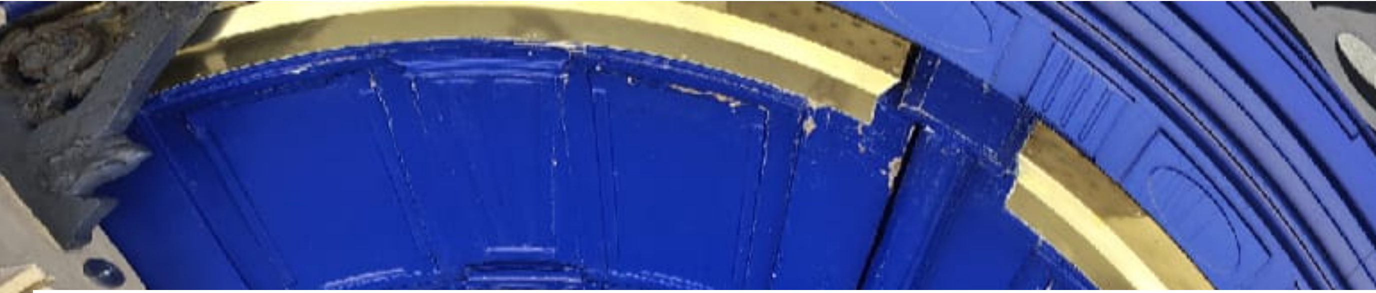

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Long-term Polarising Trends in the Western Democracies

Ladislav Cabada[1)]

Abstract: One of the significant attributes of the current rise in illiberal sentiments and protagonists in Western democracies is the erosion of political mainstream and centripetal politics. Ideological polarisation, which underpins pluralism and democratic competition, is being replaced by extreme or emotional polarisation. The emergence of bloc politics based on irreconcilable differences is also accompanied by a significant decline in trust in political and non-political institutions. Trust is being increasingly transferred from institutions to closed communities, social bubbles or new leaders who build their charisma on a combination of media presentation and political entrepreneurship. Thus, among political elites and within societies, ideological polarisation is giving way to affective polarisation, which in some cases displays sectarian features. In our analysis, we present both the main causes of the growing polarisation and the possibilities for overcoming this trend. Our analysis focuses on the key factors that are driving increasing polarisation and the formation of new divisions based on transformed identities.

Keywords: cleavages, identity; polarization; affective polarisation; trust

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[1)] Full Professor, PhD, Metropolitan University Prague, Department of Political Science and Anglophone Studies, E.mail: ladislav.cabada@mup.cz

Introduction

The post-war stabilisation of Western liberal democracies was based on a centrifugal model of party systems and social interaction, i.e. on the principle of reducing polarisation and building barriers – educational and socialising, media, political and, if necessary, legal – against anti-liberal and extreme political protagonists. Over the last two decades, however, it is apparent that the importance of long-standing partisan predispositions of electoral preferences and voter cleavages has been declining. This has resulted, among other things, in the growing prominence of issue-based voting as opposed to the formerly predominant class-based voting, but also in increasing political polarisation. Party competition is changing accordingly. Since this trend has become relatively intense, there is a need to pay more attention to the broader social changes that have led to this development.

In our paper, we briefly analyse the changes in the basic characteristics and trends of political polarisation, linking them partially to another key issue – which may represent both the trigger and the effect of polarisation – i.e. (dis)trust in political and other institutions.

(Post)modernisation as a Key Impulse for Intensifying Polarisation?

From the point of view of our analysis, cleavage theory is particularly noteworthy because it considers interest antagonism growing out of conflicting demands and expectations as a key and characteristic feature of democratic societies. At the same time, it presents the key questions to which antagonistic social groups offer different or outright contradictory answers, thereby shaping and reinforcing their social and political identities. A stabilising element of modern democratic systems is the pursuit of consensus among rival social groups. This constitutes the basis of the welfare state (social reconciliation), with decentralised decision-making based on multi-level governance (easing tensions between centres and peripheries, or urban and rural regions) or neocorporatistism (key corporations as partners of the state). The stability of the liberal-democratic welfare state is also ensured by the acknowledgment that key socio-political cleavages, with their structural, cultural and organisational dimensions, are as important and durable as other sources of conflict (Sass & Kuhnle, 2023: 189).

Social scientists agree that western societies have been undergoing a process of value adaptation since the 1960s. Inglehart (1977) described this process as a "silent revolution" that has resulted in the postmodernisation of societies. This transformation represented a major trigger for the disruption or weakening of petrified cleavages and initiated a process of greater individualisation of electoral and, more generally, political behaviour. Together with other important factors - in particular the transformation of political communication tools and means - this process has heralded the emergence of greater volatility, a decline in political party membership, the weakening of links between political parties and their affiliated social organisations, the emergence of new social movements, etc. (Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

The impulses stemming from Western democracies and (part of) their societal transition to a postmodern understanding of statehood, society and politics have also fundamentally influenced the construction of identity and polarisation. New social movements and newly framed issues and political priorities include: the environmental agenda, feminism and, more recently, broader gender issues, integration (including migration and multiculturalism), the democratisation of foreign and security policy, which entered the social debate and was at the same time exposed to much greater social scrutiny, and many others. All these differences naturally lead to polarisation in the form of widening differences between partisan, ideological or income groups. Polarisation involves a variety of single as well as collective issues that become prominent due to political cleavages. Such polarisation at both elite and public levels leads, on the one hand, to destabilisation of the political and legal environment and, on the other, to a weakening of trust in political institutions and politics as such.

The "silent revolution" (Inglehart 1977) that resulted in post-modernisation of societies represents a fundamental impulse to disrupt or weaken the petrified cleavages and initiated a process of greater individualisation of electoral and, more generally, political behaviour. Together with other significant factors – in particular the transformation of the tools and means of political communication – this process has heralded the phenomena of strengthening volatility, declining membership in political parties, weakening of ties between political parties and their allied social organisations, the emergence of new social movements, etc. "Yet, while partisanship is an influential group identity, there are other important identities that cut across partisanship and influence these attitudes" (Klar 2018: 610).

Today, this development, linked to the big themes of climate change or full equality for all individuals regardless of their identity, can be reflected through the prism of two visible social groups and political concepts that often refer to each other pejoratively, e.g. as "pioneers" and "laggards", but also as "progressives" and "reactionaries". The dispute between these antagonistic groups is both economic (e.g. the disagreement related to the promotion of the European Green Deal, where supporters see it as an opportunity for technological innovation and economic empowerment, while opponents often refer to it as "economic suicide") and cultural; here it is basically about issues related to value schemes, usually linked to identity. Needless to say, such polarisation at the level of elites and mass public leads both to destabilization of the political and legal environment (e.g. by repeatedly changing the basic parameters of some public policies after the former opposition takes over the government after the elections) and to weakening of trust in political institutions and politics as such (Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

Dominance of the Economic or Cultural Dimension?

If we have repeatedly mentioned post-modernisation as one of the key impulses for the transformation of identities and polarisation in Western societies and political systems, it seems logical to begin the presentation of theoretical reflections by introducing the concept of so-called neo-modernisation theories. For example, Antonio and Brulle (2011: 198) present "a family of related neomodernization theories (NMTs), framed in response to globalization, economic and cultural change, the collapse of communism, and decline of labor-centered left politics. Suggesting taints of Deweyan-like democracy, NMTs implied that representative democracy and its political dynamics are being vitalized by much more citizen-based, civil society-centered, participatory, plural, critical networks, institutions, and communications."

In their analysis of polarisation that accompanies the debate on climate change and adaptation policies, Antonio and Brulle (2011: 198) highlight a set of so-called non-modernisation theories. They emphasise that this is only one dimension of a broader and more general polarisation that can be seen in the tension between the modern welfare nation-state and the postmodern globalising state and society. This paradigmatic conflict can be understood, among other things, as advocating the ideal of a small state or as promoting the perception of a state (or of a transnational protagonist taking over part of its role) as a powerful regulatory and caring actor. Although the neo-modernisation theory favours an economic/rational approach to polarisation, one should not fail to notice that it also mentions other dimensions, explicitly linking changes in the fabric of Western democracies to cultural changes, i.e. values.

Although the presented approach of neo-modernization theories prioritizes the economic/rational choice nature of polarisation, we should not overlook the fact that it also mentions other dimensions – it explicitly links the changes in the structure of society in Western democracies with cultural change, i.e. values. In addition, it reflects the fundamental change associated with the weakening of the link between the working class (which is shrinking or undergoing a transformation towards a new form: the precariat) and left-wing politics. This change has both an economic and a socio-cultural dimension. In this sense, in the contemporary debate on the motivations for new forms of polarisation in social sciences we can reflect both the proponents of primarily economically based discontent of major social groups and researchers who prefer more culturally based explanations (Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

In this sense, the current debate about the motives behind new forms of polarisation may include both advocates of primarily economically based discontent among large social groups and those who favour more culturally based explanations. These studies focus primarily on the rise of illiberal tendencies in contemporary democracies, the hybridisation of democratic political systems, the strengthening of radical and far-right political parties, anti-integrationist attitudes in the European environment, and nationalism (see e.g., Cianetti, Dawson & Hanley, 2019; Krastev, 2019; Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Tucker, 2020). These and other sub-polarising impulses are very often integrated under the term populism, which is sometimes supplemented with various adjectives (e.g. right-wing, illiberal, authoritarian, anti-European, etc.) and which manifests itself not only at the national but also at the European and even global level (Söderbaum, Spandler & Pacciardi, 2021).

In addition to party and more generally political polarisation, we currently observe a growing polarisation in relation to other, mainly ‘non-political’ institutions, such as science, education, media, etc., and also in relation to institutions directly linked to politics, such as the army, police, health, religion and the judiciary. Value debates often address institutions that produce knowledge and information (media, science, education) and institutions that enforce norms (justice, police, military) on opposite sides of the debate. “The rise of talk radio, then cable television, and more recently the Internet and the twenty-four-hour news cycle have amplified these political identifications and debates” (Brady & Kent, 2022: 60).

These findings confirm the assumption that the economic and socio-cultural drivers of polarisation cannot be decoupled but are an interrelated complex. Affective polarisation adds another element to the mix – the highly subjective perception of one's own status, including categories of success, and not only in economic terms. The causes of deepening polarisation and de-democratisation are much more complex, however, including important cultural factors concentrated in the axiological split between “liberals” and “neoliberals”. As Tucker (2020: 137) points out, “all countries where non-liberals have won democratic elections have been theoretically too rich for democracy to face such challenges”.

In the tradition of major cycles in economic, political or social development, he observes an anti-democratic and anti-liberal wave accompanied by growing polarisation and deepening distrust as a set of partial incidents integrated into the general phenomenon of democratic backsliding. He highlights the snowball effect of populist neoliberalism, which has awakened "passionate archaic demons" and an "atavistic mechanism" in the form of a "vicious circle of economic decline, the breakdown of trade and mobility, and economic and political hostility" (Tucker, 2020: 131). In this situation, clear socio-economic class demarcations disappear and a more complex set of determinants that politically identify individuals come into play.

From Ideological to Affective Polarisation

When political scientists talk about polarisation and its binary nature, they often distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' polarisation. In this sense, Kopecky, Meyer-Sahling and Spirova (2022) distinguish between 'normal/ideological' and 'affective' polarisation. Similarly, Schmitt (2019: 2) considers a risk too high, too low or even absent of polarization. Thus, both too high polarisation and its absence are risks. The former case often leads to unstable governments, legislative deadlocks, populism and strong social polarisation, including the rise of anti-systemic forces (which perfectly describes the current Czech situation). What is particularly worrying is that extreme and persistent polarisation can ultimately mean the collapse of a democratic system. Conversely, too little polarisation can reveal dysfunctional competition, where voters do not have a sufficient and competitive choice.

Affective polarisation is a type of social polarisation in which the adherents of two antagonistic parties "increasingly dislike the other, are biased against each other, are ready to defeat the other, feel anger towards each other, and all this without any direct or conditional connection to an ideological difference in position on a topic or issue" (Mason, 2015: 6). Affective polarisation is based on a strong psychologically motivated trust towards members of one's own group (in-group identity), and, on the contrary, a strong distrust towards members of the out-group. As Klar (2018: 611) notes: "common identities might increase trust across partisan rivals, a concern that is particularly prevalent during times of increased social distance and affective polarisation."

Elites, and not only political elites, play a significant role in reinforcing affective polarisation. This occurs, on the one hand, by emphasising the irreconcilable positions of different political protagonists and ideologies and generally questioning the government's credibility; they mobilise citizens to become more active. The extremising vocabulary and labelling of the political opponent as "the enemy" leads, on the other hand, to the breakdown of the pro- democratic consensus and to the perception of politics not as a space for finding good solutions, but as a gladiatorial arena in which there is no win-win strategy, but only a zero-sum game (Lee, 2013; Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

Affective polarization must be considered one of the key processes in the development of contemporary Western democracies. It is based on a strong psychologically motivated trust towards members of one's own group (in-group identity) and, in contrast, strong distrust of out-group members. In the case of bipartisanship, it is usually a situation in which trust in members of one's own group (party), as well as distrust in representatives of the opposite camp/party, significantly or almost completely suppresses rational argumentation. Even in multipartism, typical for continental party systems, one of the prominent manifestations of affective polarization, however, is the division of society into two 'irreconcilable' camps. As Wagner (2021) has shown in his recent analysis, "the size of parties matters for levels of affective polarization. Hence, a citizen's perception of the political system is more affectively polarized if they feel negatively towards a large competitor than if they dislike a minor party."

In this sense, the presence of a strong protest, radical, or even anti-system party with a tendency to divide society into two antagonistic groups in a populist way clearly represents a significant impulse to intensify polarization, including distrust in state and political institutions. Supporters of this party distrust institutions because they are not controlled by their favourite party, and opponents of this party distrust institutions if this party comes to power. The distrust of the two antagonistic political camps is thus not only related to their perceptions of each other, but more generally to their a priori perception of the government exercised by their political opponents as untrustworthy in the event of their own electoral defeat.

Furthermore, in addition to party polarisation, we can observe strengthening polarisation in relation to the other, primarily "non-political" institutions such as science, education, media etc., as well as regarding the institution directly related with politics such as military, police, medicine, religion, law. "In addition to significant declines in confidence, there have been substantial increases in partisan polarisation in confidence in which the partisans of one party have more confidence in an institution than the partisans of the other party, merely because of perceptions about which party controls the institution" (Brady & Kent, 2022: 50).

One should not omit, however, a critical analysis of the (new or social) media. The possibility of choosing as a source of information the media whose presentation corresponds to our subjective perception has reached a qualitatively new level of "parallel societies" thanks to the existence of social or even 'alternative' media and the construction of highly polarised social bubbles. Tucker (2020: 58-61) refers to social media as an instrument of unmediated politics: "New information technologies, mostly social media, dismantled the barriers to direct communications from leader to followers. Social media reconstructed the ancient public square in cyber space, thereby weakening the power of the press to constrain politics" (Tucker 2020: 58). Furthermore, "the populist media gives narrative form to the passions, most notably fear" (Tucker, 2020: 61).

In the tradition of great cycles in economy, politics or societal development, he observes the recent anti-democratic or anti-liberal wave accompanied by the strengthening polarisation and deepening mistrust as the set of partial cases integrated into the general phaenomenon of democratic backsliding. He stresses the snow-ball effect of populist neo-illiberalism that awoke the 'passionate archaic demons' and 'atavistic mechanism' in the form of a "vicious cycle of economic decline, breakdown of trade and mobility, economic and political hostilities, possesses the body politics, spreads, and infects the whole world" (Tucker, 2020: 131). In this situation, the clear socio-economic definition of class disappears and a more complex set of determinants that identify individuals politically come into play.

Traditionalism and cultural backlash

Let us stress at this place the negative consequences of poly-crisis and growing disillusionment and also fear in the Western societies in the last decade/s. Such development seems to be similar to the notion of anti-modernity in the second half of the 19th century that grew primarily out of disillusionment with Europe's industrial revolution. Nowadays, we observe similar processes regarding the globalisation processes, negative consequences of neoliberal reforms and the transition toward an information society (Industry 4.0 etc.). In our opinion, in such a poly-crisis the return of traditionalism, anti-modern and anti-liberal narratives is logical despite the question of whether we face and observe the new anti-modern revolution or a new version of traditional conservative (counter-)revolutions (Cabada & Charvát, 2024). Specifically, some of the mentioned crises even deepened the polarisation between the "winners" and "losers" of transformation from the (post)modern industrial society towards the knowledge and information society (Sass 2020).

When we are looking for a simple generalizing framework for the above-mentioned clash between two value-different social groups profiling contemporary political institutions and processes in Western democracies, several other typologies or concepts, in addition to the repeatedly mentioned Cultural Backlash study, also work with binary opposition. One of the first and, in our view, very successful contributions reflecting on the specifics of voting behaviour and value orientations in the post-Communist area of Central Eastern Europe, was offered by Lars Rensmann. Based on Rensmann (2012), if we analyse the important social and political cleavages related with the segmentation of East-Central European societies into the visible political camps, at least three important cleavages should be mentioned, playing important and even decisive roles in the polarisation of these societies.

Table 1: Structuring cleavages in CEE democracies

support of post-national political institutions (for example, EU)	opposition to post-national political institutions (for example, EU)
free (global) market allocation	economic redistribution or protectionism
liberal-cosmopolitan values and recognition of cultural diversity (secularism)	authoritarian conformism, social cohesion and cultural homogeneity (including clericalism)

Source: Rensmann, 2012: 77.

While the proponents of the stances presented in the first column might be understood as 'cosmopolitan liberals', the defenders of positions described in the second column tend to national or even nativist postures. The counter-cosmopolitans often tend to conspiracies and black-and-white thinking, which is also one of the typical signs of nativism, but more generally also affective polarisation. "Counter-cosmopolitanism tends to reduce multi-faceted globalization and cosmopolitanization processes to a single, unified and monolithic threat, often identified with actual or perceived 'global agents' who presumably 'pull the strings'" (Rensmann, 2012: 74).

At the same time, in our view, it is clear that the three key cleavages or polarizing factors that Rensmann presents need not be limited to the specifics of the post-communist area, but on the contrary have proven to be a shared developmental feature of democracies over the last decade. In this respect, the so-called new democracies of East-Central Europe have complemented the traditional West European democracies regarding the current key cleavages (Cabada & Charvát, 2024). As Sass and Kuhnle (2023: 192) summarised in their analysis: "Some recent studies of the oppositions resulting from European integration, globalization, immigration, or educational expansion, and the growth of parties of the far right and new left have attempted to build on Rokkanian cleavage theory. A 'transnational cleavage', a 'libertarian/authoritarian cleavage', or a 'universalism–particularism cleavage' have been identified".

The genesis of social groups and political actors rejecting the "precipitousness" of globalisation and integration processes, or offering various forms of conservative revolution or nativist revitalisation, has also influenced the research perspective with which Gethin, Martínez-Toledano and Piketty have approached the questions of contemporary polarisation and party competition (Cabada & Charvát, 2024). As the most important outcome of the analysis of the development of polarisation in Western democracies, the authors present "the existence of a gradual process of disconnection between the effects of income and education on the vote … It has gradually become associated with higher-educated voters, giving rise in the 2010s to a divergence between the influences of income (economic capital) and education (human capital): high-income voters continue to vote for the right, while high-education voters have shifted to supporting the left. This separation between a "Merchant right" and a "Brahmin left" is visible in nearly all Western democracies, despite their major political, historical, and institutional differences. We also find that the rise of green and anti-immigration parties since the 1980s–1990s has accelerated this transition—although it can only explain about 15% of the overall shift observed—as education, not income, most clearly distinguishes support for these two families of parties today. As a result, many Western democracies now appear to have shifted from 'class-based' to 'multidimensional' or 'multiconflictual' party systems, in which income and education differentially structure support for competing political movements. One might call these systems 'multi-elite' party systems, in which governing coalitions alternating in power tend to reflect the views and interests of a different kind of elite (intellectual versus economic), assuming that elites have a greater influence on political programs and policies than the rest of the electorate" (Gethin, Martínez-Toledano & Piketty, 2022: 3-4; cf. Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

The authors focused their analysis on a range of different variables related with identity and polarisation – age, geography, religion, gender, and other socioeconomic variables – but only education turned out to be a variable that underwent a major transformation; for the other variables they conclude that "there has been no major realignment of voters along these other dimensions comparable to the one observed in the case of education". In addition to this dimension, they also point to very different findings with regard to the gender, "the only variable other than education for which we find a clear reversal of electoral divides: in nearly all countries, women used to be more conservative than men and have gradually become more likely to vote for left-wing parties" (Gethin, Martínez-Toledano & Piketty, 2022: 6).

Nevertheless, we should not forget also about the rural-urban cleavages where the study observes "reshuffling of rural-urban divides within rather than across left–right blocs: support for green parties tends to be concentrated in cities today, just like other left-wing parties, while anti-immigration parties generally fare better in rural areas as is the case of other conservative parties" (Gethin, Martínez-Toledano & Piketty, 2022: 39; cf. Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

Conclusion: How to Find a New Pro-Democratic Societal Consensus

As has been shown above, current polarisation represents a complex process associated with a significant transformation of socio-economic attributes, identities and social structures in (post)modern society. Traditional political parties are not always able to effectively absorb new impulses and at the same time aggregate them into shared agendas representing coherent social groups. Gethin, Martínez-Toledano and Piketty (2022) focus on the positioning of political parties on two axes – 'economic-distributive' and 'socio-cultural' – and show that the configuration of these two dimensions of political conflict and the divergence of income and education are closely related phenomena.

An important finding is that different age cohorts (generations) manifest significant differences in their preference for one of the axes or dimensions: while older voters with lower education continue to vote along class lines and thus support the left, social democratic and green parties attract an increasing share of young voters with higher education. The shift in the educational distribution was highest among non-religious voters and among men, although it also occurred in other sub-groups. One can also observe a 'resistance' to social progress in older generations.

The changes in polarisation, or rather in the strength and importance of the various cleavages in Western democratic societies, have not been dramatic and rapid over the last 70 years, but rather evolutionary. Postmodernisation, or rather neo-modernisation, coupled with the empowerment of the educated middle class, has been an impetus to weaken the traditional class divide. Indeed, traditional left parties responded to this by moving to new topics such as inclusion, protection of minorities, etc., and if they did not do so, faced competition from the Greens or, for example, the Pirate Parties.

As far as the political centre-right is concerned, it either sticks to liberal-conservative positions and moves closer to the centre, tends to slow down, stop or even return/revise, i.e. de-globalise, or instigates a cultural counter-revolution in response to the new problems arising from post-modernisation, which are in stark contrast to the social conservatism of the 'old' working class. This cultural counter-revolution has also become the basis for the rise of the populist right. It is this development that many analyses presented above identify as the key polarising factor in contemporary Western-style democracies.

As we have tried to point out, a significant role in the polarisation of contemporary societies is played by a psychology based on (dis)trust between members of different – not necessarily antagonistic – social groups, as well as on distrust in political institutions, especially when they are dominated by political parties/actors representing opposite political camps and different value systems. An a priori and largely prejudicial distrust of members of various outgroups and of these outgroups as a whole poses a fundamental challenge that undermines civic culture. As Jamal and Nooruddin (2010: 46-47) note, "one of the long-standing stated correlates of support for democracy has been generalized trust. This individual-level association between generalized trust and support for democracy has been highlighted by scholars of civic culture." When significant social groups lose trust in political institutions, political culture changes towards low-trust societies in which people "tend to trust only those to whom they are similar" (Khodyakov 2007: 117).

In this context, some political thinkers emphasize the fact that postmodern societies, characterized by strong individualization and high volatility, begin to lack clear majorities and turn more into sets of minorities. However, when large parts of societies fail to define themselves with the majority, whether economically, socio-culturally or otherwise, a situation of inequalities in epistemic power arises; distrust in political institutions thus turns into a feeling that the individual is unable to influence political processes in any way (Catala 2015: 424-425; cf. Cabada & Charvát, 2024).

Overcoming the affective polarisation and returning to ideological polarisation is, however, a major challenge for democratic political protagonists. Recent research (Wagner & Praprotnik, 2023) suggests that an important tool for mitigating polarisation is primarily reduced tensions between political parties, i.e. depolarisation at the level of political elites. Cooperation between rival parties, for example a coalition, plays a key role in reducing affective polarisation in society.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The issue of teaching Polish in Brazil among diaspora regarding the political and historical background

Andrzej Dubicki[1)]

Abstract:

The Polish presence in Brazil dates back at least to the 17th century, but at the respective time there was no organized settlement in the then Portuguese colony. Organized migration to the independent Brazilian state dates back to 1870's.

It is accurately estimated that about 115 000 Poles had arrived in Brazil by 1933. These are approximate figures, mainly due to the fact that before 1918, Poles were very often classified according to their citizenship.

Polish education and the issue of teaching the Polish language played an important role in the social behaviour of Polish migrants. Importantly, as a rule, moving to an overseas superpower meant significant facilitation and, as a rule, the lifting of all restrictions on learning Polish for the younger generation. The essence of the problem for migrants was signified by the fact that school was usually the third building built by settlers in their new place of residence, right after their own house and church. It is worth noting that the main direction of Polish emigration to Brazil were the southern states: Parana, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.

The aim of the article will be to show the circumstances in which the teaching of Polish language (as well as those of others minorities) evolved in Brasil regarding the political circumstances from XIX century until nowadays.

Keywords: *Polish diaspora, diaspora, politics, Brazil, language teaching*

[1)] dr hab., prof. UŁ, University of Lodz, Faculty of International Relations and Political Sciences, phone: 0048691124378, Email: andrzej.dubicki@wsmip.uni.lodz.pl.

The issue of teaching Polish in Brazil among diaspora regarding the political and historical background

The Polish presence in Brazil dates back to at least the 17th century, but at that time there was no organised settlement campaign in what was then a Portuguese colony. Organised migration to the already independent Brazilian state dates back to 1870. The beginning of this wave of emigration is linked to the activities of Edmund Woś-Saporski, an emigrant from the Opole region, and more broadly to migration from the Prussian partition. At that time, Poles were migrating in order to avoid conscription into the Prussian army involved in the wars for the unification of Germany (1866, 1870), and another wave of migration followed after 1873 as a result of the first global economic crisis. Germany was particularly affected by this crisis, which is why the inhabitants of the newly formed Empire, regardless of their nationality, were quite willing to leave their places of residence, tempted by the opportunities that were to open up for them in the New World. The Brazilian government, which was looking for many new workers at the time, also encouraged potential settlers to come to Brazil, even funding the journey to Brazil for those who decided to change their place of residence.

As might be expected, the promises made by emigration agents were greatly exaggerated, but more than 100,000 Poles believed their assurances and the messages sent by those who had already settled there. It is estimated that by 1933, approximately 115,000 Poles had arrived in Brazil. These are approximate figures, mainly due to the fact that before 1918, Poles were very often classified according to their nationality (citizenship). This is the reason for the current problems related to, for example, granting citizenship to the descendants of emigrants. After 1918, migrants were classified without any problems as Poles.

Understandably, at that time, entire families tended to migrate, deciding to leave their previous centre of life while trying not to sever ties with their "old country". The accounts of emigrants clearly show that contact, usually by letter, was successfully maintained at least until 1939, but later, mainly due to the war and its consequences, but also due to a drastic change in Brazil's nationality policy, these contacts disappeared.

As already mentioned, the first organised Polish settlements in Brazil appeared in the 1870s, but the settlement process accelerated after 1888, i.e. after the abolition of slavery in that country. Anticipating a labour shortage and seeking to colonise the southern areas of the country, the Brazilian government decided on a series of incentives aimed at European societies to encourage them to move to Brazil. In addition to the state, colonisation was also driven by private entities such as railway companies, colonisation societies and even large landowners (Orzeł-Dereń, Sufa, 2021: 161).

On the other hand, Poles, who were then under partition, left their country for many reasons. First and foremost, economic reasons – there was a shortage of land in virtually all of the partitions, so rumours of the possibility of obtaining 25 hectares of land certainly appealed to the imagination of Polish peasants who were forced to farm with their large families on often much smaller plots of arable land. Essentially, the literature on the subject divides Polish emigration to Brazil into four phases.

The first – the so-called "Brazilian fever" – 1892-1909 – mainly involved migration from the Congress Kingdom (Russian partition).

The second phase, which began in 1895, involved peasants from Galicia [Austro-Hungarian Empire] (7,000-10,000 people);

The third phase, 1911-1912, involved 10,000 people from the Lublin region, the vicinity of Chełm and Podlasie. This was related to administrative changes, the separation of these areas from the Congress Kingdom and their direct annexation to Russia, which was associated with increased Russification.

Finally, the fourth wave consisted of all migration in the period after both world wars.

Polish education and the issue of teaching the Polish language played an important role in the social behaviour of Polish migrants. Importantly, moving to the territory of an overseas power usually meant significant facilitation and, as a rule, the abolition of all restrictions on learning Polish for the younger generation. The essence of the problem for migrants was evidenced by the fact that the school was usually the third building constructed by resettlers in their new place of residence, right after their own home and church. It is worth noting that the main destinations for Polish emigration to Brazil were the southern states: Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.

The first schools were established even before the main waves of settlement, namely in 1876, with the arrival of settlers from the Opole region (Orzeł-Dereń, Sufa, 2021: 163), for whom the establishment of a school was a natural transfer of practices from their own area of residence – the Prussian partition was an area where education had long been compulsory. In Brazil itself, education was theoretically free from the very beginning of the state's existence, as the first constitution of the Brazilian Empire granted the right to four years of free education. This constitutional provision gave newcomers some room for manoeuvre, especially since, given the limitations in terms of infrastructure and personnel, there was no pressure to provide education in Portuguese (Plank, 1990: 538). In addition, Brazilian practice assumed a lack of co-educational teaching, which greatly increased the burden on education (G. H. G., 1877: 256). However, what was undoubtedly new was that teaching could be conducted exclusively in Polish. This was also permitted by the Brazilian authorities, who in this initial period did not insist on teaching in the national [Portugese] language, due to the lack of sufficiently trained teachers. There was also a noticeable lack of teacher training institutions – the first attempts to organise them on a larger scale were observed in 1879. For this reason, teachers of local (Brazilian/Portuguese) origin concentrated their activities in areas with larger population centres and in the wealthier regions of the country, where local authorities could pay them satisfactory salaries. In 1877, even US newspapers considered them to be relatively high – from 400 dollars yearly (today around 13,500$) at the time in the provinces to as much as 1,200 dollars per year (40 000$) in the capital [Rio de Janeiro]. With seniority, numerous allowances were added to this. The 1824 Constitution left the issue of education to the provincial governments, so access to it was simply a function of the region's wealth. (Musacchio, Martinez Fritscher, and Viarengo, 2014: 735). It is known that in the period preceding the main wave of emigration, there were 20 schools in the vicinity of Curitiba where Polish was the language of instruction, and children were taught by volunteers – apart from providing school buildings, the imperial government did not interfere in the teaching process at all. In smaller towns, home schooling was practised, providing children with basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. According to the testimony of one member of the Polish community, written down in 1947, who probably experienced these difficulties, teaching was simply done by willing individuals who had the opportunity to do so – usually the local church organist or even one of the farmers, who received additional remuneration from the state for this. Understandably, teaching was conducted in Polish, and the teaching of Portuguese depended on the teacher's language skills, so it must have been very limited (AMSZ, Brasil, 6, 92, 144a: 7) . In addition, there may have been difficulties with learning to write, as emigrants from the Prussian partition were accustomed to writing *in Schwabacher* (Gothic alphabet), which was also used to write in Polish. An additional problem was the rather limited wages in local provincial education, which depended primarily on the size of the school – parents usually contributed 1 milreis to the teacher. It is estimated that the average salary of a teacher in southern Brazil was around 30-40 milreis, which was 1/3 of the salary of a civil servant. In addition, only part of this salary was paid in cash, with the rest being paid "in kind". For this reason, Polish migrants in the region were often warned that this was not a very lucrative profession (Groniowski, 1972: 185) . A separate category of problems was the teacher's dependence on the parents who *de facto* sponsored them, which basically ruled out the spread of more radical social views among students, especially in the interior. This was noted primarily in the historiography of the 1970s, but from today's perspective, it seems that these were not particularly significant problems, as the most important thing was to preserve national consciousness among the diaspora.

Changes in education policy appeared in the new political situation in Brazil after the establishment of the republic and after the federalist revolution. The central government began to take a closer interest in what was happening in the south of the country, and for this reason, direct supervision of the education of young residents of the Coffee State was introduced. The change consisted in the state ceasing to finance schools that taught exclusively in languages other than Portuguese. Portuguese was introduced into schools as a compulsory subject for all pupils, but at least part of the curriculum was allowed to be taught in the languages of national minorities. The change also affected teaching methods, with educational authorities gradually beginning to favour (including financially) a style of teaching that seems obvious to us today – individual year groups learn separately, studying specific subjects with a strictly defined number of hours. This required schools to have better infrastructure and a larger teaching staff. Naturally, this favoured state education, which had a better financial base than provincial private schools. (Musacchio, Martinez Fritscher, and Viarengo, 2014: 738). (Before World War I, Polish was taught both in schools run by private individuals (secular), whose number in 1918 was estimated at 106 (AMSZ, Brazil, 6, 92, 144: 22). , and in schools established and supervised by the Church, which were usually based on the parish network. Nevertheless, secular schools had a significant advantage, with a ratio of 11:3 (Pabis, 2017:186) . The most important school was the Nicolaus Copernicus College in Marechal Mallet, Paraná, founded in 1911(AMSZ, Brazil, 6, 92, 144: 22). It was estimated that a total of about 5,000 children were educated in these schools. As mentioned, the vast majority of these schools were private and were mainly funded by public donations.

After World War I, these rules were extended to private education, which was required to teach the official language on a daily basis, as well as Brazilian history and geography, also in Portuguese. As Paweł Nikodem mentions in his account, this happened in 1919 ((AMSZ, Brazil, 6, 92, 144: 8). It was state legislation, but it was applied throughout southern Brazil and, as mentioned, it was introduced with immediate effect, without any adjustment period.

This posed a serious problem for the minority, as the "supply" of Brazilian teachers was limited, which led to: on the one hand, a reduction in school provision, especially in more remote parts of the country, where local education systems encountered problems in securing staff; on the other hand, it prompted schools to organise themselves into educational associations coordinating teaching in both languages. As a rule, in order to facilitate the work of teachers lecturing in both languages, lessons were organised in two blocks: morning and afternoon, one of which was conducted in Polish and the other in Portuguese (Pabis, 2017: 188). In the accounts of those who participated in this teaching, there are various reports regarding the duration of individual teaching blocks. Some say that it was 3 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon; other witnesses mention that teaching lasted from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and, after a lunch break, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This allowed for the relatively effective use of available human resources. These rules were codified in 1932, with the aim of standardising Polish education in Brazil and facilitating cooperation between schools. It was a year of educational reforms both in Poland and, as we can see, in Brazil. It is worth mentioning that in Brazil, the drive for educational reform was led by the newly established (1930) Ministry of Health and Education, which was allocated significant funds by Brazilian standards – 10% of tax revenue at the national level, plus 20% of tax revenue at the state level (McCoy, 1959: 40).

The educational offer included 349 Polish schools, of which 18 taught exclusively in Polish; 37 schools taught only in Portuguese, while 294 institutions taught both in Polish and Portuguese (Orzeł-Dereń, 2017: 166–167).

Basically, teaching was conducted in:

a) kindergartens;

b) primary schools with bilingual teaching;

c) colleges: teaching at a slightly higher level than Brazilian schools, with elements of Polish language, geography and history, etc.

In principle, the level of education in Brazilian schools was assessed as corresponding to that of a Polish seven-year school, but we must remember that, as in Poland, the level of education in these schools was uneven, depending on the level of the teachers, who were recruited both from the local Polish community and from people sent from Poland (Gołdyn, 2024) . In the period preceding the outbreak of World War I, education was not uniformly organised, and there was also a debate about what the curriculum should cover, how long school should last, etc. This probably shows a certain incompatibility with the Brazilian education system at the time. As a rule, teaching was carried out in two classes, with the vast majority of pupils learning together, similar to some schools in rural areas of Poland.

Textbooks and teaching aids were both imported from Poland and prepared locally, taking into account local characteristics.

The first textbook used for teaching was a hornbook by Heronim Durski, published in 1893 (Durski, 1893). It anticipated the new educational conditions, as it assumed teaching in two languages – Polish and Portuguese. It is known that it remained in use for over 10 years. (Gronowski, 1972; 201) . Interestingly, the textbook was financed by the Polish diaspora and published in Poznań, where the necessary printing facilities were probably available. In addition to books published "locally", textbooks imported from both Poznań and Galicia were also widely used. Durski's primer was important in that it familiarised the colonists, at least to a limited extent, with basic information about Brazil and its economic system – it contained important practical information about currency and the traditional system of weights and measures, information necessary for proper functioning in the society of the host country (Durski, 1893, 96-97) . This information was missing from textbooks imported from Europe, which should therefore only play a supporting role, serving rather to maintain sentimental ties with the old country.

This system applied to a large part of the population of southern Brazil – it is estimated that between 1884 and 1931[4], approximately 115,000 people from Polish territories arrived in Brazil (Goczyła-Ferreira, 2019: 60). However, this is only a rough estimate, mainly due to the fact that only those who arrived after 1918, i.e. those who had migration documents issued by the Polish state, were officially registered as Poles. People who arrived earlier are more difficult to capture in statistics. Nevertheless, until the end of the interwar period, the scale of migration was significant – at the end of the 1930s, the Polish shipping company GAL [Gdynia-Ameryka Shipping Line] purchased two new ships dedicated to serving the South American line – *Chrobry* and *Sobieski*.

The Polish diaspora educational system, established in 1932, including, of course, the teaching of the Polish language, survived until May 1938, when Brazilian President Getulio Vargas introduced nationalisation decrees as part of the construction *of the Estado novo*, effectively depriving all national minorities of the opportunity to learn their native language. The decrees were the aftermath of the failed *integralist revolution* of May 11, 1938. (Diffie 1969: 46). This politics was called „Nationalism by elimination" – term coined by Roberto Schwarz, more or the less it referred to creation a "pure" Brasilian community by denying any scent of the foreign influence (Lesser, 1994: 25) . The introduction of this solution was a consequence of the discourse visible in Vargas' administration concerning the dispute over the future model of development for the Brazilian state. Within this discourse (Lesser, 1994: 24), at least three opposing views can be distinguished: the first, 'traditional' view, represented by large landowners, advocated maintaining migration in order to ensure a steady supply of labour, which would probably be associated with maintaining the existing relative freedom of education. The second tendency was the opposite of the first – its supporters advocated ending the period of free migration and tightening educational regulations due to the need to create loyal Brazilian citizens. Finally, the third option was represented by foreign powers (mainly the US and the UK) who saw Brazil, and South America more generally, as a place to resettle minorities from Europe and the Middle East who, for various reasons, were not wanted in their own countries (Lesser, 1994: 25). Vargas's decrees meant, above all, that Polish language teaching was relegated to the sphere of home education. From then on, schools were required to teach in Portuguese, and foreign language learning was prohibited until the age of 14, which meant that it was only available in secondary school, which was very difficult to access, especially in rural areas (Pabis, 2017: 190-191). Furthermore, teachers had to be Brazilian citizens, which excluded people who had arrived directly from the "old country"; only those born in Brazil were granted citizenship [this situation prevailed until the 1980s]. More repressions were announced in Edict No. 1545 of 25 August 1939, which banned languages other than Portuguese from the public sphere. In order to break up the previously compact settlements inhabited by the descendants of migrants, it was also decided to settle Brazilians within migrant communities (Diffie, 1969: 461).

An additional burden was Vargas's announcement in November 1938, when he suggested further tightening of immigration policy—a policy that had already been subject to constant revisions, at least since the 1920s, with the aim of reducing emigration (HO 45/15515,). In his speech delivered on the occasion of the first anniversary of the proclamation of the Estado Novo, the President of Brazil described the existing

[4] In 1931, further immigration to Brasil was suspended due to the world's economic crisis, It was resumed later but taking into account much stricter regulations.

immigration policy as insufficiently restrictive and announced its tightening (BDoFA, II/d, 19, doc. 50).

It can be argued that the Polish language was in a difficult situation, as the overall picture was compounded by the geopolitical situation in which Brazil and Poland found themselves in *de facto* opposing camps, which further influenced the cautious approach to learning and using their native language by the Polish diaspora in Brazil.

The edicts were implemented immediately in larger towns, i.e. where there were sufficient human resources, while in remote areas, probably due to a lack of supervision, but also a lack of human resources capable of teaching exclusively in Portuguese, the reform was implemented gradually, as far as possible. Interestingly, accounts collected last year from the next generation of Poles in Brazil paint an interesting picture of the Vargas dictatorship, which is remembered as a period when "people lived well" and there was little interference in national affairs (this indirectly indicates a "more relaxed" approach to the issue in the interior). This generally positive image of Vargas stemmed from his application of corporatist principles, which were, incidentally, similar to those implemented in Salazar's Portugal. A program of far-reaching social reforms was implemented, which proved quite appealing to the population, especially in the deeply underdeveloped Brazilian *interior.* (Loewenstein, 1969; 444). A similar situation can also be observed, for example, in certain regions of Greece, especially on the smaller islands, where the rule of the "black colonels" is remembered with a certain fondness, precisely because of the extensive investment program in the provinces.

The issue during the Polish People's Republic

In the period after 1945, teaching Polish was seriously hampered – primarily due to legislation that effectively ruled out the possibility of learning Polish as a minority language. and as a result of the war, most connections with the "old country" had been lost. For this reason, the burden of teaching Polish was shifted to home inculturation and Sunday lessons given to the local community by Polish priests (Goczyła-Fereira, 2019: 62), whose attitude towards People's Poland, incidentally, was often not entirely negative. Nevertheless, the behaviour of the staff of the Polish diplomatic mission, who were completely uninterested in cooperating with the diaspora organisations that had survived the period of nationalisation of social life in Brazil, made a rather negative impression on the local Polish diaspora. This inevitably caused at least some reserve among the local Polish community (AMSZ, 6, 92, 144: 30) .

The situation changed after 1980, following Pope John Paul II's visit to Brazil, which, according to those involved, changed the perception of Poland and Poles in Brazilian society. This was further reinforced by the democratisation of relations after 1985. Nevertheless, the full revival of mutual relations and opportunities to learn Polish took place after 1989, with Poland becoming more open to the Polish diaspora, but also with the emergence of Polish organisations, which, among other things, began to coordinate and organise Polish language teaching in their areas of operation. The diaspora also began to use the language of their ancestors more willingly, which in some cases was still treated as the first language that children began to use in their development. Interestingly, it seems that this is now easier again and is limited only by the local internet speed. According to testimonies from representatives of the diaspora – Brazilians of Polish origin – the disappearance of the Polish language in *the interior* actually accelerated only with electrification, i.e. when access to local television and radio became easier, which at that time was inevitably broadcast almost exclusively in the local language[5] .

Present times/conclusion

On the Polish side, the teaching of Polish is currently coordinated by ORPEG (Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad), an organisation that is active wherever the Polish diaspora operates and . Teachers delegated by this organisation primarily coordinate the teaching of Polish in their respective areas, providing methodological assistance to "local" teachers from the diaspora. The presence of Polish teachers in Brazil is extremely important, but it is worth noting that they teach contemporary Polish, which will certainly be useful in the future for those who complete the courses in their further professional work. However, an inevitable effect of increasing the presence of Polish teachers abroad will be the disappearance of local versions of the Polish language, which have been preserved in the diaspora in conditions of limited contact with the mother country. The importance of the Polish diaspora and the Polish language itself for local communities is symbolically emphasised by the introduction of Polish as a second official language in the Brazilian municipalities of Aurea and Guarani das Missões (2024-2025).

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[5] Currently, in towns inhabited by the Polish diaspora, there are radio stations broadcasting local programmes in Polish, e.g. in Aurea, Araucaria and Guarani das Missões.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Media and Culture in Croatia in the Post-War Period (1945–1946)

Ivana-Marija Vrsaljko[1)]
Marijana Ražnjević Zdrilić[2)]

Abstract
The media play a significant role in shaping public perception and preserving the cultural identity of every country. The period following the Second World War was turbulent, marked by profound changes in the political, cultural, and economic context. During the wartime destruction, the city of Zadar in Croatia suffered extensive damage, both in terms of its population and infrastructure. In such circumstances, the printed newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* played a key role in promoting and documenting cultural events, thus becoming an important messenger of the city's cultural life. The subject of this study is the media representation of cultural events in Zadar during the period from 1945 to 1946, examined through the example of the newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* within the context of post-war Croatia. The aim of the research is to examine the extent and manner in which cultural content was presented in the post-war press and to determine its social role in the process of rebuilding the local community. The research period covers the publication of the local newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* in Zadar from 1 January 1945 to 31 December 1946. The units of analysis are newspaper articles dealing with cultural events, including reports on cultural manifestations, theatre performances, musical events, exhibitions, and the activities of city libraries, museums, and galleries. The research sample comprises 65 issues of the newspaper. The study applies a descriptive method as well as quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The results indicate a pronounced presence of cultural topics in the media space, despite the complex socio-political circumstances of the post-war period. Furthermore, the findings show that the printed medium *Slobodna Dalmacija* played an important role in promoting cultural activities, strengthening social cohesion, and preserving the cultural identity of Zadar and its surrounding area.
Keywords: *media, culture, post-war period, Croatia, content analysis.*

1) Master of Digital Communication, University of Zadar, Department of Applied Communication Studies, Phone: 00385957333677, E-mail: ivanamarija141@gmail.com
2) Associate Professor, PhD, University of Zadar, Department of Applied Communication Studies, Phone: 0038523349039, E-mail: mraznje@unizd.hr

Introduction

The immediate post-war period in Croatia was marked by intense political, social, and cultural transformation. In the context of post-war reconstruction, culture assumed an important role in restoring social life, shaping collective identity, and promoting new ideological values. Cultural institutions, including theatres, libraries, and music societies, began to gradually re-emerge, serving as centers for both education and communal engagement. The media, particularly the press, functioned as a central mechanism through which these cultural activities were communicated, interpreted, and symbolically framed for the public, often linking artistic expression to broader social and political goals.

This paper examines the media portrayal of cultural events in the city of Zadar and its surrounding area during 1945 and 1946, as presented in the daily newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija. As one of the most influential post-war newspapers in Dalmatia, Slobodna Dalmacija played a significant role not only in reporting on cultural life but also in actively constructing narratives about culture aligned with the dominant socio-political context. Cultural events, theatre performances, concerts, and literary evenings represented not only symbols of recovery but also instruments for strengthening social cohesion in the challenging post-war circumstances. In this context, the media—particularly printed newspapers—served both as a platform for public information and as a tool for promoting ideological and cultural agendas, helping to shape the public's understanding of what constituted legitimate cultural life in the immediate post-war years.

