a level that it is possible to replace generations, it is necessary to take measures in the area of demographic and family policy. These activities will be aimed at: increasing the fertility rate; reducing infant mortality; supporting one-parent families resulting from the growing number of divorces, as well as extra-marital births; supporting large families; increasing social expenditure for families and their children; increasing the employment rate; lowering the unemployment rate; and increasing the availability of institutional care for small children, especially in kindergartens and nurseries.

The process of forming family policy in the first years of transformation was based on the parents' right to raise and educate their children. In this way, the family became responsible for its fate, and there was also a limitation of responsibility towards the family of external institutions, primarily state institutions. The decentralization of the state's powers in the field of family policy has led to changes in the manner of the functioning of such institutions as nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, culture, sport, and recreation centres (Durasiewicz, 2017: 113).

The 2013 social diagnosis report "The low fertility rate in Poland in the context of Poles' perception" shows that barriers to parenthood can be divided into 4 main groups:

- reasons related to poor material situation, as well as a sense of instability,
- objective reasons (including the inability to become pregnant, the risk of genetic diseases, attitude of the partner's: that is being reluctant to have children),
- reasons related to insufficient state support for parents,
- reasons related to worldview changes, individualism, and the pursuit of self-realization (*Odpowiedź podsekretarza stanu...*).

P. Bryła (2008) pays attention to the fact that a large family often means resignation from a high standard of living and the necessity to reduce one's own needs and that of the family to a minimum.

Families with many children belong to the group of households most at risk of poverty (regardless of the adopted border). In 2012, "almost every tenth person lived below the minimum subsistence level in the households of married couples with three children and about 27% of people in households of married couples with

four or more children.” Even “people who made up one-parent families were in a relatively better situation” (*Ubóstwo w Polsce...*).

Currently, as a result of the ongoing intra-family transformations, Polish researchers are starting to gradually abandon the use of terms such as incomplete family, single parent, single parenting. The following term is becoming increasingly common: mono-parental family (Piotrowska, 2014: 165).

The most common reasons for the formation of single-parent families are:

- separation, i.e., termination of the parents’ joint life, but without dissolution of the marriage,
- divorce, i.e., legal sanctioning of the previously started process of family breakdown,
- death of one of the parents,
- giving birth to a child outside of marriage, which may be the result of an accident (e.g., unplanned pregnancy, rape) or result from the conscious choice of a woman to have a child and raise it alone,
- abandonment of the family by one of the parents (Gawda, 2016: 38).

Nowadays, the formation of single-parent families is increasingly influenced by social reasons. This group of conditions is primarily associated with socio-economic development, urbanization processes, and moral and cultural changes. Nowadays, the factors determining independent parenthood are quickly modified because of economic and socio-cultural changes (Szlendak, 2012: 247–476).

State activities for the family

J. Auleytner (2004: 11) underlines that despite the high assessment of the Constitution, as well as several social laws, the conditions have allowed only their partial implementation. Despite the impossibility of their implementation, they realized a new, humanistic perspective for the development of a united and independent Poland.

A Durasiewicz (2012: 17–18) pays attention to the fact that the principles of social security in the interwar period were laid down in the Act of August 16, 1923. The law defines social security as the provision of necessary living needs from public funds for those who, permanently or temporarily, with their own material resources or labour could not afford them.

Social services aimed at meeting the needs of families:

- caring for infants, children, and adolescents, especially for orphans, half-orphans, neglected children, abandoned children and children who are at risk of negative influence,
- protection of motherhood,
- strive for the religious, moral, mental, and physical education of children,

- assistance in preparing young people for professional activity (Law of August 16, 1923).

J. Frątczak (2001: 178) mentions that 1994 was proclaimed the Year of the Family by the United Nations General Assembly and provided an incentive for academia, local and religious circles to define the role of family policy actors in a market economy.

In Poland, the “Rodzina 500+” program (Family 500+) is the financial foundation for supporting families. The program entered into force on 1 April 2016 and contributed to a significant improvement in the financial situation of families, strengthened them and gave them due priority. A family-friendly policy was one of the main objectives of the IAS-U's coalition agreement (Szczudlińska-Kanoś, 2019: 55–56). As a result of the launch of the program, the share of spending on family policy in GDP has grown significantly – from 1.78% of GDP in 2015 to 4% of GDP today.

The Family 500+ program is the main instrument of family policy and aims at achieving three main goals: improving the demographic situation, reducing poverty among the youngest, and investing in the family. The Family 500+ program is the most significant and real financial assistance from the state to families raising children. Under the Family 500+ program, families with dependent children are entitled to a parenting allowance of PLN 500 per child under the age of 18 (*Rodzina 500+*). However, it is worth noting that none of the main goals of the creation of this program have been achieved.

J. Szczepaniak-Sienniak (2015: 110) writes how support for large families was also provided by the introduction of the national program “Big Family Card” (in force since 2015 in addition to the programs of local self-government of this type, which have been developed since 2005). According to the Minister of Labor and Social Policy (*Family policy in Poland*), this program is a “flagship project [...] for families with at least three children.” The purpose of introducing this tool is to directly support families, as well as create a positive image of large families and increase the chances of the development and life of children from these families. The card is intended to improve the situation of large families both in terms of reducing the cost of access to certain services and in the social sphere by stimulating the activity of these families (Szczepaniak-Sienniak, 2015: 110).

In 2019, one-time childbirth benefits, the so-called “newborn benefits”, were distributed to the parents of 252.4 thousand children, which amounted to 67.3% of the total number of children born. The expenditures for the payment of the “newborn allowance”, which was financed from the state budget, amounted to PLN 252.4 million and were 9.6% lower compared to 2018. Among families receiving lump-sum benefits in connection with the birth of a child, the largest group, i.e., 42.8%, were families with one child; with families with two children making up 38.4%; and large families (with three or more children) accounting for 18.8% of this group. In 2019, over 11,000 additional zlotys were paid out. Childbirth allowance from municipalities’ own funds was paid to the total amount of PLN 9.2 million (*Świadczenia na rzecz rodziny...*).

Conclusion

Between 2012 and 2019, the number of marriages decreased and the average age at marriage increased. The increase in the age of newlyweds is a consequence of the choices made by young people who, when planning their future, first invest in themselves, i.e., education and work, and then in their families. Women who marry have a higher level of education as well as higher economic activity. Young parents are increasingly reluctant to have offspring, because in many cases, family growth means giving up a high standard of living and the need to reduce their own expenditures. With the increasing number of divorces and layoffs, single parenting is becoming more common. In previous years, the most common cause of marriage breakdown was the death of one of the spouses, which has changed due to medical progress. Low fertility rates will also have a negative impact on future fertility rates as there will be significantly fewer women of childbearing age in the future. For this reason, the state began to take measures to support large families. An example of such financial assistance was the introduction of the Family 500+ program, the Big Family Card, and the so-called Newborn Benefit. The purpose of the programs is not only to provide financial support to families, but also to create a positive image of large families, which in turn should become a kind of incentive for other young parents to try to have children. However, despite government support, most newlyweds still choose to have one child, mainly due to job prospects and better living conditions.

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