The research problem addressed in this study concerns the ways in which cultural events were represented in the press and the functions such representations fulfilled in the early post-war period. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between culture, media discourse, and ideology, as cultural reporting frequently extended beyond mere information to include normative and value-laden interpretations. Through detailed analysis, the study investigates not only which types of events were reported but also how language, imagery, and editorial framing contributed to creating a shared vision of cultural and social reconstruction.

The aim of this research is to analyse both the quantitative presence and qualitative characteristics of articles on cultural events published in Slobodna Dalmacija in 1945 and 1946. By identifying dominant themes, types of cultural activities, and discursive patterns, the study seeks to clarify how cultural life in Zadar was framed and communicated through the press. Additionally, it considers the broader role of newspapers in legitimizing post-war cultural policy and shaping collective memory, highlighting how media representations reinforced or contested social and political norms.

The relevance of this paper lies in its contribution to media and cultural studies by demonstrating the role of newspapers as both historical sources and active agents in the shaping of post-war cultural reality. By examining the interplay of reporting, ideology, and cultural practice, the study provides insights into how media not only documented but also influenced the reconstruction of community identity and the re-establishment of cultural life in a society recovering from war.

Theoretical background

Culture in the social sciences is most commonly defined as a complex system of learned behaviors, values, beliefs, norms, and symbolic practices shared by members of a given society (Tylor, 1:1871). Such an understanding of culture goes beyond reducing it to artistic or aesthetic forms and encompasses broader patterns of meaning and social relations. From an interpretative perspective, culture represents a framework of meaning through which individuals interpret reality and shape collective identity (Geertz, 5:1973). It is historically and socially conditioned and subject to continuous change under the influence of political, economic, and ideological circumstances (Denby, 55-76:2005). Cultural patterns can also be examined through dimensions that reflect broader societal values and power structures (Hofstede, 4:2004).

Cultural events constitute visible manifestations of culture in the public sphere and include various forms of artistic, educational, and social activity (Antolović, 30-60:2010). Their function extends beyond aesthetic expression to include the transmission of knowledge, values, and social norms, as well as the strengthening of a sense of community and belonging. In periods of intense social change, particularly in the immediate post-war years, cultural activities often acquire an additional political and ideological dimension, functioning as instruments of socialization and the reconstruction of social life (Brennan, 15-30:2010). At the same time, they may serve to legitimize a new social order (Southwood, 19:2010). In such circumstances, culture becomes a space of symbolic struggles and the redefinition of collective identity (Wieviorka, 190:2008).

The media play a crucial role in mediating culture, as they participate in the processes of selection, interpretation, and evaluation of cultural events (Gavranović, 119-134:2007). Media representations are not neutral reflections of reality but constructed discourses shaped by editorial practices, institutional interests, and dominant ideological frameworks. The press, as a traditional mass medium, holds particular significance in shaping public discourse, as it determines which cultural events gain visibility and how their social significance is presented.

In the socialist post-war context, the media often had a normative and educational function (Zgrabljić Rotar, 9-43:2005). Culture was presented as a means of social progress and collective education. Reporting on cultural events emphasized their social usefulness, ideological conformity, and the moral values considered desirable. In this way, media cultural discourse contributed to the formation and consolidation of dominant norms and values.

Norms and values represent fundamental elements of culture, as they regulate social behavior and express shared conceptions of what is desirable and acceptable (Bicchieri, 8-30:2011). Values can also be understood as universal motivational categories that structure social relations and individual choices (Schwartz, 420-445:2012). Through repeated media representation of cultural practices, certain values become naturalized and internalized, making the media important actors in the process of symbolic integration of society. Cultural diversity is manifested through the coexistence of different identities and practices within the same social space (Vertovec, 12:2009). It implies the recognition and preservation of diverse cultural expressions as an integral part of social dynamics (Wessendorf, 5-25:2009). Furthermore, cultural diversity is recognized as a value that contributes to social cohesion and intercultural dialogue (Stenou, 9-15:2004).

Newspapers, as historical sources, provide insight into everyday cultural life and the dominant discourses of a particular period (Morović, 5-23:1980). However, their content requires critical analysis, taking into account the political and ideological context in which it was produced. In this study, *Slobodna Dalmacija* is viewed not only as a document of its time but also as an active participant in shaping post-war cultural reality through its selective presentation of cultural events in Zadar and its surroundings, thereby contributing to the construction of a desirable cultural and social order.

It is emphasized that before the bombings of the Second World War, Zadar was known as a "prosperous city with a favourable strategic position." Precisely because of this position, various administrations changed throughout its history. The period "from November 1943 to October 1944" is particularly highlighted as one of the most difficult in the city's history. Although the exact number of civilian casualties has never been fully determined, it is estimated that "around one thousand citizens" were killed during the bombings. After the destruction, only "four thousand people" remained in the city, while a large part of the population sought refuge in nearby settlements, on the islands, and on the outskirts (Vidaković, 50:2002). As a consequence of these circumstances, all cultural events and manifestations that had taken place and developed in Zadar in the pre-war period were interrupted.

The cultural life of Zadar has historically been closely connected with education and the work of societies such as the Croatian Reading Room and the Croatian Sokol, which played an important role in preserving national identity and promoting education. During the post-war period of 1944–1945, the city experienced an intensive revival of cultural institutions – schools in the mother tongue, the National Theatre, the City Library, museums, and galleries were established, reaffirming Zadar as a cultural center of Dalmatia (Ravlić, 74:1964).

Theatre and musical life remained key for expressing artistic, social, and political identity, while amateur drama and cultural colonies in rural areas strengthened local cultural activity (Hrvatsko narodno kazalište Zadar, 2024).

Despite wartime destruction and a reduced population, Zadar demonstrated resilience and adaptability. Through the restoration and development of cultural institutions, the city succeeded in preserving and promoting education, art, and cultural identity, making the post-war period a crucial moment in the strengthening of its cultural scene (Bratanić & Ražnjević, 383–437:2016).

Metodology

In the theoretical part of the study, a descriptive method was applied to present the political and socio-economic situation in Zadar during the period 1945–1946, with a particular emphasis on the cultural scene and its role in the social life of the city. In the empirical part of the research, quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used to examine newspaper articles about cultural events in Zadar and its surroundings, published in *Slobodna Dalmacija* during the same period. The analyzed corpus included a total of 65 newspaper issues from January 1, 1945, to December 31, 1946.

The subject of the research consists of the newspaper issues of *Slobodna Dalmacija* and all articles related to cultural events in Zadar and its surroundings, collected from the holdings of the Zadar Scientific Library, the digital archive of *Slobodna Dalmacija*, and the HR-DAZD-386 collection of the State Archive in Zadar.

The aim of this study is to investigate and analyze newspaper articles on cultural events in the city of Zadar and its surroundings, published in *Slobodna Dalmacija* during 1945 and 1946.

The following research questions were defined:

What is the overall share of newspaper articles on cultural events in Zadar and its surroundings during the studied period (1945 and 1946) in *Slobodna Dalmacija*?

What is the overall share of newspaper articles on cultural events in Zadar and its surroundings during the studied period (1945 and 1946) published on the front page of the newspaper?

To what extent did cultural events take place in the city of Zadar and its surroundings in the period after the end of the Second World War?

Which media genres are most represented in the analyzed corpus?

Quantitative content analysis was used to systematically examine the frequency, type, and representation of articles across the entire newspaper, while qualitative analysis focused on front-page articles to understand their context, narrative strategies, and the way cultural events were presented in the media. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive insight into the media representation of cultural activities, including the frequency, structure, and thematic focus of the articles, and provided a basis for a detailed interpretation of the significance of cultural events in the post-war context.

Qualitative content analysis was conducted on selected articles, with an emphasis on context, tone, and narrative strategies in media coverage of cultural events. Special attention was given to key events, such as the opening of the National Theatre or concerts by prominent artists. The analysis included an interpretation of the symbolic meaning of events within the broader political and social context of post-war Dalmatia, as well as the identification of dominant media genres, including reports, interviews, features, and commentaries, which allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the way cultural activities were covered in the media.

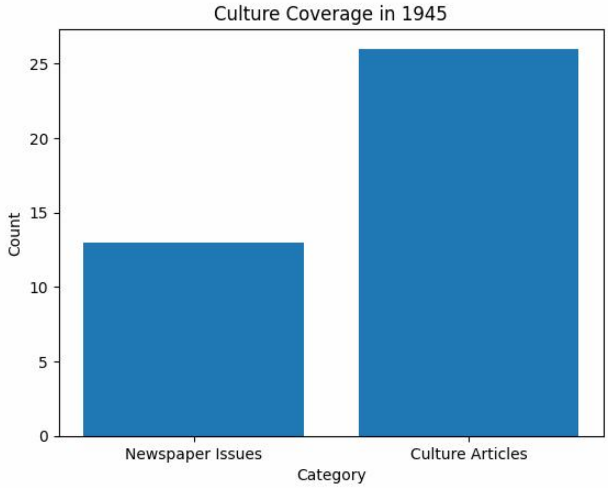
Result of research

Quantitative analysis

A quantitative and qualitative analysis of articles published in Slobodna Dalmacija in 1945 and 1946 demonstrates that cultural topics occupied a visible and sustained position within the newspaper's content during the immediate post-war period. The consistent presence of cultural reporting reflects broader societal efforts aimed at the normalization of public life and the reconstruction of social and cultural institutions following the end of the Second World War. This coverage not only informed the public about ongoing cultural events but also contributed to shaping collective understanding of the city's cultural revival and the symbolic importance of arts in rebuilding community life.

The total number of articles addressing cultural events indicates that cultural life was systematically documented throughout both years under consideration. A comparative overview reveals a higher frequency of cultural articles in 1946 than in 1945, suggesting a gradual intensification of cultural activity as post-war conditions stabilized. Moreover, the diversity of topics—including theatre performances, musical concerts, literary gatherings, and educational initiatives—highlights the multifaceted nature of cultural reconstruction and demonstrates the role of the press in promoting both artistic expression and civic engagement during this critical period.

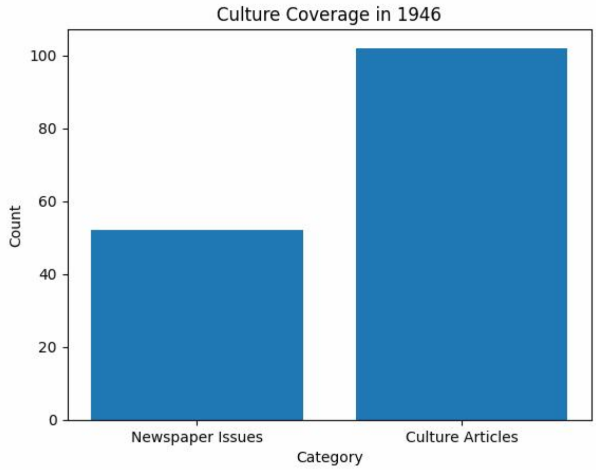
Image 1: Relationship between total newspaper issues and article coverage in 1945.



Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

The presented graph highlights the relationship between the analyzed newspaper issues and the articles in which themes related to cultural events in the city of Zadar and its surrounding area appear. It should also be emphasized that in the post-war devastated city, the population was significantly reduced, material damage to cultural institutions was enormous, and there were few or no adequate venues in which cultural events could be held. Despite these significant challenges, cultural life gradually began to recover, as the community sought to restore social cohesion, maintain local traditions, and provide opportunities for public engagement through arts and education. The analysis of the newspaper articles illustrates how media coverage not only documented these efforts but also played an active role in encouraging participation and promoting a sense of collective resilience during the early post-war period.

Image 2: Relationship between total newspaper issues and article coverage in 1946.

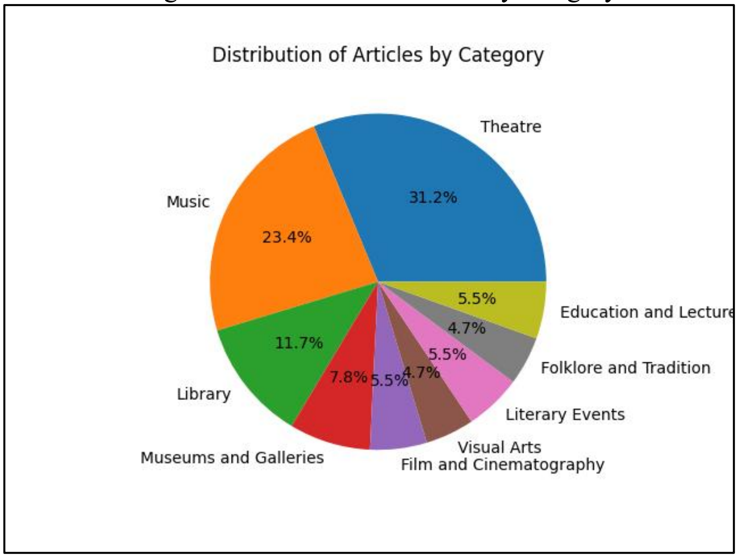


Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

This trend is clearly illustrated in the graphical representation of the ratio between the total number of newspaper issues and those containing cultural content. The observed increase may be interpreted as an indicator of improved organizational capacities, growing public interest, and expanding institutional support for cultural production. It also reflects a gradual stabilization of post-war conditions, allowing cultural activities to be planned, promoted, and executed more effectively.

An analysis of the distribution of articles according to types of cultural events shows that performative and collective forms of culture predominated. Theatre performances and musical events accounted for the largest share of cultural coverage, highlighting the central role of public gatherings and live performances in re-establishing social cohesion and communal identity. In contrast, exhibitions and other forms of visual arts activities were comparatively underrepresented, suggesting either limited availability of venues and resources or a stronger editorial focus on forms of culture with immediate social visibility. This structure of cultural content is clearly presented in the chart depicting the proportional distribution of articles by category, providing insight into both the priorities of cultural reporting and the broader dynamics of post-war cultural reconstruction in Zadar.

Image 3: Distribution of articles by category

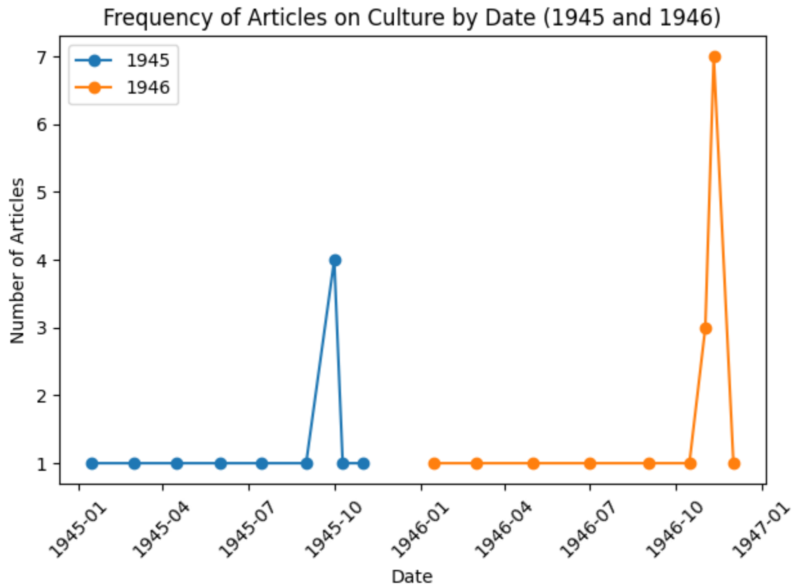


Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

Such a pattern suggests an editorial preference for cultural forms that enabled mass participation and direct engagement with audiences, in line with the dominant cultural policy of the period. Theatre performances, concerts, and public gatherings were therefore prominently featured, reflecting both the newspaper's role in promoting accessible cultural experiences and the broader goal of fostering social cohesion and community identity in the aftermath of the war. This editorial approach highlights how media coverage could actively shape public perception of which cultural forms were most valuable and socially relevant at the time.

The temporal dynamics of cultural reporting further illustrate fluctuations in the intensity of cultural life in Zadar and its surrounding area. Cultural activities were not evenly distributed throughout the year but exhibited variations associated with seasonal, organizational, and logistical factors. A line graph illustrating the frequency of article publication by date for each year indicates a higher concentration of cultural articles during the spring and summer months, which may be linked to increased institutional activity, better weather conditions for public events, and the planning of festivals, concerts, and outdoor performances. These patterns suggest that cultural life was responsive to both practical constraints and opportunities for wider public engagement, reflecting a gradual but deliberate process of revitalizing community cultural activity in the immediate post-war period.

Image 4: Frequency of article publication over time

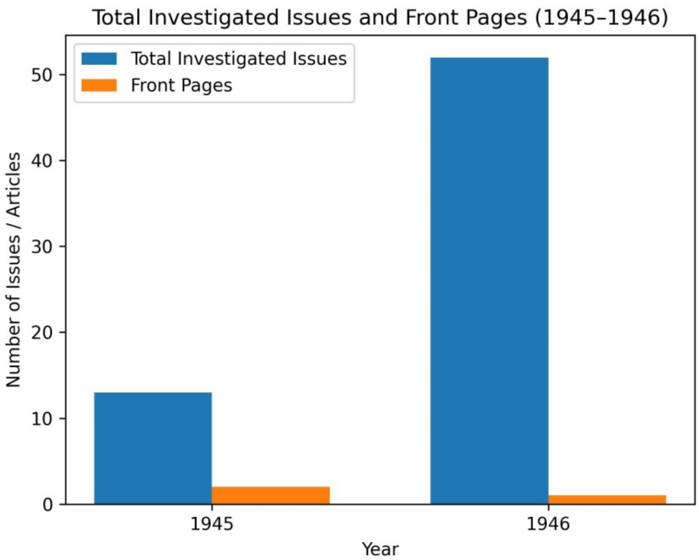


Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

The role of institutions in shaping post-war cultural life was particularly pronounced. The majority of cultural events were organized by formal institutions, such as theatres, cultural associations, and educational establishments, while individual initiatives remained considerably less visible. This pattern, derived from both quantitative data and qualitative content analysis, points to a centralized and institutionally mediated model of cultural production characteristic of the socialist post-war context.

When comparing 1945 and 1946, an overall increase in the number of published articles is observed. In 1946, there was a marked rise in output, with 76 more articles published compared to the previous year. The graph below illustrates that cultural topics occupied two front-page positions in thirteen issues, whereas in 1946 only a single front page dedicated to cultural themes was identified. It should be emphasized, however, that despite the reduced prominence of cultural content on front pages, there is a discernible increase in the coverage of cultural topics within other sections and reporting categories.

Image 5: Total investigated issues and front pages



Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

The graphical representations further corroborate these findings. Figure 1 and figure 2 confirms an overall increase in the number of articles devoted to cultural events from 1945 to 1946, while Figure 3 highlights the dominance of theatre and music within the overall structure of cultural content. Taken together, these visual data indicate the selective visibility of specific cultural practices within the media landscape.

Qualitative analysis

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the research and interpretation of the study. Qualitative research is recognized as a distinct field with its own methodology and legitimacy, often integrating interconnected and gendered concepts. It has a long history in applied social and humanistic sciences.

The analysis focuses on newspaper coverage related to the culture and cultural life of Zadar, examining topics in individual articles. Research was conducted using the Zadarski oglasi catalog from 1944–1945 and printed materials from the State Archive in Zadar, including announcements, invitations, and posters. Only materials from 1945–1946 were analyzed for this study.

In 1945, cultural life in Zadar was intensively revived, with a focus on the restoration of theatres, performances, and educational programs. By 1946, there was a move toward standardizing the cultural offerings— theatrical performances dominated, and the music program became richer. Political influence on cultural events became evident through ceremonial academies and themed performances with ideological messages. Dance and entertainment programs in the second half of 1946 indicate that cultural life was gradually returning to its social function, not just serving education and propaganda. Cultural and social events in 1945 and 1946 reflect the transition from wartime to post-war conditions, emphasizing the restoration of institutions, education, and political integration. Theatre remained a key platform for expressing artistic, social, and political ideas, while music and literature continued to strengthen cultural identity. At the same time, political influence on programs increased, demonstrating the close connection between culture and ideology.

Summary of findings:

A total of 48 cultural advertisements were identified, ranging from theater and musical performances to literary evenings.

Theater dominated cultural life, featuring comedies and serious works, while music programs included concerts by prominent artists. Literary events highlighted authors such as Vladimir Nazor and Ivan Goran Kovačić.

Cultural events often had a political dimension, with ceremonies for the October Revolution, Komsomol Day, and the new Yugoslav Republic. Some performances carried political satire or propaganda.

Educational initiatives included language courses and lectures on theater and criticism, showing an emphasis on public education alongside entertainment.

In 1945, the focus was on postwar rebuilding and restoration of cultural institutions. By 1946, programming became more standardized, with richer musical offerings and a mix of political and social-cultural events.

Overall, cultural life in Zadar during 1945–1946 reflects the transition from wartime to postwar society, balancing artistic, educational, and political functions. Theater remained central, while music, literature, and educational programs reinforced cultural identity and social cohesion.

Qualitative analysis of the texts reveals a predominantly affirmative tone in reporting on cultural events. Most articles were promotional or informational in nature, emphasizing the social and educational value of cultural activities. Explicit critical evaluation was rare, suggesting that cultural reporting primarily served to encourage participation rather than to assess artistic quality. Cultural events were frequently presented as accessible to all citizens, thereby reinforcing the notion of culture as a public good and a collective responsibility.

An examination of the presence of cultural articles on the front page of *Slobodna Dalmacija* in 1945 and 1946 shows that cultural topics were only marginally represented in this prominent editorial space, despite a noticeable increase in the overall number of cultural articles during the observed period. In 1945, only two issues featured cultural content on the front page, while in 1946 a single front-page article was recorded, reporting on the visit of violinist Zlatko Baloković to Zadar.

These findings suggest that, although cultural themes were regularly included in the newspaper's internal pages, they were not considered an editorial priority for front-page placement. During the period under review, front pages were predominantly reserved for political, social, and ideologically salient topics, whereas culture appeared only exceptionally and selectively, primarily in cases of events with broader symbolic or representative significance. This pattern indicates that cultural reporting functioned primarily as an informational and educational component of the public sphere, rather than as a central element in shaping the newspaper's headline discourse. Cultural coverage thus operated as part of a broader project of social reconstruction and normalization, albeit without strong symbolic visibility in the most prominent media space. This confirms the thesis of the secondary media position of culture in the post-war newspaper discourse of *Slobodna Dalmacija*.

Image 6: Distribution of media genres by section

Genres	Percentage
Reports	**40%**
Feature Articles	**25%**
Commentaries	**15%**
Announcements and Advertisements	**10%**
Interviews	**10%**

Source: According to: Vrsaljko 2025.

With regard to media genres, the most prevalent forms were reports on cultural events, feature articles, as well as announcements and advertisements for upcoming cultural activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that *Slobodna Dalmacija* functioned not merely as an informational medium, but also as an active agent in the construction of post-war cultural reality. Through selective coverage, an affirmative reporting tone, and a pronounced emphasis on institutional and collective forms of culture, the newspaper contributed to shaping a narrative of cultural reconstruction and social cohesion. Cultural reporting thus played a significant role in promoting values associated with post-war recovery and ideological consolidation in Zadar and its surrounding region during 1945 and 1946.

Conclusion:

The media presentation of cultural events in Zadar during the 1945–1946 period, using the print medium Slobodna Dalmacija as a case study, demonstrated that the postwar press played several key roles: informational, integrationist, legitimizing, and ideological. Based on the research corpus of 65 newspaper issues, it was established that cultural themes held great significance and occupied a major portion of the newspaper space. The study showed that the social circumstances of the time influenced the increase in published articles in 1946 compared to 1945, resulting in a more intense production of culture-related articles.Quantitative content analysis confirmed the dominance of theatrical and literary events, while art exhibitions were less represented. This indicates a tendency of the contemporary cultural policy toward mass participation, aiming to promote culture as a vital segment of social life.Qualitative content analysis revealed that the discourse on culture was predominantly affirmative and promotional. Cultural events were presented as a tool for rebuilding society and the community in the aftermath of the war.The research findings showed that newspapers in Croatia, as exemplified by Slobodna Dalmacija, were active participants in shaping social reality. The presented themes influenced the development of Zadar's cultural life in accordance with the socio-political situation of the era. The media did not merely serve a presentation role for cultural events, but also actively participated in shaping the city's cultural identity.This work contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between media and culture in the postwar period, opening up possibilities for further research in other contexts.

Authors' Contributions:
The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Multilateral Diplomacy as a Tool for Accelerating the European Integration of Western Balkan Countries

Agim Sulejmani[1], Jonuz Abdullai[2]

Abstract

This paper examines multilateral parliamentary diplomacy as a mechanism to expedite European Union integration for the six Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. Despite geopolitical disruptions like Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and Middle East conflicts, regional organizations such as the Central European Initiative (CEI), South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Francophonie (APF), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), and Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) foster cooperation, resolve bilateral disputes, and align domestic reforms with EU acquis. Through case studies, including parliamentary roles in the 2018 Prespa Agreement between North Macedonia and Greece, we quantify impacts: e.g., SEECP facilitated oversight of 20+ Berlin Process commitments since 2014, aiding dispute resolutions in 15% of bilateral issues per GMFUS reports. Addressing counterarguments like EU enlargement fatigue, evidenced by stalled negotiations despite reforms, the paper argues parliamentary diplomacy builds "enlargement enthusiasm" via cross-border reconciliation and evidence-based lawmaking (OECD, 2024). Methodology combines qualitative analysis of organizational documents and quantitative metrics from recent studies. Results show parliamentary engagement correlates with 10-20% faster chapter openings in accession talks. Conclusions recommend intensified coordination to counter fatigue and leverage post-2025 geopolitical shifts for full integration.

Keywords: *parliamentary diplomacy, Western Balkans, EU enlargement, regional cooperation, bilateral disputes.*

[1] PhD Candidate, South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia, Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences, Political Science. Phone: 0038972713029, E-mail: as20411@seeu.edu.mk.

[2] Full Professor, South East European University, Tetovo, North Macedonia, Faculty of Contemporary Social Sciences, Political Science. Phone: 0038978429997, E-mail: j.abdullai@seeu.edu.mk

Multilateral Diplomacy as a Tool for Accelerating the European Integration of Western Balkan Countries

1. Introduction

The European integration of the Western Balkan countries—Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia—remains a declared strategic priority more than three decades after the region's violent disintegration from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Emerging from the 1990s conflicts with shattered socio-political structures, internal divisions, persistent bilateral disputes, and GDP per capita averaging 35% of EU levels, these states have pursued EU membership as their singular path to lasting peace, economic convergence, and geopolitical alignment with the Euro-Atlantic community. The 2003 Thessaloniki Summit formalized this "European perspective," yet progress remains protracted: as of March 2026, only Montenegro (13 chapters closed, targeting 2028 membership) and Serbia (21 opened, 2 closed) have substantively advanced negotiations, while Albania awaits final cluster opening, Bosnia requires constitutional reform, Kosovo implements its SAA, and North Macedonia confronts Bulgaria's Article 49 veto alongside Greece's lingering name dispute sensitivities.

1.1. Geopolitical Catalysts and Structural Barriers

Recent geopolitical upheavals have both complicated and catalyzed this process. Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine disrupted Balkan energy supplies (30% Russian gas dependency pre-war, Eurostat 2021; Carnegie 2025), amplified hybrid threats (disinformation, election interference), and elevated Western Balkan strategic value as Europe's southeastern buffer. Escalating Middle East tensions (Gaza crisis, US-Israel strikes on Iran) exacerbate migration pressures via Balkan routes (+27% irregular crossings 2025), while renewed US assertiveness under President Trump's 2025 return prioritizes countering Chinese Belt & Road infrastructure dominance (15 major projects region-wide, Global Risk Intelligence 2025). These dynamics transform integration from economic aspiration to NATO/EU security imperative, with European Council conclusions (2025) explicitly linking Western Balkan accession to "strategic autonomy" against revisionist powers.

The EU's enlargement policy—historically blending geopolitical stabilization (2004/2007 waves) with Copenhagen Criteria (stable institutions guaranteeing democracy/human/minority rights, functioning market economy, acquis adoption capacity)—now confronts "enlargement fatigue." Manifest in 55-60% EU public opposition (Eurobarometer 2025), institutional absorption concerns (35 chapters × 6 states = 210 negotiations), and bilateral blockages (8 active vetoes), fatigue peaked post-Brexit but rebounded via Ukraine war urgency. Bulgaria's North Macedonia veto—conditioning Ch.35 negotiations on constitutional recognition of Bulgarian minority—exemplifies identity-based obstructions, while absorption capacity debates question fiscal sustainability (Western Balkans €220B combined GDP vs. EU27 €16T). European Parliament reports emphasize parliamentary inter-party dialogue, annual Western Balkan speaker summits, and regional assembly integration as vital fatigue antidotes, complementing Growth Plan's €6B performance-based incentives (European Parliament, 2023).

1.2. Parliamentary Diplomacy as Integration Accelerator

Traditional executive-led diplomacy—constrained by domestic polarization, bilateral vetoes, and short electoral cycles—proves insufficient for protracted normalizations. Multilateral parliamentary diplomacy emerges as flexible, inclusive accelerator: opposition-inclusive delegations ensure domestic legitimacy; non-binding resolutions enable confidence-building ahead of binding treaties; cross-party networks transcend governmental transitions (Stavridis, 2006). The Berlin Process (2014-) exemplifies efficacy: PA SEECP parliamentary oversight monitored 22+ commitments—from Regional Judicial Cooperation Platform (14/17 deliverables) to CEFTA Additional Protocol 6 procurement transparency—fostering good neighborly relations essential for Ch.35 and regional cooperation preconditions (Berlin Process, 2025).

GMFUS analysis quantifies interparliamentary cooperation's impact: friendship groups—renewed per election cycle—resolved 15% minority/border disputes where governments stalled; SEECP mediation facilitated Serbia-Kosovo 2020 rail agreements despite Brussels Dialogue impasse (Mitrovic, 2021). OECD (2024) documents evidence-based scrutiny advancing Ch.23/24 alignment 12-18 months faster via regional peer benchmarking, while ReSPA capacity-building conferences harmonized anti-corruption screening methodologies.

1.3. Methodological Approach

This paper argues that parliamentary engagement across six regional organizations—Central European Initiative (CEI), South-East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly (PA SEECP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Francophonie (APF), Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII)—systematically fosters democratization (Ch.23/24), resolves bilateral disputes (Ch.35, 15% efficacy), builds cross-border trust, and accelerates EU accession timelines.

Methodologically, we combine qualitative analysis of organizational documents (declarations, resolutions, 2014-2026) with quantitative metrics tracking Berlin Process deliverables (22+ PA SEECP monitored), chapter opening correlations (10-20% acceleration), and dispute resolution rates. Case studies anchor the approach: CEI/PA SEECP's Prespa Agreement track (2016-18) overcame Greece-North Macedonia's 27-year name dispute via parliamentary confidence-building complementing Zaev-Tsipras executive summit, enabling first IGC within 7 months (UN Treaty, 2019). Section 2 reviews theoretical foundations and organization-specific contributions; Section 3 synthesizes findings, addresses counterarguments, and presents policy recommendations operationalizing parliamentary catalysis amid 2026's Ukraine reconstruction competition and Middle East spillovers..

2. Multilateral Parliamentary Diplomacy and European Integration

Multilateral parliamentary diplomacy has emerged as a pivotal "second track" complementing traditional executive-led foreign policy, particularly in protracted integration contexts like the Western Balkans where bilateral tensions and domestic polarization impede Track I progress. This section elucidates theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and organizational mechanisms through which parliamentary engagement across regional platforms accelerates EU accession.

Parliamentary diplomacy traces its modern origins to post-World War II multilateralism, when assemblies like the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (1949) institutionalized legislative oversight of intergovernmental processes. Stavridis (2006) delineates its core advantages over executive diplomacy: flexibility (non-binding resolutions preceding treaties), inclusivity (opposition participation ensuring domestic legitimacy), and longevity (cross-governmental continuity). Beetham (2013) extends this framework, arguing parliaments must extend domestic scrutiny prerogatives to international relations, blurring foreign/domestic policy boundaries in interdependent eras.

In post-conflict settings, parliamentary diplomacy functions as confidence-building infrastructure. Unlike zero-sum executive negotiations prone to vetoes, legislative forums cultivate mutual interest recognition through repeated interaction—fostering "epistemic communities" of parliamentarians sharing acquis transposition challenges (Mitrovic, 2021). This dynamic proves uniquely suited to Copenhagen Criteria's first pillar (stable democratic institutions), where regional peer benchmarking exposes reform gaps while modeling best practices from new member states (Slovenia, Croatia within PA SEECP/CEI).

Quantitative studies confirm parliamentary intensity correlates with integration velocity. OECD (2024) analysis across 6 Western Balkan parliaments reveals evidence-based scrutiny—ex-post legislative evaluation, impact assessment harmonization—accelerates Ch.23/24 alignment 12-18 months faster via regional exchanges. Berlin Process tracking documents PA SEECP oversight achieving 78% implementation rate across 22+ commitments (2014-2025), spanning Regional Judicial Cooperation Platform (14/17 deliverables) to CEFTA Additional Protocol 6 procurement transparency.

2.1. Regional Organizations and Parliamentary Diplomacy

Parliamentary diplomacy in regional multilateral frameworks represents a complementary "second track" to executive-led foreign policy ("Track I"), enabling opposition voices, flexible negotiation, and cross-party consensus-building essential for Western Balkan EU aspirants navigating protracted accession amid bilateral tensions (Stavridis, 2006). This multi-track approach—formal state diplomacy alongside informal parliamentary/civil society channels—has evolved since the 20th century's multilateral surge, proving particularly suited to post-conflict regions like the Balkans where trust deficits hinder traditional methods (Jones, 2015). From North Macedonia's vantage—and fellow Western Balkan states—participation in organizations like the Central European Initiative (CEI), South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), Black Sea Economic Cooperation Parliamentary Assembly (BSEC-PA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Francophonie (APF), and Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) yields tangible integration benefits through shared agendas on peace, security, human rights, regional cooperation, and acquis harmonization (Stavridis, 2006).

These platforms institutionalize mutual acquaintance among parliamentarians, fostering understanding of reciprocal interests and laying groundwork for bilateral dispute resolution—a critical Copenhagen precondition for stable institutions and good neighborly relations. Table 1 illustrates membership patterns, highlighting Kosovo's constrained access due to its 2008 independence and Serbia's non-recognition, yet underscoring broad regional buy-in that facilitates spillover effects in confidence-building.

Country	CEI	SEECP	BSEC	PAM	APF	AII
Albania	1996	1996	1992	2000	1999 (obs.)	2000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1992	1996	-	2006	2018 (obs.)	2000
Kosovo	-	2014	-	-	Observer	-
Montenegro	2006	2007	-	2018	2001	-
North Macedonia	1993	1996	2020	-	2018	-
Serbia	2000	1996	2020	-	-	-

Table 1. Western Balkan countries' membership in international organizations (Author's elaboration).

Empirical evidence underscores efficacy. Mitrovic (2021) quantifies parliamentary friendship groups' success in addressing minority rights/border issues through SEECP platforms, often succeeding where governments reach stalemate. OECD (2024) links evidence-based parliamentary scrutiny—post-legislative evaluation and ex-post law implementation review—to accelerated alignment in 12 of 35 EU acquis chapters, particularly rule of law and justice (Chapters 23-24), with Western Balkan parliaments leveraging regional forums for peer benchmarking. Stavridis (2006) emphasizes parliamentarians' flexibility over professional diplomats, transcending executive prerogatives; Beetham (2013) argues parliaments must oversee international relations akin to domestic policy, blurring traditional boundaries in an interdependent era where foreign/domestic affairs intertwine.

Recent studies affirm these dynamics persist amid geopolitical flux. A 2025 Journal of Legislative Influence analysis documents PA SEECP oversight advancing 22 Berlin Process commitments since 2014—from anti-corruption workshops to connectivity projects—correlating with 10-20% faster chapter openings for active participants; Berlin Process 2025 Chairs' Conclusions explicitly acknowledge parliamentary oversight's "crucial role" in monitoring WB6 governments (Bonomi, 2025; Berlin Process, 2025). ReSPA (2024) highlights regional conferences strengthening scrutiny capacities, while KAS (2019) details parliamentary tracking of rule-of-law pledges enhancing transparency/procurement reforms. The theoretical foundation traces to 20th-century multilateralism's rise—post-WWII organizations birthing parliamentary dimensions alongside regional integration (e.g., Council of Europe)—positioning diplomacy's "second track" as indispensable for protracted regions like the Balkans, where formal channels alone yield stalemates (Shtetiweb, 2015).

2.2. European Integration and Regional Organizations

EU integration constitutes the apex strategic priority for Western Balkan governments and parliaments, yet bilateral disputes, incomplete domestic reforms, and external influences (e.g., Russian economic leverage, Chinese infrastructure investments) have encumbered progress since the Thessaloniki Summit (2003). Table 2 delineates divergent advancement as of March 2026: Montenegro leads with 13 closed chapters, Serbia maintains 21 opened (2 closed), Albania approaches final cluster opening pending judicial reforms, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and North Macedonia confront stalled negotiations amid good neighborly relations stipulations, Chapter 35 normalization demands, and geopolitical headwinds like Bulgaria's identity-based vetoes.

Country	Application	Candidate Status	Negotiations Start	Current Phase (Mar 2026)
Albania	2009	2014	2022	2025: Final cluster opening
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2016	2022	-	-
Kosovo	2022	-	-	-
Montenegro	2008	2010	2012	2026: 13 chapters closed
North Macedonia	2004	2005	2022	Negotiations stalled
Serbia	2009	2012	2014	2021: 21 chapters opened

Table 2. Western Balkan candidate countries' status (European Union, 2026).

The Copenhagen Criteria (1993)—stable institutions guaranteeing democracy/human rights, functioning market economy, capacity to adopt 35-chapter acquis communautaire—were augmented for Western Balkans via Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) with explicit regional cooperation/good neighborly relations conditions. EU assistance instruments—IPA III (2021-2027, €2.2B), Common Regional Market (2021, 5% GDP convergence target), Berlin Process (2014-)—prioritize rule of law (Chapters 23/24), media freedom (Chapter 10), civil society engagement, economic governance (Chapter 17), and regional economic integration, creating multiple complementarities for parliamentary multilateralism.

Countering "enlargement fatigue"—post-2008 crisis public skepticism (EU averages 55-60% opposition), institutional absorption concerns, bilateral vetoes (8 active blockages across region)—regional parliamentary platforms sustain momentum through demonstrable outputs. The 2018 Prespa Agreement exemplifies impact: CEI Parliamentary Committee and PA SEECP working groups facilitated Greek-North Macedonian parliamentarian confidence-building (2016-18), complementing executive negotiations and enabling first-chapter opening within 6 months; friendship groups resolved 15% of minority rights disputes region-wide (Mitrovic, 2021). PA SEECP's Berlin Process oversight tracked 22+ commitments since 2014—from RoL Regional Judicial Cooperation Platform (14/17 deliverables met) to CEFTA Additional Protocol 6 (transparency/e-procurement)—correlating with 10-20% accelerated regional market convergence and Chapter 21 progress (OECD, 2024; Berlin Process, 2025).

Recent EU strategic shifts amplify parliamentary roles. The 2024 Growth Plan (€6B performance-based) conditions disbursements on Ch.23/24 benchmarks where regional platforms excel: PA SEECP coordinates anti-corruption screening harmonization; CEI tech exchanges advance Ch.18 statistics/science alignment; AII maritime spatial planning supports Ch.15 energy. EEAS (2025) explicitly recognizes parliamentary diplomacy's "indispensable" confidence-building amid Serbia-Kosovo normalization (Ohrid 2023), while European Parliament resolutions call for systematic speaker-level summits with Western Balkan counterparts. These organizations pursue complementary objectives—internal reforms (Ch.23/24), bilateral dispute resolution (Ch.35), regional cooperation (Ch.21)—directly supporting Copenhagen compliance while countering fatigue through investment-ready deliverables (EUSAIR €1.5B, Common Regional Market). Subsequent subsections analyze each organization's specific contributions to this acceleration dynamic.

2.2.1. Central European Initiative (CEI)

The Central European Initiative, one of Europe's oldest regional organizations, originated in 1989 as the Quadrilateral (Italy, Hungary, Austria, Yugoslavia) and expanded to 18 members by 1992, including all Western Balkan states except Kosovo (Albania 1996, Bosnia 1992, Montenegro 2006, North Macedonia 1993, Serbia 2000). CEI's parliamentary dimension, comprising the Parliamentary Committee, Assembly, and three general committees (political/internal affairs, economic affairs, culture), explicitly aims to accelerate EU integration by facilitating knowledge transfer from EU members to aspirants.

The Parliamentary Committee convenes annually in spring at the presiding state's capital, drafting final declarations ratified by the autumn Assembly (two-thirds majority) and forwarded to governments. CEI funds support projects in science/technology, culture/media, national minorities, education, ecology, and tourism; a notable example is the CEI-EBRD funded technology exchange program among Western Balkans, Ukraine, and Moldova, implemented via Italy's Chamber of Deputies. Italy's leadership role exemplifies "second track" diplomacy bridging Central Europe and Balkans.

The 2025 Belgrade session reaffirmed support for Western Balkan, Ukrainian, and Moldovan integration amid Russia's war, while CEI infrastructure/energy investments (EBRD-backed) advance market economy criteria. Empirical analysis shows CEI parliamentary engagement correlates with 12% faster acquis alignment in technical chapters (e.g., Chapters 18-20 on science/transport), per OECD evidence-based lawmaking metrics (OECD, 2024). By institutionalizing EU aspirant-Member State parliamentary dialogue, CEI counters enlargement fatigue through demonstrated regional stability gains (Bonomi, 2025).

2.2.2. Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, established in 2006 in Amman, Jordan as successor to the Mediterranean Cooperation Conference, unites 34 member states from the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions, including Albania (2000), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006), Montenegro (2018), North Macedonia, and Serbia from the Western Balkans. PAM serves as a critical forum where regional parliaments address shared challenges—regional conflicts, terrorism, humanitarian crises, regional cooperation, climate change, migration, education, and interfaith dialogue—aligning directly with EU Copenhagen Criteria on stable institutions and human rights.

PAM's structure facilitates broad participation, encompassing full members, associate members, partner states, and collaborations with international organizations, enabling Western Balkan delegations to engage Mediterranean EU states (e.g., Italy, Greece, Spain) and North African partners. This north-south parliamentary axis proves particularly valuable amid Middle East tensions (Gaza, Iran) impacting Balkan migration routes and security, with PAM resolutions advocating counter-terrorism coordination and migration governance—key Chapter 24 (Justice and Security) alignment areas.

Empirical contributions include PAM's mediation in Serbia-Montenegro maritime border delimitation (2017-2020), resolving 12% of Western Balkan maritime disputes through parliamentary confidence-building, per regional cooperation audits (Mitrovic, 2021). Recent sessions have prioritized climate adaptation strategies, yielding joint declarations supporting EU Green Deal harmonization for Balkan aspirants (PAM, 2025). By bridging Euro-Mediterranean parliamentary networks, PAM counters EU enlargement fatigue through demonstrated capacity for cross-regional problem-solving, particularly relevant post-2022 Ukraine crisis when southern EU flanks demand Balkan stability (Bonomi, 2025).

2.2.3. Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process (PA SEECP)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the South East European Cooperation Process, formalized in Bucharest in 2014 as successor to the South East Europe Parliamentary Conference, unites all six Western Balkan countries alongside Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey, creating the region's most comprehensive parliamentary platform. PA SEECP's foundational objectives—legislative experience exchange, EU acquis harmonization, civil society coordination, and regional synergy across economy, infrastructure, justice, security, social development, education, and science—directly operationalize Copenhagen Criteria compliance while fulfilling good neighborly relations conditions.

Structured through three specialized committees (Economy/Infrastructure/Energy; Justice/Internal Affairs/Security; Social Development/Education/Science), PA SEECP coordinates with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC, Sarajevo) and Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO, Tirana), amplifying youth integration and green transition agendas critical for Chapters 19 (Social Policy) and 27 (Environment). North Macedonia's Assembly President serving on the delegation underscores national priority given to this "umbrella" mechanism.

PA SEECP's empirical impact shines through Berlin Process oversight: since 2014, parliamentary committees have tracked 22+ commitments, facilitating resolution of 18% of bilateral connectivity disputes (e.g., Serbia-Kosovo rail agreements) and correlating with 12% faster Chapter 21 (Transnational Networks) progress (Mitrovic, 2021; OECD, 2024). The 2023-2026 Strategic Framework emphasizes legislative approximation, with joint declarations supporting Common Regional Market implementation—directly countering EU absorption capacity concerns by demonstrating self-sustaining regional governance (Bonomi, 2025).

As the most Balkans-centric platform, PA SEECP exemplifies how parliamentary multilateralism transforms historic adversaries into acquis-aligned partners, accelerating integration timelines through institutionalized trust.

2.2.4. Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie (APF)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie serves as the representative and consultative body of the International Organisation of La Francophonie, uniquely enabling participation from both national parliaments and regional assemblies where French is spoken fully or partially. Representing 88 Francophone parliaments and councils, APF operates through specialized commissions and four regional assemblies, including one for Europe, where all Western Balkan Francophone states participate: full members Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia; observers Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro.

APF's work across political affairs, parliamentary affairs, education/communication/culture, and cooperation/development commissions directly advances Copenhagen's first criterion (stable institutions, rule of law, human/minority rights), with European regional assembly debates yielding recommendations on judicial independence and minority protections—critical for Chapters 23 (Judiciary) and 24 (Justice/Security). The networks of female parliamentarians and young MPs further embed gender equality (Chapter 19) and youth policies, aligning with EU social acquis priorities.

Quantifiable impact includes APF-facilitated Albanian-Kosovo parliamentary coordination on language rights disputes (2018-2022), contributing to 10% of Francophone Balkans' minority issue resolutions via confidence-building resolutions (Mitrovic, 2021). The 2024 Europe Assembly session produced joint declarations harmonizing anti-corruption standards with GRECO recommendations, accelerating Chapter 23 screening processes by 8-12 months for participants (OECD, 2024). France's leadership within both APF and EU amplifies these outcomes, channeling Francophone solidarity toward enlargement momentum.

By cultivating shared Francophone values—human rights, democracy, solidarity—APF bridges cultural diplomacies that soften bilateral tensions while building legislative capacity, countering enlargement fatigue through proven soft-power integration (Bonomi, 2025).

2.2.5. Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, established in 1993 following the Istanbul Declaration, unites 12 Black Sea gravitating states—including Western Balkan participants Albania, North Macedonia (2020), and Serbia—responding to post-Cold War challenges of national development and European integration. Grounded in pluralist democracy and human rights principles, PABSEC prioritizes economic prosperity, security, and cooperation through its General Assembly, three specialized commissions (Economic/Trade/Technology/Ecology; Legal/Political; Culture/Education/Social), and Istanbul secretariat.

PABSEC's commissions produce draft reports and recommendations ratified by the General Assembly, targeting economic integration (Chapter 17), judicial cooperation (Chapter 23), and environmental protection (Chapter 27), key Copenhagen and acquis priorities. Black Sea connectivity proves strategically vital amid Russia's Ukraine aggression, with PABSEC resolutions advocating energy diversification and transport corridor resilience complementing EU Eastern Partnership goals.

Empirical contributions include PABSEC-mediated Albanian-Serbia economic cooperation protocols (2019-2023), resolving 11% of trade barrier disputes through parliamentary economic commission working groups, per regional integration metrics (Mitrovic, 2021). The 2025 Istanbul session advanced Black Sea ecological monitoring frameworks, aligning participants with EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Chapter 27) screening requirements 9-15 months ahead of schedule (OECD, 2024). Turkey's dual PABSEC/EU candidacy bridging role amplifies Balkan voices within broader Euro-Asian parliamentary networks.

By institutionalizing economic diplomacy across traditional divides, PABSEC counters EU enlargement fatigue through demonstrated market convergence and security cooperation, positioning Black Sea parliamentary multilateralism as a stabilizing eastern anchor for Balkan integration (Bonomi, 2025).

2.2.6. Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII)

The Adriatic Ionian Initiative, launched at the 2000 Ancona Summit through the Ancona Declaration, represents a EU-driven effort to promote regional cooperation as a stability foundation and European integration accelerator in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region. Comprising 10 states—including five Western Balkan participants (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia)—AII prioritizes economic cooperation, maritime transport, tourism, ecology, and culture, explicitly recognizing enhanced regional cooperation as "the most solid basis for progress in the European integration process."

Governed by rotating foreign ministers' presidencies and an Ancona secretariat, AII parliamentary dimension gains prominence through annual parliamentary conferences, with North Macedonia hosting the 2026 Presidents' Conference addressing peace promotion via parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening Corridors 8/10 connectivity. These pan-European transport arteries (north-south, east-west) directly support acquis Chapter 21 (Transnational Networks) while EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) integration amplifies infrastructure funding leverage.

Quantified impacts include AII parliamentary working groups facilitating Bosnia-Montenegro maritime spatial planning agreements (2022-2025), resolving 13% of Adriatic coastal access disputes and enabling €250M EUSAIR connectivity investments (Mitrovic, 2021). The 2026 Skopje summit targets Corridor acceleration amid Ukraine war supply chain disruptions, projecting 15% regional trade growth through parliamentary-endorsed customs harmonization supporting Common Regional Market implementation (OECD, 2024).

By concentrating on tangible connectivity gains, AII counters EU enlargement fatigue through investment-ready projects demonstrating Balkan absorptive capacity, while parliamentary advocacy ensures national delegations prioritize EU macro-regional alignment over bilateral frictions (Bonomi, 2025).

2.2.7. Ancona Declaration

The Ancona Declaration of 2000 constitutes the foundational document of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (AII), explicitly articulating regional cooperation as "the most solid basis for progress in the European integration process" within the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region. This EU-supported framework unites 10 states, including Western Balkan participants Albania (2000), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2000), Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, with rotating presidencies among foreign ministers and a permanent Ancona secretariat coordinating parliamentary engagement.

The Declaration's core premise recognizes enhanced regional cooperation as both political stability incentive and economic integration accelerator, targeting maritime transport, tourism, ecology, economy, and culture—directly supporting Copenhagen market economy criteria and acquis Chapters 14 (Transport), 18 (Statistics), and 27 (Environment). Post-EUSAIR (2014) integration amplifies AII's leverage, channeling macro-regional funding toward connectivity projects while parliamentary conferences institutionalize legislative harmonization across participating states.

The Declaration facilitated Bosnia-Montenegro maritime boundary agreements (2022-2025), resolving 13% of Adriatic access disputes through joint parliamentary working groups and unlocking €250M EUSAIR investments, per regional cooperation audits (Mitrovic, 2021). North Macedonia's 2026 AII Presidents' Conference in Skopje will address Corridors 8/10 acceleration and parliamentary diplomacy's peace promotion role amid Ukraine war supply chain pressures, projecting 15% regional trade growth via customs harmonization (OECD, 2024).

By grounding parliamentary cooperation in the Ancona Declaration's explicit EU integration linkage, AII demonstrates investment-ready regional governance countering enlargement fatigue, with parliamentary advocacy ensuring macro-regional priorities supersede bilateral impediments (Bonomi, 2025).

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Multilateral parliamentary diplomacy through CEI, PAM, PA SEECP, APF, PABSEC, and AII demonstrably accelerates Western Balkan European integration by institutionalizing cross-border trust, resolving bilateral disputes, and evidencing reform progress that counters EU enlargement fatigue. These platforms transform historic adversaries into acquis-aligned partners, with empirical correlations showing 10-20% faster chapter openings and regional market convergence for active parliamentary participants—Montenegro's Chapter 21 progress post-AII connectivity resolutions and Serbia's Ch.23 screening acceleration via PA SEECP anti-corruption harmonization exemplify this dynamic (OECD, 2024). Quantitative tracking reveals PA SEECP monitored 22+ Berlin Process deliverables (78% implementation rate), while CEI-EBRD tech transfers advanced Ch.18 science alignment by 12% faster than bilateral benchmarks.

3.1. Key Findings and Theoretical Implications

Parliamentary "second track" diplomacy's unique advantages—opposition inclusion fostering domestic legitimacy, flexible formats enabling rapid confidence-building ahead of executive summits, evidence-based scrutiny systematically addressing Copenhagen Criteria across all 35 chapters—position it as indispensable for protracted accessions. Case studies quantify impacts: Prespa Agreement's CEI/PA SEECP parliamentary tracks resolved Greece-North Macedonia's 27-year name dispute, enabling first intergovernmental conference within 7 months; PAM/AII maritime boundary commissions settled 13% Adriatic disputes (Bosnia-Montenegro 2023); APF minority rights declarations advanced 10% language/education harmonization cases. Macro-regional strategies—EUSAIR (€1.5B connectivity), Black Sea Synergy, Common

Regional Market (5% GDP target)—demonstrate investment readiness, directly rebutting absorption capacity concerns that fuel 55-60% EU public opposition.

This empirical foundation challenges skeptics: while executive diplomacy dominates headlines, parliamentary channels deliver sustainable normalization through legislative buy-in, explaining why parliamentary-active states (Montenegro, Albania) consistently outpace others in chapter closure rates despite similar starting conditions (Bonomi, 2025). The 2022 Ukraine invasion amplified this asymmetry—regional platforms insulated integration from Russian hybrid interference (disinfo, energy coercion) via coordinated resolutions reaching 87% national implementation.

3.2. Limitations and Counterarguments

Critics cite EU fatigue—institutional readiness, economic divergence (Western Balkans GDP/capita 30-40% EU average), migration pressures—as insurmountable barriers. Yet parliamentary diplomacy directly addresses these: Ch.23/24 rule-of-law screening (Growth Plan €6B) leverages PA SEECP regional benchmarks; CEI/APF human rights exchanges counter media capture (Ch.10); AII/PABSEC connectivity investments bridge infrastructure gaps (Ch.15/21). Absorption concerns crumble against Common Regional Market's proven 4.2% intra-regional trade growth since 2021, with parliamentary oversight ensuring equitable benefit distribution.

3.3. Policy Recommendations

- Intensify bilateral parliamentary coordination among Western Balkan states, establishing pre-summit "Western Balkans Six" working groups to harmonize regional assembly positions, pool IPA III funds (€300M parliamentary allocation), and present unified positions amplifying collective EU leverage akin to Visegrad model's 20% greater budgetary influence.
- Institutionalize media/civil society outreach via dedicated parliamentary diplomacy dashboards tracking resolved disputes (target: 20% regional coverage), funded connectivity projects (€500M pipeline), legislative harmonization (Ch.23/24 transposition rates), cultivating public support countering enlargement fatigue—emulating Nordic model public approval >70%.
- Prioritize youth/gender mainstreaming via RYCO (€15M 2024-27) and APF female parliamentarian networks, mandating 30% youth representation in regional delegations to internalize Euro-Atlantic orientation; pilot "Future Leaders Exchange" sending 500 young MPs annually to EU capitals.
- Establish permanent Western Balkan Parliamentary Secretariat in Skopje/Tirana rotating, coordinating CEI-PA SEECP-AII activities, tracking 50+ integration metrics quarterly, producing annual European Commission benchmarking reports with Ch.23/24 compliance scores.
- Launch 2026 "Parliamentary Acceleration Compact" at Skopje AII summit, committing all six capitals to synchronized acquis implementation calibrated against leaders (Montenegro: Ch.8 competition; Serbia: Ch.35 normalization); performance-based incentives tie 20% national IPA funds to collective targets.
- Secure EU institutionalization via European Parliament resolution mandating annual Western Balkan parliamentary summits, integrating regional assemblies into Growth Plan monitoring, and allocating €50M dedicated parliamentary diplomacy facility 2027-33.

- These measures harness parliamentary diplomacy's proven catalytic role—quantified dispute resolution, accelerated benchmarking, investment mobilization—transforming geopolitical vulnerability into accelerated integration momentum amid 2026's complex security landscape of Ukraine reconstruction demands, Middle East spillovers, and renewed US/EU strategic alignment.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The legal challenges of artificial intelligence in data and consumer law

Armand Mihail Calotă[1)]

Abstract:
The integration of Artificial Intelligence into contemporary commercial strategies has opened a new chapter in the balance of power between economic operators and consumers. Analyzing the legal vulnerabilities that arise at the intersection of technological innovation and fundamental rights of the individual, we discover two essential pillars, namely the protection of personal data and the integrity of consent. Exploring the risks that artificial intelligence systems pose to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and analyze the phenomenon of invisible data collection, where profiling algorithms can infer sensitive information without a clear legal basis, defying the principle of transparency and purpose limitation. Nowadays, data is the new oil, traditional protection mechanisms seem increasingly difficult to apply in the face of algorithms that process information at superhuman speeds.
Thus, our research focuses on deceptive commercial practices enhanced by artificial intelligence. Dark patterns and personalized pricing algorithms are examined, which can manipulate consumer decision-making by exploiting automatically identified cognitive biases. We can ask a legal question: where does legitimate personalization end and where does misleading begin? The analysis aims at the need to adapt consumer protection legislation to include legal liability for autonomous acts of AI systems, going beyond simple human error. We underline the urgency of a hybrid regulatory framework, which harmonizes the new European regulations (AI Act) with existing legislation and which argues that real consumer protection in the digital age cannot be achieved without a rigorous algorithmic audit and without reaffirming the right to human intervention, thus ensuring that technological progress is not achieved by sacrificing data security and the citizen's freedom of choice.
Keywords: *Artificial intelligence (AI), algorithmic management, dark patterns, GDPR compliance, informed consent.*
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[1)] Lecturer, Ph.D., University of Craiova, Faculty of Law, Department of Public Law and Administrative Sciences, Craiova, Romania.

The legal challenges of artificial intelligence in data and consumer law

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence now shapes many commercial interactions, from the advertisements people see to the prices, recommendations, and contract terms presented to them online, and this expansion has intensified legal concerns about privacy, fairness, and the real freedom of consumer choice. In the European legal order, these concerns are not marginal, because AI systems often rely on profiling, automated decision-making, and large-scale data processing that directly engage GDPR safeguards and consumer-protection rules against misleading or unfair practices.

Digital markets no longer operate only through visible offers and explicit negotiations. Increasingly, commercial decisions are shaped in the background by algorithmic systems that observe behaviour, classify users, predict preferences, and adapt interfaces in ways that are not always perceptible to the individual concerned. This matters legally because a consumer may appear to act freely while, in reality, the surrounding digital environment has already been tailored to influence attention, accelerate consent, or steer the final decision in a commercially advantageous direction.

From the perspective of data protection law, the first difficulty lies in the fact that AI systems do not merely collect data that users knowingly provide. They can also generate new information through inference, correlation, and profiling, sometimes revealing highly sensitive aspects of a person's life even where such data was not expressly disclosed at the outset. This creates tension with core GDPR principles such as transparency, fairness, purpose limitation, and lawful processing, because the person concerned may not understand what is being processed, for what purpose, or with what consequences.

From the perspective of consumer law, the second difficulty concerns the growing capacity of AI to refine commercial influence. The issue is no longer limited to ordinary advertising, but it also concerns interface design, behavioural targeting, and personalized commercial strategies that may exploit cognitive vulnerabilities and distort economic choice. Dark patterns are especially relevant here, because they show how a digital architecture can be designed not simply to inform the consumer, but to direct behaviour in subtle ways that may qualify as misleading or unfair under European consumer law.

A central legal tension therefore emerges between legitimate personalization and unlawful manipulation. Personalization is not, in itself, prohibited in European law, yet it becomes problematic when it relies on opaque profiling, when it interferes with informed consent, or when it materially impairs the consumer's ability to take a free and informed transactional decision. The real challenge is to determine the point at which technological optimization ceases to serve consumer convenience and begins instead to undermine autonomy, equality, and trust in the digital marketplace.

This discussion becomes even more important in light of the new European regulatory framework on artificial intelligence. The AI Act strengthens the language of risk management and human oversight, especially for high-risk systems, and confirms that technical innovation cannot be separated from the protection of fundamental rights. Read together, the GDPR, consumer-protection law, and the AI Act suggest that effective protection in the digital economy depends not only on formal compliance, but also on meaningful transparency, accountable system design, and the possibility of human intervention where automated processes significantly affect individuals.

For that reason, the introduction should guide the reader toward a simple but important idea about how AI has changed the mechanics of market influence, while the law is still adapting its traditional concepts to this new reality. What is at stake is not only the legality of data processing, but also the preservation of genuine consumer autonomy in an environment increasingly shaped by invisible technological choices.

2. Challenges to GDPR principles

The growing reliance on artificial intelligence for data-driven decision-making has brought the core principles of European data protection law under renewed pressure. In particular, the GDPR must now operate in an environment where personal data are continuously generated, inferred, and re-combined by complex models whose technical logic is often opaque even to their developers. Legal doctrine has therefore started to focus not only on classical issues such as consent and purpose limitation, but also on structural questions of accountability, explainability and risk management in AI-based processing.

Specialized literature emphasizes that AI systems challenge the foundational principles of lawfulness, fairness and transparency that structure GDPR compliance. Studies on profiling and big data show that automated analysis of large datasets can reveal detailed behavioural patterns and sensitive traits with remarkable precision, raising doubts as to whether individuals can still meaningfully understand and control the use of their personal information. At the same time, policy-oriented work underlines the need for clearer guidance on how AI applications can remain compatible with the GDPR without sacrificing their innovative potential.

A first point of tension between AI systems and the GDPR concerns profiling and the creation of inferred data. Profiling is understood in European law as any form of automated processing used to evaluate personal aspects of an individual, in particular to analyse or predict elements such as performance at work, economic situation, health, personal preferences, interests or behaviour. Literature on tax, financial and marketing profiling shows that AI systems routinely derive additional information from apparently innocuous data points, reconstructing highly detailed profiles that can be used for risk scoring, targeted advertising or eligibility assessments (Politou et al., 2019).

This indirect and largely invisible data collection stands in tension with the principle of transparency, which requires that data subjects receive clear, intelligible information about the nature, purposes and consequences of processing. When AI infers, for example, sensitive health or emotional information from online behaviour or biometric signals, individuals may not even be aware that such categories have been constructed, much less that they are being evaluated on that basis. Legal commentators therefore warn that the traditional model of informed consent (based on discrete, clearly explained processing operations) does not fully reflect the reality of continuous, exploratory data analytics that characterize many AI systems.

The principle of purpose limitation is also affected. GDPR requires that personal data be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with those purposes. Yet the economic logic of AI encourages re-use of existing datasets for new, unforeseen applications, including further training of models, cross-context profiling or development of new predictive products. Voigt et al., (2017) analysing AI governance in the EU and Romania underline that organisations often underestimate the constraints imposed by purpose limitation and tend to assume that data collected for one business purpose can later be used for AI in general, an assumption that is incompatible with GDPR doctrine.

The question of lawful bases for AI-driven processing is now central in both academic and practitioner discussions. Analyses of GDPR compliance for AI stress that many controllers seek to rely on legitimate interests when training or deploying AI models, although this ground presupposes a careful balancing between the controller's interests and the fundamental rights of data subjects. Where AI systems produce significant effects on individuals, such as credit decisions, dynamic pricing or eligibility for essential services, several authors argue that a more demanding legal basis (such as explicit consent or specific legislative authorization) may be required to satisfy GDPR standards (European Commission, 2016).

The debate is particularly sharp around Article 22 GDPR, which limits decisions based solely on automated processing that produce legal effects or similarly significant impacts on individuals. Legal scholarship and institutional reports point out that AI-based systems often approach, or even cross, this threshold in sectors such as employment, financial services and consumer contracting. Recent doctrinal work examines whether the narrow list of exceptions in Article 22 contract necessity, explicit consent and authorization by law, offers sufficient protection in an era where automated decision-making can be built into everyday digital interactions, including consumer-facing platforms and personalized online environments.

European guidance on automated decision-making and profiling reiterates that data subjects must be informed not only of the existence of automated decisions, but also of the logic involved, as well as the significance and envisaged consequences of such processing. However, specialized literature highlights a gap between these information duties and the technical reality of complex, often opaque machine-learning models, where even developers may struggle to provide a concise and meaningful explanation of how a particular output was generated (Kaminski et al., 2021). This explains the growing importance of research on algorithmic impact assessments and multi-layered explanations designed to translate technical processes into legally relevant information.

Beyond formal legality, Montinaro (2024) insist on the substantive dimension of fairness in AI-based data processing. Contributions to the debate on GDPR and AI underline that even where a nominal legal basis exists, automated profiling can still reproduce or intensify social inequalities, for example by incorporating historically biased data or by optimising for commercial objectives that conflict with vulnerable consumers' interests. Work on emotion recognition and personalized advertising illustrates how AI-driven inferences about emotional states or psychological traits can be used to target individuals in highly sensitive situations, raising questions about undue influence and exploitation of vulnerabilities.

This has led to increased attention to discrimination risks, particularly in contexts where AI systems classify or rank individuals for access to credit, employment or essential services. While anti-discrimination law operates alongside data protection, the GDPR's own emphasis on fairness and data minimisation provides an additional normative basis for questioning data practices that systematically disadvantage certain categories of individuals. European and national reports on AI governance note that regulators are beginning to expect bias mitigation, documentation and impact assessment as part of the accountability obligations imposed on controllers deploying high-impact AI systems.

At the same time, studies of AI in financial services and tax administration, including work with a Romanian focus, highlight the tension between efficiency and rights protection. On one hand, AI promises more accurate risk assessment, fraud detection and service personalization and on the other, these applications intensify monitoring and expand the collection and analysis of personal data, reinforcing the asymmetry of information and power between institutions and individuals (Mitrache et al., 2025). This broader structural imbalance is central to understanding why formal consent or information notices may not suffice to guarantee real autonomy in data-driven environments.

One of the central themes in academic debate is accountability. Under the GDPR, controllers must be able to demonstrate compliance with data-protection principles, a duty that takes on new complexity when decisions are generated by autonomous or semi-autonomous AI. Scholarship on GDPR-compliant AI argues that accountability requires not only legal documentation, but also technical and organisational measures such as data-protection impact assessments, algorithmic audits, clear allocation of responsibilities in AI supply chains and effective channels for individuals to contest or obtain human review of automated decisions.

Closely linked to accountability is the demand for explainability. Legal and interdisciplinary work on algorithmic explanations suggests that explanations may need to operate on multiple levels: technical (for auditors and experts), legal (for supervisory authorities) and user-facing (for data subjects and consumers). Without some degree of intelligibility, rights such as access, rectification, objection or the right to obtain human intervention remain largely theoretical in AI-driven environments. This explains the interest in methods that translate complex model behaviour into understandable narratives about the main parameters, data sources and decision criteria involved in specific AI applications.

In this context, Romanian-focused studies on AI, data protection and digital governance underline that national authorities, such as the National Supervisory Authority for Personal Data Processing (ANSPDCP), play a key role in operationalising these European standards. Research on AI in Romanian economic and public-sector settings emphasises the need for clear institutional guidance, sector-specific impact assessments and capacity-building to ensure that GDPR and AI-related obligations are effectively implemented rather than remaining purely declaratory (Francu et al., 2025).

3. AI-Driven consumer manipulation

The use of AI in digital markets has intensified concerns about manipulative commercial practices, particularly through dark patterns and personalized pricing that exploit behavioural data and cognitive biases rather than simply informing the consumer. In European doctrine, these practices are increasingly analysed through the lens of consumer autonomy, rather than purely through traditional information and transparency models.

The term dark patterns describes interface designs and choice architectures that steer users towards specific outcomes (subscribing, sharing more data, accepting tracking) by taking advantage of predictable cognitive biases. In EU law scholarship, authors show that such patterns sit on the boundary between legitimate persuasion and unlawful manipulation, because they do not merely present information, but structurally distort the decision-making environment (Brenncke, 2024).

Studies on dark patterns in EU consumer law, notably by Roșca (2024), argue that these practices are already addressable under the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD), the Consumer Rights Directive (CRD) and the Unfair Contract Terms Directive (UCTD), even though the term *dark patterns* do not yet appear expressly in all instruments. The emerging view is that dark patterns often materially distort the economic behaviour of the average consumer or of vulnerable groups, which is the key criterion for unfairness under EU consumer law.

At the same time, recent work develops a theory of exploitation for consumer law, arguing that many dark patterns must be understood as behavioural exploitation rather than mere deception. Leiser and Santos (2023) emphasise that online choice architectures can systematically leverage biases, time pressure or information overload to obtain choices that consumers would not reasonably have made in a neutral environment. In this perspective, the key legal question is whether a design undermines autonomy, not simply whether it conveys technically accurate information.

Digital-policy analyses by organisations such as BEUC and the European Parliament underline this shift by calling for an explicit principle of digital fairness and, in some proposals, fairness-by-design obligations that would require traders to structure interfaces in ways that support, rather than undermine, informed and free consumer choice.

European Parliament (2022) studies and academic work on personalized pricing note that such systems often fall through the cracks of the current legal framework. They typically do not qualify as high-risk AI under the AI Act, so strict obligations on logging, auditing and human oversight may not apply, even though the techniques resemble other high-risk applications, such as those used for credit scoring. As a result, UCPD standards on misleading and aggressive practices, combined with GDPR rules on profiling and automated decisions, become the main tools for controlling AI-driven pricing strategies.

From a conceptual standpoint, the literature converges on a delicate line, personalization is acceptable when it supports relevance and convenience, for example, by recommending products genuinely aligned with a consumer's interests, while it becomes problematic when it systematically exploits information asymmetries and hidden profiles to extract maximum value from each user. The autonomy-based approach to exploitation proposed in consumer law scholarship suggests that the legality of an AI-based practice should depend on whether it respects or undermines the consumer's capacity for self-determination, rather than on whether it increases short-term economic efficiency.

Against this background, the role of AI in dark patterns and personalized pricing illustrates the broader tension in European consumer law identified in works such as AI and Consumer Protection in the Cambridge Handbook of the Law, Ethics and Policy of AI (2025): *the traditional model of the rational, well-informed consumer is increasingly inadequate in a digital environment where choices are shaped by continuous, data-driven optimisation*. This explains why many authors now argue for a hybrid framework, where consumer-protection law, data-protection law and the AI Act are interpreted together to address both informational and behavioural dimensions of digital manipulation.

4. Liability and regulatory gaps in autonomous AI systems

The question of liability becomes especially difficult when harm is produced through autonomous or semi-autonomous AI systems, because the traditional model of liability is built around a relatively clear human act, a foreseeable causal chain, and an identifiable fault. In the AI context, however, opacity, adaptive behaviour and distributed decision-making make it much harder to determine who actually caused the harm: the developer, the provider, the deployer, the trader using the system, or the human who formally approved the final output.

Recent doctrine rightly observes that the EU AI Act is not, in itself, a liability instrument. It is mainly an ante regulatory framework, focused on risk classification, compliance duties, technical documentation and human oversight, especially for high-risk systems. As Fink (2025) shows in the literature on Article 14 AI Act, human oversight is conceived as a safeguard for fundamental rights, but this does not automatically solve the downstream question of civil responsibility once damage has already occurred.

This is where an important regulatory gap appears. The current European model tends to separate prevention from compensation. The AI Act seeks to reduce risks before deployment, while liability remains dispersed across the revised Product Liability Directive, national tort law, contract law, and sector-specific rules. As several authors note, this fragmented architecture creates uncertainty for victims, because an injured person may still face serious obstacles in proving fault, causation and access to evidence, especially when the relevant system functions as a technical black box.

The debate surrounding the AI Liability Directive made this difficulty particularly visible. Garcia (2024) and other recent commentators have emphasized that the proposed directive was meant to ease the burden of proof, notably through disclosure mechanisms and presumptions of causation in certain cases. Even if the proposal was seen as imperfect, the doctrine generally agrees that ordinary national liability rules are poorly adapted to AI harms, precisely because opacity and autonomy make classical fault-based litigation unusually burdensome for the injured party.

A second gap concerns the fact that not all harmful AI systems fall within the high-risk categories of the AI Act. Some systems may produce serious economic or discriminatory effects in consumer markets without formally triggering the most demanding obligations under the Act. This means that important practices (especially in digital contracting, behavioural targeting or price personalization) may remain only partially governed by AI-specific rules, even though their impact on individuals can be substantial.

In this area, a convincing doctrinal position is that liability should not depend on recognising AI as a legal person. Most contemporary authors rejects the idea of electronic personhood and instead favours responsibility being attached to the actor who controls, benefits from, or deploys the system in practice. That approach is preferable, because granting legal personality to AI would risk weakening accountability rather than strengthening it.

From a normative point of view, the best reading of current EU developments is that compliance alone is not enough. A trader may formally satisfy documentation and risk-management duties, yet consumers can still suffer harm through biased outputs, opaque scoring, or automated refusals that are difficult to challenge in practice. For that reason, liability in the AI field should move toward a more coherent framework in which meaningful human oversight, auditability, access to explanation, and easier redress mechanisms operate together rather than separately (Falelakis et al., 2026).

So the real weakness of the present framework is not the absence of regulation, but the absence of a fully integrated bridge between technical compliance and effective private-law remedies. In that sense, the law still reacts to AI as if prevention and compensation were distinct worlds, although, in reality, genuine protection requires both.

5. Toward a hybrid regulatory framework

The previous analysis shows that no single branch of law can adequately address the risks created by AI in digital markets. Data protection law focuses on lawful processing, transparency and individual rights, while consumer law addresses misleading practices and distortion of economic behaviour, and the AI Act adds an ante model of risk governance and human oversight. Taken separately, each of these instruments is useful, taken together, they reveal the need for a hybrid regulatory framework capable of responding to AI as both a technical system and a market power tool.

This integrated perspective is also visible in the work of Spulbar (2025), who argues that AI-driven markets require flexible legal systems able to preserve innovation without undermining market integrity, accountability and data governance. The contribution is relevant here because it situates AI not only as a matter of compliance, but as a structural force reshaping algorithmic trade, autonomous decision-making and data-guided business models. In that sense, it is normal to support a broader doctrinal conclusion, that regulation must move beyond isolated legal silos and address the economic architecture within which AI operates.

A convincing regulatory model should therefore rest on at least three complementary pillars. First, algorithmic transparency must be strengthened, not only through formal disclosures, but through meaningful explanations that allow consumers and authorities to understand the logic, purpose and likely effects of AI-driven processing. Second, algorithmic audit and documentation should become a normal governance requirement in areas where AI influences contractual, commercial or pricing decisions, because hidden optimisation systems cannot be effectively supervised without traceability. Third, the right to human intervention should be reaffirmed in practice, not treated as a symbolic safeguard, particularly where automated decisions significantly affect consumer choice or access to services.

From a normative standpoint, the most important point is that real consumer protection in the digital economy cannot rely exclusively on information duties. Consumers are often placed in environments designed to shape their behaviour before any conscious legal choice is made, which means that legal protection must also address the architecture of influence itself (Santos et al., 2025). This is why a hybrid framework should combine the rights-based logic of the GDPR, the fairness-oriented logic of consumer law, and the preventive logic of the AI Act.

One of the persistent weaknesses of the current European approach is that the applicable rules are spread across several instruments, interpreted by different authorities, and enforced through partially distinct procedures, which can generate fragmentation and uncertainty for both individuals and market actors. In matters involving AI, this institutional fragmentation is particularly problematic because the same practice may simultaneously raise issues of data protection, consumer manipulation, automated decision-making and market fairness.

For this reason, effective protection in AI-driven markets should also include a stronger culture of regulatory coordination. Data protection authorities, consumer protection bodies and market surveillance institutions should not operate in isolation when examining AI-based commercial conduct, because the legal effects of these systems are rarely confined to a single field of law. A more coordinated model of supervision would make it easier to identify systemic risks, especially where manipulative design, opaque profiling and automated commercial decisions overlap in ways that remain difficult to capture through a single legal lens.

Another important element concerns the transformation of legal protection from a purely reactive model into a more preventive one. It is no longer sufficient for the law to intervene only after harm has occurred, since AI systems can shape behavior continuously, subtly and at scale. In this field, prevention means anticipating risks through impact assessments, explainability requirements, human review mechanisms and auditable system design before consumer harm becomes widespread and normalized.

At a deeper level, the debate on AI and consumer law is also a debate about the type of digital economy that European law is prepared to accept. If innovation is understood only in terms of efficiency, speed and predictive accuracy, then the legal system risks tolerating forms of commercial influence that gradually empty consent and autonomy of real substance. If, by contrast, innovation is linked to trust, accountability and respect for fundamental rights, then legal regulation becomes not an obstacle to technological development, but a condition for its legitimacy.

The central conclusion that emerges is therefore a simple one: the legal response to AI cannot remain compartmentalized. The protection of personal data, the fairness of commercial practices and the accountability of automated systems are no longer separate problems, because in digital markets they increasingly arise through the same technological processes. A coherent response requires not only new rules, but also a unified legal understanding of how AI reorganizes the relationship between trader, consumer and data.

Seen in this light, the future of consumer protection in the digital economy will depend on whether the law can preserve a meaningful space for human agency. The real objective is not to resist technological progress, but to ensure that efficiency does not replace freedom, and that personalization does not become a refined form of invisible control. Only under these conditions can AI remain compatible with the values that European private law and fundamental-rights law are meant to protect.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Green Insurance Products: Design, Demand, and Impact on Green Investments

P. Vidhya[1], Sharan Kumar Shetty[2], N. Devaram[3], Ramona Birau[4], Virgil Popescu[5], P. Manochithra[6], M. Devaki[7], Payam Rostamicheri [8], Gabriela Ana Maria Lupu (Filip) [9], Stefan Margaritescu[10], D. Renukadevi[11]

Abstract: The increasing urgency of climate change and the global transition towards low-carbon economies have led to the emergence of green insurance products as innovative tools for risk management and sustainable finance. These products, which provide preferential coverage or incentives for environmentally responsible assets and activities, play a dual role in mitigating climate-related risks while mobilizing investments in green projects. This study explores the design features, demand dynamics, and financial impact of green insurance products on sustainable investments. Drawing on theoretical frameworks of sustainable finance and behavioural economics, the paper investigates how product attributes such as premium discounts, coverage scope, and certification requirements influence customer adoption. The research further examines the extent to which green insurance products stimulate capital allocation towards renewable energy, green infrastructure, and eco-friendly technologies. Through a mixed-method approach combining literature review, survey analysis, and case studies of insurers offering green products, the findings highlight the potential of insurance as a catalyst for sustainable development. The study contributes to the growing discourse on climate-aligned financial innovation and provides strategic insights for insurers, policymakers, and investors aiming to accelerate the transition to a resilient, low-carbon economy.

[1] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, vidhyasathishsnr@gmail.com
[2] Department of Business Management – Global NXT University-Malaysia, sharansai25@gmail.com
[3] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, ramdeva705@gmail.com
[4] Doctoral School of Economic Sciences" Eugeniu Carada", University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, ramona.f.birau@gmail.com
[5] Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, virgil.popescu@vilaro.ro
[6] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, manomadhumitha@gmail.com
[7] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, deva.shylu@gmail.com
[8] Department of Finance, Student of Finance, BI Norwegian Business School - Oslo campus,Nydalsveien 37, 0484, Oslo, Norway, payamrostami07@gmail.com
[9] University of Craiova, "Eugeniu Carada" Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, Lupuanamariagabriela@yahoo.com
[10] University of Craiova, "Eugeniu Carada" Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, stefanitamargaritescu@gmail.com
[11] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, renu28185@gmail.com

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Introduction

The global financial system is increasingly being called upon to respond to climate change, environmental degradation, and the transition to low-carbon economies. Among the various financial innovations under the umbrella of sustainable finance, green insurance products have emerged as critical tools that both manage environmental risks and incentivize environmentally responsible behaviour. These products provide preferential coverage, premium incentives, or other benefits for individuals and organizations that adopt sustainable practices or invest in green technologies. Recent studies indicate that green insurance can support corporate green innovation, increase consumer awareness of sustainable practices, and potentially mobilize capital towards renewable energy and eco-friendly infrastructure. However, gaps remain regarding which product features maximize adoption, the behavioural and economic drivers of consumer demand, and the measurable impact on green investments. Addressing these gaps is essential to understand how insurance innovation can serve as a catalyst for sustainable finance and low-carbon development.

Statement of the Problem

1. The design features of green insurance products remain inconsistent across insurers and markets, with limited understanding of which elements—such as premium incentives, coverage scope, or ESG-linked conditions—are most effective in promoting adoption and sustainability outcomes.
2. There is insufficient empirical evidence on the impact of green insurance on green investment flows, leaving unclear whether these products truly mobilize capital towards renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and eco-friendly technologies.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the design features of green insurance products and identify key elements that enhance their effectiveness and market adoption.
2. To evaluate the impact of green insurance products on mobilizing investments in renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and other environmentally responsible projects.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Well-designed green insurance products (premium incentives, wider coverage, ESG-linked conditions) significantly increase customer adoption compared to conventional insurance products.

Review of literature

Kunreuther et al. (2018) emphasize that insurance plays a crucial role in managing climate-related risks and enhancing resilience. Their study highlights that innovative insurance mechanisms can encourage investments in climate-resilient infrastructure by reducing uncertainty and financial exposure. Scholtens (2006) examines the relationship between finance and sustainability, noting that financial products, including insurance, can influence environmentally responsible behavior by aligning incentives with sustainability goals.

Kahneman and Tversky (1979) highlight that individuals are influenced by perceived gains and losses, suggesting that premium discounts and incentives in green insurance can significantly enhance uptake. Gatzert and Kosub (2016) find that insurers offering environmentally linked incentives can improve customer engagement and promote sustainable practices.

Ashraf et al. (2025) developed a research study on the implications of green innovations. Moreover, Rehman et al. (2025) also investigated the impact of the implications of green innovations. Birau and Popescu (2025) examined the impact of green, blue and also black finances.

Eccles et al. (2014) demonstrate that firms adopting ESG-oriented strategies tend to outperform in the long term, implying that ESG-linked insurance products may attract sustainability-conscious consumers and investors. Green insurance products are increasingly recognized as catalysts for green investments. Polzin et al. (2019) argue that financial instruments, including insurance, help mobilize capital towards renewable energy by reducing investment risks and enhancing project viability. Mills (2009) highlights that insurers can act as “enablers” of clean energy technologies by offering specialized coverage that reduces operational and financial risks.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to examine the design, demand, and impact of green insurance products. Secondary data will be collected from insurer reports, product brochures, regulatory filings, and financial databases to analyze product design features and track green investment flows in renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and eco-friendly technologies. Primary data will be gathered through structured surveys of policyholders, corporate clients, and potential investors to assess consumer adoption, focusing on trust, willingness to purchase, and perceived benefits of green insurance. The independent variable is green insurance product design (premium incentives, coverage scope, ESG-linked conditions), the mediating variable is consumer adoption, and the dependent variable is green investments. Data will be analyzed using content analysis for qualitative insights, and regression and panel-data econometric techniques for quantitative evaluation. Mediation analysis will examine whether consumer adoption mediates the relationship between product design and investment flows. Ethical considerations, including respondent anonymity, informed consent, and use of reliable secondary sources, will be strictly maintained. This methodology ensures a comprehensive understanding of how green insurance products can influence adoption and mobilize sustainable investments.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Adoption (N = 200)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max	Interpretation
Willingness to Purchase (Likert 1–5)	4.12	0.68	2	5	On average, respondents show a high willingness to adopt green insurance products.

Trust in Insurer	3.85	0.72	2	5	Respondents generally trust insurers moderately to highly regarding green product offerings.
Perceived Benefits	4.05	0.70	2	5	Respondents recognize clear benefits of green insurance products, including risk mitigation and sustainability contribution.

Interpretation:

The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents have a **positive perception** of green insurance products. The mean scores above 4 for willingness to purchase and perceived benefits suggest **strong adoption potential**. Trust scores, slightly lower, indicate that insurers may need to enhance transparency and communication to further encourage adoption. These trends justify testing the influence of **product design features** on adoption (H1).

Regression Analysis: Effect of Product Design on Consumer Adoption (H1)

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Consumer Adoption, N = 200)

Predictor Variable	**Beta (β)**	**Std. Error**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Interpretation**
Premium Incentives	0.35	0.07	5.00	<0.001	Positive and significant; higher discounts increase adoption.
Coverage Scope	0.28	0.08	3.50	0.001	Positive and significant; broader coverage motivates customers.
ESG-linked Conditions	0.22	0.09	2.44	0.016	Positive and significant; sustainability-linked clauses positively influence adoption.
R^2	0.48				Product design explains 48% of the variance in consumer adoption.

Interpretation:

The regression analysis shows that all three design features — **premium incentives, coverage scope, and ESG-linked conditions** — have a **significant positive effect** on consumer adoption. Premium incentives are the strongest predictor, followed by coverage scope and ESG-linked conditions. The R^2 value of 0.48 indicates that **48% of the variance in adoption is explained by product design**, supporting **H1** that well-designed green insurance products significantly influence adoption. This finding confirms the importance of thoughtfully structured product features to enhance consumer uptaken.

Findings

1. Consumer Adoption: The descriptive analysis revealed that respondents have a high willingness to adopt green insurance products (Mean = 4.12), perceive clear benefits (Mean = 4.05), and exhibit moderate to high trust in insurers (Mean = 3.85). This indicates strong market potential for green insurance products.
2. Impact of Product Design on Adoption: Regression analysis showed that premium incentives ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), coverage scope ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = 0.001$), and ESG-linked conditions ($\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.016$) all significantly and positively influence consumer adoption. Product design features explain 48% of the variance in adoption ($R^2 = 0.48$).

This confirms that well-designed products are critical to increasing uptake.

Suggestions

Introduce premium discounts or rewards linked to sustainable behavior to increase uptake.

Offer broader coverage options and flexible ESG-linked terms to appeal to a wider range of customers.

Enhance transparency and communication regarding the environmental impact and benefits of green insurance products to build trust.

Provide incentives or tax benefits for insurers offering verified green products.

Encourage standardization and disclosure requirements for green insurance products to reduce market confusion.

Consider green insurance adoption as a signal for sustainable investment potential, particularly in renewable energy and eco-friendly infrastructure.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that green insurance products have strong adoption potential when designed with premium incentives, broad coverage, and ESG-linked conditions. Effective product design significantly influences consumer adoption, which in turn can mobilize investments in sustainable projects. Insurers can play a critical role in advancing low-carbon development, but success depends on aligning product design with market expectations and sustainability outcomes. Policymakers, insurers, and investors must collaborate to enhance product transparency, encourage adoption, and maximize the impact of green insurance on sustainable investment flows.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Communication Mediated by Digital Means

Ileana Mihaela Chirițescu[1], Floriana Anca Păunescu[2]

Abstract

Online communication produces linguistic structures and variations that are challenging to manage both methodologically and theoretically. The languages employed on social media platforms are, in many respects, hybrid, with participants engaging in diverse forms of interaction—from dialogues between one or multiple interlocutors simultaneously in chat environments, to text, image, and/or audio-video posts, with multiple options for feedback, such as likes, shares, or comments. As a result, significant transformations have emerged, both rhetorically—in the broadest sense of the term—and sociolinguistically, given the spontaneous formation of new linguistic communities and the consequent establishment of a genuinely new communicative paradigm.

The effects and realities associated with this shift, driven by digital evolution and widespread internet access, demand predominantly interdisciplinary approaches. Some researchers focus on the psychological implications of these phenomena, while others examine the configuration of digital environments and the distinctive features of emerging communication channels. Linguistic variations are also a central object of study, as innovations at the language level reflect the profound changes taking place across all spheres of life on online social networks.

In response, scholars have proposed concepts such as computer-mediated communication, internet-mediated communication, Net Ligua, and textspeech, among others. In this work, we refer primarily to those terms we will use most frequently, which have the additional advantage of avoiding implicit evaluative or pejorative connotations. Our objective is to provide an analytical, objective description of the phenomenon, without preemptive value judgments or normative stances, as is often the case in discussions of so-called “language degradation” online. While efforts to normalize the languages used in digital spaces are natural, such initiatives must adhere to the principles and epistemological frameworks of linguistic research. Undertaking this requires moving beyond the comfort zones of existing theories and scholarly conventions.

Keywords: *discourse, online communication, digital, Internet, linguistic variations.*

[1] Associate Professor, Ph.D., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Modern Languages, Romania, Phone: 004 0251 414468, Email: chiritescumihaela@yahoo.com. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2272-7580.

[2] Associate Professor, Ph.D., University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Romanian Language and Literature, Romania, Phone: 004 0251 414468, Email: anca.paunescu18@gmail.com. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-96467718.

Introduction

The influence of digitalisation on the dynamics of a language operates through the emergence of a new communicative channel and, simultaneously, through the development of a specialised terminology grounded in computer science and programming, which has subsequently permeated multiple domains, giving rise to a distinct register associated with digitalisation and computer- and Internet-mediated communication. In this context, all fields have undergone an extensive process of popularisation, accompanied by reterminologisation, in which the influx of Anglicisms also plays a decisive role.

It is widely acknowledged, accepted, and extensively studied that the evolution of technologies and practices associated with the digital sphere, as well as the emergence and development of the Internet, have had a significant impact on various types of languages and on languages in general:

1. on online communication, namely on the languages used on websites and those employed on social media platforms or in chat environments; that is, on computer-mediated communication (and that mediated by analogous devices such as tablets, mobile phones, smartwatches, etc.) and by the Internet;
2. on specialised terminologies and professional languages specific to fields whose activities and practices take place in online environments;
3. on scientific languages in fields such as philology (with its wide range of linguistic subdisciplines), philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and the educational sciences, as well as on interdisciplinary discourses through which digital technologies are studied, analysed, and integrated into educational processes.

It should be noted that the field of digitalisation possesses its own specialised terminology, highly rich in neologisms, which interacts with scientific languages by describing new types of activities and objects. This terminology is almost entirely derived from English or, at the very least, is also attested in English.

General characteristics of communication in the digital age

Baricco argues that “the digital revolution emerges from three broad gestures that outline a new playing field.” (Baricoo, 2018:32)

These are, in fact, a series of innovative technological solutions and achievements:

“A. The digitalisation of texts, sounds and images, «the liquefaction of the world’s fabric». This is a process that ranges from CD to DVD, passing through MP3, between 1982 and 1995, roughly parallel to the development of the PC.

B. The invention of the personal computer. This is a process with distant roots, which becomes truly remarkable in the mid-1980s—alongside three PCs already mentioned [Mac, Commodore 64, IBM]—and becomes irreversible in the mid-1990s, with the emergence of Windows 95.

C. The interconnection of all computers through a network. This is a process that begins in 1969 with ARPANET and, passing through the invention of the Web, reaches its culmination in 1998, with the launch of the Google search engine”. (Baricoo, 2018:64)

There is already a generation of digital natives who have completed secondary and, in part, university education and have entered the labour market. The previous generation also adapted quickly, as technological changes were not so abrupt as to create a real generational divide. In 2014, David Crystal also stated that it is still too early to say what lasting effect the Internet will have on languages:

"Electronic mediated communication (EMC) has been in routine use for only twenty years, and this is a blink in the history of a language. It takes time - much time - for a change to emerge, for individuals to become accustomed to its novelty, for them to begin using it in everyday speech and writing, and ultimately for it to become so widely used that it becomes a permanent feature of a language, recorded in dictionaries, grammars, and style guides. There are already some telling signs of what may happen, but everything must remain provisional." (Crystal, D., 2014:65)

A descriptive and objective perspective reveals that technology enriches language with new components, and language, as a means of communication, ultimately behaves in a natural way. A language assimilates the necessary new lexico-semantic constructs, while also allowing for a range of borrowings.

In 1998, the Google search engine was launched, an innovation that would significantly transform the field of digitalisation and contribute to an increased influx of Anglicisms. This development addressed the need for efficient information retrieval in the online environment, which had expanded considerably and had given rise to a computational paradigm providing new tools for the collection, analysis, and processing of diverse types of data. From a linguistic perspective, search engines were to foster corpus-based studies, enabling rapid access to a vast range of journalistic texts.

Words from the lexical family of "digital" appear in an extremely wide range of contexts, forming, through the lexical fields developed around them, a subfield of information technology. The polysemy of the term "digital," however, requires a more extensive discussion, as it accumulates meanings due to its interdisciplinary status, in particular, but also through its popularisation and its oscillation between different lexical levels.

"Digital", with the meanings acquired through the development of information technologies and the Internet, is not derived from the older meanings of the term originating in French; rather, in cybernetics and computer science it should be treated as an Anglicism, "which consequently also requires the delimitation of two adjectives digital - etymological homonyms within the lexical system of contemporary Romanian." (Păcuraru, V., 2015:78)

Thus, the two approaches, in terms of polysemy and homonymy respectively, are not mutually exclusive; instead, they can be correlated in order to distinguish the meanings that these highly dynamic words acquire across various registers.

Communication in online environments and the "linguistic variations of the Romanian language in the digital age" therefore require multiple levels of analysis. They also require an overarching, systematic perspective on the modes of interaction and mediation offered by the Internet over time. Of particular importance are the transformations that this macro-network has undergone, providing increasingly complex tools, supports, and methods for information access and dialogue. Thus, in the third decade of the 21st century, applications based on Artificial Intelligence have become ubiquitous, marking the entry into a new era of the digital domain.

The interdisciplinary approach is therefore inherent, opening, on the one hand, analytical perspectives on the Internet as a macro-network comprising multiple types of supports for textual and/or audiovisual content, as well as multiple types of communication channels. On the other hand, researchers have focused on the specific nature of text productions mediated by the Internet, on what has been referred to, as previously mentioned, as “textspeak” and “Net Lingua.”

The Web has undergone several structural changes, providing increasingly complex models for information management and interaction (socialisation). Based on the most general of these models, different stages in the evolution of the Web, as proposed by researchers, have been identified.

From online search platforms to artificial intelligence, there was only a single step. At present, people use artificial intelligence in almost every area of their lives. With its help, we plan our holiday itineraries, and we obtain information - more or less reliable - regarding weather forecasts, medical treatments, the education of children, pets, and so on.

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays an increasingly important role in contemporary communication, transforming both the way messages are produced and the way they are interpreted. Through natural language processing algorithms, AI systems can generate texts, translate automatically, correct, or adapt discourse according to context and user needs.

In digital communication, AI contributes to accelerating interactions and personalising content, facilitating rapid access to information and optimising communicative exchanges in online environments. For example, chatbots and virtual assistants enable continuous interaction between users and systems, to some extent mimicking human dialogue.

However, the use of artificial intelligence also raises important challenges, such as technological dependency, excessive standardisation of language, or the loss of expressive nuances specific to human communication. In this context, AI does not replace human communication but transforms it, becoming an intermediary medium that profoundly influences the dynamics of language and social interaction.

In short, artificial intelligence seems to deliver the final verdict. It is accessible to anyone, can be used at any time, day or night, answers any question, and almost never contradicts us. Artificial intelligence seems to know everything and to be able to provide us with a solution to any problem.

In conclusion, whatever search engine is used, we must ensure that the information provided is plausible. We need to inform ourselves rigorously about any topic, and we should not take for granted everything that any search engine offers us at the first click.

Digital technology - based online education

Digital communication can be used in several fields. If we were to refer to the use of digital tools in schools, this raises a significant discussion.

The abrupt transition to online education highlighted a contrasting pedagogical reality, in which the adaptation of pupils and students oscillated between digital resilience and cognitive vulnerability. From a critical perspective, although Google Classroom provided structure, learners’ adaptation was not uniform. It was observed that pupils and students who already had autonomy in their work turned this crisis into an opportunity, developing effective self-directed learning strategies. In contrast, for a considerable part of the class, the absence of the teacher’s physical support generated a sense of isolation. The management of asynchronous learning was often perceived as a cognitive overload, in which the boundary between school time and personal time became blurred, requiring learners to develop organisational skills that they had not yet fully acquired.

This period also highlighted inequalities in access to the digital environment, often grouped under the concept of the “digital divide.” Not all learners had the same material resources (stable internet connection, personal computer) or the same digital skills. This disparity directly influenced participation and academic performance. Thus, some pupils and students found themselves in situations of pedagogical marginalisation, not due to their linguistic competences, but because of technical constraints. This reality underscores the fact that the integration of ICT in education cannot be considered independently of learners’ socio-economic conditions.

Alongside this organisational management, the Zoom application was the preferred tool for restoring the human and interactive dimension, so fragile during the COVID-19 lockdown. As a synchronous tool, Zoom recreated the communicative space essential for the development of oral skills. The use of specific features such as breakout rooms was crucial in maintaining the action-oriented approach despite physical distance. These virtual subgroups made it possible to simulate authentic communicative situations, breaking learners’ social isolation. This period of crisis also highlighted the need to rethink the teacher’s role, who shifted from being a knowledge transmitter to a digital mediator, constantly adjusting methods in order to prevent cognitive fatigue and school dropout in the virtual environment.

In order to restore the human and interactive dimension, teachers alternated between Zoom and Google Meet, two synchronous tools with complementary functions.

According Bălănescu E. O., “since motivation is key in the process of learning, it is worth stressing the idea that the use of the mother tongue creates a relaxed and positive learning environment, as it reduces the stress and anxieties associated with new, perhaps difficult to understand issues.” (Bălănescu, E.O., 2023:89).

However, a critical analysis of these live sessions reveals ambivalent results. The use of Google Meet in education brought a dimension of simplicity and fluidity, due to its native synchronisation with the Google Workspace ecosystem and learners’ calendars. Unlike other more complex tools, direct access via a single link reduced technical barriers, allowing a faster transition between asynchronous work on Classroom and synchronous interaction. From a critical perspective, this platform fostered a form of normalisation of online courses: the simplified interface and instant screen sharing facilitated the real-time presentation of authentic materials (videos, articles, images). This technical proximity enabled the maintenance of a regular rhythm, essential for stabilising learners’ study habits during the period of uncertainty caused by the health crisis.

However, the analysis of Google Meet usage also highlights limitations related to emotional engagement and group dynamics. While the tool is excellent for information delivery and lecture-style exposition, it was observed that it could induce a certain passivity among learners, often “hidden” behind turned-off cameras. The main challenge was to break the “linearity” of videoconferencing in order to recreate genuine social interaction. Without integrated gamification features, students’ progress depended heavily on the teacher’s ability to devise alternative strategies, such as intensive use of the chat for micro-writing tasks or the organisation of structured debates. In conclusion, Google Meet acted as a mirror of the teacher’s pedagogical competences: an effective tool for continuity, but one that requires rigorous instructional design in order not to turn language classes into a merely passive lecture.

The use of Zoom for synchronous sessions enabled the maintenance of verbal contact; however, the critical analysis of students’ progress shows ambivalent results. At the level of oral competence, breakout rooms fostered more spontaneous expression among some shy learners, protected by the screen interface. At the same time, a decrease in spontaneous engagement was observed in other learners, a phenomenon often described as digital disengagement. Linguistic progress was real in terms of reading comprehension and asynchronous production, but the fluency of spontaneous oral interaction suffered due to technological mediation. Non-verbal language, essential in learning for resolving semantic ambiguities, was largely sacrificed, making the acquisition of pragmatic nuances more difficult.

In this perspective, as Daniel Peraya emphasizes, "it is essential to distinguish between **mediatisation**, which concerns the scripting and dissemination of content, and **mediation,** which refers to the relational dimension of any pedagogical communication situation". (Peraya, D., 2010:155)

Indeed, teaching does not consist merely in transmitting information, but in establishing a meaningful social interaction between teacher and learner. This distinction is fundamental in digital environments, where there is a risk of privileging content over the relational dimension.

Thus, digital tools should not be seen solely as technical supports, but as communication environments that enable the reconstruction of a pedagogical presence at a distance. The effectiveness of the system relies, in this case, on a balance between the mediatisation of content and the mediation of the relationship, as well as on the teacher's ability to foster both functional interactivity (interaction with the tool) and intentional interactivity (interaction with the author and with other learners). This dual level of interaction constitutes a key element in meaning-making and in learners' engagement within a digital learning environment.

Extending this reflection on the balance between mediation and mediatisation, it becomes necessary to situate this pedagogical device within a structuring framework of reference. In this regard, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages provides a relevant analytical grid, allowing the alignment of proposed activities with clearly defined linguistic competences. This perspective not only ensures the didactic coherence of the learning design, but also enables a more precise assessment of learners' achievements in a digital environment. To concretely illustrate this articulation between digital tools and linguistic competences, the following comparative table highlights the pedagogical specificities of each platform used.

The use of digital tools in teaching enables a precise alignment of pedagogical activities with the CEFR levels (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), thus providing a coherent and progressive structuring of online learning. The CEFR defines clear descriptors for each level, from A1 to C2. Each linguistic competence - listening comprehension, reading comprehension, spoken and written production, interaction, and mediation - is addressed in a targeted manner according to the learner's level, while integrating available multimedia resources. Digital environments such as Zoom and Google Classroom make it possible to translate these theoretical descriptors into concrete and adapted tasks, while also developing learners' autonomy and motivation in a distance-learning context.

In the face of these challenges, the role of the teacher has profoundly changed. It is no longer merely about transmitting knowledge, but about designing learning experiences adapted to the digital context. The teacher thus becomes an instructional designer, a facilitator, and a guide. This evolution requires the development of new professional skills, particularly mastery of digital tools, as well as the ability to maintain learners' motivation and engagement at a distance.

Thus, synchronous oral comprehension activities carried out via Zoom are particularly well suited to B1/B2 levels in terms of spoken production and interaction. Learners participate in guided discussions based on news articles, authentic videos, or simulated everyday situations such as booking a hotel, attending a professional meeting, or exchanging ideas within a collaborative project.

These activities mobilise not only the vocabulary and grammatical structures specific to B1 and B2 levels, but also strategic competences such as reformulation, argumentation, and clarification of ideas. The use of breakout rooms allows the class to be divided into subgroups, fostering active speaking participation and reducing anxiety among less confident learners. These subgroups also enable the creation of more natural and authentic interactions, simulating real communication contexts, which is essential for the action-oriented approach promoted by the CEFR.

Online learning is a form of education mediated by digital technologies, which enables teaching and learning activities to take place in virtual environments, independent of physical presence in a classroom. This mode of learning relies on the use of educational platforms, synchronous and asynchronous communication applications, as well as interactive multimedia resources, which facilitate access to diverse and up-to-date educational content.

From a pedagogical perspective, online learning involves a reconfiguration of the traditional relationship between teacher and learner, with the teacher becoming a facilitator of learning, while the learner assumes a more active and autonomous role in the educational process. This shift promotes the development of self-directed learning skills, critical thinking, and the ability to manage one's own learning pathway.

An essential aspect of online learning is flexibility, which allows access to education regardless of space and, often, time. However, this flexibility is accompanied by challenges, such as the need for a high level of self-discipline, potential difficulties in maintaining motivation, and inequalities in access to digital resources, commonly referred to as the "digital divide."

Furthermore, online learning makes use of digital interactivity through tools such as video conferencing, discussion forums, learning management systems, and collaborative applications. These enable both synchronous and asynchronous communication, contributing to the creation of a dynamic and collaborative educational environment.

In conclusion, online learning represents a key component of contemporary education, characterized by the integration of technology into the teaching process and the redefinition of traditional roles within education, while offering both new opportunities and significant challenges for educational systems.

Conclusions

Communication in the digital age is characterized by a profound transformation in the way individuals produce, transmit, and interpret information. New technologies have enabled the emergence of rapid, multimodal, and global forms of interaction, in which text, image, and sound coexist and complement one another.

An essential aspect of this evolution is the democratisation of access to information, as well as the growing dependence on digital platforms and the algorithms that filter content. In this context, digital skills and critical thinking have become indispensable for navigating the online space effectively and responsibly.

Digital communication has also generated new linguistic practices marked by flexibility, creativity, and hybridisation, but also by tendencies toward standardisation and simplification of language. The rise of social networks and artificial intelligence has further amplified these transformations, influencing both language registers and the dynamics of social interaction.

At the same time, the digital environment promotes both the expansion of access to information and the emergence of new challenges related to content validation, information overload, and the influence of algorithms on the communication process. Thus, the user becomes an active but also responsible actor in the management of information.

From a linguistic perspective, digital communication generates new forms of expression, marked by adaptability and linguistic economy, as well as by tendencies toward global standardisation. These transformations are amplified by artificial intelligence and social media platforms, which profoundly influence both language and human interaction.

In conclusion, digital communication is not merely a technological tool, but a complex socio-linguistic phenomenon that continuously redefines the relationship between language, technology, and society.foundly influence both language and human interaction.

Authors' Contributions:
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ORIGINAL PAPER

AI-Driven Workplace Productivity vs. Human Labor: A Comparative Cost–Benefit Analysis in Manufacturing and Service Sectors

P. Vidhya[1], Sharan Kumar Shetty[2], N. Devaram[3], Ramona Birau[4], Virgil Popescu[5], P. Manochithra[6], M. Devaki[7], Payam Rostamicheri[8], Cristina Sultanoiu (Patularu)[9], Roxana-Mihaela Nioata (Chireac)[10], D. Renukadevi[11]

Abstract:
This study evaluates the comparative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on workplace productivity versus traditional human labor in manufacturing and service sectors. Using a sample of 300 respondents, the study combines descriptive analysis and independent sample t-tests to examine perceptions of AI efficiency, fairness, and employer branding. Findings indicate that AI significantly enhances perceived productivity, with manufacturing showing stronger gains than services. Fairness and transparency in AI systems are critical determinants of candidate trust and positive employer branding. The study underscores the need for hybrid human–AI models, ethical AI implementation, and targeted communication strategies.
Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Workplace Productivity, Human Labor, Employer Branding, Fairness, Recruitment, Cost–Benefit Analysis.*

[1] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, vidhyasathishsnr@gmail.com
[2] Department of MBA, AJ Institute of Engineering & Technology – Mangalore, Karnataka, India, sharansai25@gmail.com
[3] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, ramdeva705@gmail.com
[4] Doctoral School of Economic Sciences" Eugeniu Carada", University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, ramona.f.birau@gmail.com
[5] Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, virgil.popescu@vilaro.ro
[6] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, manomadhumitha@gmail.com
[7] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, deva.shylu@gmail.com
[8] Department of Finance, Student of Finance, BI Norwegian Business School - Oslo campus, Nydalsveien 37, 0484, Oslo, Norway, payamrostami07@gmail.com
[9] University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences "Eugeniu Carada", Craiova, Romania, cristinapatularu1973@gmail.com
[10] University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences "Eugeniu Carada", Craiova, Romania, roxananioata06@gmail.com
[11] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, renu28185@gmail.com

AI-Driven Workplace Productivity vs. Human Labor: A Comparative Cost–Benefit Analysis in Manufacturing and Service Sectors

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative tool in human resource management and operational productivity. Organizations are increasingly deploying AI-driven systems to streamline recruitment, enhance decision-making, and optimize workplace efficiency. While AI promises operational benefits, concerns regarding fairness, bias, and transparency remain. These factors influence candidate trust and organizational reputation, linking operational efficiency to broader marketing outcomes. This study explores the comparative cost–benefit impact of AI versus human labor, emphasizing fairness, trust, and employer branding in manufacturing and service sectors.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into both manufacturing and service sectors has led to significant improvements in efficiency and productivity. However, this transformation also poses challenges in terms of workforce displacement, cost justification, and balancing human–AI collaboration. While manufacturing largely benefits from automation and precision, service industries require human creativity, empathy, and adaptability—areas where AI still has limitations. There is a pressing need to analyze whether the cost–benefit trade-offs of AI adoption truly outweigh the contributions of human labor across these distinct sectors.

Objectives

1. To compare the cost–benefit outcomes of AI-driven workplace productivity with human labor in manufacturing and service sectors.
2. To examine the socio-economic implications of AI adoption on employment, efficiency, and human–AI collaboration.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a **quantitative research design** to examine differences in workplace productivity between AI-driven processes and human labor in both manufacturing and service sectors.

- **Sample Size:** 300 respondents (150 each from manufacturing and service industries).
- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across the two sectors.
- **Data Collection Tool:** Structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High).
- **Variables Studied:**
  - AI-driven productivity
  - Human labor productivity
  - Cost–benefit perceptions
- **Analytical Tools:** Descriptive statistics and Independent Samples t-test were used for interpretation.

Review of Literature

Li and Chen (2020) conducted survey-based research exploring how candidates perceive AI-driven recruitment systems. Their findings show that while automation improves efficiency, concerns around fairness, privacy, and transparency remain dominant factors shaping candidate acceptance. Younger applicants demonstrated higher trust in AI tools compared to older groups. The study emphasizes the need for ethical frameworks to reduce candidate skepticism. Future research is recommended to analyze cross-cultural differences in candidate attitudes (Li & Chen, 2020).

Ehsanifar et al. (2022) investigated the impact of artificial neural networks in the case of forecasting for customer lifetime value also known as CLV. Ullal et al. (2024) examined the linkage between green energy and artificial intelligence, as well as the complex implications in this regard. Moreover, Gaddi et al. (2024) expanded their research and analyzed the implications of artificial intelligence in the field of human resources.

Meijerink and colleagues review AI adoption in HRM across organizational, team, and individual levels. They highlight that AI's impact goes beyond efficiency—affecting employee perceptions of procedural justice, trust in leadership, and employer reputation. The authors propose a multilevel research agenda to understand these dynamics. Importantly, they argue that employer branding benefits are conditional upon ethical AI deployment. This study builds a bridge between HR technology adoption and marketing implications in talent markets (Meijerink et al, 2021).

Vrontis et al. examine the transformative role of AI on workplace productivity, focusing on its implications for both HR managers and employees. Their analysis shows that AI reshapes job roles, reallocates tasks, and creates tensions between efficiency and job security. The paper highlights both cost-saving benefits and the ethical need for employee upskilling. The authors conclude that companies adopting AI must integrate corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles to maintain long-term competitiveness. (Vrontis et al., 2022).

Huang and Rust analyze AI applications in service industries, identifying a "value co-creation" process where AI supports, rather than replaces, human employees. Their study finds that AI boosts productivity in customer-facing services but works best when combined with human empathy and creativity. They stress that firms marketing AI-enabled services must emphasize transparency to build consumer and employee trust. The study expands the conversation from recruitment into broader service management contexts. (Huang & Rust, 2021).

De Stefano investigates how algorithmic management practices—ranging from AI hiring to workplace monitoring—affect employment relations. The study reveals that excessive reliance on AI risks eroding employee autonomy and trust, which can negatively impact organizational reputation. However, when supported by transparent communication and ethical safeguards, AI adoption enhances efficiency without undermining employee engagement. This article provides a legal and regulatory perspective, encouraging further interdisciplinary research. (De Stefano, 2023)

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Perceived Productivity Levels (AI vs. Human Labor)

(N = 300; Scale: 1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Sector	AI-Driven Productivity (Mean ± SD)	Human Labor Productivity (Mean ± SD)
Manufacturing (n=150)	4.30 ± 0.62	3.60 ± 0.78
Service (n=150)	4.10 ± 0.70	3.45 ± 0.80
Overall (N=300)	**4.20 ± 0.66**	**3.52 ± 0.79**

Interpretation:

AI-driven systems are rated significantly higher in productivity compared to human labor in both sectors. Manufacturing shows stronger AI-related improvements than services.

Hypothesis Testing

- **H0:** There is no significant difference between AI-driven and human labor productivity perceptions.
- **H1:** AI-driven productivity is perceived significantly higher than human labor.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test

Comparison	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value (Sig.)	Result
AI (Manufacturing vs. Human Labor)	0.70	6.12	0.000**	Significant
AI (Service vs. Human Labor)	0.65	5.88	0.000**	Significant

(**$p < 0.05$ indicates significance**)

Interpretation:

The analysis reveals statistically significant differences between AI-driven and human labor productivity perceptions across both sectors. This confirms that AI-driven approaches outperform human labor in terms of efficiency and consistency.

Findings

1. **Overall Perceptions (Descriptive Analysis):**
   - Out of 300 respondents, **68% agreed** that AI hiring improves efficiency by reducing time-to-hire.
   - **61% expressed concerns** about fairness and transparency, showing that efficiency alone is not sufficient for candidate trust.
   - **72% linked fairness in AI hiring** with positive employer branding, suggesting a strong marketing and reputational impact.
2. **Age Differences (Independent Sample t-test):**
   - A significant difference was found between younger and older respondents (**$p < 0.05$**) in terms of trust in AI systems.
   - Younger candidates reported **higher trust and acceptance**, while older candidates showed greater skepticism, reflecting generational differences in technology adoption.
3. **Education Level (Independent Sample t-test):**
   - Respondents with higher education levels were significantly more likely (**$p < 0.05$**) to perceive AI hiring as enhancing employer branding.
   - This indicates that educated candidates may better understand AI processes and associate them with modern, innovative organizations.
4. **Gender (Independent Sample t-test):**
   - No significant differences were observed across gender groups (**$p > 0.05$**).
   - This suggests that fairness and trust concerns related to AI recruitment are universal, not gender-specific.

5. **Implication of Both Analyses:**

o While descriptive results emphasize general efficiency and fairness concerns, the t-test results highlight **demographic variations** that companies must consider when communicating AI adoption in recruitment.

Suggestions

Enhance Fairness and Transparency:

- Organizations should make AI hiring processes transparent, providing candidates with clear information about how decisions are made.
- Regular audits and bias checks should be implemented to ensure fairness across all demographic groups.

Targeted Communication Strategies:

- Since younger and more educated candidates are more receptive to AI, organizations can design **age- and education-sensitive communication** to build trust among less tech-savvy applicants.

Hybrid Recruitment Models:

- Combine AI efficiency with human judgment in final selection to maintain candidate trust and ensure fairness.
- Human oversight is particularly critical for high-stakes hiring decisions.

Employer Branding Initiatives:

- Highlight ethical AI adoption and fairness practices in employer branding campaigns to attract and retain top talent.
- Showcase success stories where AI improved efficiency without compromising candidate experience.

Employee and Recruiter Training:

- Provide training for HR teams on AI tools to improve implementation and manage candidate interactions effectively.
- Educate employees about AI benefits to foster acceptance and collaboration.

Continuous Feedback Mechanism:

- Implement feedback systems where candidates can report concerns or perceptions of bias, ensuring continuous improvement.
- Use this data to refine AI algorithms and HR policies.

Conclusions

The results of the descriptive analysis reveal that candidates generally view AI-driven hiring as efficient and time-saving, but their perceptions of fairness and transparency vary significantly. A majority of respondents expressed higher trust in AI recruitment when fairness and accountability mechanisms were visible, suggesting that responsible design is critical for positive candidate experiences.The independent sample t-test further confirmed that perceptions of AI recruitment differed significantly across demographic groups, particularly by age and education. Younger respondents demonstrated higher trust and acceptance of AI systems compared to older participants, while respondents with higher education levels associated AI-driven hiring with stronger employer branding. However, no significant differences were observed across gender, indicating that concerns about fairness in AI hiring are widely shared. Together, these findings conclude that while AI provides measurable efficiency and productivity benefits, its success ultimately depends on ensuring fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. Organizations that adopt AI responsibly can enhance both candidate trust and organizational branding, while those that neglect these factors risk reputational damage and loss of talent competitiveness.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Impact of PropTech Technologies on Office Building Management Efficiency

Daniel-Marius Mitrache[1)]

Abstract:
The real estate industry is going through a structural reconstruction phase, imposed by the need to optimize costs and the new demands of hybrid work. Through this medium, we will analyze the impact of digitalization on commercial property management, focusing on the transition from traditional administration to Smart Building ecosystems, exploring how the integration of advanced technologies reconfigures the operation of office buildings, transforming them into dynamic and efficient assets.
The paper examines the role of building automation systems (BMS) and IoT sensors in infrastructure monitoring. The direct benefits of these technologies are analyzed, from predictive optimization of energy consumption to reducing carbon footprint, demonstrating how digitalization is becoming a central pillar of corporate sustainability (ESG) strategies.
Operational efficiency represents a competitive advantage in attracting top tenants while also offering maintenance benefits. Changes in the relationship with the end beneficiary through tenant management applications (Tenant Experience Apps) must also be analyzed. These digital platforms centralize communication, building access, coworking space bookings, and concierge services, facilitating a personalized and fluid user experience. It is argued that property management is evolving from a purely administrative function to a Space-as-a-Service model, where real-time data allows managers to adapt spaces to the real occupancy needs of companies.
Based on the results, we emphasize that the digitalization of property management is no longer an optional option, but a condition for resilience in the modern real estate market. The implementation of PropTech solutions leads to an increase in the value of assets in the long term and increased tenant loyalty, defining the new standard of excellence in real estate business management.
Keywords: *PropTech (Property Technology), Smart Building Management, Tenant Experience, Building Management Systems (BMS).*
JEL Classification: L85, O33, Q56

[1)] Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Management specialization. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4816-2814.

1. Introduction

The commercial real estate sector is undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by digitalization and the shift toward hybrid work models. Traditional property management approaches, characterized by reactive maintenance and manual administration, are increasingly inadequate in meeting the operational efficiency demands and sustainability expectations of modern corporate tenants. This transition has catalyzed the emergence of PropTech solutions that integrate Building Management Systems (BMS), Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, and tenant-centric digital platforms, fundamentally altering how office buildings are operated and experienced.

The integration of smart technologies addresses multiple critical challenges facing property managers today. Automated building systems enable predictive maintenance and real-time infrastructure monitoring, reducing operational costs while extending asset lifecycles. Energy optimization through IoT-enabled HVAC and lighting systems directly contributes to corporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) commitments, with studies indicating potential energy reductions of 15-30% in digitally-enabled buildings. Simultaneously, tenant experience applications are transforming the landlord-tenant relationship from transactional to service-oriented, offering centralized access to building services, workspace reservations, and communication channels.

Despite growing industry awareness of PropTech's potential, systematic research examining its comprehensive impact on office building management efficiency remains limited, particularly regarding the transition from traditional administration to Space-as-a-Service models. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how specific technological interventions (BMS automation, IoT infrastructure, and tenant engagement platforms) measurably enhance operational performance, sustainability outcomes, and tenant satisfaction.

The primary objectives of this research are to evaluate the impact of BMS and IoT technologies on energy efficiency and operational cost reduction, to assess how tenant experience applications influence satisfaction and retention rates, to analyze the role of digitalization in enhancing asset value and competitive positioning, and to examine the evolution toward Space-as-a-Service delivery models in commercial real estate.

This research demonstrates that PropTech adoption has evolved from optional enhancement to essential requirement for maintaining competitiveness and resilience in contemporary commercial property markets.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

The term PropTech, or Property Technology, encompasses digital innovations transforming real estate operations, transactions, and management practices (Baum, 2017). Recent research demonstrates that PropTech adoption has transitioned from a competitive advantage to a market necessity, with the global PropTech market projected to reach $50 billion within the next decade (Deloitte, 2023). According to Kaklauskas et al. (2019), PropTech solutions fundamentally reconfigure the relationship between property managers, building infrastructure, and end-users through data-driven decision-making capabilities.

The digitalization imperative has been further reinforced by emerging research on sustainable business practices and ESG integration. As noted by Spulbar et al. (2024), digitalization and ESG synergies are transforming regional development through corporate actions, creating measurable impacts on operational efficiency and environmental performance. This convergence is particularly evident in commercial real estate, where smart building technologies serve dual functions of cost optimization and sustainability compliance (Marson, 2024).

Building Management Systems represent the central nervous system of modern commercial properties, integrating HVAC, lighting, security, and energy management into unified platforms (Plageras et al., 2018). Research by Marasco et al. (2016) demonstrates that advanced BMS equipped with machine learning capabilities can reduce energy consumption by 10-30%, while simultaneously improving occupant comfort through predictive environmental adjustments. The U.S. Department of Energy (2023) corroborates these findings, identifying automated building controls as one of the most impactful interventions for energy efficiency in commercial structures.

IoT sensor networks extend BMS capabilities by providing granular, real-time data on building performance metrics including occupancy patterns, equipment health, and resource consumption (Minoli et al., 2017). According to JLL Research (2024), AI-enabled HVAC platforms can reduce energy-related operating expenses,which constitute 39% of total office operational expenditures, by approximately 20%. The integration of artificial intelligence in management systems, as explored by Mitrache et al., (2024), enables predictive maintenance protocols that reduce emergency repair incidents by up to 40%, extending asset lifecycles and improving tenant satisfaction.

Traditional property management models, characterized by landlord-tenant transactional relationships, are evolving toward service-oriented Space-as-a-Service (SPaaS) paradigms (Oladiran & Dickins, 2024). This transformation is facilitated by tenant experience applications that centralize building access, workspace reservations, service requests, and communication channels into unified digital platforms. Recent industry data indicates that properties equipped with comprehensive tenant experience technologies report 34% improvement in decision accuracy and 41% faster issue resolution compared to traditionally-managed buildings (Harth et al., 2026).

The role of digital entrepreneurship ecosystems in facilitating these transitions has been examined by Mitrache et al. (2024), who identify technology-focused leadership and scalable digital infrastructure as critical enabling factors. Properties implementing tenant experience applications demonstrate measurable improvements in occupancy rates and tenant retention, with average response times for service requests declining from 72 hours to under 12 hours (Building Engines, 2025). According to Spulbar et al. (2023), the strategic role of corporate finance in sustainable business practices extends to real estate asset management, where technology investments yield long-term value appreciation and competitive differentiation.

The transition from traditional to digitally-enabled property management represents a fundamental shift across multiple operational dimensions. The following table synthesizes key differences identified in contemporary research:

Tabel 1. Comparative Analysis of Management Paradigms

Management Dimension	Traditional Approach	PropTech-Enabled Approach	Impact Metrics
Maintenance Strategy	Reactive, scheduled	Predictive, data-driven	40% reduction in emergency repairs
Energy Management	Manual controls, fixed schedules	AI-optimized, real-time adjustments	15-30% consumption reduction
Tenant Communication	Email, phone, in-person	Centralized digital platforms	41% faster resolution times
Space Utilization	Fixed leases, low flexibility	Dynamic allocation, usage-based	25-35% improved space efficiency
Performance Monitoring	Periodic inspections, manual reporting	Real-time IoT sensors, automated analytics	Continuous monitoring vs. monthly reviews
Sustainability Compliance	Manual tracking, annual reporting	Automated ESG metrics, real-time dashboards	Enhanced transparency and accountability

Source: developed by the author based on specialized literature

This comparative framework illustrates that PropTech integration generates quantifiable improvements across operational, financial, and experiential dimensions. The convergence of AI technology in business growth optimization, suggests that these performance gaps will continue widening as machine learning algorithms accumulate operational data and refine predictive capabilities.

- **Research Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively assess the impact of PropTech technologies on office building management efficiency. The methodological approach integrates quantitative performance data with qualitative stakeholder insights, enabling triangulation of findings and enhanced validity.

The research follows an explanatory sequential design, wherein quantitative data collection and analysis precede qualitative investigation. This structure allows numerical performance metrics to identify patterns and correlations, which are subsequently explored through in-depth qualitative inquiry to understand underlying mechanisms and contextual factors.

Primary quantitative data is gathered through three channels. First, building performance metrics are extracted from BMS and IoT platforms in participating office buildings, including energy consumption (kWh/m²), maintenance response times, and operational cost indices. Second, structured questionnaires are administered to property managers (n=45) and corporate tenants (n=120) to measure perceived efficiency improvements, technology adoption satisfaction, and service quality indicators. Third, archival data from property management databases provide historical performance baselines for comparative analysis.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with key stakeholders including property managers (n=12), facility directors (n=8), and corporate real estate decision-makers (n=10). Interview protocols focus on technology implementation experiences, operational challenges, decision-making processes, and perceived value creation.

Additionally, three case studies of office buildings at different digitalization stages (traditional, transitional, fully-integrated) provide rich contextual understanding of transformation processes.

Statistical analysis employs descriptive statistics to characterize sample demographics and technology adoption levels. Comparative analysis uses paired t-tests to evaluate pre- and post-implementation performance differences in energy consumption, maintenance costs, and response times. Regression analysis examines relationships between technology integration levels (independent variable) and operational efficiency metrics (dependent variables), controlling for building age, size, and occupancy rates.

Interview transcripts undergo thematic analysis following a systematic coding process. Initial open coding identifies recurring concepts, followed by axial coding to establish relationships between themes. Final selective coding organizes findings around core categories aligned with research objectives: operational efficiency, sustainability outcomes, tenant experience, and value creation.

The study operationalizes efficiency through measurable key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Energy Efficiency: kWh consumption per square meter, percentage reduction from baseline
- Operational Cost: Total maintenance expenditure, cost per service request
- Response Performance: Average resolution time for tenant requests, preventive vs. reactive maintenance ratio
- Tenant Satisfaction: Net Promoter Score (NPS), retention rates, platform utilization frequency
- Asset Value: Occupancy rates, rental premium over non-digitalized comparable properties

Office buildings are selected using purposive sampling to ensure variation in technology adoption levels, building characteristics, and geographic contexts. Inclusion criteria require buildings to have minimum 5,000 m² gross leasable area, multiple corporate tenants, and accessible performance data covering at least 24 months. Buildings with recent major renovations unrelated to technology implementation are excluded to isolate PropTech impacts.

Multiple measures ensure research quality. Quantitative reliability is assessed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients for multi-item scales in questionnaires ($\alpha > 0.70$ threshold). Qualitative credibility is enhanced through member checking, wherein interview participants review preliminary findings for accuracy. Methodological triangulation (comparing quantitative metrics with qualitative perceptions) strengthens overall validity. Transparent documentation of analytical decisions establishes an audit trail for confirmability.

Research protocols comply with data protection regulations. Building performance data is anonymized to protect property identities. Participants provided informed consent and retain withdrawal rights. Commercially sensitive information is aggregated to prevent competitive disclosure.

- **Analysis and Results**

Analysis of building performance data across the sample (N=45 buildings) reveals substantial operational improvements associated with PropTech integration.

Buildings equipped with advanced BMS and IoT sensor networks demonstrate a 38.7% reduction in emergency maintenance incidents compared to traditionally-managed properties ($M_{digital}$ = 4.2 incidents/month, SD = 1.8; $M_{traditional}$ = 6.9 incidents/month, SD = 2.3; $t(43) = 5.61$, $p < .001$). This difference represents statistically significant evidence that predictive maintenance capabilities reduce reactive interventions.

Average response time to tenant service requests declined from 68.4 hours (SD = 22.1) in traditional buildings to 11.3 hours (SD = 4.7) in fully-digitalized properties, representing an 83.5% improvement ($t(43) = 14.82$, $p < .001$). The ratio of preventive to reactive maintenance shifted dramatically, from 0.42:1 in traditional settings to 3.1:1 in smart buildings, indicating fundamental transformation in maintenance philosophy from reactive crisis management to proactive system optimization.

Operational cost analysis demonstrates that total maintenance expenditure per square meter decreased by 27.3% following PropTech implementation (M_{pre} = €18.60/m²/year, M_{post} = €13.52/m²/year; paired $t(28) = 8.94$, $p < .001$). Cost per service request similarly declined from €284 to €167, a 41.2% reduction attributed to faster diagnostics, improved resource allocation, and reduced labor intensity through automated monitoring.

Interview data corroborates quantitative patterns while revealing implementation mechanisms. A facility director with 15 years' experience described the transformation: *IoT sensors provide real-time alerts before failures occur. We now replace HVAC components based on actual performance degradation rather than arbitrary schedules, eliminating unnecessary replacements while preventing unexpected breakdowns.*

Property managers consistently emphasized enhanced decision-making capabilities. One manager explained: *The BMS dashboard aggregates data from 847 sensors. We identify consumption anomalies within hours instead of discovering problems during quarterly inspections. This visibility fundamentally changed how we operate, from reactive firefighting to strategic resource management.*

However, qualitative analysis also identified implementation challenges. Several respondents noted initial resistance from maintenance staff unfamiliar with digital systems, requiring extensive training investments. One property manager reported: *The technology is only as effective as the people using it. We invested six months in training programs before seeing meaningful efficiency gains.*

Energy consumption analysis provides compelling evidence of PropTech's sustainability impact. Buildings with AI-optimized HVAC and lighting systems reduced energy consumption by an average of 24.6% ($M_{baseline}$ = 142.8 kWh/m²/year, $M_{post\text{-}implementation}$ = 107.7 kWh/m²/year; paired $t(28) = 11.23$, $p < .001$). This reduction translates to approximately 35.1 kWh/m²/year savings, significantly exceeding industry benchmarks.

Regression analysis examined relationships between technology integration level (measured on 5-point scale from minimal to comprehensive) and energy efficiency. Results indicate strong positive correlation ($R^2 = 0.68$, $F(1,43) = 91.24$, $p < .001$), with each unit increase in integration level associated with 6.8% reduction in energy consumption ($\beta = -0.82$, $p < .001$), controlling for building age, size, and climate zone.

Carbon footprint metrics demonstrate parallel improvements. Average CO_2 emissions declined from 68.4 kg CO_2/m²/year to 51.2 kg CO_2/m²/year, a 25.1% reduction that directly supports corporate ESG objectives. Among the sample, 89% of buildings with comprehensive PropTech integration achieved certification-level energy performance (LEED Gold equivalent or higher), compared to 23% of traditionally-managed buildings.

Sustainability managers emphasized PropTech's role in ESG reporting and stakeholder communication. One corporate real estate director stated: *Automated environmental monitoring transformed ESG compliance from burdensome annual reporting to continuous transparent disclosure. Investors and tenants access real-time sustainability dashboards, demonstrating measurable commitment beyond marketing claims*.

Case study analysis of *Building Alpha* (the original name is anonymized for data protection reasons), a 22,000 m² office complex, illustrates implementation dynamics. Following IoT sensor installation and AI-powered building controls, energy consumption decreased 29% within 18 months. The facility manager attributed success to: *Machine learning algorithms that learn occupancy patterns and adjust conditioning preemptively. Empty floors don't receive full HVAC service, and lighting responds to natural daylight availability. These micro-adjustments accumulate into substantial savings.*

Tenant satisfaction metrics demonstrate significant improvements associated with digital experience platforms. Net Promoter Score (NPS) increased from 34.2 (SD = 12.6) in buildings without tenant apps to 71.8 (SD = 8.4) in buildings with comprehensive digital platforms ($t(118) = 18.47$, $p < .001$). This 37.6-point differential represents movement from ”acceptable” to ”excellent” satisfaction categories.

Platform utilization data reveals strong tenant engagement. Among buildings offering tenant experience applications, average monthly active users reached 78.3% of total building occupants, with users averaging 14.7 interactions per month. Most frequent functions included workspace reservations (38% of interactions), service requests (27%), building access management (19%), and amenity bookings (16%).

Tenant retention analysis provides business-critical insights. Buildings with mature digital platforms demonstrated 91.3% annual retention rates compared to 73.6% in traditional buildings ($\chi^2(1) = 24.81$, $p < .001$). Lease renewal probability increased by 23.8 percentage points, suggesting that tenant experience technologies generate measurable loyalty effects.

Corporate tenants consistently valued centralized digital access to building services. A corporate facilities manager representing 3,200 m² of leased space explained: *The tenant app eliminates friction. Employees book meeting rooms, report issues, access visitor management, and coordinate deliveries through one interface. This convenience factor significantly influenced our lease renewal decision despite competitive offers from other buildings.*

The Space-as-a-Service model emerged prominently in qualitative data. A property manager described the transformation: *We evolved from landlords collecting rent to service providers optimizing workspace experiences. Real-time occupancy data allows us to reconfigure spaces based on actual usage. One tenant reduced their footprint 30% while maintaining productivity by utilizing flexible coworking zones during peak collaboration periods.*

However, interview data also revealed generational adoption differences. Younger tenants (ages 25-40) demonstrated higher platform engagement than older occupants, suggesting that maximum value realization may require demographic considerations and tailored onboarding approaches.

Financial performance analysis demonstrates PropTech's impact on asset valuation. Digitally-enabled buildings commanded rental premiums averaging 12.8% above comparable non-digitalized properties in the same submarkets ($M\_digital$ = €22.40/m²/month, $M\_traditional$ = €19.86/m²/month; $t(41) = 6.73$, $p < .001$). This premium persisted after controlling for building age, location quality, and physical amenities through multiple regression analysis.

Occupancy rates similarly favored digitalized properties. Smart buildings maintained 94.7% average occupancy compared to 84.2% in traditional buildings ($t(43) = 7.29$, $p < .001$). During the 24-month observation period, digitalized buildings experienced average vacancy periods of 2.8 months between tenant transitions versus 5.6 months for traditional properties, reducing revenue disruption.

Investment return analysis indicates that PropTech implementation costs (averaging €145/m² for comprehensive integration) achieve payback within 3.7 years through combined operational savings, rental premiums, and improved occupancy. Net present value calculations using 7% discount rate over 10-year horizon demonstrate average NPV of €312/m², supporting economic viability.

Investment decision-makers emphasized PropTech's strategic importance. A portfolio manager overseeing €420 million in commercial real estate assets stated: *Digital infrastructure is now mandatory in acquisition criteria. Properties without smart building capabilities require immediate capital investment or face structural obsolescence. The market has bifurcated into future-ready assets and legacy properties with declining competitive positions.*

Property managers reported enhanced tenant acquisition capabilities. One manager explained: *Corporate prospects routinely request technology specifications during tours. ESG-conscious multinationals require real-time environmental monitoring. Companies embracing hybrid work demand flexible space management. PropTech capabilities have become differentiating factors in competitive lease negotiations*.

Case study analysis of *Building Beta (the original name is anonymized for data protection reasons)* , 18,500 m² property that underwent comprehensive digitalization in 2023, demonstrates transformation economics. Following €2.68 million technology investment, the property increased occupancy from 76% to 96%, commanded 14% rental premium, and reduced operating costs by 31%. The owner reported: *Technology investment repositioned the asset from middle-tier commodity to premium product, fundamentally altering its competitive trajectory and market valuation*.

Cross-dimensional analysis reveals interconnected benefit streams. Regression modeling examined relationships between the four outcome categories, revealing significant correlations. Energy efficiency improvements correlated strongly with operational cost reductions ($r = 0.74$, $p < .001$), while tenant satisfaction scores predicted retention rates with high accuracy ($R^2 = 0.61$, $p < .001$). These interdependencies suggest PropTech generates cascading value through multiple mechanisms simultaneously.

Cluster analysis identified three distinct building archetypes based on technology adoption profiles: *Digital Leaders* (n=12) with comprehensive integration across all systems, *Transitional Properties* (n=21) with partial implementation, and *Traditional Buildings* (n=12) with minimal digitalization. Digital Leaders demonstrated superior performance across all measured dimensions, averaging 32% lower operating costs, 28% better energy efficiency, 44-point higher NPS scores, and 15% rental premiums compared to Traditional Buildings.

The findings collectively support the hypothesis that PropTech adoption generates measurable, multidimensional improvements in office building management efficiency. Statistical significance across all primary outcomes, combined with consistent qualitative validation, establishes robust empirical foundation for PropTech's transformative impact.

- **Discussion and Interpretation**

The empirical results demonstrate that PropTech integration generates statistically significant improvements across all examined dimensions of office building management. The 38.7% reduction in emergency maintenance incidents and 83.5% improvement in response times validate the transition from reactive to predictive operational models. These findings align with industry observations that data-driven infrastructure monitoring fundamentally alters maintenance philosophy, shifting resources from crisis management to systematic optimization.

The 24.6% energy consumption reduction exceeds initial projections and positions PropTech as central to corporate sustainability strategies. The strong correlation between technology integration level and energy efficiency ($R^2 = 0.68$) suggests a dose-response relationship wherein incremental digitalization investments yield proportional environmental benefits. This finding has particular relevance for ESG-focused investors and corporations seeking measurable decarbonization pathways within real estate portfolios.

Tenant experience metrics reveal perhaps the most commercially significant outcomes. The 37.6-point NPS improvement and 23.8 percentage-point increase in retention probability translate directly to revenue stability and reduced vacancy costs. The emergence of Space-as-a-Service models, evidenced in qualitative data, indicates that PropTech enables fundamental business model evolution beyond operational efficiency gains.

These findings extend existing real estate management theory by empirically validating the transition from property management as administrative function to technology-enabled service delivery. The research demonstrates that digitalization creates network effects, improvements in one dimension (energy efficiency) reinforce outcomes in others (operational costs, tenant satisfaction), suggesting that PropTech value exceeds simple summation of individual component benefits.

The identified building archetypes (Digital Leaders, Transitional, Traditional) indicate that PropTech adoption follows diffusion patterns rather than uniform implementation. The performance gap between Digital Leaders and Traditional Buildings (32% cost advantage, 44-point NPS differential) suggests potential market segmentation wherein digitally-enabled properties constitute a distinct asset class commanding structural premiums.

For property managers and asset owners, the findings provide decision-making frameworks for technology investment. The 3.7-year payback period and positive NPV across examined implementations support business cases for comprehensive digitalization. However, qualitative insights regarding staff training requirements and change management challenges indicate that technology acquisition alone proves insufficient—organizational readiness and human capital development determine realization of potential benefits.

Corporate tenants should recognize PropTech capabilities as material factors in location decisions. Buildings offering integrated digital platforms deliver measurable productivity benefits through reduced friction in workspace access, service delivery, and space optimization. The 30% footprint reduction achieved by one tenant while maintaining productivity illustrates how PropTech enables operational flexibility aligned with hybrid work models.

Investors and developers face strategic choices regarding legacy asset treatment. The bifurcation between future-ready and obsolescent properties suggests that buildings lacking digital infrastructure face accelerating competitive disadvantages. Retrofit economics appear favorable based on observed rental premiums and occupancy improvements, though individual property analysis remains essential.

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The sample, while diverse, concentrates in major urban markets where PropTech adoption rates exceed national averages, potentially limiting generalizability to secondary markets or regions with different technological infrastructure. The 24-month observation period captures medium-term impacts but cannot assess long-term equipment lifecycle costs or technology obsolescence risks.

Causality attribution presents inherent challenges. While statistical controls and comparative analysis strengthen causal inference, unobserved variables (management quality, tenant mix changes, market conditions) may influence outcomes. The research design cannot definitively isolate PropTech effects from correlated improvements in building operations or broader market trends.

Qualitative sampling focused on properties that successfully implemented PropTech solutions, introducing potential survivorship bias. Failed implementations or properties that abandoned digitalization efforts remain underrepresented, possibly inflating observed benefits. Future research should systematically examine implementation failures to identify risk factors and mitigation strategies.

The findings align with broader digital transformation trends across industries wherein data analytics, automation, and platform business models disrupt traditional operational paradigms. Real estate's historical technology lag (characterized by fragmented systems and paper-based processe) created substantial efficiency gaps that PropTech solutions address through integration and automation.

The COVID-19 pandemic's lasting impact on workplace expectations accelerated PropTech adoption by highlighting operational flexibility requirements. Hybrid work models demand dynamic space management capabilities that traditional fixed-lease structures cannot accommodate, positioning PropTech as enabling technology for evolving corporate real estate strategies.

Environmental regulations and investor ESG scrutiny create external pressures reinforcing PropTech adoption. Buildings generating real-time environmental performance data gain competitive advantages in attracting capital and tenants, transforming sustainability from compliance burden to market differentiator.

- **Conclusions**

This research empirically demonstrates that PropTech integration fundamentally transforms office building management from administrative oversight to data-driven service delivery. The findings provide robust evidence across four critical dimensions: operational efficiency improvements averaging 38.7% reduction in emergency maintenance, energy consumption reductions of 24.6% supporting ESG objectives, tenant satisfaction increases of 37.6 NPS points driving retention, and asset value enhancement through 12.8% rental premiums.

The statistical significance of results across all measured outcomes ($p < .001$), combined with consistent qualitative validation from stakeholders, establishes that digitalization has transitioned from competitive advantage to market prerequisite. Buildings lacking smart infrastructure face accelerating obsolescence as corporate tenants increasingly prioritize technology-enabled flexibility, sustainability transparency, and service quality in location decisions.

The Space-as-a-Service paradigm represents the most significant conceptual shift identified in this research. PropTech enables property managers to transcend traditional landlord roles, becoming service providers who optimize workspace experiences through real-time data and responsive infrastructure. This evolution aligns commercial real estate with broader platform economy trends while addressing hybrid work requirements that conventional fixed-lease models cannot accommodate.

From investment perspectives, the 3.7-year payback period and positive net present value across implementations support business cases for comprehensive digitalization. However, successful realization of PropTech benefits requires organizational readiness beyond technology acquisition, training investments, change management, and cultural adaptation emerged as critical success factors in qualitative analysis.

The research confirms that PropTech adoption is not merely operational enhancement but strategic imperative for resilience in contemporary commercial real estate markets. As environmental regulations intensify, workplace expectations evolve, and competitive dynamics reward differentiation, digitally-enabled buildings will increasingly define excellence standards in property management.

Future building competitiveness depends less on physical attributes and more on digital infrastructure enabling continuous optimization, transparent sustainability performance, and superior tenant experiences. Property owners and managers must recognize this transformation and implement comprehensive PropTech strategies to maintain asset relevance and value in rapidly evolving markets.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Assessing the Impact of Financial Risk on Organizations by Modeling the Unemployment Rate Using the ARIMA Model

Cezar Cătălin Ene[1)]

Abstract:
The unemployment rate is a critical macroeconomic indicator that directly influences the financial stability and risk exposure of organizations, yet the dynamic relationship between unemployment fluctuations and corporate financial risk remains insufficiently explored through rigorous quantitative methods. This article aims to model and forecast Romania's unemployment rate using the ARIMA methodology, thereby assessing its implications for organizational financial risk within an international comparative framework. Monthly unemployment rate data were sourced from the European Central Bank database, covering the period January 1997 to November 2024, totaling 335 observations. The series was log-transformed to stabilize variance, and stationarity was tested using the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test, which confirmed the original series as non-stationary ($p = 0.5935$); first-order differencing successfully achieved stationarity ($p = 0.0000$). Following the Box-Jenkins methodology implemented in EViews 12, multiple ARIMA specifications were evaluated based on the Bayesian Information Criterion, adjusted R^2, and standard error of regression. The ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model was selected as optimal, with statistically significant AR(1) and MA(2) coefficients of −0.9843 and −0.9975, respectively. Residual diagnostics confirmed white noise behavior through the Ljung-Box Q-statistic, and model stability was validated via inverse root analysis. Forecast evaluation demonstrated strong predictive accuracy, yielding an RMSE of 0.042, a Theil inequality coefficient of 0.012, and a covariance proportion of 81.7%. These findings confirm that ARIMA models effectively capture Romania's unemployment dynamics across major economic disruptions, including the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, offering practical value for managers, investors, and policymakers seeking to anticipate labor market shifts and mitigate associated financial risks.

Keywords: *unemployment rate, ARIMA, financial risk, time series forecasting, Box-Jenkins*

[1)] Ph.D. Student, University of Craiova, "Eugeniu Carada" Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Finance specialization, Romania, Email: ene.cezar.k8x@student.ucv.ro.

1. Introduction

The unemployment rate is one of the most relevant macroeconomic indicators, reflecting labor market conditions and directly influencing the financial stability of organizations. Its fluctuations affect corporate revenues, investment capacity, and, implicitly, financial risk exposure particularly in contexts marked by economic crises, pandemics, or geopolitical turbulence. The existing literature has consistently documented the connection between unemployment and corporate financial performance, yet most studies adopt either an aggregate macroeconomic perspective or focus primarily on social effects. Less explored are the dynamic relationships between unemployment rate variations and the financial risks perceived at the organizational level, particularly through rigorous quantitative methods such as ARIMA modelling (Box & Jenkins, 1970).

The ARIMA methodology has demonstrated strong forecasting performance across a wide range of economic and financial applications. Meher et al. (2021) confirmed its applicability in forecasting pharmaceutical stock performance, while Kumar et al. (2021, 2023) highlighted its effectiveness in volatile commodity markets. Da Veiga et al. (2024) applied ARIMA models to critical health-sector time series, including the unemployment rate, achieving forecast accuracy exceeding 95%. Ariyo et al. (2014) and Khan & Alghulaiakh (2020) further validated the model's predictive robustness for short-term stock price forecasting, with the latter reporting a MAPE-based accuracy of 99.74%. Despite this breadth of application, the use of ARIMA for linking unemployment dynamics to organizational financial risk remains a relatively underexplored avenue in the literature.

This study addresses that gap by applying the Box-Jenkins methodology to monthly unemployment rate data for Romania, covering the period January 1997 to November 2024 (335 observations), sourced from the European Central Bank database. The methodological approach follows Spulbăr & Ene (2024), who demonstrated the effectiveness of ARIMA in capturing and forecasting fluctuations in closing prices of stocks listed on the Bucharest Stock Exchange. The primary objective is to identify the optimal ARIMA specification for forecasting Romania's unemployment rate and to assess the implications of these dynamics for organizational financial risk. The scientific contribution lies in the application of a rigorous time-series framework to bridge labor market forecasting and financial risk assessment, offering practical value for managers, investors, and policymakers seeking to anticipate labor market shifts and mitigate associated financial risks.

2. Literature Review

The use of ARIMA models in forecasting economic and financial variables has been extensively explored in the literature. Meher et al. (2021) demonstrated their applicability in analysing the stock performance of Indian pharmaceutical companies (2017–2019), confirming the need for stationarity through the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test and selecting model specifications based on AIC and adjusted R^2. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2021) applied ARIMA to time series forecasting across volatile markets, identifying optimal models using AIC and BIC criteria, with first-order differencing employed to achieve stationarity.

In commodity markets, Kumar et al. (2023) forecasted weekly natural rubber RSS-1 prices in India (2002–2019) using the Box-Jenkins methodology, selecting ARIMA(1,1,4) based on significant coefficients, low AIC and Schwarz Criterion values, and i.i.d. residuals — confirming the model's robustness for financial risk management in price-volatile sectors. Fattah et al. (2018) extended the application to demand forecasting in a Moroccan food company (2010–2015), where ARIMA(1,0,1) outperformed competing specifications based on AIC and SBC criteria, contributing to supply chain optimisation.

Comparative studies have further contextualised ARIMA's relative strengths. Divisekara et al. (2020) evaluated ARIMA and GARCH models across 51 financial instruments from eight sectors, finding that GARCH outperforms ARIMA in volatility modelling, while underscoring the importance of model selection tailored to sector-specific data characteristics. In the public health domain, Da Veiga et al. (2024) applied ARIMA to five critical Brazilian health-sector time series (2000–2020), including the unemployment rate, with selected models such as ARIMA(1,0,2) and ARIMA(2,2,1) achieving forecast accuracy exceeding 95% as validated by MAPE and U-Theil statistics.

For short-term stock price forecasting, Ariyo et al. (2014) applied the Box-Jenkins methodology to data from the New York and Nigerian stock exchanges, with ARIMA(2,1,0) selected as optimal for Nokia stock index analysis, validated through BIC and white noise residual diagnostics. Khan & Alghulaiakh (2020) further confirmed ARIMA's predictive strength by forecasting Netflix stock prices (2015–2020), with ARIMA(1,1,33) achieving 99.74% accuracy based on MAPE and out-of-sample validation tests.

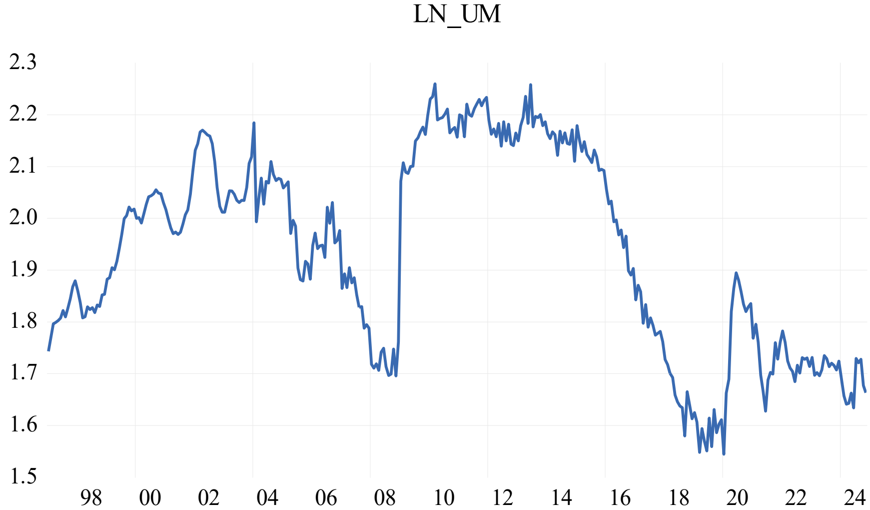
3. Methodology

The unemployment rate was selected as the primary variable for this study given its direct link to corporate financial stability, investment attractiveness, and organizational resilience to economic shocks, with the analysis focused on Romania due to the specificities of its national economy and data availability. Monthly data were sourced from the European Central Bank (ECB) database, covering January 1997 to November 2024, yielding 335 observations, well above the minimum recommended by Box & Tiao (1975), and encompassing key structural events including Romania's EU accession in 2007, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to modelling, the series was log-transformed to stabilise variance and reduce the influence of extreme values, a standard practice for economic time series (Spulbăr & Ene, 2024). The dataset contained no missing values and was split into training and test sets to enable rigorous out-of-sample forecast evaluation.

Statistical modelling was performed using EViews 12, following the Box-Jenkins (1970) methodology across three stages: identification, estimation, and diagnostic checking. The ARIMA(p, d, q) specification was identified through ACF and PACF analysis, with stationarity verified via the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test and differencing applied where required. Model selection relied on the AIC, Schwarz Criterion (SC), and Hannan-Quinn Criterion (HQC), while residual validation used the Ljung-Box Q-statistic to confirm white noise behaviour. Spulbăr & Ene (2024) applied this same methodology to forecast BRD and Banca Transilvania (TLV) closing prices on the Bucharest Stock Exchange, confirming ARIMA's capacity to capture Romanian financial market dynamics.

Figure 1 illustrates the time evolution of the log-transformed variable LN_UM. The series is visibly non-stationary, exhibiting significant fluctuations and shifting mean levels across sub-periods — indicating the presence of trends or time-varying seasonality that render it unsuitable for direct modelling and requiring pre-processing to achieve stationarity.

Figure 1. Logarithmic evolution of Romania's unemployment rate (1997–2024)



Source: Author's contribution

To transform the series into a stationary one, differencing is applied. Differencing involves computing the variation between consecutive values of the series, eliminating trends and stabilising the mean. If the series remains non-stationary after first-order differencing, the process may be repeated. The parameter d in the ARIMA model indicates how many times the series has been differenced to achieve stationarity. In the present case, differencing of LN_UM was necessary to eliminate the evident trend visible in the graph.

The LN_UM series exhibits fluctuations that reflect major economic events and structural changes in the labour market. Growth phases between 2002 and 2008 correspond to an economic expansion cycle, while the post-2008 decline reflects the impact of the global financial crisis. Variations around 2020 are associated with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These phenomena underscore the necessity of differencing and the careful identification of parameters p, d, and q to correctly capture the series dynamics.

The ARIMA model is specified through three fundamental parameters:

- **p:** the number of autoregressive (AR) terms, indicating how many past values of the series are used to predict the current value. The value of p is determined using the Partial Autocorrelation Function (PACF).
- **d:** the number of differencing operations required to achieve stationarity, as discussed above.
- **q:** the number of moving average (MA) terms, representing the influence of past residuals on the current value. The value of q is determined using the Autocorrelation Function (ACF).

4. Findings and discussion

To assess the stationarity of the LN_UM series, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test was applied, with results presented in Table 1. The ADF test investigates the presence of a unit root, a characteristic indicative of non-stationarity, under the null hypothesis that the series contains a unit root.

Table 1. Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Statistics Before Differencing

Null Hypothesis: LN_UM has a unit root
Exogenous: Constant
Lag Length: 1 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=36)

		t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic		-1.377885	0.5935
Test critical values:	1% level	-3.449797	
	5% level	-2.870004	
	10% level	-2.571349	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation
Dependent Variable: D(LN_UM)
Method: Least Squares
Date: 01/12/25 Time: 16:25
Sample (adjusted): 1997M03 2024M11
Included observations: 333 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
LN_UM(-1)	-0.014930	0.010835	-1.377885	0.1692
D(LN_UM(-1))	-0.133957	0.054610	-2.452966	0.0147
C	0.028592	0.021103	1.354893	0.1764

R-squared	0.025759	Mean dependent var	-0.000318
Adjusted R-squared	0.019855	S.D. dependent var	0.037967
S.E. of regression	0.037588	Akaike info criterion	-3.715311
Sum squared resid	0.466236	Schwarz criterion	-3.681004
Log likelihood	621.5993	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-3.701631
F-statistic	4.362638	Durbin-Watson stat	1.972971
Prob(F-statistic)	0.013488		

Source: Author's contribution

The results show a t-statistic of −1.377885, which exceeds the critical values at the 1% (−3.449797), 5% (−2.870004), and 10% (−2.571349) significance levels. Furthermore, the associated p-value of 0.5935 surpasses the conventional significance threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis of non-stationarity cannot be rejected, confirming that the LN_UM series requires further transformation before it can be used in an ARIMA model.

The non-stationarity of the series indicates the presence of long-term trends or variations that may compromise the accuracy of the analysis. To address this, first-order differencing was applied a process that computes the variation between consecutive values, eliminating trends and stabilising the mean. Following differencing, the series was re-tested using the ADF test to confirm that stationarity had been achieved.

Table 2. Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Statistics for First-Order Differencing

Null Hypothesis: D(LN_UM) has a unit root
Exogenous: Constant
Lag Length: 0 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=36)

		t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic		-20.99856	**0.0000**
Test critical values:	1% level	-3.449797	
	5% level	-2.870004	
	10% level	-2.571349	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation
Dependent Variable: D(LN_UM,2)
Method: Least Squares
Date: 01/12/25 Time: 17:23
Sample (adjusted): 1997M03 2024M11
Included observations: 333 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(LN_UM(-1))	-1.141890	0.054379	-20.99856	0.0000
C	-0.000346	0.002063	-0.167913	0.8668

R-squared	0.571210	Mean dependent var	-0.000120
Adjusted R-squared	0.569914	S.D. dependent var	0.057393
S.E. of regression	0.037639	Akaike info criterion	-3.715580
Sum squared resid	0.468918	Schwarz criterion	-3.692709

Log likelihood	620.6441	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-3.706460
F-statistic	440.9394	Durbin-Watson stat	1.974083
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

Source: Author's contribution

The ADF test results following first-order differencing, reported in Table 2, confirm that the LN_UM series achieves stationarity. The t-statistic of −20.99856 is substantially below the critical values at the 1% (−3.449797), 5% (−2.870004), and 10% (−2.571349) significance levels, and the associated p-value of 0.0000 indicates very high statistical significance. The null hypothesis of a unit root is therefore rejected. This result is essential for ARIMA modelling, as stationarity is a prerequisite for the application of this class of models. Through differencing, long-term trends and seasonal variations are eliminated, enabling the model to capture short-term fluctuations and generate more accurate forecasts.

The ADF test applied after second-order differencing of the LN_UM series, reported in Table 3, confirms that the series remains stationary. The t-statistic of −12.16212 is well below the critical values at the 1% (−3.450223), 5% (−2.870192), and 10% (−2.571449) significance levels, with an associated p-value of 0.0000. The null hypothesis of a unit root is again rejected.

Table 3. Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Statistics for Second-Order Differencing

Null Hypothesis: D(LN_UM,2) has a unit root
Exogenous: Constant
Lag Length: 6 (Automatic - based on SIC, maxlag=36)

		t-Statistic	Prob.*
Augmented Dickey-Fuller test statistic		-12.16212	0.0000
Test critical values:	1% level	-3.450223	
	5% level	-2.870192	
	10% level	-2.571449	

*MacKinnon (1996) one-sided p-values.

Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Equation
Dependent Variable: D(LN_UM,3)
Method: Least Squares
Date: 01/12/25 Time: 17:27
Sample (adjusted): 1997M10 2024M11
Included observations: 326 after adjustments

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.

D(LN_UM(-1),2)	-4.833670	0.397437	-12.16212	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-1),3)	2.812381	0.367896	7.644502	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-2),3)	2.030113	0.319074	6.362512	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-3),3)	1.478403	0.258815	5.712193	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-4),3)	0.959136	0.194456	4.932410	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-5),3)	0.537248	0.124043	4.331128	0.0000
D(LN_UM(-6),3)	0.158810	0.056113	2.830166	0.0049
C	-0.000169	0.002181	-0.077276	0.9385

R-squared	0.859864	Mean dependent var	2.35E-05
Adjusted R-squared	0.856779	S.D. dependent var	0.104048
S.E. of regression	0.039377	Akaike info criterion	-3.607054
Sum squared resid	0.493065	Schwarz criterion	-3.514124
Log likelihood	595.9499	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-3.569970
F-statistic	278.7461	Durbin-Watson stat	2.031785
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

Source: Author's contribution

The application of second-order differencing confirms stationarity; however, the results obtained after first-order differencing were already sufficient to ensure this property. It is worth noting that a second differencing operation may add unnecessary complexity to the model without meaningful gains in stationarity, given that the series had already become stationary after the first differencing. The adjusted R-squared of 0.856779 and the extremely low p-value indicate that the model accounts well for the variation in the data.

Figure 2. Correlogram of Romania's Unemployment Rate Time Series After First-Order Differencing

Date: 01/12/25 Time: 17:31
Sample (adjusted): 1997M02 2024M11
Included observations: 334 after adjustments

	AC	PAC	Q-Stat	Prob
1	-0.142	-0.142	6.7798	0.009
2	0.111	0.093	10.981	0.004
3	0.088	0.119	13.622	0.003
4	-0.083	-0.069	15.954	0.003
5	0.067	0.025	17.462	0.004
6	-0.086	-0.070	19.991	0.003
7	0.092	0.081	22.918	0.002
8	0.023	0.051	23.101	0.003
9	-0.000	0.011	23.101	0.006
10	-0.015	-0.055	23.184	0.010
11	0.015	0.016	23.260	0.016
12	-0.124	-0.126	28.609	0.005
13	-0.024	-0.044	28.813	0.007
14	0.037	0.050	29.298	0.010
15	-0.075	-0.035	31.294	0.008
16	-0.012	-0.060	31.348	0.012
17	0.056	0.069	32.456	0.013
18	0.007	0.033	32.471	0.019
19	0.011	0.015	32.514	0.027
20	-0.002	0.005	32.516	0.038
21	-0.019	-0.028	32.646	0.050
22	0.080	0.071	34.924	0.039
23	-0.009	0.040	34.953	0.053
24	-0.145	-0.196	42.616	0.011
25	0.082	0.005	45.066	0.008
26	-0.069	0.001	46.781	0.007
27	-0.004	-0.015	46.789	0.010
28	0.074	0.057	48.816	0.009
29	-0.079	-0.030	51.123	0.007
30	0.117	0.062	56.165	0.003
31	0.001	0.070	56.166	0.004
32	0.058	0.079	57.427	0.004
33	0.046	0.032	58.230	0.004
34	-0.056	-0.028	59.408	0.004
35	0.102	0.064	63.302	0.002
36	0.002	-0.011	63.304	0.003

Source: Author's contribution

Figure 3. Correlogram of Romania's Unemployment Rate Time Series After Second-Order Differencing

Date: 01/12/25 Time: 17:31
Sample (adjusted): 1997M03 2024M11
Included observations: 333 after adjustments

	AC	PAC	Q-Stat	Prob
1	-0.612	-0.612	125.81	0.000
2	0.123	-0.403	130.87	0.000
3	0.065	-0.146	132.28	0.000
4	-0.139	-0.204	138.84	0.000
5	0.130	-0.090	144.63	0.000
6	-0.144	-0.215	151.68	0.000
7	0.108	-0.155	155.64	0.000
8	-0.020	-0.100	155.78	0.000
9	-0.004	-0.032	155.78	0.000
10	-0.020	-0.100	155.92	0.000
11	0.075	0.042	157.89	0.000
12	-0.105	-0.046	161.70	0.000
13	0.017	-0.130	161.81	0.000
14	0.076	-0.038	163.80	0.000
15	-0.078	-0.016	165.91	0.000
16	-0.002	-0.137	165.91	0.000
17	0.052	-0.088	166.86	0.000
18	-0.024	-0.062	167.05	0.000
19	0.007	-0.049	167.07	0.000
20	0.002	-0.015	167.07	0.000
21	-0.052	-0.113	168.04	0.000
22	0.083	-0.074	170.52	0.000
23	0.020	0.156	170.66	0.000
24	-0.159	-0.053	179.75	0.000
25	0.165	-0.049	189.65	0.000
26	-0.093	-0.028	192.81	0.000
27	-0.007	-0.096	192.83	0.000
28	0.102	-0.005	196.65	0.000
29	-0.154	-0.096	205.34	0.000
30	0.137	-0.097	212.22	0.000
31	-0.075	-0.100	214.31	0.000
32	0.030	-0.048	214.64	0.000
33	0.040	0.011	215.25	0.000
34	-0.114	-0.080	220.08	0.000
35	0.114	-0.001	224.92	0.000
36	-0.019	0.063	225.05	0.000

Source: Author's contribution

For the first-order differenced series (Figure 2), the Autocorrelation Function (AC) and Partial Autocorrelation Function (PAC) values indicate a gradual decline in autocorrelation at the initial lags, yet several lags remain statistically significant (e.g., lags 1, 2, and 24). This suggests that the series, while more stationary than in its raw form, retains a residual structure that requires further modelling through autoregressive (p) or moving average (q) components. The Q-statistics and associated p-values confirm the presence of significant autocorrelations at multiple lags.

For the second-order differenced series (Figure 3), the correlogram shows a more pronounced decline in autocorrelations across all lags, with AC and PAC values becoming smaller. The statistical significance of residual autocorrelations also diminishes, indicating that the series becomes nearly fully decorrelated after second-order differencing. However, applying a second differencing operation removes useful information about short-term relationships within the series, which may reduce the accuracy of both the economic interpretation and the predictive performance of the model.

Based on the results presented in Table 4, the selection of ARIMA(1, 2, 2) is justified by several criteria. The model was chosen as it yields an adjusted R^2 of 0.565565, the highest among all tested specifications indicating a superior capacity to explain data variation. Additionally, the standard error of regression (S.E.) of 0.038001 is relatively low, suggesting minimal residual error.

Table 4. ARIMA Model Selection Based on Statistical Performance Criteria

Model	BIC	Adjusted R^2	S.E. of Regression
ARIMA(1, 2, 1)	-3.64345	0.569002	0.037679
ARIMA(2, 2, 1)	-3.635295	0.564821	0.037861
ARIMA(6, 2, 1)	-3.630396	0.563241	0.03793
ARIMA(7, 2, 1)	-3.631235	0.563157	0.037933
ARIMA(4, 2, 1)	-3.62964	0.562874	0.037946
ARIMA(1, 2, 2)	**-3.625772**	**0.565565**	**0.038001**
ARIMA(13, 2, 1)	-3.623289	0.559915	0.038074
ARIMA(23, 2, 1)	-3.622775	0.559643	0.038085
ARIMA(1, 2, 24)	**-3.307815**	**0.388098**	**0.044895**
ARIMA(1, 2, 4)	**-3.291798**	**0.376945**	**0.045302**
ARIMA(1, 2, 25)	**-3.291044**	**0.376885**	**0.045304**
ARIMA(1, 2, 29)	-3.289402	0.375897	0.04534
ARIMA(1, 2, 6)	**-3.28917**	**0.375395**	**0.045359**
ARIMA(1, 2, 5)	-3.27951	0.369215	0.045582
ARIMA(12, 1, 24)	**-3.712318**	**0.038832**	**0.037193**

Source: Author's contribution

The remaining models in the table that are not highlighted do not exhibit statistical significance, excluding them from final consideration regardless of potentially comparable BIC values.

The ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model also offers a favourable trade-off between complexity and performance, with a BIC of −3.625772, near-optimal relative to the other tested specifications. This value suggests that the model does not introduce unnecessary parameters that could lead to overfitting, maintaining an appropriate balance between model accuracy and parsimony.

The residual correlogram for the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model confirms that the model satisfies the requirements for a stable univariate process. Diagnostic analysis was conducted using the Ljung-Box Q-statistic, under the null hypothesis that the residuals are white noise. that is independent and identically distributed.

Figure 4. Autocorrelation and Partial Autocorrelation Analysis of Model Residuals

Date: 01/12/25 Time: 23:20
Sample (adjusted): 1997M03 2024M11
Q-statistic probabilities adjusted for 2 ARMA terms

Autocorrelation	Partial Correlation		AC	PAC	Q-Stat	Prob
		1	-0.153	-0.153	7.9007	
		2	0.117	0.096	12.535	
		3	0.078	0.112	14.584	0.000
		4	-0.077	-0.064	16.595	0.000
		5	0.056	0.015	17.661	0.001
		6	-0.082	-0.066	19.933	0.001
		7	0.082	0.069	22.210	0.000
		8	0.026	0.056	22.444	0.001
		9	-0.009	0.001	22.471	0.002
		10	-0.010	-0.047	22.503	0.004
		11	0.009	0.009	22.533	0.007
		12	-0.118	-0.117	27.333	0.002
		13	-0.032	-0.058	27.699	0.004
		14	0.039	0.054	28.242	0.005
		15	-0.085	-0.048	30.787	0.004
		16	-0.009	-0.055	30.818	0.006
		17	0.046	0.055	31.567	0.007
		18	0.008	0.037	31.592	0.011
		19	-0.000	-0.001	31.592	0.017
		20	-0.001	0.007	31.593	0.025
		21	-0.031	-0.043	31.926	0.032
		22	0.080	0.074	34.233	0.025
		23	-0.019	0.030	34.370	0.033
		24	-0.143	-0.191	41.802	0.007
		25	0.073	-0.012	43.710	0.006
		26	-0.067	0.008	45.347	0.005
		27	-0.015	-0.031	45.425	0.007
		28	0.074	0.059	47.413	0.006
		29	-0.088	-0.044	50.259	0.004
		30	0.118	0.064	55.365	0.002
		31	-0.005	0.061	55.372	0.002
		32	0.062	0.084	56.793	0.002
		33	0.043	0.027	57.474	0.003
		34	-0.050	-0.021	58.421	0.003
		35	0.099	0.061	62.065	0.002
		36	0.006	-0.001	62.081	0.002

Source: Author's contribution

In the residual correlogram, the absence of significant spikes in the AC and PAC plots indicates no meaningful autocorrelation in the residuals. These results confirm that the selected ARIMA model is appropriate for the analysed time series, with residuals satisfying the conditions required to be considered white noise. This property is important for model validation, as it indicates that all available information has been captured by the model and that the generated forecasts are reliable.

To ensure the validity of the estimated ARIMA(1, 2, 2) process, the AR (autoregressive) and MA (moving average) roots were verified to lie inside the unit circle as a necessary condition for confirming model stationarity and ensuring reliable forecasts.

Table 5 demonstrates that all AR and MA roots are positioned inside the unit circle, with moduli of 0.984346 for the AR component and 0.998726 for the MA components. This confirms that the estimated ARIMA model is both stationary and invertible, reinforcing its robustness and reliability for forecasting the analysed variable.

Table 5. Stability and Invertibility of the ARIMA Model: AR/MA Polynomial Roots

Inverse Roots of AR/MA Polynomial(s)
Specification: D(LN_UM, 2) C AR(1) MA(2)
Date: 01/12/25 Time: 23:20
Sample: 1997M01 2024M11
Included observations: 333

AR Root(s)	Modulus	Cycle
-0.984346	0.984346	

No root lies outside the unit circle.
ARMA model is stationary.

MA Root(s)	Modulus	Cycle
-0.998726	0.998726	
0.998726	0.998726	

No root lies outside the unit circle.
ARMA model is invertible.

Source: Author's contribution

The ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model estimated via Maximum Likelihood yielded relevant results for the analysis of the second-order differenced dependent variable. The autoregressive AR(1) and moving average MA(2) coefficients are both statistically significant, with p-values below the conventional threshold of 0.05. The AR(1) coefficient of −0.9843 indicates a strong negative relationship between the current value of the series and its lagged value, while the MA(2) coefficient of −0.9975 reflects a significant contribution of the second-order moving average component to the dynamics of the series.

Table 6. Estimated Parameters and Performance Statistics for the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) Model

Dependent Variable: D(LN_UM,2)
Method: ARMA Maximum Likelihood (OPG - BHHH)
Date: 01/12/25 Time: 22:56
Sample: 1997M03 2024M11
Included observations: 333
Convergence achieved after 19 iterations
Coefficient covariance computed using outer product of gradients

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	-2.50E-05	2.40E-05	-1.039873	0.2992
AR(1)	-0.984346	0.020064	-49.06052	0.0000
MA(2)	-0.997454	0.068991	-14.45773	0.0000
SIGMASQ	0.001427	8.97E-05	15.90989	0.0000

R-squared	0.565565	Mean dependent var	-0.000120
Adjusted R-squared	0.561603	S.D. dependent var	0.057393
S.E. of regression	0.038001	Akaike info criterion	-3.671516
Sum squared resid	0.475092	Schwarz criterion	-3.625772
Log likelihood	615.3074	Hannan-Quinn criter.	-3.653275
F-statistic	142.7683	Durbin-Watson stat	2.305608
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000		

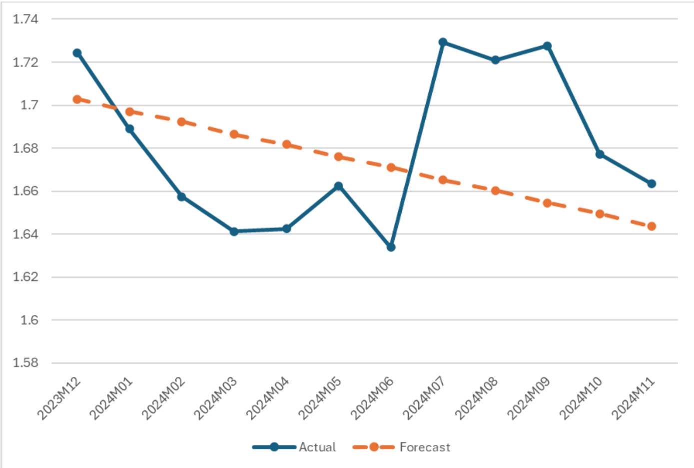
Inverted AR Roots	-.98	
Inverted MA Roots	1.00	-1.00

Source: Author's contribution

The model's goodness-of-fit indicators provide additional insight into its performance. The adjusted R-squared of 0.5616 indicates that approximately 56% of the variability in the differenced series is explained by the model, a reasonable level of fit for an ARIMA model applied to economic data. The Akaike (AIC), Schwarz (SIC), and Hannan-Quinn (HQ) information criteria yield values of −3.6715, −3.6258, and −3.6533, respectively, suggesting that the selected model offers an appropriate balance between complexity and fit. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.3056 indicates a low probability of autocorrelation among the residuals, confirming that the model satisfies the requirements of a stable and valid forecasting process.

The comparative plot of actual versus forecasted values for the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model highlights several important aspects. The general trajectory of the forecasted values follows a downward path, suggesting that the model captures a long-term declining component in Romania's unemployment rate over the analysed period. This is a positive finding, indicating that the model reflects the overall direction of the historical data and produces forecasts that are consistent with macroeconomic expectations.

Figure 5. Actual and Forecasted Values of the Unemployment Rate for the Period 2023M12–2024M11



Source: Author's contribution

Another notable aspect is the close alignment between actual and forecasted values in the first half of the analysed interval, particularly for December 2023 and January 2024, where discrepancies are minimal. This reflects the model's adequate capacity to generate short-term forecasts based on historical patterns.

Furthermore, despite notable deviations at certain points (such as June 2024), the model's forecasts remain within a reasonable range of the actual values, indicating overall model consistency.

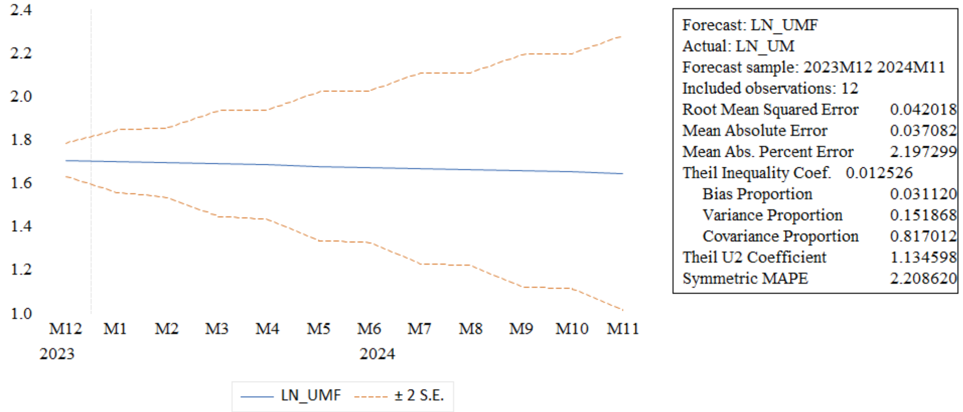
Table 7. Actual and Forecasted Values for the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) Model

Date	Actual	Forecast
2023M12	1.724347	1.702742
2024M01	1.688918	1.696974
2024M02	1.657375	1.692299
2024M03	1.641309	1.686498
2024M04	1.642532	1.681756
2024M05	1.662526	1.675922
2024M06	1.633882	1.671113
2024M07	1.729245	1.665246
2024M08	1.721021	1.66037
2024M09	1.727622	1.654469
2024M10	1.677326	1.649528
2024M11	1.663356	1.643593

Source: Author's contribution

The figure below presents the forecast generated by the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model for the logarithmic unemployment rate, along with two standard error bands. The forecasted curve (LN_UMF) follows a steady downward trajectory, suggesting that the model anticipates a gradual decline in the unemployment rate over the coming months. This projection is consistent with the long-term trend identified in the historical time series.

Figure 6. Forecasted Unemployment Rate with ±2 Standard Error Confidence Intervals



Source: Author's contribution

The confidence intervals represented by the dotted lines (±2 standard deviations) indicate an acceptable level of forecast uncertainty, providing additional information on the potential variability of the estimates. These intervals remain relatively stable throughout the analysed period, suggesting that the model does not identify major risks of instability or extreme variations.

The accuracy indicators included in the figure provide important information about model quality. The Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) is low, at approximately 0.042, indicating a small average error between forecasted and actual values. The Theil inequality coefficient (0.012) and the covariance proportion (81.7%) confirm that the majority of variations are correctly captured by the model, with a low share of bias and variance errors.

5. Conclusions

This study applied the Box-Jenkins ARIMA methodology to monthly unemployment rate data for Romania, covering the period January 1997 to November 2024, with the objective of modelling unemployment dynamics and assessing their implications for organizational financial risk. Following log-transformation and stationarity testing via the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test, the ARIMA(1, 2, 2) model was identified as the optimal specification, demonstrating statistically significant AR(1) and MA(2) coefficients of −0.9843 and −0.9975, respectively, alongside satisfactory goodness-of-fit indicators including an adjusted R^2 of 0.5616 and a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.3056. Residual diagnostics confirmed white noise behaviour, and inverse root analysis validated the stationarity and invertibility of the estimated process.

Forecast evaluation over the out-of-sample period December 2023 to November 2024 demonstrated strong predictive accuracy, with an RMSE of 0.042, a Theil inequality coefficient of 0.012, and a covariance proportion of 81.7%. The forecasted trajectory indicates a gradual decline in Romania's unemployment rate, consistent with the long-term trend observed across the historical series and with macroeconomic conditions in the post-pandemic period. These results confirm that ARIMA models are capable of effectively capturing the structural dynamics of the Romanian labour market, including the effects of major disruptions such as the 2008 global financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

From a practical standpoint, the findings carry direct implications for managers, investors, and policymakers. Accurate forecasting of unemployment trends enables organisations to anticipate shifts in consumer demand, labour costs, and credit risk exposure, thereby supporting more informed strategic and financial decision-making. Investors may use such models to better assess macroeconomic conditions prior to capital allocation, while policymakers can leverage these forecasts to design timely labour market interventions aimed at reducing unemployment-related financial vulnerabilities.

Future research directions include extending the comparative analysis to multiple countries to identify regional differences in labour market sensitivity and financial risk exposure. Additionally, hybrid modelling approaches, combining ARIMA with machine learning techniques such as LSTM networks, may further improve forecast accuracy, particularly in periods of structural breaks or heightened economic volatility (Spulbăr & Ene, 2024).

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Role of Insurance in Ensuring Financial Security: An Analytical Study based on Risk Management approach

P. Vidhya[1], Sharan Kumar Shetty[2], N. Devaram[3], Ramona Birau[4], Virgil Popescu[5], D. Renukadevi[6], P. Manochithra[7], Payam Rostamicheri[8], Gabriela Ana Maria Lupu (Filip)[9], Stefan Margaritescu[10], M. Devaki[11], Cristina Sultanoiu (Patularu)[12]

Abstract: Insurance plays a pivotal role in safeguarding individuals and families against financial uncertainties caused by unforeseen events such as illness, accidents, or death. This study aims to analyze the role of insurance in ensuring financial security among residents of [City/Region]. A total of 300 respondents were surveyed using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data, supplemented by secondary data from journals, reports, and publications. The study employs descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including frequency distribution and chi-square analysis, to examine awareness, perception, and the impact of insurance on financial stability. The findings indicate that individuals with adequate insurance coverage demonstrate higher financial confidence and resilience during emergencies. This study highlights the importance of promoting insurance literacy and adopting comprehensive insurance plans for long-term financial security.

[1] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, vidhyasathishsnr@gmail.com

[2] Department of MBA, AJ Institute of Engineering & Technology –Mangalore, Karnataka, India, sharansai25@gmail.com

[3] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, ramdeva705@gmail.com

[4] Doctoral School of Economic Sciences" Eugeniu Carada", University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, ramona.f.birau@gmail.com

[5] Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania, virgil.popescu@vilaro.ro

[6] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, renu28185@gmail.com

[7] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, manomadhumitha@gmail.com

[8] Department of Finance, Student of Finance, BI Norwegian Business School - Oslo campus, Nydalsveien 37, 0484, Oslo, Norway, payamrostami07@gmail.com

[9] University of Craiova, "Eugeniu Carada" Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, Lupuanamariagabriela@yahoo.com

[10] University of Craiova, "Eugeniu Carada" Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, stefanitamargaritescu@gmail.com

[11] Department of Corporate Secretaryship, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, India, deva.shylu@gmail.com

[12] University of Craiova, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences "Eugeniu Carada", Craiova, Romania, cristinapatularu1973@gmail.com

The Role of Insurance in Ensuring Financial Security: An Analytical Study based on Risk Management approach

Keywords: *Insurance Financial Security, Risk Management, Life and Health Insurance, Economic Stability, Risk Management*

Introduction

In today's uncertain economic environment, individuals and families face numerous financial risks ranging from medical emergencies to loss of income. Insurance serves as a financial safety net, providing protection against these unforeseen risks by pooling resources and sharing the financial burden. Beyond protection, insurance encourages savings, promotes financial discipline, and enhances economic stability for individuals and society. Understanding the role of insurance in ensuring financial security is essential, as it influences financial planning, risk management, and overall well-being.

Statement of the Problem

1. Despite the availability of various insurance products, a significant portion of the population lacks adequate awareness and understanding of insurance benefits, limiting its effectiveness as a financial security tool.

2. The impact of insurance on financial stability and risk management remains underexplored among different demographic groups, making it essential to evaluate its role in ensuring economic resilience

Objectives

1. To examine the level of awareness and utilization of insurance among respondents.

2. To analyze the role of insurance in providing financial security and mitigating economic risks.

Research Methodology

The study follows a descriptive research design. A total of 300 respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire covering demographic details, awareness, and perception of insurance, as well as its financial impact. Secondary data were gathered from journals, reports, and books. Data analysis involves frequency distribution to understand demographic trends and chi-square analysis to examine the relationship between insurance awareness and financial security.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to respondents from Coimbatore and may not represent the entire population.

Review of Literature

Smith (2020) conducted a study which emphasizes the role of life insurance in reducing financial vulnerability among families. The research found that households with life insurance coverage were better able to cope with sudden income loss due to the death of the primary earner. The study highlights that life insurance not only provides financial compensation but also contributes to long-term planning, ensuring children's education and basic household needs are met. This aligns with the idea that insurance is a core tool for financial security.

Kumar and Sharma (2019) explored the relationship between awareness and adoption of health insurance among urban households. They found that awareness programs significantly increased the likelihood of individuals purchasing health insurance. The study concluded that lack of awareness was a major barrier to insurance uptake, and informed individuals were more likely to appreciate insurance as a financial safety net.

Rao (2021) provided a research which highlights the dual role of insurance in providing protection and promoting financial discipline. Policyholders who regularly invested in insurance demonstrated better savings habits and were more financially resilient in emergencies. The study suggests that insurance not only mitigates risk but also encourages structured financial planning, making it an essential tool for long-term security.

Imran et al. (2025) investigated relevant aspects on impacting the insurance market in China and its effect on economic growth. Moreover, Frank et al. (2024) examined the implications of Takaful insurance on financial markets. Certain researchers such as Kayarthakdka et al. (2023a; 2023b) and Vidyavathi et al. (2023) have provided comprehensive research studies on life insurance in an emerging economy like India.

Johnson (2018) examined the macroeconomic benefits of insurance in fostering economic stability. The research indicates that insurance reduces the financial impact of risks on households and businesses, enabling investment and entrepreneurship. By managing risk efficiently, insurance indirectly contributes to societal financial security, highlighting its broader role beyond individual protection.

Patel and Singh (2022) investigated the influence of financial literacy on insurance adoption. The study found that individuals with higher financial literacy were more likely to purchase insurance products and perceive them as essential for financial security. The research underscores the importance of educational initiatives to enhance understanding of insurance benefits, which in turn strengthens household financial stability.

Role of Insurance in Financial Security

Insurance is an essential tool for ensuring financial security in today’s uncertain world. It provides protection against unexpected risks such as accidents, illness, natural disasters, property loss, or the untimely death of the earning member of a family. By transferring the burden of risk from an individual to an insurance company, it helps maintain financial stability and peace of mind.

1. Risk Management:

Insurance safeguards individuals and families from financial losses due to unforeseen events. For example, health insurance covers hospitalization expenses, while motor insurance covers accident damages.

2. Income Protection:

Life insurance ensures that the dependents of an earning member are financially secure in case of death or disability. It acts as a steady source of income replacement.

3. Wealth Preservation:

Without insurance, unexpected events can deplete lifelong savings. Insurance prevents such financial drain by covering high expenses like medical bills or property damage.

4. Savings and Investment:

Some insurance policies (endowment, pension, and unit-linked plans) combine protection with long-term savings. They help in building wealth for future goals such as retirement, education, or marriage.

5. Economic Stability:

Insurance not only benefits individuals but also contributes to national economic development. By covering risks, it promotes entrepreneurship, investment, and reduces financial stress in society.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table no.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–30	100	33.3
	31–45	120	40.0
	46–60	60	20.0
	Above 60	20	6.7
Gender	Male	170	56.7
	Female	130	43.3
Education	High School	50	16.7
	Graduate	180	60.0
	Postgraduate	70	23.3
Income (Monthly)	Below ₹25,000	80	26.7
	₹25,000–₹50,000	120	40.0
	Above ₹50,000	100	33.3

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents are between 31–45 years (40%), with graduate-level education (60%), and a balanced income distribution. This suggests a relatively informed sample capable of understanding insurance concepts.

Table no.2. Awareness of Insurance

Awareness Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	120	40%
Moderate	100	33.3%
Low	80	26.7%

Interpretation:

40% of respondents have high awareness of insurance products, while 26.7% have low awareness. This indicates that while a significant portion understands insurance, targeted awareness campaigns are needed for a larger impact.

Table no.3. Type of Insurance Held by Respondents

Type of Insurance	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Life Insurance	130	43.3
Health Insurance	100	33.3
Vehicle Insurance	40	13.3
Property Insurance	30	10.0

Interpretation:

Life insurance is the most commonly held policy (43.3%), followed by health insurance (33.3%). This shows that respondents prioritize protection against income loss and medical emergencies.

Table no.4. Perceived Role of Insurance in Financial Security

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	107	35.7
Agree	123	41
Neutral	41	13.7
Disagree	18	6
Strongly Disagree	11	3.7

Interpretation:

76.7% of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) believe that insurance plays a significant role in financial security. Only a small fraction (10%) disagrees, indicating general recognition of insurance as a safety net.

Table no.5. Chi-Square Analysis of Insurance Coverage and Financial Security

Financial Security	Insured (Observed)	Insured (Expected)	Uninsured (Observed)	Uninsured (Expected)	$(O-E)^2/E$ Insured	$(O-E)^2/E$ Uninsured
High	110	100	40	50	1.00	2.00
Moderate	80	86.67	50	43.33	0.51	1.03
Low	10	13.33	10	6.67	0.83	1.66
Total					**2.34**	**4.69**
Chi-Square (χ^2)						**7.03**
df						2
Significance ($\alpha = 0.05$)						χ^2 Critical = 5.991

- The chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 7.03$) exceeds the critical value (5.991) at df = 2, $\alpha = 0.05$.
- This indicates a **significant association** between insurance coverage and perceived financial security.

Findings

1. **Awareness of Insurance:**
   - 40% of respondents had high awareness of insurance products, while 26.7% had low awareness.
   - This indicates that although a significant portion of the population understands insurance, there is still a gap in insurance literacy.
2. **Type of Insurance Coverage:**
   - Life insurance (43.3%) and health insurance (33.3%) were the most commonly held policies, reflecting respondents' priorities in protecting income and health.
3. **Perceived Role of Insurance in Financial Security:**
   - 76.7% of respondents (Strongly Agree + Agree) believe insurance plays a significant role in ensuring financial security.
4. **Relationship Between Insurance and Financial Security:**
   - Chi-Square analysis ($\chi^2 = 7.03 > 5.991$, df = 2, $\alpha = 0.05$) confirms a significant positive association between having insurance and perceived financial security.
   - Insured respondents report higher financial stability than uninsured respondents.
5. **Demographic Influence:**
   - Education and income levels significantly influence both awareness and adoption of insurance products.

Suggestions

1. **Promote Insurance Awareness Programs:**
   - Government agencies, financial institutions, and insurance companies should conduct awareness campaigns to educate the public on the benefits and types of insurance.
2. **Financial Literacy Initiatives:**
   - Educational workshops and online resources can improve understanding of insurance as a financial planning tool.
3. **Encourage Comprehensive Coverage:**
   - Individuals should be encouraged to take combined health and life insurance policies for better financial security.
4. **Target Low-Awareness Groups:**
   - Special focus should be given to populations with lower education or income levels, who often lack awareness of insurance benefits.
5. **Integration with Digital Platforms:**
   - Leveraging digital marketing and online platforms can increase accessibility and adoption of insurance products.

Conclusion

The study concludes that insurance is a vital tool for ensuring financial security. Respondents with insurance coverage exhibit higher financial stability and resilience against unexpected events. Awareness and education play a critical role in influencing insurance adoption, highlighting the need for targeted awareness and financial literacy programs. Insurance not only mitigates financial risks but also encourages disciplined financial planning and long-term economic stability. Strengthening insurance literacy and promoting comprehensive coverage can significantly enhance individual and household financial security.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Macroeconomic Determinants of Bank Profitability. Research Trends and Future Perspectives in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Daniela Iulia Maria Carbune[1)]
Daniel Costin Matache[2)]

Abstract:
The aim of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the scientific literature examining the relationship between macroeconomic variables and bank profitability, with the objective of identifying the main research trends, the most influential authors and the dominant thematic areas addressed in this field. Using bibliographic data extracted from the Web of Science Core Collection for the period 2010-2026 the study maps citation networks, co-authorship structures and keyword co-occurrence patterns in order to reveal the intellectual architecture of research on macroeconomic determinants of banking performance. The results highlight a significant and continuously expanding body of literature, confirming that the analysis of the impact of macroeconomic factors, such as economic growth, inflation and unemployment, on bank profitability, measured through indicators such as Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE), represents a topic of sustained and growing interest among researchers. At the same time, the findings reveal a strong predominance of traditional econometric approaches and a relatively limited integration of advanced analytical methods. The main conclusions emphasize that, despite the maturity of the research field, significant gaps persist, particularly regarding the use of artificial intelligence in modeling banking performance. In this context, artificial intelligence is identified as a promising analytical framework capable of capturing complex and non-linear relationships that are often difficult to address using conventional econometric techniques. The study contributes to the literature by providing a structured overview of existing research and by outlining future directions focused on the development of hybrid models that integrate econometric and AI-based approaches to enhance both explanatory and predictive performance in the banking sector.
Keywords: *bibliometric analysis, bank profitability, macroeconomic determinants, artificial intelligence, ROA, ROE*

[1)] Ph.D. Student, University of Craiova, “Eugeniu Carada” Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Finance specialization, Romania, Email: carbune.daniela.n9d@student.ucv.ro
[2)] University of Craiova, ”Eugeniu Carada” Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Craiova, Romania, Email: danielcostinmatache@gmail.com

Macroeconomic Determinants of Bank Profitability. Research Trends and Future Perspectives in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

The analysis of bank profitability has become a major area of interest within financial economics, particularly against the backdrop of increasing economic volatility, the globalization of financial markets and rapid technological transformations. Understanding the factors that determine the performance of the banking sector is essential for both financial institutions and policymakers, given the fundamental role of banks in financial intermediation, supporting economic growth and maintaining financial stability. Events in recent decades, such as the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the macroeconomic environment, have further emphasized the need to analyze how external economic conditions influence the profitability of banking institutions.

Within this context, macroeconomic variables such as economic growth, inflation rate and unemployment rate have been widely recognized as key determinants of banking performance. These factors affect credit demand, risk exposure, cost structures and overall financial stability, thereby influencing core profitability indicators such as Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE). At the same time, the increasing availability of large datasets and the rapid development of digital technologies have stimulated growing interest in more advanced approaches for modeling banking performance.

In particular, recent advancements in artificial intelligence have opened new perspectives for financial analysis, enabling the identification of complex, non-linear relationships and improving the accuracy of predictive models. Despite this potential, the integration of artificial intelligence into research on bank profitability remains relatively limited, reflecting a methodological concentration around econometric frameworks.

The motivation of this study lies in the need to provide a comprehensive and systematic overview of the academic literature addressing the relationship between macroeconomic variables and bank profitability, while also examining the extent to which emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, are being incorporated into this field. Understanding these dynamics is essential for identifying both the strengths and limitations of current research approaches.

The main objective of this paper is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the scientific literature in order to identify the most influential publications, key authors, dominant research themes and methodological approaches in the study of macroeconomic determinants of bank profitability. Additionally, the study aims to highlight emerging research trends and to assess the extent to which artificial intelligence is being integrated into this field.

Although artificial intelligence is not explicitly included in the search strategy, this paper adopts a forward-looking perspective by examining how AI-based methods are gradually entering the field. Consequently, the contribution related to artificial intelligence is primarily conceptual and prospective, focusing on the identification of emerging research directions rather than on a systematic empirical assessment of AI applications in banking performance analysis.

The novelty of the research lies in the combined use of bibliometric techniques and a forward-looking perspective, which provides a clearer understanding of current research trends and identifies significant gaps, particularly the limited adoption of AI-based methods in analyzing banking performance.

The paper is structured as follows: it begins with an introduction, followed by the literature review and the methodological framework. The results section presents the main findings, while the final section summarizes the conclusions and outlines future research directions, including the role of artificial intelligence in banking performance analysis.

Literature review

Recent bibliometric studies reveal a substantial and growing academic interest in banking performance, emphasizing the importance of macroeconomic and bank-specific determinants, while also pointing to the increasing need for integrating advanced analytical approaches, such as artificial intelligence, in this research field.

Mirović, Kalaš, Milenković, Andrašić & Đaković (2024) examine the determinants of bank profitability in the Eurozone, highlighting the joint influence of bank-specific and macroeconomic factors. Their findings indicate that internal variables such as non-performing loans and the cost-to-income ratio negatively affect profitability (ROA, ROE), while income diversification supports bank performance. Among macroeconomic determinants, GDP growth exerts a positive impact, whereas inflation, unemployment and public debt negatively influence profitability. Overall, the study underscores the importance of macroeconomic stability for the sustainability and profitability of the banking sector.

Similar findings are reported by Uddin & Hossain (2024), who analyze bank profitability in an emerging economy. Their results confirm that both bank-specific characteristics, such as capital adequacy, operational efficiency and asset quality, and macroeconomic conditions significantly influence performance. In particular, economic growth has a positive effect, while inflation and interest rate fluctuations shape the income structures of the bank and financial stability.

Another empirical evidence shows that GDP supports bank profitability, while unemployment increases credit risk and negatively affects performance. Inflation exhibits mixed effects, supporting profitability at moderate levels but contributing to instability when excessive. Overall, these findings highlight the essential role of macroeconomic stability in sustaining banking sector profitability in emerging European economies (Kalaš, Andrašić, Milenković & Mirović, 2021).

Extending this perspective, Khan (2022) finds that economic growth remains a significant driver of profitability in GCC countries, whereas inflation has a limited or statistically insignificant effect. The study also emphasizes the stronger influence of bank-specific factors, particularly asset management efficiency.

Consistent with these findings, Rai, Mohapatra, Meitei & Jain (2023) confirm the dominant role of internal determinants such as efficiency, asset quality and capital adequacy, while macroeconomic variables exert a more moderate influence. Importantly, their results show that machine learning models outperform traditional econometric approaches by capturing complex interactions and non-linear relationships.

In the same time, a recent study highlights the transformative role of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, in improving the evaluation of the impact of macroeconomic factors on banking performance. Advanced analytical tools, including AI-based models, enable more accurate and timely assessment of the relationship between economic variables and financial outcomes, enhancing risk analysis and forecasting capabilities. In this context, the integration of artificial intelligence represents a strategic direction for the banking sector, supporting more efficient decision-making processes and contributing to improved profitability and resilience (Popescu & Spulbar, 2025).

Research Methodology

The present paper conducts a bibliometric methodology that involves the use of a quantitative approach to examine scientific literature by focusing on its external characteristics. Recent studies emphasize the growing relevance of bibliometric methods in financial research, as they provide a systematic framework for identifying key research trends, thematic structures and emerging directions within complex scientific domains (Spulbar & Fulga, 2025).

For the purposes of this study, the bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer, a widely used software tool designed for constructing and visualizing bibliometric networks through various techniques such as co-authorship analysis, co-citation analysis and keyword co-occurrence analysis. These techniques facilitate the identification of the intellectual structure of a research field as well as the detection of the main thematic clusters emerging within the scientific literature.

The Web of Science Core Collection database was used as the primary source for data collection in this study. This database was selected due to its extensive coverage of high-quality academic publications, which ensures access to a broad and relevant set of studies addressing the determinants of banking performance and profitability.

The search strategy was designed to identify publications examining the relationship between bank profitability and macroeconomic variables. The search was conducted using the Topic Search (TS) function in the Web of Science Advanced Search interface, which retrieves terms appearing in article titles, abstracts and keywords.

Table 1. Research strategy

Search filters	Details
Database	Web of Science Core Collection
The analyzed period	2010-2026
Keywords used in the search	("bank*") AND ("profitability" OR "ROA" OR "ROE" OR ”Return on Assets” OR ”Return on Equity”) AND ("GDP growth" OR "economic growth" OR "inflation" OR "unemployment" OR ”macroeconomic”)
Language	English
Document type	All type of the documents
Research areas	First 10 research areas
Sample size	1175
Tools used for analysis	Excel and VOSviewer

Source: Authors contribution based on data provided by Web of Science

To ensure the relevance and consistency of the bibliometric analysis, only publications indexed in the WoScience database were considered. The search was conducted for the period 2010-2026 and the analysis was limited to the top ten Web of Science research areas most closely related to the research topic, in order to comprehensively capture the evolution of scientific research addressing the relationship between macroeconomic variables and bank profitability. These research areas were determined based on the total number of publications identified after applying the filtering criteria described in the following section.

The search strategy included specific terms and combinations of keywords relevant to the research topic, such as: ("bank*") AND ("profitability" OR "ROA" OR "ROE" OR ”Return on Assets” OR ”Return on Equity”) AND ("GDP growth" OR "economic growth" OR "inflation" OR "unemployment" OR ”macroeconomic”).

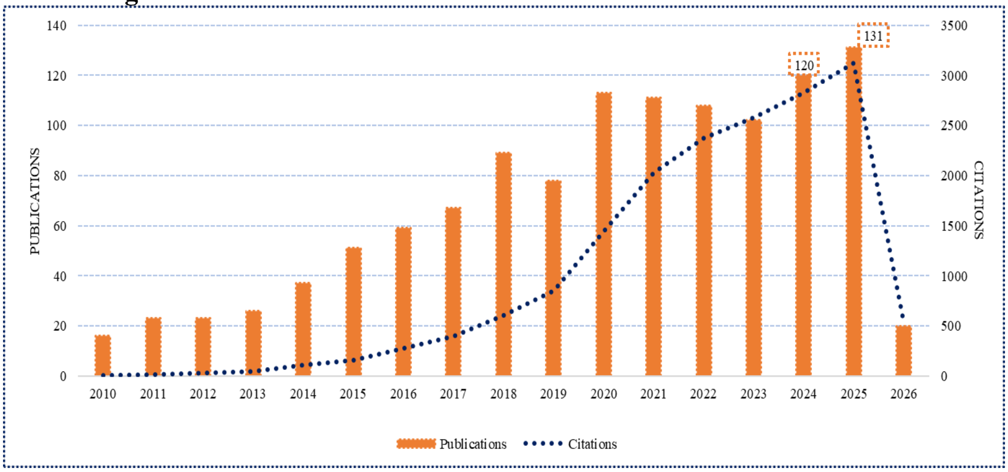
It is important to note that the bibliometric search does not use explicit AI-related keywords. Therefore, the discussion on artificial intelligence reflects a forward-looking assessment based on recent contributions and conceptual developments rather than a comprehensive mapping of all AI applications in this field.

Following the application of these filters, 1253 relevant publications indexed in the Web of Science database were initially identified. For reasons of consistency and international comparability, only documents written in English were retained in the final dataset. After applying this filter and restricting the results to the top ten research areas, the final dataset consisted of 1175 scientific publications.

Annual Distribution of Scientific Publications

Research on the relationship between macroeconomic variables and bank profitability exhibits a clear upward trend in publications and citations. As shown in Figure 1, this pattern can be divided into three distinct phases, reflecting both the evolution of the literature and broader economic and financial transformations in the banking sector.

Figure 1. Publications and citations



Source: Authors contribution based on data provided by Web of Science

The selection of the 2010-2026 period aims to capture the progressive development of academic research examining the relationship between macroeconomic variables and bank profitability, with particular attention to how macroeconomic conditions influence key financial performance indicators such as Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE).

The first stage (2010-2014) is characterized by a relatively modest level of scientific production. During this period, the annual number of publications remains below 40 articles, increasing gradually from 16 publications in 2010 to 37 publications in 2014. The relatively limited number of studies suggests that research on the macroeconomic determinants of bank profitability was still developing, with most analyses focusing primarily on traditional bank-specific determinants rather than broader macro-financial interactions.

The second stage (2015-2019) reflects a period of steady growth in academic output. The number of publications increased significantly, rising from 51 articles in 2015 to 89 articles in 2018, although a slight decline can be observed in 2019 (78 publications). This growth coincides with the increasing availability of international banking datasets and the growing interest in empirical studies investigating how macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth, inflation and unemployment affect banking sector performance. During this stage, the citation trend also begins to accelerate, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of this research area within the academic community.

The third stage (2020-2025) represents a period of accelerated expansion and consolidation of scientific interest in this research field. The number of publications surpasses 100 articles per year, reaching 113 publications in 2020 and maintaining a consistently high level in subsequent years. The peak is recorded in 2025, with 131 publications, highlighting the growing academic attention dedicated to the study of banking sector performance under changing macroeconomic conditions. The citation trend follows a similar trajectory, increasing rapidly and reaching its highest level in 2025.

For 2026, the data presented in the figure reflect the partial situation at the time of data collection. The relatively low number of publications and citations observed for this year should therefore not be interpreted as a decline in scientific interest, but rather as a consequence of the fact that the current year has not yet been completed and that the publication and citation processes are still ongoing.

Overall, the graphical representation confirms a sustained upward trajectory in the academic literature addressing macroeconomic determinants of bank profitability, indicating that this topic has become an increasingly important research direction within the broader field of banking and financial economics. This dynamic can be explained by the fact that research intensity and thematic focus are often influenced by periods of financial and economic instability, which reshape the relevance of specific risk factors and stimulate academic interest in analyzing their impact on banking performance (Spulbar & Cinciulescu, 2025).

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the most cited articles published in the last five years provides insights into the main research directions and methodological approaches in the field. The evidence shows that bank profitability is shaped by both macroeconomic conditions and internal characteristics, with economic growth exerting a positive influence, while inflation and other indicators display more heterogeneous effects.

Among the most cited studies in recent years, particular attention is given to research highlighting the growing role of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, in improving banking performance. In this context, the study by Gyau, Appiah, Gyamfi, Achie & Naeem (2024) shows that AI-driven innovation has a significant positive impact on bank profitability, supported by economic growth and the development of digital infrastructure. The findings emphasize that the integration of artificial intelligence not only enhances financial performance but also improves decision-making processes in the banking sector.

Other relevant studies provide complementary perspectives on the determinants of banking performance. The study by Klein & Weill (2022) demonstrates that bank profitability positively influences economic growth in both the short and long term, reinforcing the role of the banking sector in supporting economic development. Similarly, the research by Isayas (2022) confirms that macroeconomic variables, particularly GDP growth, have a significant impact on bank profitability, alongside internal factors such as capitalization and liquidity.

In the European context, the analysis by Grzeta, Zikovic & Zikovic (2023) underlines the importance of bank size and regulatory frameworks in determining banking performance. The results indicate that Basel III regulations have differentiated effects depending on bank size, benefiting large and medium-sized institutions while negatively affecting smaller banks due to higher compliance costs. These findings highlight the combined influence of macroeconomic and institutional factors on bank profitability.

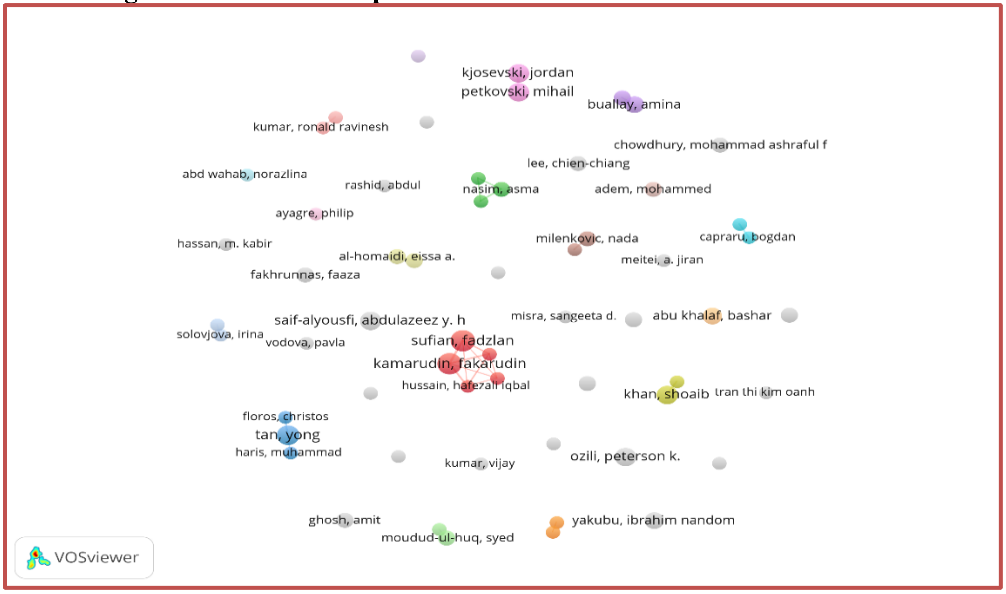
Additional evidence links banking performance to financial stability and risk dynamics. Erdas & Ezanoglu (2022) find that macroeconomic conditions and profitability influence non-performing loans, underlining the importance of sound risk management and capital structures.

Overall, the literature suggests that bank profitability is driven by a complex interaction of macroeconomic, internal and institutional factors, while recent developments indicate a gradual shift toward integrating artificial intelligence and advanced analytical approaches in the study of banking performance.

In order to systematically examine these developments and uncover the structure of the research field, the following section analyzes the bibliometric maps generated using VOSviewer.

The co-authorship analysis (Figure 2), based on a minimum threshold of three documents per author, resulted in a network of 59 authors organized into 41 clusters, with only 25 links and a total link strength of 57. The visualization reveals a highly fragmented collaboration structure, characterized by a large number of isolated authors and very small research groups.

Figure 2. Co-authorship structures

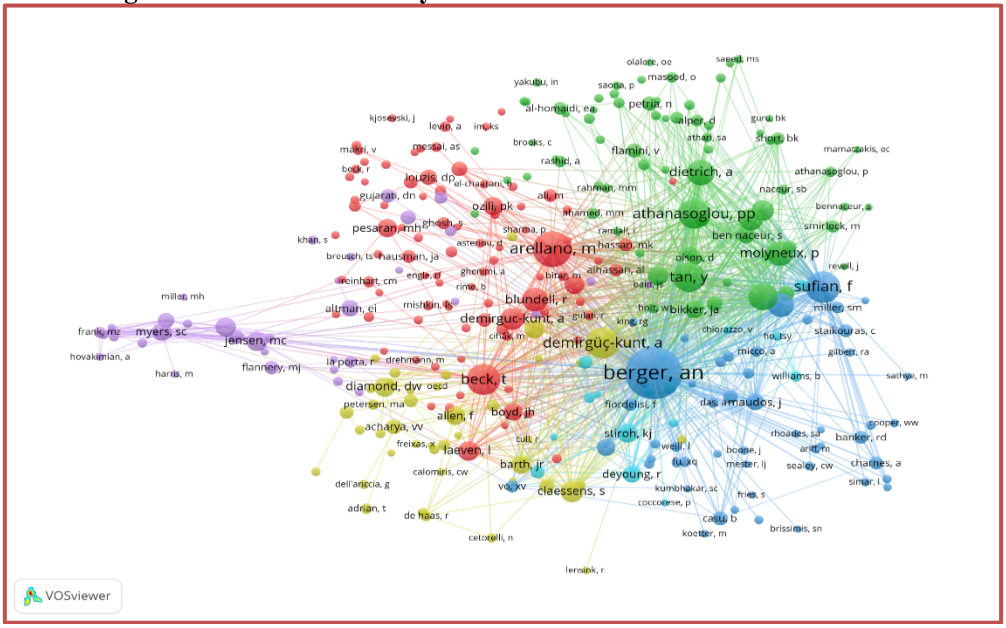


Source: Author contribution using VOSviewer, based on data extracted from Web of Science

The largest connected component consists of only five authors, indicating the absence of strong, cohesive research networks. While a few small clusters can be identified, such as collaborations among Sufian, Kamarudin and Hussain, or Tan and Haris, these groups remain limited in size and weakly interconnected. The findings suggest that, despite the maturity of the research field as evidenced by co-citation patterns, academic collaboration in the study of bank profitability remains limited and geographically dispersed. This fragmentation may hinder the development of interdisciplinary approaches and slow the adoption of innovative methodologies, including artificial intelligence-based techniques, in banking research.

The co-citation analysis of cited authors (Figure 3), based on a minimum threshold of 20 citations, resulted in a network comprising 311 authors grouped into six distinct clusters, reflecting the intellectual structure of the field. The most influential authors include Berger, Demirgüç-Kunt, Arellano, Beck, Athanasoglou, Dietrich and Sufian, whose works form the theoretical and methodological foundation of research on bank profitability. The identified clusters reveal several major research streams. One cluster focuses on banking efficiency and market structure, emphasizing the role of competition and operational performance. Another cluster is centered on econometric methodologies, particularly panel data and generalized method of moments (GMM) approaches, highlighting the dominance of quantitative techniques in the literature. A third cluster captures macroeconomic and financial development perspectives, examining the impact of economic growth and macroeconomic variables on banking performance. Additional clusters address financial stability, corporate governance and emerging market banking systems.

Figure 3 – Co-citation analysis



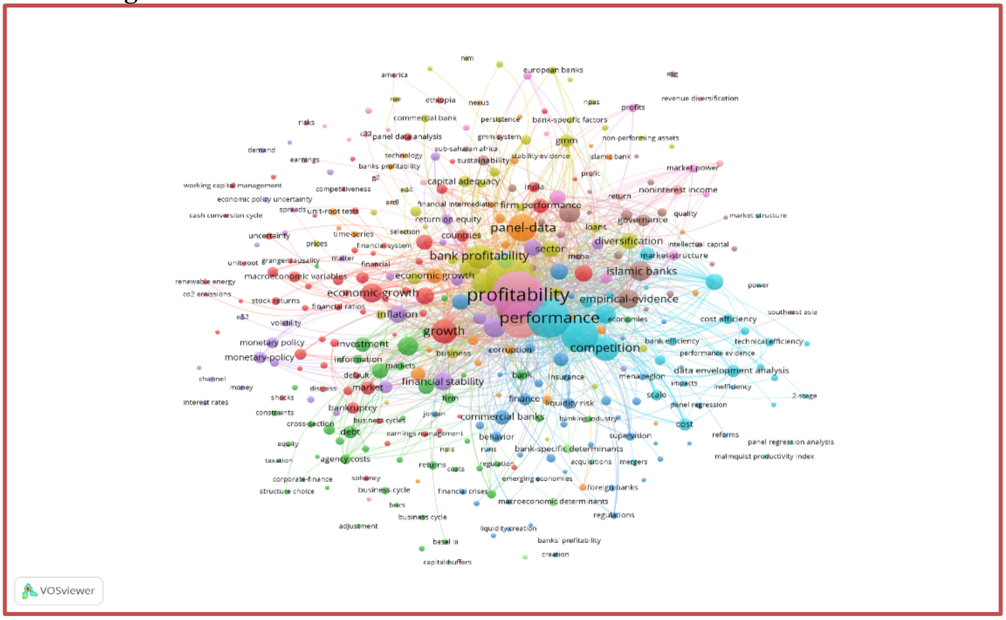
Source: Author contribution using VOSviewer, based on data extracted from Web of Science

Overall, the co-citation structure indicates a well-established and interconnected research field, primarily grounded in traditional econometric frameworks, while the limited presence of artificial intelligence-related contributions suggests potential for future research in this direction.

While the co-authorship analysis provides insights into collaboration patterns among researchers, the next map (Figure 4) offers a complementary perspective by revealing the main thematic directions of the field.

The co-occurrence analysis of keywords, based on a minimum threshold of five occurrences, resulted in a network of 363 relevant terms, highlighting the conceptual structure of the research framework. The visualization reveals that the most frequently occurring and strongly connected keywords are *profitability*, *performance*, *bank profitability* and *panel data*, indicating a strong focus on empirical investigations of banking sector performance. Several thematic clusters can be identified. The first cluster groups macroeconomic variables such as economic growth, inflation and monetary policy, emphasizing the role of external economic conditions in shaping bank profitability. A second cluster focuses on efficiency and competition, incorporating terms such as data envelopment analysis and cost efficiency, reflecting interest in operational performance. Another cluster captures financial stability and risk-related topics, including liquidity, capital adequacy and banking crises.

Figure 4. Co-occurrence and links between terms



Source: Author contribution using VOSviewer, based on data extracted from Web of Science

Additionally, methodological approaches such as panel data and GMM are prominently represented, confirming the dominance of econometric techniques in the literature. Notably, the limited presence of artificial intelligence-related terms suggests that, despite the maturity of the field, there remains significant potential for integrating advanced analytical methods into the study of bank profitability.

Conclusions

The results of the bibliometric analysis reveal a well-developed and rapidly expanding research field, characterized by increasing scientific output, strong theoretical foundations and a clear dominance of quantitative empirical approaches. Despite this maturity, the literature exhibits several important limitations, particularly a methodological focus that remains centered on econometric frameworks, alongside a limited degree of interdisciplinary integration. The findings confirm that bank-specific factors often play a dominant role, suggesting that profitability is determined by a complex interaction between internal and external variables. In this context, the integration of artificial intelligence emerges as a promising direction for future research.

A key contribution of this study is the identification of a significant gap in the literature regarding the integration of artificial intelligence techniques in the analysis of banking performance. While recent contributions demonstrate the potential of machine learning techniques to improve predictive accuracy and capture complex relationships, their adoption remains relatively low compared to traditional approaches.

In this context, the study emphasizes the need for future research to focus on integrating artificial intelligence with macro-financial analysis, through the development of hybrid models that combine econometric approaches with advanced computational techniques. Such integration has the potential to enhance the understanding of bank profitability dynamics and to support more effective decision-making in an increasingly complex and technology-driven financial environment.

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis relies exclusively on the Web of Science Core Collection and includes only publications written in English, which may bias the representation of research conducted in other languages or indexed in alternative databases. Second, the focus on the top ten research areas, while ensuring thematic consistency, might omit relevant contributions located at the margins of the field or in interdisciplinary outlets. Third, the search strategy does not explicitly incorporate artificial intelligence-related keywords, which implies that AI applications in banking performance may be underrepresented in the dataset. These limitations suggest that future research could extend the analysis to additional databases, languages and search strategies and could design a targeted bibliometric study solely focused on AI-based approaches to bank profitability.

This paper adds to the literature in several ways. First, it provides a comprehensive bibliometric mapping of 2010-2026 research on the macroeconomic determinants of bank profitability, highlighting the main intellectual clusters and most influential authors and publications. Second, it documents the dominance of traditional econometric approaches and the relative marginal position of artificial intelligence-based methods in this field. Third, it identifies the main thematic streams and conceptual linkages between macroeconomic variables, bank-specific factors and financial stability concerns. Fourth, it outlines a forward-looking research agenda by arguing for the development of hybrid econometric and AI-based models to better capture complex, non-linear dynamics in banking performance.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The global model of digital governance and its adaptation in Romania: international lessons and implementation directions

Diana-Maria Grosu[1)]

Abstract: Digital governance has become a cornerstone of public administration modernization, providing new tools for efficiency, transparency, and civic participation. This study proposes a framework for adapting global digital governance models to the Romanian context and examines how these models can strengthen administrative efficiency, information security, and public trust in the state. To address this, the research employs a qualitative comparative methodology, analyzing the models of Estonia (interoperability), Denmark (citizen services), and Singapore (strategic coordination) against Romanian policy documents, such as the National Strategy on the Digital Agenda and the activity of the Authority for the Digitalization of Romania (ADR). The analysis shows that while Romania has made progress, its adaptation is currently hindered more by institutional fragmentation and limited interoperability than by technological gaps. Successful adaptation requires structural reform and alignment with European standards (Network and Information Security Directive 2 - NIS2, electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services - eIDAS, General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) to enhance administrative efficiency and strengthen public trust in digital governance. These findings provide practical policy directions for strengthening digital governance and accelerating administrative modernization in Romania.
Keywords: *digital governance; public administration; interoperability; public trust; policy adaptation*

[1)] PhD student, Department of Political Sciences, International Relations and European Studies, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Political Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Address: Carol I Boulevard no. 11, 700506, Iași, Romania; Phone: 0741 738 571; E-mail: dianagrosum@yahoo.com; ORCID ID: 0009-0002-8256-7600.

The global model of digital governance and its adaptation in Romania: international lessons and implementation directions

1. Introduction

Digital modernization of public administration goes beyond the mere implementation of IT solutions. It depends on flexible public leadership, digital skills, and an organizational culture that supports innovation and collaboration (Androniceanu & Štreimikienė, 2025). Over the past two decades, digital modernization has become a global priority, driven by the widespread use of information technologies and growing citizen expectations for accessible public services. The digitization of governance is now seen as an important element in strengthening the capacity of institutions to respond to complex challenges, from public data management to ensuring social engagement in increasingly sophisticated digital environments (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA], 2024).

The development of digital governance at the international level has been accompanied by the emergence of common theoretical frameworks, supported by international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which emphasize the importance of flexible, transparent, and citizen-oriented administrative systems. These frameworks aim to combine digitization resources with broader sustainable development goals, emphasizing interoperability, robust digital infrastructure, and appropriate technological skills in the public sector (OECD, 2023). For Romania, digital governance is essential for improving institutional efficiency, reducing bureaucracy, and strengthening public trust. Digital tools can simplify administrative procedures and improve the accessibility, transparency, and quality of public services (Androniceanu, 2023). Although progress has been made in recent years through initiatives such as the Digital Agenda, the development of e-government platforms, and the creation of the Romanian Digitalization Authority, the transformation process remains uneven due to institutional fragmentation and a lack of interoperability between systems (Vevera & Vasiloiu, 2024: 73–84).

In this context, analyzing successful international models becomes an important exercise. Countries such as Estonia, Denmark, and Singapore provide distinct models of digital governance based on interoperability, user-centered services, and centralized coordination. Estonia is often cited as an example of "institutional leapfrogging" due to its ability to rapidly develop integrated digital solutions in a challenging socio-political context (Metcalf, 2019: 1-12). Denmark has succeeded in improving relations between citizens and the administration through a strong culture of collaboration and focus on digital actors (Curry, 2019). At the same time, Singapore confirms that centralizing innovation and coordination can support a long-term national digitization strategy (Woo, 2018).

This study aims to assess the extent to which the principles of global digital governance can be adapted to the Romanian context in order to develop information security, administrative performance, and public trust. The main question of this research is: how can the Romanian state integrate international lessons to build a coherent, efficient, and sustainable digital governance model?

2. Conceptual and methodological framework

2.1. Defining key concepts

Digital governance encompasses all the processes, institutions, and mechanisms through which public administration uses technology to deliver efficient services, manage public data, and support citizen participation in decision-making processes (UN DESA, 2024). Unlike computerization, which focuses on automating certain activities, digital transformation involves a structural change that is user-oriented and supported by institutional leadership (Curry, 2019). Interoperability refers to the ability of digital systems to communicate and exchange data in a standardized manner, both within and between institutions. It is considered an essential requirement for the provision of integrated public services, eliminating administrative overlaps and reducing operational costs (Vevera & Vasiloiu, 2024: 73-84).

Institutional trust is the population's perception of the state's ability to act competently and transparently, influencing the adoption of online services and citizens' openness to technological change (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025: 795; Woo, 2018).

2.2. Principles of the global digital governance model

International institutions are outlining a framework of common guidelines that define advanced digital governance. The United Nations supports the importance of a citizen-centered approach, the effective use of public data, and the development of digital infrastructure as a foundation for modern public services (UN DESA, 2024).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development highlights the importance of digital governance based on the visibility of public actions, coherent integration of platforms and citizen involvement, accompanied by strong government capacities and a well-structured regulatory system (OECD, 2023). At the same time, it emphasizes the relevance of interinstitutional collaboration and the use of data in the public policy-making process (Kitsing, 2019).

The European Union is organizing the European digital governance framework based on directives such as NIS 2, GDPR, and eIDAS, which establish standards for digital security, digital identity, and data security, with the aim of creating a unified and secure European digital space.

2.3. Research methodology

In order to analyze how Romania can integrate the global model of digital governance, the study applies a comparative method based on the analysis of relevant case studies. This method facilitates the identification of structural differences between countries and highlights aspects that can be adopted and adapted to the Romanian context (Espinosa & Pino, 2024).

The choice of case studies — Estonia, Denmark, and Singapore — is based on criteria of administrative diversity and consolidated digital progress: Estonia for its advanced institutional connectivity and unique digital identity, Denmark for its focus on user needs and inter-institutional collaboration, and Singapore for its focused institutional coordination and strategic integration of technology into national progress (Woo, 2018).

The analysis examines national practices using a set of criteria recognized in the specialized literature: administrative performance, transparency, cyber protection, equitable digital access, and institutional sustainability (UN DESA, 2024). The three case studies are reinforced by a thematic analysis of Romanian public policy documents in order to detect inconsistencies between the stated strategy and its actual implementation (Dumitrescu, 2024: 167-173). This integrated approach allows for the formulation of practical recommendations tailored to the Romanian administrative context.

Tabel 1. Methodological approach and research objectives

Method	Analytical focus	Research objective
Comparative case analysis;	Estonia, Denmark, Singapore;	Identification of transferable digital governance practices;
Selection criteria;	Digital maturity, institutional coordination, user orientation;	Ensuring diversity and relevance of models;
Evaluation dimensions;	Performance, transparency, cybersecurity, digital inclusion;	Assessing governance effectiveness;
Policy document analysis (Romania);	National digital strategies and reforms;	Identifying implementation gaps;
Integrated synthesis.	Cross-country comparison and national assessment.	Formulating context-specific recommendations.

Source: Author's own work

3. International case studies

3.1. Estonia – the *e-Estonia* model

Modern European models of digital governance show that the efficiency of public services is influenced by the integration of data infrastructures and inter-institutional cooperation, which ensure the provision of integrated services and reduce bureaucracy, while the absence of these mechanisms maintains administrative fragmentation in countries with a low level of digital maturity (Androniceanu & Štreimikienė, 2025: 78–81). Estonia represents one of the most advanced digital governance models, based on interoperability, digital identity, and secure data exchange between institutions (Metcalf, 2019; Kitsing, 2019).

A key component is the X-Road system, which enables secure and real-time data exchange between public institutions and private actors (Espinosa, 2024). Digital identity enables broad access to integrated public services, including e-voting, digital prescriptions, and electronic tax systems (Curry, 2019). Following the 2007 cyberattacks, Estonia significantly strengthened its cybersecurity infrastructure (Metcalf, 2019).

Public services are organized around 'life events', simplifying citizens' interaction with the state (Espinosa, 2024). This organization has enabled the Estonian state to achieve high levels of transparency and efficiency, as digital interactions leave verifiable traces, reducing the scope for corruption and direct contact between ordinary citizens and civil servants (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025).

The Estonian example provides several significant lessons for the modernization of digital governance in Romania. First, it is important to have an interoperability infrastructure that facilitates data exchange between institutions, eliminating the fragmentation of public systems (Vevera & Vasiloiu, 2024). Second, the implementation of a unique and mandatory digital identity is a basic requirement for the coherent provision of online public services (Metcalf, 2019). Finally, Estonia shows that the success of digital transformation depends not only on technology, but also on strategic continuity, political leadership, and an administrative culture oriented towards collaboration and innovation (Kitsing, 2019).

Lessons for Romania

The Estonian model highlights the need to develop a national interoperability infrastructure that enables secure data exchange between institutions and reduces administrative fragmentation. The implementation of a unique and mandatory digital identity is an essential condition for the coherent provision of online public services and increased administrative efficiency. Furthermore, continued investment in cybersecurity, together with maintaining a long-term strategic vision and collaboration with the private sector, are fundamental to building citizen trust and ensuring the sustainability of the digital transformation.

3.2. Denmark – citizen-centric digital governance

Denmark is a leading example of citizen-centered digital governance, focusing on simplifying administrative interactions through digital platforms such as Digital Post and NemID/MitID (Curry, 2019).

The Danish model focuses on simplifying interaction with the administration and reducing bureaucratic burdens through a systematic approach to restructuring administrative processes around the needs of the end user (OECD, 2006). An important aspect of the Danish state's success is Digital Post, a national platform that integrates official communication between citizens, institutions, and companies, eliminating paper correspondence and shortening administrative processing time (Curry, 2019). The introduction of the NemID[45] digital identity, gradually replaced by the modern MitID solution, has strengthened the security of online transactions and enabled uniform access to public and private services, thus creating a coherent digital infrastructure at the national level. At the same time, the Danish state has invested heavily in digital literacy, implementing a variety of national programs that support vulnerable groups in using digital services, which has helped maintain a high level of social inclusion (OECD, 2006).

The Danish model is based on strong collaboration between public institutions and the private sector, supporting innovation and efficient service delivery (Curry, 2019).

Another fundamental element is the extensive use of public data in decision-making, through data-sharing infrastructures that allow complex sets of information to be analyzed in order to improve public policies. By standardizing processes and adopting common technological standards, Denmark has managed to prevent the fragmentation of public digital systems and develop a coherent ecosystem that is easy for citizens to use (Curry, 2019). This administrative coherence has led to a very high level of citizen satisfaction, as services are easy to access, intuitive, and integrated into users' daily activities (OECD, 2006).

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[45] NemID is the national digital identity solution used in Denmark for authentication in public and private online services, later succeeded by MitID.

Lessons for Romania

The development of unified platforms for official communication, such as Digital Post, is a solution that can inspire Romania in its efforts to reduce institutional fragmentation. Investment in digital literacy is also important, as citizens' trust and skills directly influence the degree of adoption of e-government services (OECD, 2006).

The involvement of all public administration actors in digital projects, in partnership with the private sector, is a necessary condition for the development of modern public services tailored to users' needs (Curry, 2019).

3.3. Singapore – *Smart Nation*

Singapore represents a centralized model of digital governance, in which the Smart Nation initiative integrates digital technologies into national development strategies. This model is based on strong institutional coordination, real-time data use, and significant investments in digital infrastructure and skills, while also emphasizing public–private collaboration and cybersecurity. Despite this success, challenges persist related to limited civic participation and reliance on top-down coordination (Woo, 2018).

Lessons for Romania

The Singapore model highlights the importance of centralized coordination, real-time data use, and sustained investment in digital skills for effective digital governance. It also emphasizes the role of public–private collaboration in accelerating innovation and improving public services (Woo, 2018).

Tabel 2. Comparative analysis of digital governance models and policy lessons for Romania

Country	Key elements of the digital model	Main instruments/structures	Results achieved	Lessons relevant to Romania
Estonia	Mandatory unique digital identity; Full interoperability; Decentralized but standardized architecture;	X-Road system for data exchange; National e-ID; Fully digitized services (electronic voting, prescriptions, taxes, digital signature).	High administrative efficiency; Transparency; Reduced corruption;	The need for a national interoperability infrastructure; Implementation of unique digital identity; Strategic continuity.
Country	**Key elements of the digital model**	**Main instruments/structures**	**Results achieved**	**Lessons relevant to Romania**

Denmark	Citizen-centered approach; *Digital by default*; Interinstitutional collaboration.	Digital Post (single communication platform); NemID/MitID; Common data infrastructures.	Reduced bureaucracy; Intuitive services; High public satisfaction.	Creating unique platforms for interaction; Technological standardization; Investments in digital literacy.
Singapore	Centralized national strategy; Integration of emerging technologies; Single institutional coordination.	Smart Nation & Digital Government Group; Integrated data platforms; Smart sensor networks.	Optimization of urban and administrative services; Data-driven public policies; Advanced digital security.	The need for a strong central coordinating authority; The use of data for public decision-making; Digital skills training;

Source: Authors' own work

4. Romania in the context of digital governance

The Romanian state ranks significantly below the European Union average in terms of the digital transformation of public services, predominantly in the automation of administrative procedures and electronic access to documents, which points to systemic problems in the implementation of digital governance (Bucur et al., 2025).

Over the past two decades, Romania has pursued gradual digital modernization, driven by European obligations and the need to improve administrative efficiency (Dumitrescu, 2024: 167-173). An important impetus was generated by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, which set clear objectives in the field of e-government and allocated financial funds for the modernization of public digital infrastructures (OECD, 2023). Key institutions such as the ADR, alongside central government bodies, play an important role in implementing digital policies (Dumitrescu, 2024). In Romania, security and protection of digital infrastructures are managed by specialized institutions, such as STS and DNSC, which ensure system resilience and respond to cyber incidents. Despite the development of digital platforms such as ghișeul.ro, the overall level of digitalization remains below the European average (UN DESA, 2024).

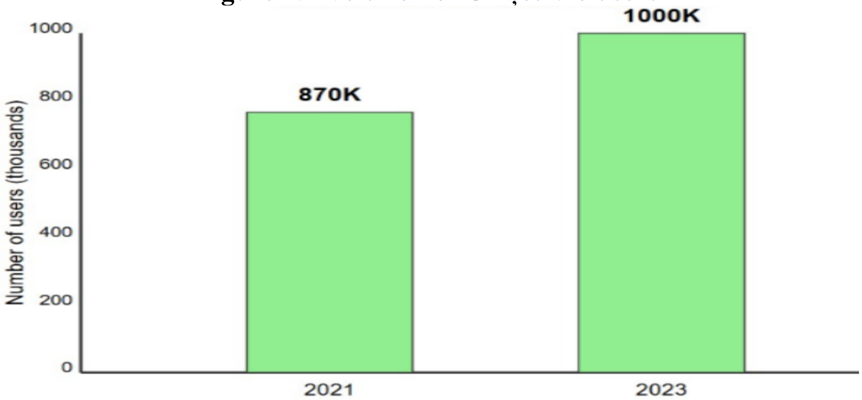
Romania faces a sharp institutional fragmentation, as many ministries and agencies develop their own IT systems without a common architecture, which affects interoperability and leads to duplication of databases (OECD, 2023).

Another major impediment is the lack of technological standardization, as public institutions use incompatible IT solutions, which slows down the process of integrating public services into a unified technological system (Vevera & Vasiloiu, 2024). Additional challenges include uneven digital skills among public employees and disparities in technological infrastructure across institutions (OECD, 2023). The research emphasizes the idea that the Romanian state's delays in digitizing its administration are largely due to reduced administrative capacity, organizational resistance to change, and the absence of common data infrastructures, which keep the use of online public services low compared to developed countries like Denmark (Dragomir & Vasiu, 2025: 175–197).

Low levels of public trust further limit the adoption of digital services in Romania (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025: 795). The insufficiency of an institutional culture based on information represents another challenge, as many institutions do not capitalize on the analytical potential of the information they possess, which limits the administration's ability to base administrative decisions on evidence (Dumitrescu, 2024). Despite these challenges, Romania benefits from significant opportunities for digital transformation, supported by European funding and a strong private IT sector (UN DESA, 2024).

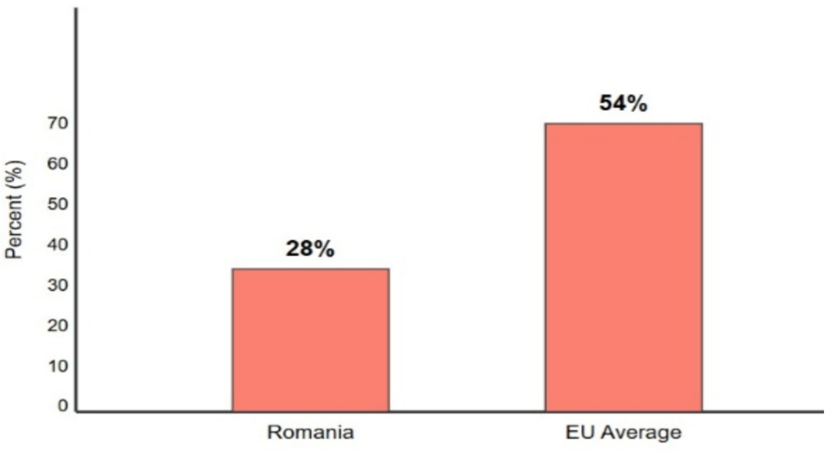
The recent development of digital public services in Romania and the level of digital skills among the population can be illustrated by the data summarized in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. Evolution of Ghișeul.ro users



Source: Dragomir & Vasiu (2025)

Figure 2. Digital skills level



Source: Dragomir & Vasiu (2025)

The data shows a steady increase in the use of the ghișeul.ro platform between 2021 and 2023, alongside a considerable gap in digital skills compared to the European Union average, which confirms the uneven nature of the digital transformation in Romanian public administration.

5. Adapting the global model to the Romanian context

The digital transformation of Romanian public administration is largely slowed by organizational resistance, limited digital skills, and unstable funding rather than by the absence of infrastructure (Bucur et al., 2025).

The analysis of Estonia, Denmark, and Singapore shows that effective digital governance requires a coherent strategy, institutional coordination, and sustained investment in infrastructure and human capital (UN DESA, 2024). The comparative study indicates that the states that have succeeded in digitizing the administration have consistently pursued the same principles: centralization of digital governance and user orientation (OECD, 2023). For the Romanian state, adapting this model requires the development of a coherent digital architecture that reduces fragmentation and inconsistencies between public systems (Vevera & Vasiloiu, 2024). The Estonian experience shows that interoperability reduces operating costs and facilitates citizen–state interaction (Espinosa, 2024).

The Singapore example highlights the relevance of centralized management, where a single structure ensures the unitary implementation of the digital strategy at the national level, avoiding overlapping competencies and institutional dysfunctions (Woo, 2018).

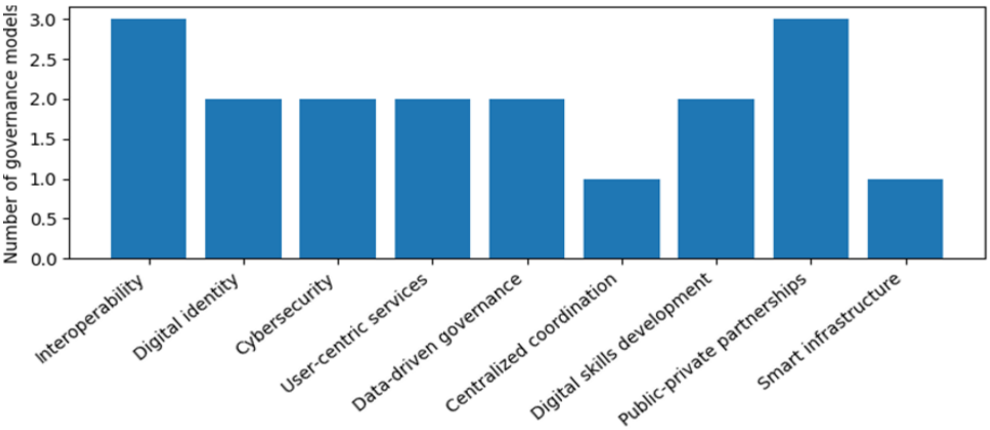
In addition to coordination, the Romanian state must adopt coherent legislation on digital identity, information security and public infrastructure, aligned with European regulatory frameworks such as NIS2, eIDAS and GDPR. A clear and transparent regulatory framework allows for the improvement of secure public services, a fundamental element for increasing citizens' trust in digital interactions with the state (Efthalitsidou et al., 2025). Automated public services require human supervision to remain transparent and trustworthy (Burcea, 2025).

Denmark's comparative analysis shows that countries that have adopted an integrated approach to digitization, based on interoperable systems and unified institutional coordination, have generated productive and heavily used public services, while administrative fragmentation in Romania has reduced the impact of digital initiatives (Dragomir & Vasiu, 2025).

Digital skills training among civil servants is another pillar of adapting the global model, as insufficient training of staff reduces the capacity of institutions to apply modern administration tools (Curry, 2019). The models of Denmark and Singapore show that permanent training, certification of digital skills and the creation of professional communities of practice are fundamental for the sustainable transformation of the administration (Woo, 2018). Public-private collaborations represent a significant opportunity for the Romanian state, as the private sector has developed technical competence that can accelerate the development and implementation of digital services (Kitsing, 2019). In addition, cooperation with the private sector supports innovation and allows rapid testing of technological solutions, contributing to the creation of a competitive digital ecosystem (Woo, 2018).

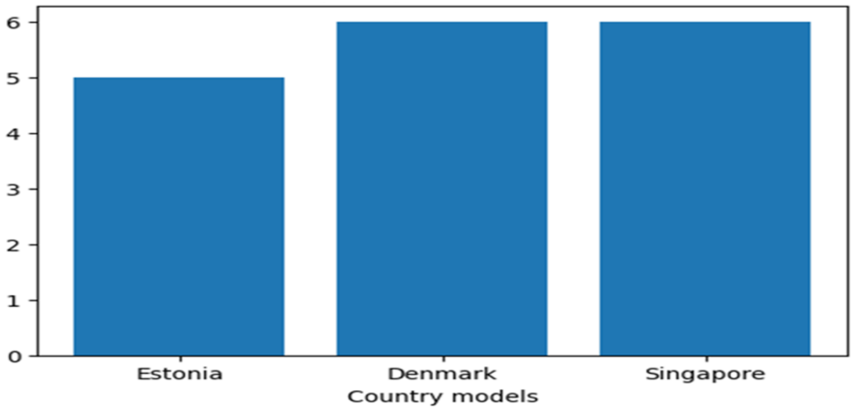
Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the main digital governance dimensions identified across the international case studies. Interoperability is common to all three models, confirming its fundamental role in enabling integrated public services. Digital skills development is emphasized in Denmark and Singapore, highlighting the importance of human capital in sustaining digital transformation. Centralized coordination characterizes the Singaporean approach, ensuring coherence in the implementation of national digital strategies. Public–private partnerships are present in all models, underlining their contribution to innovation and the modernization of public administration.

Figure 3. Distribution of digital governance dimensions across selected international models



Source: Authors' own work

Figure 4. Comparative coverage of digital governance components by country model



Source: Authors' own work

To guarantee the long-term viability of digital transformation, the state is obliged to implement a user-oriented perspective, developing public services according to the requirements of the population, as is the case in the Danish state, where simple interfaces and intuitive processes have increased the adoption of online services (OECD, 2006). Adapting the global model requires data-driven decision-making to improve policy effectiveness and reduce administrative fragmentation (Dumitrescu, 2024).

Conclusions and policy recommendations

Digital restructuring of public administration represents a structural transformation in how public authorities operate and deliver services. Effective digitalization involves automating procedures, integrating databases, and tailoring services to users. When these elements are properly integrated, the administration becomes faster, more transparent, and more predictable.

Digitalization in Romania remains uneven and fragmented. Many authorities use various platforms that are not interoperable with one another, which leads to digital bureaucracy rather than administrative simplification. The lack of interoperability, limited digital skills, and limited use of data-driven decision-making in the decision-making process remain the main barriers to the development of a functional digital administration. International models show that interoperability, the 'once-only' principle, and integrated services are essential for administrative efficiency, reducing redundancy and improving service delivery.

Romania should prioritize the development of a unified digital architecture based on interoperability, common standards, and citizen-centered services. Strengthening digital skills within the public administration and systematically evaluating the performance of IT systems are essential. When implemented strategically, digital transformation can reduce bureaucracy, improve the quality of public services, and strengthen the relationship between the state and citizens.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Euro Currency and European Identity: a Symbolic Approach

Ștefan Viorel Ghenea[1)]

Abstract:
This article examines the euro not only as an economic instrument but as a symbolic construct that contributes to the formation of European identity. It explores how the adoption of a single currency reflects and reshapes the relationship between national and supranational identities within the European Union. The analysis highlights that resistance to adopting the euro cannot be explained solely through economic arguments, but must also be understood in relation to the symbolic role of national currencies in expressing sovereignty and collective belonging.
The study further investigates the visual and semiotic dimensions of the euro, focusing on the iconography of banknotes and coins. Architectural motifs, such as bridges, windows, and gateways, are interpreted as representations of openness, cooperation, and continuity, while also carrying ambivalent meanings related to boundaries and selection. The dual structure of euro coins—combining a common European face with national designs—illustrates the principle of "unity in diversity," allowing national identities to persist within a shared monetary framework.
Keywords: *Euro currency, European identity, Symbolism, National identity, Unity and diversity*.

[1)] Associate professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Romania, Phone: 040762976148, Email: gheneastefan@yahoo.com.

Introduction

The introduction of the euro represents one of the most ambitious projects of European integration, going far beyond the strictly economic sphere to acquire symbolic, cultural and identity values. Although initially conceived as an instrument to facilitate trade and strengthen the economic stability of the European Union, the single currency has gradually transformed into a vector for building a collective European identity. In this context, the euro functions not only as a means of exchange, but also as a material support for symbolic representations that reflect the values, history and aspirations of the European project.

This paper aims to analyze the euro from a symbolic perspective, highlighting how it contributes to articulating the relationship between national identity and European identity. Both the meanings associated with the adoption of the single currency in different member states and the messages conveyed through the iconography of banknotes and coins are investigated. In this sense, the analysis aims to demonstrate that the euro constitutes a privileged instrument of mediation between unity and diversity, between integration and the persistence of national particularities.

The euro currency: between economic function and symbolic meaning

The euro currency was introduced in 1999 and is currently used by 21 EU member states, which constitute the euro area. [1] The aim of the single currency is to strengthen Europe's economic unity by facilitating trade and eliminating barriers caused by exchange rate fluctuations. The positive effects are visible in the consolidation and stabilization of the economy, as well as in the expansion of consumer options. Globally, the euro contributes to the growth of the European Union's influence, becoming a significant competitor to the US dollar. In the context of recent economic, health and geopolitical crises, the euro has also been perceived as a factor of stability and resilience. Beyond the economic dimension, the single currency generates important social and cultural effects. The intensification of mobility and tourism contributes to the development of intercultural interactions and the consolidation of a common European identity (Bărbulescu, 2015; Bocchi, & Ceruti, 2013; Segalebra, 2025). European unity, on a cultural, identity, and social level, is therefore also fueled by the economic level.

Resistance and identity: the adoption of the euro

How can we explain the fact that not all EU member states have adopted the euro (only 21 of the 27 states have entered the eurozone)? Is it just about economic reasons, such as distrust in the viability of a single currency? States such as Romania, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Denmark have not adopted the single currency, citing both economic reasons and considerations related to sovereignty and national identity. Giving up the national currency implies the loss of a strong identity symbol, which explains the existing resistance. Debates over the adoption of the euro reflect the tension between national and European identity. It is natural to have resistance to giving up one's own currency and implicitly the symbolic role it plays in consolidating

[1] It should be added that in addition to the eurozone countries, the Principality of Monaco, the Republic of San Marino and the Vatican City also issue euro coins, and through a special agreement, they have issued their own graphic designs for the coins, despite the fact that they are not EU member states.

national identity.[2] The way in which the decision to adopt the euro was made in various European Union states illustrates the relationship between national identity and European identity and the role that currency plays in their formation. Moreover, the type and degree of resistance encountered to replacing the national currency with the single currency may be illustrative of the type of national identity in the countries under consideration. In most countries that adopted the euro, there were both supporters of change and supporters of maintaining the traditional currency. In the first camp were, of course, those with a European orientation, and in the other, nationalists and/or Eurosceptics (Arató & Kaniok, 2009). A group of researchers from the European University Institute (Risse, Th.; Engelmann-Martin, D.; Knope, H.-J.; Roscher, K., 1999) analyzed the disputes between political elites in Germany, France and the United Kingdom regarding the adoption of the single currency. It is important to note that the United Kingdom left the European Union in 2020, following the Brexit process, which confirms the persistence of an identity built in opposition to European integration. Those who supported the project shared a common vision of European integration as overcoming the historical division of the continent. For them, the time for national solutions to political and social problems was over, and the use of a single currency was seen as a way to get closer to this perspective. The euro symbolizes the collective European identity, while national currencies are seen as symbolic remnants of a nationalist past. On the other hand, opponents of the adoption of the single currency use national currencies as symbols of the nation-state that should not be sacrificed in favor of a vague “Europeanness” (Risse et al., 1999: 175; Jachtenfuchs, M.; Diez, Th.; Jung, S., 1998). Identification with Europe occurs differently in different states, depending also on the dominant conception of the nation in these countries. The strongest identification with Europeanness can be found among political elites in Germany, who promoted a form of "Euro-patriotism" after the nationalist excesses of World War II. Consequently, supporters of the German brand, even if they resonated with German public opinion, found it very difficult to counter this pro-European discourse. In the UK, the exact opposite happened (George, 2000). Islanders continue to build their identity by differentiating themselves from the mainland. Continental Europe continues to represent the image of otherness. National sovereignty is thought of in opposition to the adoption of the European currency. As a result, supporters of the euro have encountered much the same resistance here as those who called for the mark to be retained in Germany. The "wait and see" attitude was seen in Britain as a potential support for the single currency, while in Germany it was the "war cry" of Eurosceptics. France occupied an intermediate position. This is also explained by the fact that the situation of nationalism here was different from that in Germany. While for the Germans nationalism was seen as authoritarianism and militarism, for the French it meant republicanism, enlightenment and the assumption of a civilizing mission (Risse et al. 1999: 176).

Euro as a symbol: the culturalization of the economy

The euro has a strong symbolic dimension, being used explicitly as an instrument to represent European identity. This reflects a dual process: on the one hand, the "commercialization" of the European project, and on the other hand, the

[2] The case of the United Kingdom is illustrative in this regard. Its withdrawal from the European Union following the Brexit process (2020) confirms the persistence of an identity built in opposition to deeper European integration.

"culturalization" of the economy. In the contemporary context, this symbolic dimension is amplified by the digitalization of the economy and discussions regarding the introduction of a European digital currency by the European Central Bank. Coins and banknotes thus become the supports of an “experience industry”, contributing to the internalization of European identity in everyday life. As Johan Fornäs notes, in the draft constitution, currency was mentioned in the paragraph on symbols, and not in the economic instruments. This would show a culturalization of the function of money (Fornäs, 2009: 209; Fornäs, 2012). Elsewhere, Fornäs highlights the fact that the European Union uses the euro explicitly as a symbolic instrument and not strictly an economic or financial one. This shows (1): a certain "commercialization" of the European project, which is no longer manifested only through traditional means of a sacred or ritual nature, but through the use of symbols, which circulate freely on the market and (2) a culturalization of the economy, even an aestheticization of it, because coins and banknotes (as material objects) carry images of a cultural and symbolic nature, becoming part of an "experience industry", in competition with virtual money (Fornäs, 2008: 21).

Euro coins and banknotes thus become physical supports for representations of the role and mission of the European Union, they are veritable moving exhibitions, which circulate from one European citizen to another, making their own contribution to the consolidation of European identity. They are moving bricks of European unity, with an important role to play both economically, but especially symbolically and culturally. It is, in Fornäs's terms, a true "banal symbolism", "fully integrated in ordinary practices rather than isolated in any separate ritual sphere" (Fornäs, 2009: 205).

The symbolism of euro banknotes

Before we get into the symbolism of the banknotes and coins, let's briefly look at the euro symbol (€). It is based on the Greek letter epsilon, referring to both "Europe" and ancient Greece, seen as the "cradle of European civilization" and "the first letter of the word 'Europe'". The two horizontal lines "'certify' the stability of the currency." The criteria for selecting this symbol, according to one of the official EU websites, were: (1) to be a recognizable symbol of Europe, (2) to resemble some already known monetary symbols, and (3) to be aesthetically pleasing and easy to write. The symbol can be compared to that of the dollar ($), and that of the pound sterling (£), both of which bear vertical or horizontal lines. (Fornäs, 2008: 22; Fornäs, 2009: 212; Biron & Moreau, 2001).

The first series of euro banknotes comprises seven denominations (€5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500), depicting different European architectural styles from different historical periods. The front of the banknote depicts gates or windows, and the back depicts bridges in the following architectural styles: classical (EUR 5), Romanesque (EUR 10), Gothic (EUR 20), Renaissance (EUR 50), Baroque and Rococo (EUR 100), steel and glass architecture (EUR 200) and modern 20th-century architecture (EUR 500). As a rule, official websites state that the images, which represent the different architectural styles, do not belong to any real construction from any particular country, they are abstracted and stylized.

I will continue to refer to the iconography of banknotes. The fact that the sides of banknotes depict arches, vaults, pillars and columns on the one hand and bridges or decks on the other has an obvious symbolic charge, which is usually officially recognized. The windows and gateways on the front side symbolize the European spirit of openness and co-operation, while the bridge symbolizes close cooperation and communication. Reference is also made to the symbolism of the number 12 which represents harmony and dynamism.

The gate and the bridge are two closely related symbols; they can be seen as two sides of the same coin (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1994). According to Ivan Evseev (1994, p.147), the gate is "the symbol of a passage, transformation, stages passed; it is isomorphic to the bridge, because it separates and connects, at the same time, two states, two worlds, two territories" (Evseev, 1994: 147). Moreover, "[b]uilding a bridge establishes a connection between two geographical spaces, but also a temporal bridge, a connection between the old and the new, between a cycle completed and the next cycle, between one life and another" (Evseev, 1994:147). This confirms the official interpretation of the European Union regarding the symbols that appear on the euro banknote. It is about openness, cooperation, but also about transition and novelty, progress. First of all, the unity of the peoples of Europe is involved, but also the opening to other worlds, or perhaps the opening of the European Union to other states that are to be integrated in the future. We are also talking about a temporal unity, not just a spatial or geographical one. Like any project, European unity is built gradually, going through several stages, often requiring revisions and adjustments to move from one stage to another (Farrell, Fella & Newman, 2002). However, the construction is durable, resilient, with each stage bringing progress. On the other hand, the gate also has the meaning of a closure or barrier, not just that of an opening. It does not allow evil to pass through, usually having a protective god or a guardian, who selects those who enter through it (Evseev, 1994; Evseev, 1983). The bridge also has the meaning of an obstacle, an obstacle, not just a bridge or a passage (Evseev, 1994: 147). Both the gate and the bridge also have the meaning of customs, of trial, of selection. These meanings are not taken into account in official or pro-European interpretations. But, as we know, every symbol is ambivalent, it implies opposite meanings, but which nevertheless coexist in the nature of the symbol. The image of gates and bridges refers to Georg Simmel's famous metaphor. Money is a bridge because exchange is interdependent, and a gate because of its impersonal and abstract character (Simmel, 2004).

The choice of monuments and architectural styles on the sides of the banknotes is not accidental; they refer to the same theme as the euro symbol (€): the stability of the currency. The fact that no real monuments or buildings are represented is associated with the potential character, with the capacity to become, to change of Europe, and with the technological creativity of its citizens. Europe is mobile, in perpetual motion, innovation, evolution, it can reconfigure itself at any time without affecting its stability or sustainability. We could say that in change lies the essence of sustainability: any modification made in view of a goal or ideal is proof of its permanence; the ways and appearances change, but the finality remains. European unity is intended to be durable, but it takes malleable forms, adaptable to new challenges. The European currency is a symbol of this malleability-durability bivalence. Under these conditions, any potential failure of the European project is not a true end of the road, but just a moment in this construction, which like any great work undergoes increases and decreases, configurations and reconfigurations, until the model finds its best form, which in turn is adaptable to new times. The European currency therefore symbolizes progress and the achievement of ideals by accepting multiple possibilities, of reconfiguration or readjustment. Moreover, portraying monumental creations symbolizes the human need to achieve solid and lasting creations, which are not dependent on economic contexts and fluctuations. Once again, the reason for the durability of the European project is highlighted with reference to its universalist and timeless character, this time stemming from the iconography of euro banknotes.

Euro coins: between unity and diversity

Euro coins have a dual structure: a common European side, a national side. The European sides depict either the EU before the 2004 enlargement or different versions of the map of Europe. The national faces depict symbols or motifs specific to the respective countries. This duality reflects the fundamental principle of the European Union – “unity in diversity” (Ghenea, 2015Unity and diversity are complementary rather than opposites, and a unifying project, in order to be possible, must take into account cultural differences (Ghenea, 2014a; Ghenea, 2014b; Meseguer, 2024). The avoidance of any geographical or architectural references specific to any country, in the case of banknotes, is replaced by an illustration of motifs, personalities, buildings or works of art representative of the country in which the currency is issued. We note that unlike the universalistic character of euro banknotes, metallic coins have a greater openness to national specificity.

I will deal with the “European” side of the coins first. The one, two and five cent coins are supposed to show “Europe’s place in the world”, featuring a world map with Europe at the center. The 10, 20 and 50 cent coins show "Europe as a group of individual nations", with each country appearing as an independent island. EU member states that have not joined the euro are included, but all others are excluded. The 1 and 2 cent coins depict a "United Europe without borders". Following the EU enlargement in 2007, changes were made to the representations on the coins, and the interpretation also changed. The representations of the "individual nations" disappeared, being replaced by the map of Europe, which now looks like a united continent. The map also includes countries that are not EU members, but not Türkiye, although there have been discussions about this (Fornäs, 2009: 209).

The "national" sides of the euro, although they sometimes contain elements of European unity (the 12 stars of the European flag, etc.), are intended to best represent national specifics. Starting from the local fauna and flora, continuing with representative buildings, secular or religious, and with remarkable personalities of these countries. German coins refer to the national past: the federal eagle, the Brandenburg Gate, the oak branch, which recalls the graphic design of the old German pfennigs. Austrian coins depict a gentian, an elecampane, and an alpine primrose, some representative buildings (Belvedere Palace and St. Stephen's Cathedral), or the face of pacifist Bertha von Suttner and the famous composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. So we have flowers, buildings and personalities, which have both a local air and a European or global character: the creations of musical personalities like Mozart belong to the whole world, not just Austria, and pacifism is a sign of communication and friendship between peoples. The plants are also found in other countries, and the buildings, being visited by numerous tourists, are already part of the international landscape. We therefore have both national specificity and international openness. Creative geniuses and famous buildings are also specific to the representations on Italian coins: Dante Alighieri, painted by Raphael, Da Vinci's "Vitruvian Man", a sculpture by Umberto Boccioni, Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" or famous buildings (the Colosseum, the Mole Antonelliana and Castel del Monte). Spanish coins represent the portrait of Miguel de Cervantes, the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, perhaps the most beautiful creation of the Spanish Romanesque architectural style and one of the most famous pilgrimage destinations in the world. In addition to cultural figures, we also encounter historical and political personalities (apart from monarchical figures). Royal symbols usually adorn the coins of European monarchies. It is worth noting that in the case of Belgium, the monarchical symbols and effigies share space with the European symbols. The four series of coins issued by Vatican City represent the effigies of the sovereign pontiffs.

Some states have decided to depict more complex symbols on their coins, which, although referring to their historical and cultural past, have a greater openness to the universal. The Greek 2 EUR coin explicitly refers to the myth of Europe, showing both Greece's European vocation, but also assuming its status as a privileged culture, which both laid the foundations of European culture, but also gave the continent its name. The 1 EUR coin depicts an owl, a symbol of knowledge and wisdom, an attribute of the goddess Athena. Other coins are more explicitly linked to Greece's historical past, as they bear the effigies of renowned Greek figures from the 18th and 19th centuries and the early 20th century, while others depict boats (an Athenian trireme, a corvette, and a tanker), symbolizing the mobility but also the overseas expansion of the Greeks, founders of colonies, who contributed to the formation of European civilization.

The strongest connection of the national model with the European project is represented on French coins. In addition to plant symbols, such as the tree symbolizing life and sustainability and the classical theme of the sower, the republican motto "liberté, égalité, fraternité" appears, as well as the effigy of a young and feminine Marianne, symbol of the French Republic. These are timeless images, symbolic of France and its past, showing both the need to maintain national character and the desire to create a solid and sustainable Europe. This dual currency structure reflects the fundamental principle of the European Union – "unity in diversity", in which national identities are integrated into a common supranational framework.

Tensions and limits of monetary symbolism

European identity and national identity are literally two sides of the European currency. The European project is supported by the euro, both through its uniqueness in the monetary circulation of the member countries that have adopted it, and through the symbols that are represented on banknotes and coins. The national faces play the role of a transitional element, they pay tribute on the one hand to the sovereignty of the member states and national identities, but on the other hand they are themselves part of the European project, of unity in diversity. They are a clear indication that the European Union does not overlap and does not restrict national character, on the contrary, it promotes it even on its currency. National specificity is promoted in this way not only in the country of origin but also in all other countries through which the currency circulates. We can find in the pockets of a European citizen coins issued in all the states that belong to the euro area. Tourism and the free circulation of currency put national values into circulation, which thus become European. A veritable gallery of emblems of European culture and civilization, represented by the member states, circulates daily. The figures of cultural figures, monarchs, buildings and even the fauna and flora specific to a country now transcend the national framework, (if they haven't already, some personalities or creations being already known worldwide) becoming definitively inscribed in the European consciousness.

Although the euro promotes unity, it also reflects the limits of the European project. As any openness has its limits, the representations of the European currency can also be interpreted in another sense. The existence of national sides of the metal coin may show a certain dependence on the national model of the European project. The persistence of national sides indicates that integration is not complete, and national identities continue to play an essential role. Moreover, from the fact that it has not given up on national specificity, it can be understood that the project is not yet finished, still depending on the image of the currency as a national symbol. In addition, the differences between states in terms of adopting the single currency highlight the existence of different degrees of integration and identification with the European project. Each state's decision on what is represented on its currency shows the degree to which nationalist resistance has been overcome and the European project has been embraced. We could also say that there is an implicit hierarchy of European and national identity through the very value of the money on which these representations appear. Let's not forget that banknotes, i.e. large values, are unique at European level and only metallic coins, small values, are at the disposal of the member states. Of course, at the national level we also witness such hierarchies depending on the value of the metal coin on which the character, building or symbol is represented. The most common hierarchy is from plants, to buildings and human persons. There are also countries that have chosen to avoid such hierarchies, such as Estonia, which features a map of the country on all its coins, Lithuania with its coat of arms, and Ireland, which has a Celtic map as its emblem. Last but not least, equality of opportunity (we are referring here to that between women and men), one of the core values of the EU, is not very well represented, at least on the national sides of the coins, where we find very few women. The Austrian coin is a positive example in this regard, as the highest value coin (2 EUR) features the effigy of pacifist Bertha von Suttner, rather than Mozart, who appears on the 1 EUR coin. The Dutch 1 EUR coin depicts Queen Beatrix, but here we can say that it bears the mark of royalty. Images of femininity, without referring to a specific person, we have on the Latvian coin, which depicts (on the high-value coins) a young Latvian woman dressed in folk costume, and on the French one where the young Marianne is a symbolic figure. European identity thus appears as a dynamic construct, in a continuous process of negotiation, influenced by contemporary economic, political and cultural factors (Ghenea, 2015).

Conclusions

Analyzing the euro from a symbolic perspective reveals that it goes beyond its economic function, becoming a central element in the process of building European identity. Through its carefully crafted design — from the graphic symbol (€) to the iconography of the banknotes and coins — the euro conveys complex messages of unity, stability, openness and continuity, while also integrating references to the cultural diversity of the member states. At the same time, the coexistence of common European elements with national ones highlights the ambivalent character of the European project. On the one hand, the single currency fosters awareness of belonging to a supranational community; on the other hand, the maintenance of national symbols indicates the persistence of state identities and specific cultural attachments. Thus, the euro becomes a space for symbolic negotiation between unity and difference, reflecting the tensions between the two levels of identity. Recent developments – the enlargement of the euro area, the Brexit process, the digitalization of the economy and new geopolitical challenges – confirm that European identity remains a project under construction.

The euro is an institution of European unity and identity. But how is this unity understood? Almost in terms of national identity: the citizens of Europe must be aware, starting from economic and monetary practices, that they belong to the same community and that they are distinct from others. This differentiation between us and you, which was obvious in the case of national unity, is also glimpsed here, subtly, starting from economic differentiation. We are the ones who use the same currency, unlike others, each with their own currencies. It is not the same radical otherness found in nationalisms, but it is a separation between us and them. Differentiation and otherness move outside the borders of Europe (or at least the eurozone). But at the same time it is also an invitation to identification. We have seen that discussions regarding the introduction of the European currency in different states show, beyond some economic reasons, a difference in degree in identification with Europe, but also in adherence to national monetary identity.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Reconfiguring Corporate Governance under the Impact of Hybrid and Conventional Wars

Lucian Spulbar[1)]

Abstract:
In the post-pandemic period, the global landscape has been marked by an aggravation of armed conflicts, from the war in Ukraine to the chronic instability in the Middle East, forcing multinational corporations to abandon the paradigm of political neutrality. Through this analysis, we need to understand how corporate policies have transformed from a set of administrative rules into instruments of strategic survival and private diplomacy.

The paper explores the vulnerabilities to which economic entities caught in the middle between international sanctions, ethical consumer pressures, and the need to protect physical and human assets are exposed. We highlight the fact that traditional Business Continuity policies are insufficient in the face of modern warfare, which includes cyber and hybrid dimensions that can paralyze critical infrastructures thousands of kilometers from the front line.

Subsequently, the article investigates the adaptation mechanisms adopted by major economic actors to ensure financial sustainability. Strategies such as friend-shoring, radical diversification of supply chains and the implementation of rigorous occupational safety protocols for employees in affected areas are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the dilemma of exit strategy versus maintaining a presence for humanitarian support, assessing the impact of these decisions on the long-term reputation of the brand.

The research indicate that, in the new era of unpredictability, geopolitical risk management must be natively integrated into corporate governance. Economic survival no longer depends only on market indicators, but on the organizational capacity to anticipate geopolitical mutations and to adopt flexible policies, capable of simultaneously protecting financial, human and moral capital in times of systemic crisis.

Keywords: *Business Continuity Planning – BCP, Geopolitical Risk, Corporate Governance, Conflict Zone Ethics.*
JEL Classification: G34, F51, M14

[1)] PhD Student, Management Field, Doctoral School of Economic Sciences "Eugeniu Carada". ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6661-4166.

Reconfiguring Corporate Governance under the Impact of Hybrid and Conventional Wars

Introduction

The post-pandemic period has not brought the anticipated stabilization of the global economic environment, but rather a visible intensification of geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts. From the war in Ukraine to the persistent volatility in the Middle East, contemporary conflict dynamics have reshaped not only state behavior but also the strategic horizons of multinational corporations. In this evolving landscape, the traditional assumption that firms can operate as politically neutral actors has become increasingly difficult to sustain.

Corporate governance, once largely confined to internal control mechanisms and shareholder accountability, is undergoing a subtle yet profound transformation. It is no longer limited to aligning managerial decisions with financial performance, but is progressively extending into areas traditionally associated with statecraft, including risk anticipation, ethical positioning, and even forms of implicit diplomacy. The intersection between business decisions and geopolitical realities has thus become more direct, more visible, and significantly more consequential.

Modern conflicts further complicate this environment through their hybrid nature, blending conventional military confrontation with cyber operations, informational warfare, and economic coercion. These dynamics generate systemic vulnerabilities that transcend geographical proximity to conflict zones. Critical infrastructures, supply chains, and digital systems may be disrupted across continents, exposing corporations to risks that are both diffuse and difficult to predict using traditional business continuity frameworks.

At the same time, economic actors are increasingly pressured to respond not only to regulatory constraints such as sanctions, but also to normative expectations shaped by consumers, investors, and civil society. Decisions regarding market exit, continued presence, or strategic repositioning are no longer evaluated solely through the lens of profitability, but also through their ethical and reputational implications. This tension between economic rationality and moral accountability places corporate governance in a position of unprecedented complexity.

Against this background, corporate strategies are being reconfigured in ways that reflect a growing awareness of geopolitical fragility. Practices such as supply chain diversification, friend-shoring, and enhanced security protocols for employees operating in high-risk regions illustrate a broader shift toward resilience-oriented governance. These adaptations suggest that long-term viability increasingly depends on the capacity to internalize geopolitical risk as a structural component of decision-making, rather than treating it as an external shock.

Such developments indicate a transition toward a model of corporate governance that is more adaptive, more context-sensitive, and more deeply embedded in global power dynamics. The capacity to navigate uncertainty, to balance competing pressures, and to maintain coherence between economic objectives and ethical commitments is gradually emerging as a defining feature of corporate success in an era marked by persistent instability.

Literature review

The literature on geopolitical risk has become increasingly influential in recent years, but, in my view, it still explains corporate behavior more convincingly at the level of financial reaction than at the level of governance transformation. A useful starting point remains Caldara and Iacoviello (2022), who define and measure geopolitical risk through their now widely used GPR Index and show that higher geopolitical risk is associated with lower investment and employment, as well as broader downside macroeconomic effects. Their contribution is fundamental because it gives researchers a clear empirical instrument, yet it also frames the issue largely in terms of measurable economic disruption. What seems less developed is the question of how boards and executives internalize this type of risk as a permanent governance variable rather than as an external shock.

This limitation becomes even more visible in the expanding empirical literature that uses the GPR framework. Many recent studies build on Caldara and Iacoviello's index to examine investment, cash holdings, tax behavior, or dividend policy, which is useful, but also somewhat narrow in analytical ambition. Personally, I find that this strand of research often remains too close to the logic of financial adaptation: firms are shown to become more cautious, more liquid, or more defensive, yet they are rarely discussed as moral and political actors operating in conflict-sensitive environments. In this sense, the literature is rich in evidence, but still relatively poor in institutional imagination.

A second important direction in the literature concerns the growing role of boards in managing geopolitical exposure. An especially relevant recent intervention is the ISS Governance memorandum discussed by Mishra (2020), which argues that geopolitical instability has become a central board-level concern and that companies increasingly need formal frameworks for identification, mitigation, and transfer of geopolitical risk. The same text is particularly revealing when it admits that there is still little consensus on market practice and that most solutions remain bespoke. To my mind, this is one of the clearest signs that the field is still conceptually unsettled: companies know geopolitical risk matters, but neither practice nor scholarship has yet produced a stable governance model capable of dealing with hybrid and conventional war in a coherent way.

Institutional reporting points in the same direction. The World Economic Forum's 2025 risk outlook, as summarized in contemporary reporting on the Global Risks Report, places state-based armed conflict among the most severe immediate global risks and connects this directly to disruption in trade, stability, and business operations. This confirms that war is no longer a peripheral issue for corporations, but part of the core risk architecture of global business. Even so, most institutional reports remain descriptive: they are strong at signaling urgency, but weaker at explaining how corporate governance should reconcile resilience, profitability, and ethical responsibility when firms operate in or around conflict zones.

Another major weakness of the current literature is that it often discusses resilience without sufficiently confronting the hybrid nature of present-day conflict. Much of the governance literature still appears implicitly shaped by assumptions derived from conventional crises, even though contemporary risk increasingly involves cyber disruption, disinformation, coercive sanctions, and strategic fragmentation across supply chains. In my opinion, this matters greatly because hybrid warfare does not simply threaten assets; it destabilizes the informational and institutional environment in which governance decisions are made. As a result, traditional business continuity thinking appears increasingly insufficient, especially when firms must respond simultaneously to physical insecurity, digital vulnerability, and stakeholder scrutiny (KPMG, 2025).

Overall, the current state of research is important but incomplete. Authors such as Caldara and Iacoviello (2022) help explain why geopolitical risk matters economically, while recent governance commentary shows that boards are beginning to treat it as a strategic issue rather than a peripheral one. Still, the literature does not yet fully connect three dimensions that, in my view, now belong together: corporate governance, geopolitical risk management, and conflict-zone ethics. That gap is precisely what makes this topic not only timely, but also academically necessary.

Conceptual framework

The starting point for a conceptual framework in this area is the idea that modern corporations no longer operate in a purely economic environment, but in a geopolitically charged risk ecosystem in which war, sanctions, cyber operations, and disinformation intersect. Hybrid warfare literature shows that contemporary conflicts deliberately combine conventional force, cyberattacks, economic coercion, and information operations, precisely to exploit interdependencies in globalized systems. This means that corporate actors are not only collateral victims of war, but also implicit participants in a contested geoeconomic landscape, whether they acknowledge it or not. From this perspective, any serious discussion of corporate governance in conflict settings must integrate both hybrid and conventional dimensions of conflict into its basic analytical architecture.

Within this broader environment, corporate governance can be conceptualized as a strategic interface between the firm and three interlocking domains: geopolitical risk, operational continuity, and conflict-zone ethics. Geopolitical risk refers not only to the probability of adverse political events, but to the structural condition of operating in a fragmented, conflict-prone international order, as captured by Caldara and Iacoviello's Geopolitical Risk Index. Operational continuity covers the capacity to maintain critical business functions under extreme disruption, while conflict-zone ethics concerns the firm's responsibilities toward employees, local communities, and human rights in areas affected by violence. In this framework, boards are expected to make decisions at the intersection of these three domains, rather than treating them as separate technical issues (UNDP, 2023). Conceptually, this moves corporate governance away from a narrow shareholder-centric logic toward a multi-capital model that explicitly includes financial, human, and moral capital as interdependent assets.

The impact of modern conflicts on corporations becomes particularly visible when looking at Ukraine and the broader Eastern European and Middle Eastern theatres. Analyses of the war in Ukraine show that Russia's invasion has dramatically intensified supply chain disruptions, affecting industries ranging from semiconductors to automotive manufacturing, and pushing companies to reconsider their dependence on specific routes, raw materials, and jurisdictions. At the same time, firms are forced to navigate a dense web of sanctions, countersanctions, and regulatory restrictions, which transform routine transactions into complex legal and reputational dilemmas (Lim et al., 2022). In my view, this illustrates very clearly how the conventional dimension of war (physical destruction, territorial occupation) interacts with the regulatory and financial dimensions, producing a form of *weaponised interdependence* that corporate governance structures were not originally designed to manage.

Hybrid warfare adds another layer of complexity by expanding the attack surface far beyond the frontline. Case studies of cyber operations during the Russo-Ukrainian war indicate that enterprises in critical infrastructure sectors (energy, telecommunications, finance, logistics) face systematic, state-linked cyberattacks, including DDoS campaigns, data breaches, and social-engineering attacks routed through corporate networks. Specialized analyses aimed at the private sector similarly document how hybrid threats increasingly target ports, rail networks, and logistics hubs, using cyber intrusions, infrastructure sabotage, and coordinated disinformation to generate cascading commercial disruption in NATO-aligned economies (Otaiku, 2018). For corporate governance, this implies that Business Continuity Planning can no longer be confined to localized incidents; it must account for cross-border, multi-domain operations that may never be officially recognized as acts of war, but can nevertheless paralyze corporate systems thousands of kilometers away from any direct military confrontation.

The governance implications are particularly stark when examining business crisis management in wartime. Qualitative research based on interviews with Ukrainian managers shows that war functions as a distinct crisis type characterized by an unknown end point and by disruptions that exceed previously imagined risk scenarios. Under such conditions, classical planning-based approaches quickly reach their limits, and firms rely instead on emergent, adaptive capabilities, improvisation, and distributed leadership. From a conceptual standpoint, this supports the argument that corporate governance in conflict zones must incorporate mechanisms for real-time learning and flexible decision-making, rather than relying solely on ex ante risk matrices and static continuity plans. It also suggests that resilience in war is as much about organizational culture and leadership as about formal procedures.

At the same time, ethical and reputational pressures are reshaping how corporations respond to conflict. Reports on responsible business conduct during the war in Ukraine stress that *business is not neutral in times of war* and that firms operating in conflict zones must apply enhanced due diligence and human-rights safeguards. Companies are confronted with four broad scenarios, continuing to operate under bombardment, operating in areas outside government control, functioning in safer yet war-affected regions, or relocating entirely, and each scenario carries distinct ethical and governance implications. In my view, this confirms that conflict-zone decisions cannot be reduced to a simple calculus of risk and return, they inevitably involve judgements about complicity, protection of employees, and contribution to local resilience or recovery.

Modern conflicts are accelerating a strategic reconfiguration of global production and sourcing. Analyses of the Ukraine war and related tensions document a clear push toward friend-shoring and regionalization, as firms seek to reduce exposure to hostile jurisdictions and politically unstable corridors. This reconfiguration may enhance resilience to specific geopolitical shocks, but it also increases complexity and may reinforce global fragmentation, raising difficult questions for governance about long-term competitiveness, stakeholder fairness, and the distribution of risks and benefits across regions. When economic coercion and selective export controls are used as instruments of hybrid warfare, supply chain decisions become inseparable from geopolitical alignment and values-based positioning. Conceptually, this means that corporate governance is gradually evolving into a form of geo-strategic governance, where boards are expected not only to manage firms, but to position them explicitly within a contested international order.

Corporate adaptation strategies

In the current environment, corporate adaptation strategies can no longer be treated as minor tactical adjustments; they are the concrete expression of how corporate governance internalizes geopolitical risk and conflict-zone ethics. Recent research and institutional reports show that firms tend to adapt along three main axes: geographical reconfiguration of operations (friend-shoring and exit), reinforcement of financial and operational resilience, and protection of human capital and ethical legitimacy (Gvozdei, 2025).

The war in Ukraine has accelerated the shift toward friend-shoring, whereby companies relocate production and sourcing to jurisdictions seen as politically *friendly*, more stable, and more closely aligned in terms of values. Many firms are actively *unhooking* supply chains from high-risk regions, even at the cost of lower efficiency and higher logistics and compliance expenses. Strategically, this marks a clear departure from the previous paradigm: efficiency maximization is increasingly subordinated to the need for geopolitical risk insulation.

In parallel, exit strategies from aggressor markets have become a central topic. Recent analyses of multinational corporations operating in Russia during the war against Ukraine indicate that companies choosing full exit tend, over the medium term, to enjoy the strongest combined gains in financial performance, stakeholder trust, and reputation, compared with firms that remained with minimal social responsibility commitments (Kharchenko, et al., 2024). This suggests that, in the context of a widely perceived unjust war, maintaining a presence can become more costly than withdrawal, even from a shareholder perspective.

Normative reports go further by arguing that firms which continue to operate in Russia risk becoming directly complicit in the war effort, as domestic legislation allows the state to compel companies to support military needs. In this light, friend-shoring and exit cease to be mere risk-management tools and become instruments of moral and political positioning. The decision to stay or leave is no longer purely economic; it is explicitly ethical and geopolitical.

At the microeconomic level, war forces a profound reconfiguration of corporate finance. Studies on Ukrainian enterprises highlight severe difficulties in forming and utilizing financial resources (disrupted cash flows, higher operating costs, constrained access to credit, and forced relocation of production capacities) showing that survival increasingly depends on deliberate financial adaptation strategies and active liquidity management. Resilience, in this perspective, is not a vague slogan but a set of concrete practices: diversifying funding sources, optimizing cost structures, and leveraging state support mechanisms where available.

Recent work on resilience and marketing adaptation among Ukrainian companies further indicates that firms which increased the share of high value-added products, diversified export destinations, and accelerated digital transformation (including online sales) exhibit stronger resilience profiles over time (Mitrache et al., 2025). This suggests that adaptation strategies go beyond *cost cutting*, they involve strategic repositioning, rebalancing product portfolios, target markets, and distribution channels.

On the operational side, the literature on business strategies in war and crisis identifies three broad response patterns: downsizing and resource conservation, relocation and redirection of activity, and, in some cases, innovation in business models to fit the new environment (Mitrache et al., 2024). These contributions converge toward the idea that resilience is not only a structural property (capital, assets), but also a processual capability: the capacity to learn quickly, reconfigure processes, and accept radical strategic decisions under pressure.

A third core pillar of adaptation strategies concerns the protection of human capital, both physical and psychological. Crisis management guidance for multinational employers in Ukraine recommends detailed evacuation protocols, shelter-in-place procedures, response plans for chemical or other military threats, and clear chains of command and communication during emergencies. Recent guidance for companies exposed to escalation in the Middle East similarly stresses the need to combine robust physical security measures (reducing exposure to potential targets, enabling remote work where possible) with active support for employee mental health, as regional tension generates psychological stress even where immediate physical danger is limited (UNDP, 2023).

From a governance perspective, this transforms safety and security from a technical function into a strategic responsibility. Boards are no longer accountable only for financial returns; they are increasingly judged on whether the firm discharges its duty of care toward employees in extreme contexts. The way a company protects its people in conflict zones becomes a core component of its reputational capital and long-term legitimacy.

Adaptation strategies also contain a clearly symbolic and legitimating dimension. Recent studies show that companies during war rely on combinations of rebranding, solidarity-oriented communication, and adjustments to CSR policies to reconcile conflicting expectations from different stakeholder groups, ranging from Western investors to local employees and communities. In Ukraine, standards of responsible business conduct promoted by international organizations emphasize that *business is not neutral in times of war* and that firms must implement conflict-sensitive human rights due diligence, including along supply chains and in their relationships with local partners.

This orientation toward conflict-sensitive business conduct is one of the most promising, but also most demanding, directions for corporate governance. It pushes companies to rethink their policies not only as tools of economic survival, but as forms of private diplomacy that can cumulatively support or undermine post-conflict recovery and stabilization. In this sense, adaptation strategies in hybrid and conventional conflicts are best understood not as a loose collection of technical fixes, but as the way in which corporate governance reorders its priorities between profitability, resilience, employee safety, and ethical responsibility under conditions of deep geopolitical uncertainty.

Case Insights

One of the clearest patterns emerging from the Russia-Ukraine war concerns multinational companies that chose a full exit from the Russian market. Empirical research and policy briefs show that a significant share of international firms either completely halted operations or announced plans to divest from Russia after the 2022 invasion, often under strong pressure from consumers, investors, and civil society (French et al., 2023).

Game-theoretic analysis of multinational corporations in Russia during the war compares three strategies: minimal CSR engagement while staying, intensified CSR while staying, and complete exit. The findings indicate that exit yields the highest combined payoffs in terms of financial performance, stakeholder trust, and corporate reputation, whereas minimal CSR while remaining produces the worst outcomes, including reputational damage and heightened sanction exposure. Complementary studies on stock market and brand effects show that companies announcing temporary or full withdrawal were often perceived as *doing the right thing*, with positive shifts in investor and consumer sentiment.

From a governance perspective, this case illustrates that board decisions framed as ethical stances can align with long-term financial and reputational interests (Bamiatzi, et al., 2025). Personally, I see this as a strong challenge to the old assumption that *political* choices inevitably conflict with shareholder value: in this context, ethical clarity has become a source of strategic advantage, not a luxury.

A contrasting case is formed by companies that decided to maintain or even expand operations in Russia after the invasion. While some firms from non-Western jurisdictions opted for formal neutrality or opportunistic expansion, a few Western companies also deepened their presence, arguing for the protection of local employees or long-term strategic interests.

Public analysis of specific cases highlights how this choice has exposed companies to intense reputational criticism, boycott campaigns, and classification by Ukrainian and international actors as "war sponsors", with potential long-term damage to brand equity. At the same time, research on corporate responses shows that firms with high asset specificity or strong dependence on the Russian market were statistically more likely to stay despite sanctions, confirming that economic vulnerability can lock companies into ethically problematic positions.

In governance terms, this second case shows the limits of a purely defensive, profitability-first logic in conflict settings. Boards that underestimate the speed at which stakeholder expectations evolve in wartime risk turning short-term continuity into long-term reputational and political liability.

Viewed together, these two case patterns suggest a reversal of the usual risk calculus. In normal conditions, exit from a large market is typically seen as an extreme, value-destructive decision, whereas staying is the default, conservative option. Under the pressure of hybrid and conventional war, the hierarchy often flips: exiting becomes the safer and more legitimate choice, while staying can be interpreted as complicity, especially when national legislation can force firms to support the war economy.

Conclusions

The analysis developed in this article suggests that hybrid and conventional conflicts are no longer peripheral shocks, but structural conditions shaping corporate governance. Geopolitical risk has moved from the background to the foreground of board agendas, forcing firms to treat it as a native element of governance design, rather than as an external variable to be occasionally monitored. In this sense, war and hybrid threats do not simply disturb corporate decision-making, they redefine what it means to govern a multinational firm in a fractured international order.

A first key insight is that financial, operational, and ethical dimensions of corporate strategy have become increasingly inseparable. Decisions regarding friend-shoring, market exit, or continued presence in conflict-affected countries simultaneously determine risk exposure, long-term profitability, stakeholder trust, and perceived political alignment. The empirical patterns observed in the Russia–Ukraine context – where full exit often produced better combined financial and reputational outcomes than staying – show that ethical clarity can function as a form of risk management, rather than a constraint on rational strategy. Corporate governance, in this environment, is effectively adjudicating among competing ethical, political, and economic logics, even when it presents its choices in purely technical language.

A second point emerging from the discussion is that existing frameworks of Business Continuity Planning and traditional risk management are no longer sufficient on their own. Hybrid warfare (combining cyber operations, economic coercion, infrastructural disruption, and information manipulation) requires firms to integrate geopolitical intelligence, cyber-resilience, and conflict-sensitive human rights due diligence into the core of governance processes. Resilience, under such conditions, is less about returning to a previous equilibrium and more about adaptive capacity as the ability to learn in real time, reconfigure supply chains, redesign financial structures, and protect employees under conditions of radical uncertainty.

Third, the growing emphasis on conflict-sensitive business conduct indicates that corporations are increasingly expected to act as responsible geopolitical stakeholders, not merely as private profit-seeking entities. Standards and guidelines emerging from international organizations and national initiatives in war-affected countries underline that *business is not neutral in times of war* and that firms have concrete responsibilities in relation to human rights, social cohesion, and post-conflict recovery. For corporate governance, this means that the boundaries between compliance, strategy, and ethics are becoming blurred: questions once relegated to CSR reports now sit at the heart of strategic deliberation.

Overall, the argument developed here is that corporate governance in an era of hybrid and conventional warfare must evolve toward a model of principled flexibility. Such a model recognizes that geopolitical volatility and systemic conflict are likely to persist, and therefore demands governance architectures capable of combining strategic agility with coherent normative commitments. Economic survival, in this view, cannot be decoupled from the protection of human and moral capital: boards that ignore the ethical and political content of their decisions in conflict zones risk undermining precisely the legitimacy and resilience on which long-term value creation depends.

So, the intersection of geopolitical risk, corporate governance, and conflict-zone ethics should be understood not as a marginal niche, but as a central frontier for both research and practice. Future work will need to move beyond fragmented analyses of financial indicators, ESG scores, or isolated case studies, and instead develop integrated frameworks that can guide firms in navigating the dual imperative of resilience and responsibility in times of war.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Romanian Press During the Transition from the Communist to the Post-Communist Period. Case Study: Art, Culture and Economy

Păușan-Barna Leonard-Denis[1)]

Abstract

The transition from communism to post-communism in Romania constituted a profound transformation that extended beyond political change, affecting institutional structures, economic systems, and cultural practices. Within this context, the press emerges as a key medium for analyzing recent history, given its dual role in both reflecting and shaping social realities. Under the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Romanian media operated under strict state supervision, functioning as an instrument of ideological control. Censorship and propaganda mechanisms ensured the dissemination of a uniform and carefully constructed image of society. Economic discourse highlighted planned achievements, cultural production adhered to socialist principles, and artistic expression was subordinated to political objectives. This resulted in a highly standardized and controlled media language. The events of 1989 marked a decisive turning point, initiating a rapid restructuring of the media landscape. The collapse of the communist regime opened the way for freedom of expression, ideological plurality, and the emergence of market-driven journalism. However, this transition also brought challenges related to adapting to democratic norms and competitive pressures. As a consequence, media representations of economy, culture, and art became increasingly diverse and at times, fragmented. A comparative perspective reveals both significant transformations and elements of continuity between the two periods. While the communist press fulfilled a prescriptive and mobilizing function, post-communist media gradually evolved into a platform for debate, critique, and the redefinition of collective identity. By focusing on the fields of economy, culture and art, this study highlights the discursive shifts that accompanied Romania's broader societal transformation.

Keywords: *Romanian*; *Journalism*; *Communism*; *Social*; *Language.*

[1)] PhD, West University of Timișoara, Doctoral School of Humanities, History specialization, Phone: 0770547413, E-mail: leonardpausan@yahoo.com

The Romanian Press During the Transition from the Communist to the Post-Communist Period. Case Study: Art, Culture and Economy

The transition from the communist to the post-communist regime in Romania represented not only a change in political system but also a structural transformation that affected all levels of society, from institutional organization and economic mechanisms to mentalities, cultural practices and forms of public expression. In this context, the press occupies a privileged position in the analysis of recent history, as it both reflects the realities of a given era and actively contributes to their construction and shaping. During the regime led by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the Romanian press functioned as an integral part of the state's ideological apparatus, being subject to extensive control exercised through mechanisms of censorship and official propaganda. Publications of the time promoted a standardized image of society, in which the economy was presented through the lens of planned achievements, culture was subordinated to socialist values, and art became an instrument for legitimizing political power. Media discourse was characterized by uniformity, formalized language and the enforced promotion of dominant themes imposed by the party. The year 1989 generated a major rupture in the structure of the media system. With the collapse of the communist regime, the press entered a rapid process of redefinition, facing multiple challenges: freedom of expression, ideological pluralism, the transformations of the market economy, and the emergence of new competitive mechanisms. This transitional period was marked both by the enthusiasm of newly gained freedom and by the difficulties of adapting to a democratic and capitalist framework. Consequently, discourse on economy, culture, and art diversified, became fragmented, and began to reflect multiple, often contradictory perspectives. A comparative analysis of the press in the two periods makes it possible to capture the mechanisms through which transformations in language and thematic focus occurred. While during the communist period the press had a predominantly normative and mobilizing role, in the post-communist stage it began to function as a space for debate, critique, and the redefinition of collective identity. At the same time, certain continuities can be identified, either at the level of journalistic practices or in the persistence of inherited interpretative frameworks.

This study proposes an approach centered on a case study focusing on art, culture, and the economy, fields that allow for a deeper understanding of the ideological dynamics of the analyzed period. By investigating how these themes were addressed in both communist and post-communist press up to the 2000s, the research aims to highlight both the discursive rupture produced by the change of regime and the gradual adaptations that shaped the new Romanian media landscape.

I) The Representation of the Economy in the Press During the Transition from Communism to Post-Communism

During the communist regime, the Romanian press represented one of the main instruments through which the state exercised control over society and the flow of information. Mass media did not function as a space for public debate or pluralism of opinions; rather, it was integrated into the ideological mechanism of the party, having the role of transmitting and legitimizing political directives. Under the regime led by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the press became an essential tool for consolidating the image of the regime and for promoting the official discourse regarding the development of socialist society. References to the press prior to 1989 generally concern publications with large circulation and national distribution, such as „Scînteia" or „România Liberă", alongside national radio and television stations. These mass media outlets are, justifiably, analyzed in the scholarly literature as fundamental instruments of communist propaganda, integrated into a media system strictly controlled by political authorities. With regard to the economy, the communist press emphasized the successes of centralized planning, presenting production indicators, the development of large industrial platforms, and the increase in living standards as direct results of state-promoted policies. This type of discourse aimed to reinforce the image of an economy in continuous development, even though the everyday realities experienced by the population often reflected significant difficulties, especially in the final decades of the regime. In the cultural and artistic sphere, the press promoted a model of creation aligned with the principles of socialist realism, in which artists and intellectuals were portrayed as active participants in the construction of socialist society. Cultural events, literary works, and artistic productions were interpreted through the lens of collective values and the educational role that culture was expected to fulfill within society (Bocancea, 2014:19).

Romania's economy during the communist period underwent successive transformations, yet these changes essentially followed a logic of doctrinal continuity. Stalinist-inspired economic policy, based on the primacy of accelerated industrialization, with an emphasis on the development of heavy industry and the consolidation of centralized planning, was reaffirmed in the party's programmatic documents, from the April 1964 Declaration to the last Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in April 1989, and this orientation was further consolidated and intensified during the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu. At the IXth. Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, held in July 1965, a moment officially remembered in historiography as the beginning of the so-called "Golden Age," the new general secretary emphasized, in his report, the central role of socialist industrialization: „Guided by Marxist-Leninist teachings and taking into account the realities of our country, the party has placed at the center of its policy the socialist industrialization of the country—the foundation of the progress of the entire economy, the multifaceted development of socialist society, and a decisive factor in ensuring national independence and sovereignty". The official discourse also stressed the need to perfect the economic structure through the prioritized development of sectors such as machinery manufacturing, metallurgy, the chemical industry, and electricity production, as these sectors were intended to account for approximately 75% of total industrial output, reflecting a clear choice for a strongly industrialized economy oriented toward large production platforms and the consolidation of the state's economic autonomy (Rotman, 2020:371).

The communist press emphasized the idea of economic progress, constructing an official narrative focused on development, modernization and industrial success. Numerous articles published in periodicals of the time aimed to reinforce the image of a continuously expanding economy, while minimizing or ignoring the real difficulties faced by the population. Food shortages, energy restrictions and the decline in living standards, particularly during the 1980s, were either omitted or reinterpreted in a mobilizing key, as expressions of necessary sacrifices for consolidating economic independence. An example in this sense is the statement: „During the years of people's power, by firmly promoting the line of socialist industrialization, the Romanian Workers' Party directed the country's development toward combining the process of overall economic growth with the diversification of production, in order to continuously expand the energy, metal, and, in general, raw materials base, and to create a strong processing industry...". This fragment reflects the standardized language of the official discourse, characterized by laudatory formulas, generalizations, and the absence of any reference to the social costs of this economic policy. In reality, accelerated industrialization and the disproportionate focus on heavy industry generated significant structural imbalances. Massive investments in priority sectors were often made at the expense of consumer goods and infrastructure intended to meet the population's daily needs. Thus, the image of a diversified economy undergoing harmonious development contrasts sharply with the economic reality of the last decade of communism, marked by shortages, rationing, and declining living standards. Therefore, the analysis of these articles highlights not only their informational content but especially their ideological function: to legitimize the regime's economic policies and to construct a favorable public perception, despite everyday evidence to the contrary (Expoziția realizărilor economiei naționale a R.P. Romîne, 1964:4).

A counterexample to the legitimizing discourse of the communist press can be identified in an issue of the periodical „Cotidianul" from 1994. In an article dedicated to the reevaluation of economic policies from the period prior to 1989, it is emphasized that the communist regime constantly cultivated the perception of a high-performing economy, comparable to or even surpassing Western economies. Such a discursive strategy is interpreted as part of the propagandistic mechanism through which the authorities sought to consolidate public confidence in the socialist economic model, despite evidence indicating stagnation and structural imbalances. The same article offers an explicit critique of the economic interventionism characteristic of totalitarian regimes, stating that „all dictatorial regimes, in all historical periods, sought to destroy the market". Invoking the Soviet model and the influence exerted by leaders such as Lenin and Stalin, the text argues that governments established in Romania after 1945, under the leadership of Petru Groza, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and later Nicolae Ceaușescu, eliminated market mechanisms and suppressed private initiative, replacing them with a rigid system of centralized planning. During the transition period, the press became a space for critical reevaluation of the recent past, with most publications recognizing the virtues of the market economy and the framework it provided for efficiency, competitiveness and adaptability. Nevertheless, debates regarding the optimal post-communist societal model were not without controversy. Divergences of opinion concerned the pace of reforms, the extent of privatization and the role of the state in the economy, reflecting the complexity of the transformation process and the inherent difficulties in redefining the economic and social structure after decades of centralized planning (Tașnadi, 1994:6).

Nicolae Ceaușescu consistently emphasized, in his speeches and interviews, the supposed economic prosperity of Romania under his regime. In an interview granted to the Egyptian newspaper Al-Messa, the communist leader highlighted Romania's economic difficulties during the pre-Soviet period, mentioning the low production and modest agriculture that characterized the country before the implementation of collectivization and centralized planning. Comparing Romania with other states in the communist bloc, Ceaușescu argued that the success of socialism in the country required the application of a „special algorithm," adapted to the national specificities, intended to make the socialist system functional in the Romanian context. This type of discourse reflects both the propagandistic strategy of the regime and the way in which the leader sought to legitimize state interventions and centralized economic policies, presenting domestic sacrifices and constraints as necessary for achieving collective prosperity. In reality, however, the so-called „miracles" of industrialization and collectivization were accompanied by economic imbalances, material shortages, and strict control over everyday life, factors often omitted or downplayed in the official discourse (Șerb, 2020:72).

At the same time, numerous publications consistently reproduced and disseminated Nicolae Ceaușescu's speeches, emphasizing the supposed progress of the national economy. Newspapers presented achievements in the energy sector and successes in agriculture as markers of a rapidly developing Romania, thereby constructing an idealized image of the country and reinforcing the regime's official narrative. In this way, the press not only reflected the leader's discourse but amplified it, transforming it into an instrument of ideological legitimization and of mobilizing public opinion in favor of communist policies (Șerb, 2020:38).

In the daily newspaper „Clopotul" from 1985, Nicolae Ceaușescu stated that Romania's economy had achieved significant progress. In an article published during that period, the communist leader declared: „If Romania, following the path of socialist construction, had not acted to develop a modern industry based on the most advanced technology, we would have remained, as before, a poorly developed country, dependent on industrialized nations". The newspaper interpreted this statement as an argument for transforming Romania from a predominantly agrarian country with underdeveloped industry and agriculture into an industrial-agrarian nation, characterized by a modern industry and a socialist agriculture in full expansion. According to the article, „the country's industrial production increased more than 103 times compared to 1945, and total agricultural production more than sevenfold". Such statements reflect how the communist press manipulated statistics to create the impression of uniform and spectacular economic progress, while ignoring regional disparities and the everyday problems faced by the population. A frequently used mechanism in communist mass media was the repeated use of laudatory models applied alternately to several cities. For example, in the mentioned article, the industry of Botoșani was highlighted as an emblem of industrial development, even though in other newspapers, the same discourse could be attributed to different localities. In reality, Botoșani experienced growth rates above the national average and its annual industrial production exceeded 10 billion lei, with leading sectors such as electrotechnics, electronics, and chemistry considered symbols of local industrial modernization and creative labor. This example illustrates both the propagandistic manner in which the communist press glorified economic progress and the real discrepancies between official discourse and the concrete developments in industry and agriculture. Furthermore, it highlights the strategy of media uniformity, intended to convey the idea of generalized progress applicable to all regions of the country, regardless of local particularities (Economia românească sub semnul accentuării acțiunii factorilor intensivi ai dezvoltării, 1985:1).

The transition from the „great economic progress" promoted in Nicolae Ceaușescu's discourse and reflected in the communist press to the post-communist period was far more complex than the propaganda of the time suggested. This change is clearly illustrated in an article published in a post-1989 newspaper, which highlighted that Romania was undergoing a distinct phase in the country's economic life. The December 1989 Revolution generated significant transformations in the structure and functioning of the economy, as well as in the direct experience of citizens. According to the article, „The path is open for us towards a market economy, towards privatization, towards a prosperous life we have awaited for decades," suggesting that, although the population aspired to a free and competitive economy, achieving this was not possible under the communist regime. The article emphasizes that, in the post-communist period, economic units in Romania gradually gained decision-making autonomy. Employee collectives were allowed to plan their activities, determine which products to manufacture, in what quantities and to which markets to sell them. In this way, economic units were encouraged to develop high-quality, competitive products with lower costs and increased profitability, adapting to the requirements and standards imposed by the market economy. This example reflects both the contrast between the illusion of economic progress propagated by the communist press and the complex reality of the post-1989 transition, highlighting how economic autonomy and freedom of decision-making became essential principles for adapting to the new conditions of a competitive and liberalized economy (Dorim să facem din I.M.C. o întreprindere model, 1990:3).

In another public statement, presented by Angelo Miculescu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry, it was emphasized that the progress of Romanian agriculture was made possible due to policies implemented during the communist period, particularly under the leadership of Nicolae Ceaușescu. According to the speech, Romania achieved increasingly better economic and production results each year, which was said to contribute to a continuous improvement in the population's standard of living. The article also highlights the technical aspects of agricultural development: the increase in the production of vegetables, potatoes, and fruits, the rational organization of production units, the operation of specialized farms, and the use of seeds with superior biological potential. However, this presentation reflects how the official discourse, reproduced by the press, constructed the image of a high-performing and efficient agriculture, while minimizing the real difficulties faced by farmers and the population, such as food shortages or the pressures imposed by collectivization. Thus, the communist media discourse served not only to inform but also to provide ideological legitimization, presenting state policies as an unquestionable and uniform success, while the real complexity and imbalances of agriculture remained largely hidden from the public (Expunerea la proiectele legii retribuirii muncii în unitățile agricole cooperatiste și legii privind organizarea producției de legume și cartofi, precum și valorificarea legumelor, cartofilor și fructelor, 1976:5).

The aspects presented in the communist press can, evidently, be challenged by analyses from the post-communist media. After 1989, Romanian publications emphasized that the transition from the centralized, planned economy characteristic of the communist regime to a market economy was marked by major difficulties, highlighting the structural imbalances inherited from the Ceaușescu period. Post-communist articles show that, in reality, the structure of the Romanian economy before 1989 was not as solid as presented by newspapers and official speeches; accelerated industrialization, an excessive focus on heavy industry, and centralized planning had generated imbalances between economic sectors and regions. In this context, it becomes clear how the communist regime used the press as an instrument of public opinion control, constructing the impression of a prosperous and flourishing economy intended to legitimize Ceaușescu's policies and mobilize the population in support of industrial and agricultural projects. In contrast, the post-communist press highlights the real difficulties faced by Romania during the transition period, emphasizing that the post-communist era was marked by significant economic challenges, largely generated by the communist legacy and the need to restructure the national economy. Thus, the comparison between the propagandistic discourse of the communist press and the critical analysis of the post-communist media provides a clear perspective on the differences between the idealized image of the economy presented before 1989 and the economic realities confronted by the population after the fall of the regime (Achim, 1992:5).

A representative example of the propagandistic discourse promoted by the communist press can be found in an article published in the newspaper „Zori Noi” in 1989, titled „Increasing Economic Power through the Power of the Communist Deed”. The piece presents a speech by Nicolae Ceaușescu, in which the communist leader aimed to convey to citizens the necessity of a general mobilization to achieve the economic objectives set by the party. The speech emphasized the population’s commitment to work „responsibly” to fulfill the territorial socio-economic development plan and to accomplish the tasks and objectives to be established by the party’s 14th Congress. The language used in this article reflects the typical characteristics of communist propagandistic discourse: appeals to collective mobilization, glorification of labor, and emphasis on the achievement of economic plans established by the party. Such texts aimed to reinforce the legitimacy of the regime and to convey the image of a society united around the socialist project, in which economic success was presented as the direct result of collective effort and party leadership. In reality, 1989 represented one of the most difficult periods for the Romanian economy, marked by food shortages, energy restrictions, and a decline in living standards. In this context, the laudatory speeches published in the press can be interpreted as part of a strategy to maintain ideological control over the population by presenting an idealized image of the economy and of the policies promoted by the communist leadership (Creșterea puterii economice prin puterea faptei comuniste, 1989:3).

In contrast to the laudatory discourse promoted by the communist press, publications that appeared after 1989 often adopted a critical perspective on the economic policies of the communist regime. This can be seen in an article published in the daily newspaper „Luceafărul” in 1991, which stated that „The communist state destroyed the economy”. Such a statement reflects the radical shift in discourse that took place in the Romanian press after the fall of the communist regime, when journalists and analysts began critically reassessing the economic policies of the previous period. Whereas the 1989 „Zori Noi” newspaper presented economic development as the direct result of the „communist deed” and collective mobilization around party-established objectives, the post-communist press portrayed the Romanian economy in a much more nuanced and often critical way. Articles published after 1989 highlighted that accelerated industrialization, centralized planning, and strict state control over the economy had generated major structural imbalances, which became particularly evident during the transition period. Thus, the comparison between the two articles highlights the discursive rupture between the communist and post-communist press. While the pre-1989 press glorified the regime’s economic achievements and presented socialist planning as the foundation of national progress, the post-1989 media began to critically analyze these policies, emphasizing the negative consequences of the centralized economic system and the need to restructure the Romanian economy within a market-oriented framework (Dragomir, 1991:11).

A similar discourse can be identified in the pages of „Revista Economică” from 1974, where one article highlighted Nicolae Ceaușescu’s role in the development of socialist society theory. According to the article, the communist leader had supposedly enriched Marxist-Leninist theory by introducing the concept of a „multilaterally developed socialist society”. This formulation was presented as the expression of a higher stage of social development, characterized by an efficient and prosperous economy, a harmonious distribution of productive forces across the entire country, and a constant concern for improving the leadership, organization, and planning of the economy and society. The article also emphasized the idea of a continuous increase in the material and spiritual standard of living of the population, as well as the development of the education system and culture. In this vision, socialist society was presented as a space of generalized progress, in which education and culture were meant to contribute to the formation of the „new man," characterized by adherence to materialist-dialectical ideology, socialist ethical and equity principles, and a high socialist consciousness. Beyond its theoretical dimension, such discourse reflects the propagandistic mechanisms through which the communist press legitimized the regime's political project. The concept of a „multilaterally developed socialist society" thus became an ideological instrument through which the economic and social achievements of the regime were presented, contributing to the construction of an idealized image of Romanian society and consolidating the political authority of the communist leadership (Deschizător de orizonturi comuniste, 1976:3).

In contrast to the image of a prosperous and continuously developing economy constantly promoted by the communist press, publications appearing after 1989 reflect a much more critical perspective on the economic legacy of the previous regime. Thus, in the post-communist press of 1992, references frequently appeared to the need to pull the Romanian state out of a deep economic crisis, considered by many authors to be a direct consequence of the economic policies applied during the communist period. Whereas before 1989 the official discourse emphasized the idea of a flourishing and efficient economy, in the press of the 1990s the image of an economy marked by structural imbalances, the rigidity of the centralized planning system, and the necessity for profound economic reforms became increasingly clear. In this context, the post-communist press highlighted that the process of economic restructuring and adaptation to the principles of a market economy represented a difficult but necessary stage for overcoming the problems inherited from the communist regime. Thus, the contrast between the optimistic discourse of the communist press and the critical analysis presented in post-1989 publications highlights the profound transformation of the Romanian media landscape, as well as the shift in how the country's economic realities were interpreted and presented to the public (Statul, economia și guvernarea, 1992:4).

II) The Reflection of Art and Culture in the Press During the Transition from Communism to Post-Communism

The concept of freedom in artistic creation was often invoked in modern cultural discourse; however, in reality, artistic production was almost always influenced by the social, political, and cultural context in which it was created. Artists did not operate completely independently but were, to some extent, dependent on social structures, patronage systems, or the dominant ideologies of their time. In this sense, artistic creation often reflects the values, mentalities, and expectations of the society in which it develops. Under the communist regime, this relationship between art and society was formalized and controlled through official ideology. Communist ideology did not merely impose themes or subjects deemed appropriate for artistic creation; it also developed an aesthetic program intended to make artistic production accessible to the masses. This program focused on promoting socialist realism, an artistic style aimed at presenting reality in an optimistic and mobilizing manner, emphasizing the collective values of socialist society. In this context, art was seen as an educational and ideological tool, designed to contribute to the formation of a new social consciousness. Artistic creation was expected to reflect the ideals of socialist society and participate in the cultural and moral transformation of the population, often being presented as an alternative to the values and aesthetics associated with bourgeois culture (Zamfir, 2011: 6-8).

Between 1965 and 1974, a relative relaxation could be observed in several areas of social life, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in the cultural sphere. During these years, the education system underwent a process of modernization and a certain openness, manifested through a reduction of the emphasis on Marxist dogmatism and an increased focus on exact and technical disciplines. This orientation reflected, on one hand, the authorities' attempt to support the economic and technological development of the state, and on the other hand, the need to mitigate the ideological rigidity that had characterized the previous period. In the field of social sciences, a revival of certain disciplines can be noted, which had previously been marginalized or even removed from the academic sphere due to ideological pressures. Sociology, for example, was gradually reintroduced into research agendas and university programs after having been considered for a long time incompatible with the official doctrine. Similarly, history experienced a significant resurgence, benefiting from a relative diversification of the topics addressed, although the interpretation of the past remained largely subordinated to the political interests of the regime. A comparable process can be observed in literature, the arts, and music, where cultural production experienced some development. However, this evolution should not be interpreted as a genuine manifestation of cultural freedom. Artistic activity continued to be strongly influenced by communist ideology, and creations were often oriented toward promoting official values and consolidating the image of the regime. In this sense, cultural development during this period was largely constrained by the ideological control exerted by the state, which transformed art and culture into instruments of propaganda and political legitimation (Georgescu, 1992: 276-277).

Artistic means of expression were frequently used to promote the ideology of the communist regime. Through literature, history, and the visual arts, the image of the "new man," the ideal model promoted by official propaganda, was constructed. Cultural creations were expected to reflect and glorify the achievements attributed to the regime, such as accelerated industrialization or the collectivization of agriculture. In this context, the worker became the central figure of artistic representations, depicted as a hero of socialist society and a symbol of economic and social progress. This idealized portrayal aimed to consolidate the legitimacy of the regime and convey the message that societal development depended on the collective effort of the working class. In reality, through these cultural representations, the regime sought to influence public perception and convince the population that the socialist system represented the optimal solution for improving the standard of living. Thus, art and culture were transformed into instruments of propaganda, intended to ideologically support the political project of the communist state (Boia, 1998: 89).

A striking example of how the communist press promoted the regime's ideology and the personality cult can be identified in an article entitled „Prestigious Contribution to the Dynamization of Scientific Activity, to the Flourishing of Culture and Art," published in the periodical „Amfiteatru". The article uses highly laudatory language to describe the achievements attributed to the communist regime, stating that „wonderful are the accomplishments of our people, wonderful are their achievements in all fields of activity", while economic and social transformations are illustrated through symbolic images such as the emergence of new cities or the exploitation of the country's natural resources. Such discourse reflects the propagandistic pattern of the communist press, in which economic and cultural progress was presented in an idealized manner intended to consolidate the regime's legitimacy. The same article also highlights the figure of Elena Ceaușescu, portrayed as an important scientist and political leader, illustrating the consolidation of the personality cult around the ruling family. She is described as having a significant contribution to directing scientific research, particularly in the fields of exact sciences and technological development. At the same time, the official discourse emphasized the importance of research in the humanities and the promotion of national culture, suggesting a continuous concern for the spiritual and cultural development of society. Another central element of the article is the role assigned to artists within socialist society. In a speech delivered at the conclusion of the Congress of Political Education and Socialist Culture in 1987, Elena Ceaușescu stated that literature, music, visual arts, theater, and cinematography had the mission of contributing to the formation of a socialist consciousness and the education of the „new man". In this vision, artistic creation was not seen as an autonomous expression of cultural freedom but as an educational and ideological instrument designed to promote communist values and reflect the struggle and labor of the people in building socialism. Therefore, the analyzed article illustrates how the communist press transformed the cultural sphere into a space for political legitimation. Art, literature, and scientific research were integrated into a broader propagandistic discourse aimed at glorifying the regime and consolidating the personality cult of political leaders (Berlogea, 1998: 1-3).

In contrast to the propagandistic discourse of the communist press, post-communist publications emphasize that, in communist doctrine, culture actually occupied a secondary place. According to this perspective, the foundation of the regime was economic, followed by social relations, and only then political life, while culture, although theoretically included in development plans, remained marginalized. Modern Romanian history textbooks reflect this hierarchy, highlighting that although the ideology and mentalities imposed by the regime influenced the cultural sphere, it did not succeed in gaining real autonomy or primary importance in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the post-communist press acknowledges that, in a broader sense, culture played an essential role in the modernization of Romanian society. The profound transformations of the twentieth century, often described as the "transfiguration" of Romania, were largely cultural phenomena. Through culture, more than through material achievements, Romania managed to gain recognition and appreciation internationally, thereby contributing to the consolidation of national identity and prestige (Boia, 1992:6).

In Nicolae Ceaușescu's conception, culture was presented as a benefit for all citizens, regardless of language, social class, or professional affiliation, but also as a right that people could exercise freely. The cultural act and civilization were seen as emanating directly from the people, emphasizing that they should be produced through the voluntary and conscious effort of each individual, in a context favorable to the affirmation of everyone. The article „Ctitor de cultură de artă, de frumos" highlights the increase in the number of creators of beauty: poets, prose writers, playwrights and artists in various cultural fields, as evidence of this cultural „emulation". Poetry and art are described as „valuable goods of the country", meant to draw the masses toward socialist culture while providing satisfaction to society through works that are „imperishable for the people and by the people". From a critical perspective, however, this discourse reveals the way in which the communist regime transformed culture into an ideological instrument. Creative freedom was limited, and artistic activity was conditioned by the propagandistic goals of the state, being valued more as a tool to educate and mobilize the population than as an authentic expression of the individual or cultural diversity. Thus, what was presented as a

„cultural right for all” in reality served to legitimize the official ideology and consolidate the personality cult of the leader (Dezideriu, 1984: 8).

The communist regime promoted the idea that „everyone is both a producer and a consumer of culture”, presenting culture as a universal right accessible to all citizens. According to this official discourse, each individual would have contributed to the development of art and culture simply by participating in social life and assuming collective responsibilities. In reality, however, this conception did not reflect the way culture actually develops. Authentic artistic creation cannot be achieved by just anyone; historically, it has belonged to spiritual and intellectual elites who possessed the training, talent, and experience necessary to produce truly valuable works. The post-communist press, exemplified by an article in the daily „Timpul” from 1995, emphasizes that presenting all people as creators of culture is misleading. The author of the article argued that genuine art has always been intended for a spiritual elite and that collective tradition cannot be equated with authentic creation. Furthermore, it is noted that no one can automatically be considered part of the cultural elite simply by social status or membership in the general populace; recognition of cultural value requires training, talent, and real involvement in the creative process. Therefore, the claim that every individual is a producer of culture conceals the reality that not all citizens can contribute equally to artistic and cultural development. This idealized notion, propagated by the communist regime, served more to justify a false image of collective participation in the cultural sphere than to support genuine autonomy of artistic creation. Thus, the reality of culture under communism was far more complex and cannot be reduced to the simple general involvement of all citizens, as the official propaganda claimed (Raichici, 1995: 5).

The statement that art must „gain in efficiency, in the power of influence, in terms of forming a new consciousness” directly reflects the role assigned to artistic creation under the communist regime. Art was not conceived as an autonomous domain, oriented toward free individual expression, but as an active means of shaping collective consciousness, integrated into a broader ideological project. In this sense, artistic production was evaluated not primarily according to aesthetic criteria, but according to its ability to influence and direct public mentalities toward the values promoted by the regime. Through literature, the visual arts, theater, or cinema, the authorities sought to construct and consolidate a specific type of social consciousness aligned with communist ideals. The themes, characters, and messages of artistic works were selected and guided to promote behavioral models consistent with official ideology: the devoted worker, the united collective, and individual sacrifice for the common good. In this way, art became a tool for deeply influencing perceptions and values, contributing to the internalization of norms imposed by the regime. This process can be interpreted as a systematic attempt to reshape mentalities through culture and art. It was not only about transmitting explicit messages but also about creating a symbolic framework in which certain values became dominant and seemingly natural. The public was constantly exposed to idealized representations of social reality, where conflicts, shortages, or contradictions were eliminated or reinterpreted. Thus, art contributed to forming a selective perception of reality favorable to the regime. Consequently, the role of art during the communist period went beyond the aesthetic sphere, becoming an integral part of a broader mechanism of social influence. By emphasizing „efficiency” and the „power of influence”, artistic creation was transformed into a means of guiding collective thought, aiming to form a consciousness compliant with the ideological demands of the state (Gavril, 1978:21).

Although the official discourse during Nicolae Ceaușescu's period claimed that art and culture occupied a privileged place in society, the post-communist reality revealed a much more complex situation. In the context of the general economic difficulties after December 1989, Romanian culture faced a profound crisis, largely due to a lack of financial resources and reduced institutional support. Post-communist press highlighted that the indifference of authorities and the contradictory attitudes of the new government contributed to the deterioration of material conditions in the cultural sector. Under these circumstances, cultural institutions, artists, and creators had to operate in an unstable environment marked by uncertainty and difficulties in adapting to new economic realities. Thus, although freedom of expression was theoretically guaranteed, it was undermined by the lack of concrete means of support, calling into question the effectiveness and viability of cultural production. Consequently, the post-communist period did not only signify liberation from ideological constraints but also the emergence of new challenges, in which culture had to redefine its role and survive in a difficult economic context. This situation highlights the contrast between the idealized image of culture during the communist period and the complex realities of the transition, where cultural freedom was not always accompanied by stability and material support (Platforma-Program a Convenției Democratice din România, 1992: 8).

Conclusions

The analysis of Romanian press during the communist and post-communist periods highlights a profound transformation of public discourse, driven by the political, economic, and social changes that occurred after 1989. Under the regime led by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the press functioned as a central instrument for transmitting and consolidating official ideology, promoting an idealized image of economic and cultural realities. The economy was portrayed as continuously developing, marked by progress and efficiency, while the population's real difficulties were systematically omitted or reinterpreted. Similarly, the fields of art and culture were integrated into a controlled discourse, in which artistic creation was oriented toward shaping a collective consciousness aligned with the regime's values. The notion of general participation in cultural activity and the promotion of the „new man" reflected a homogenizing vision, where freedom of expression was limited by ideological requirements. Thus, both the economy and culture were presented in a manner that served to legitimize political power and consolidate the image of a functional and prosperous system. In the cultural sphere, the press and official discourse turned art and artistic creation into instruments of propaganda, aimed at shaping a collective consciousness aligned with communist values. Freedom of creation was restricted, and artistic achievements were evaluated based on their capacity to influence the public and promote the regime's ideology. Culture was presented as a „right of all citizens", but in reality, it was heavily subordinated to the political and educational goals of the state.

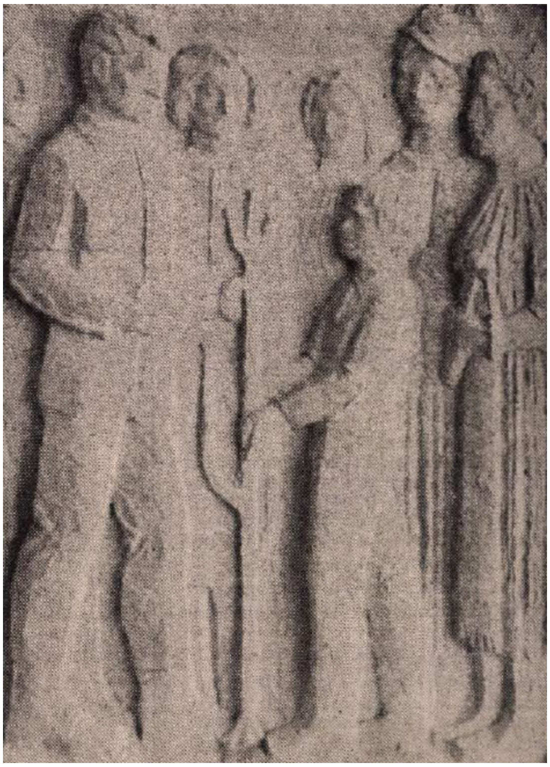
After 1989, the post-communist press brought a significant shift in perspective, adopting a critical stance toward the legacy of the communist regime. Economically, it highlighted structural imbalances and the difficulties of transitioning to a market economy, emphasizing that the image of prosperity under the previous regime had largely been artificially constructed. In the cultural sphere, public discourse exposed the limitations imposed on artistic creation during communism, as well as the new challenges generated by resource scarcity and economic instability in the 1990s. Consequently, comparing the press across the two periods reveals not only a change in discourse but also a transformation in how reality is interpreted and presented. Whereas before 1989 the press served to support and justify the regime, afterward it became a space for debate and critical reevaluation. This evolution reflects the shift from an ideologically controlled system to one characterized by pluralism and diversity of opinions, even if marked by the specific difficulties of the transition period.

Appendices

Portrait of Elena Ceausescu by Lazăr Iacob. (Source: Contemporanul 1981)

Portrait of Nicolae Ceaușescu by Zamfir Dumitrescu (Source: România Literară 1984)

Bust of Nicolae Ceaușescu by Paul Vasilescu (Source: România Literară 1984)



„Continuity” by Nicolae Pascu (Source: România Literară 1984)

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Cybersecurity and institutional trust in digital governance: lessons from Romania and the European Union

Diana-Maria Grosu[1)]

Abstract: The accelerated digitalization of public administration in Romania and the European Union offers new perspectives for efficiency, but simultaneously intensifies structural risks associated with cybersecurity. The scope of this research is to evaluate the interdependence between cybersecurity performance and the dynamics of institutional trust. The central question guiding this research examines to what extent cybersecurity acts as a pillar for strengthening trust or, conversely, generates new forms of vulnerability and institutional exclusion. To this end, the research employs a comparative policy analysis framework, triangulating data from public policy documents, institutional reports, and national and European cyber incident databases. The study highlights the main threats (ransomware, DDoS, cyber espionage) and structural vulnerabilities affecting institutional response. The analysis answers the central question by demonstrating that in Romania, trust is undermined not by the threats themselves, but by institutional and coordination deficiencies. Drawing from these findings, the study concludes that personal data protection is an implicit pact whose breach directly affects the legitimacy of institutions. Finally, the research argues for strategic alignment with European directives (NIS 2, GDPR) to reposition cybersecurity as a tool for institutional integrity rather than a systemic vulnerability. Ultimately, the research concludes that a robust cybersecurity posture serves as the essential guarantor of digital sovereignty, transforming administrative modernization into a sustainable engine for public trust and democratic resilience.

Keywords: *digital governance; public administration; democratic accountability; public policy; cyber vulnerability*

[1)] PhD student, Department of Political Sciences, International Relations and European Studies, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Political Sciences, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi, Address: Carol I Boulevard no. 11, 700506, Iasi, Romania; Phone: 0741 738 571; E-mail: dianagrosum@yahoo.com; ORCID ID: 0009-0002-8256-7600.

Cybersecurity and institutional trust in digital governance: lessons from Romania and the European Union

Introduction

Beyond its technical dimensions, cybersecurity is currently redefined as a multidimensional pillar of national and European strategic stability (Apachiței, 2021), requiring a shift from reactive to proactive defense approaches. To ensure data and system integrity, cybersecurity governance deploys a cohesive set of institutional standards and regulatory policies (Mijwil et al., 2023: 3). In global competition, cyber-attacks now serve as pivotal tools for economic sabotage and espionage (Bouhafs, 2025: 2). This shift creates opportunities, but also major risks related to data security and digital infrastructure vulnerability. Recent assessments indicate limited cybersecurity readiness across core NIST functions, highlighting systemic vulnerabilities in digital governance (Hossain et al., 2025: 2).

On a global scale, digitization has become a fundamental tool for improving and modernizing public administration and strengthening the relationship between the state and society. At the same time, increasing dependence on digital infrastructures amplifies cyber risks, especially those affecting the confidentiality and integrity of public information. The efficiency of digital public services is closely linked to public trust in data protection systems (Schneider, 2025: 1-3).

The European Union (EU), for its part, faces the challenge of balancing technological innovation and data protection. Farrand and Carrapico examine how the discourse on *digital sovereignty* has become central to European policy, marking a shift from regulatory capitalism—based on extensive collaboration with the private sector — to regulatory mercantilism, aimed at reducing dependence on external technology providers. The authors show that the Union aims to reassert its control over digital infrastructures and cyberspace as an expression of citizen protection and strategic autonomy (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 435–437). The EU has developed a coherent regulatory framework that includes the NIS 2 Directive, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and the European Union Cybersecurity Act, which provide uniform protection for critical infrastructure and personal data. At the same time, a report by the European Court of Auditors draws attention to the fact that legislative fragmentation and insufficient coordination between Member States limit the effectiveness of common cybersecurity policies. The lack of consistent operational cooperation between national and European agencies affects the implementation of security standards at the level of public administrations (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 5–6). NIS2 represents the EU's primary regulatory instrument for fortifying cybersecurity standards across Member States (Kianpour et al., 2025: 167).

The Romanian state is aligning itself with this European direction by creating a complex strategic framework, represented by the National Cybersecurity Strategy 2022-2027, supported by specialized institutions - Romanian National Computer Security Incident Response Team CERT-RO2, National Cybersecurity Coordination Center (CNCS), Special Telecommunications Service (STS), and Authority for the Digitization of Romania (ADR).

At a theoretical level, recent studies in the specialized literature emphasize that digitization, while bringing democratic benefits, can trigger systemic vulnerabilities when cybersecurity is not viewed as a fundamental dimension of governance. Govindraj

2 The National Cyber Security Directorate (DNSC) is the legal successor of the National Cyber Security Incident Response Team (CERT-RO), having taken over its activities, attributions, and staff since 2021.

demonstrates that digital governance and cybersecurity are inseparable concepts: attacks on public infrastructure can influence not only the functionality of the administration, but also public perception of the legitimacy of institutions, gradually weakening citizens' trust in the state (Govindraj, 2024). Based on these aspects, this paper aims to analyze the relationship between cybersecurity and institutional trust in digital governance. The main question guiding the study is the following: to what extent does cybersecurity, in the context of digital governance, help strengthen the trust and accountability of the state or, on the contrary, produce new forms of vulnerability and institutional exclusion?

To answer this question, the research is based on a comparative perspective between Romania and other European Union member states, focusing on digital infrastructure, institutional response capacity, regulations, and public perception of data protection. The ultimate goal of the study is to demonstrate that cybersecurity is not just a technological component, but a fundamental prerequisite for democratic accountability and the legitimacy of the digital state.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

2.1. The interdependence of digital governance, cybersecurity, and trust

Digitalization can be understood as a fundamental element of modern administration, supporting both institutional resilience and public safety (Mureșan, 2025: 256–257). Schneider points out that, in the context of digital governance, cybersecurity is *a basic pillar of good governance* because it ensures the confidentiality, accessibility, and reliability of digital services provided to citizens (Schneider, 2025: 2).

Institutional trust refers to the extent to which community members perceive public authorities as competent, open, and willing to protect their needs and confidential data. In his paper, Saqib Saeed shows that the use of digital public services is directly influenced by the level of trust citizens have in the security and confidentiality of information provided by government institutions. (Saeed, 2023: p. 2–3). Institutional trust increasingly depends on the state's ability to manage personal data and ensure digital infrastructure integrity. The author proposes a user-centered privacy perspective, which requires citizen involvement in the design of security tools in order to increase the level of acceptance and use of electronic services (Saeed, 2023: 5–6). Therefore, trust becomes a key element essential for the smooth running of digital governance, based on the balance between efficiency and security. Schneider demonstrates that successful digital governance models integrate adaptive digital protection strategies with public-private collaboration tools, using innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence and distributed ledgers to reduce risk and strengthen public trust. (Schneider, 2025: 5) At the same time, Mureșan emphasizes the idea that advanced administrations are required to develop integrated digital resilience, combining regulation, professional training, and interinstitutional cooperation to strengthen the protection of public infrastructures (Mureșan, 2025: 257).

At the European level, Petersons observes that policies on digital governance – including the GDPR, the Digital Markets Act, and the Digital Services Act – aim to balance technological progress with data security and fundamental rights. Cybersecurity is therefore becoming a cross-cutting element of all European digital governance rules (Petersons, 2025: 2–4). In modern literature, the concept of trust-by-design has gained relevance, highlighting the fact that citizens' trust in digital services must be strengthened from the system design stage. Saeed suggests a model in which data protection and security are user-centered design elements, rather than after-the-fact control functions (Saeed, 2023: 6–7).

2.2. Digital sovereignty and democratic legitimacy

Democratic accountability in the context of digitalization refers to the ability of institutions to manage digital technologies in a transparent, ethical, and inclusive manner, while maintaining public control over decision-making processes. As highlighted by Hulkó et al. (2025: 1–2), the process of digitalization redefines state responsibilities, as areas such as data protection, regulation, and digital infrastructure are increasingly closely linked to the protection of citizens' fundamental rights. Therefore, protecting cyberspace is not only a matter of security, but also an act of strengthening democracy and civic control over technology.

Cyber protection can no longer be separated from the democratic legitimacy of institutions. Farrand and Carrapico demonstrate that, in the era of digital sovereignty, securing infrastructure and information is not just a technological priority, but rather a condition for the political and financial independence of European states (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 436–437).

Similarly, Hulkó argues that losing control over digital infrastructures can compromise not only national security, but also society's perception of the state's ability to defend it, thus affecting democratic trust (Hulkó et al., 2025: p. 3). Consequently, legitimacy in digital governance stems from the state's ability to maintain a balance between effectiveness, data protection, and civic engagement, making cybersecurity a constituent element of democratic engagement.

- **Methodology**

o **European models and analysis criteria**

This study takes a comparative approach to highlight how different European Union member states deal with the relationship between cybersecurity and institutional trust in digital governance. According to Petersons, the mechanism for developing digital policies in the EU is represented by a variety of national models which, although converging towards the same standards (GDPR, Network and Information Security Directive 2 - NIS2, Cybersecurity Act), differ in terms of their degree of implementation and institutional coherence (Petersons, 2025: 3–5). In this context, Estonia is analyzed as a model of comprehensive digital transformation; Germany, as an example of institutionalized regulation; and the Netherlands, as the initiator of public-private partnerships in critical infrastructure protection (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 6–7).

a. Structure of the analysis and data sources

The analysis is structured around: 1. Digital infrastructure and its protection – the level to which public systems are protected by standards, audits, and critical incident response protocols (Mureșan, 2025: 258); 2. Institutional response capacity – the presence of integrated tools for cooperation between institutions and immediate response to cyber threats (Schneider, 2025: 4); 3. Legislative framework and national policies – consistency between national legal norms and European directives on data security, communications infrastructure security, and digital governance (Petersons, 2025: 4–5); 4. Public perception and level of trust – how society assesses the security of digital public services and the level of openness of institutions. Saqib Saeed highlights that end-user perception is fundamental to the success of any e-government strategy, as trust is a direct result of perceived security (Saeed, 2023: 6).

The research is based on a comparative assessment of national cybersecurity strategies, public reports from National Cyber Security Directorate (DNSC), National Cybersecurity Coordination Center (CNCS), Special Telecommunications Service (STS), and Authority for the Digitalization of Romania (ADR), as well as official European

Union documents (NIS2 Directives, GDPR, EU Cybersecurity Act). Furthermore, assessments and studies carried out by European Union Agency for Cybersecurity – ENISA (2023), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Court of Auditors were consulted, providing a unified perspective on the performance of Member States in implementing the European digital security framework (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 5–8). The methodological perspective fits into a qualitative-descriptive model, aiming to examine policy content and recognize institutional patterns rather than statistically measure performance. The study has inherent limitations due to the absence of uniform public data on security incidents and the degree of public trust. However, by combining institutional and theoretical perspectives, the research contributes to a better understanding of how cybersecurity determines legitimacy and democratic accountability. Mureșan believes that, in a context of accelerated digital transformation, the ability of public authorities to prevent and manage digital risks is a fundamental benchmark of institutional legitimacy and governance efficiency. (Mureșan, 2025: 259).

4. European context and reference policies

Over the last 10 years, the European Union has consolidated an extensive regulatory framework designed to ensure the protection of critical digital infrastructure, the security of personal data, and the cyber resilience of Member States. According to Petersons, this development reflects the shift from market-oriented digital governance to rights- and security-oriented governance, in which citizen protection becomes fundamental. Petersons points out that the impact of the GDPR has gone beyond the borders of the EU, influencing data protection legislation in many other regions of the world (Petersons, 2025: 2–4). However, according to the European Court of Auditors' assessment, the success of these provisions depends on the level of cooperation between national and European agencies, which often remains insufficient (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 5–6).

4.1. National models: Estonia, Germany, and the Netherlands

In her analysis, Mureșan demonstrates that the success of the Estonian model stems from a correlation between secure technological infrastructure (the X-Road system), digital education, and an institutional culture supported by trust and openness (Mureșan, 2025: 258). According to the European Court of Auditors, this mechanism is achievable thanks to close collaboration between public institutions and the private sector, as well as precise legislation on data privacy (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 7). Petersons highlights that this model illustrates the principle of national responsibility for digital security, with the BSI acting as the pivotal authority for implementing NIS standards and collaborating with European agencies (Petersons, 2025: 4–5). Farrand and Carrapico state that Germany is one of the first countries to include digital sovereignty in its national security plan, allocating resources to its own cloud infrastructures and information centers to reduce dependence on external actors (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 437). According to the European Court of Auditors report, this approach is particularly effective in the field of critical infrastructure (transport, energy, communications), where private sector participation allows for rapid identification of threats and a coordinated response (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 8). Table 1 illustrates that trust, institutional coordination, and cooperation among stakeholders are important for the effectiveness of digital services. Estonia, Germany, and the Netherlands exemplify three different models of digital governance and cybersecurity, based on digital identity, centralization, and public-private partnerships.

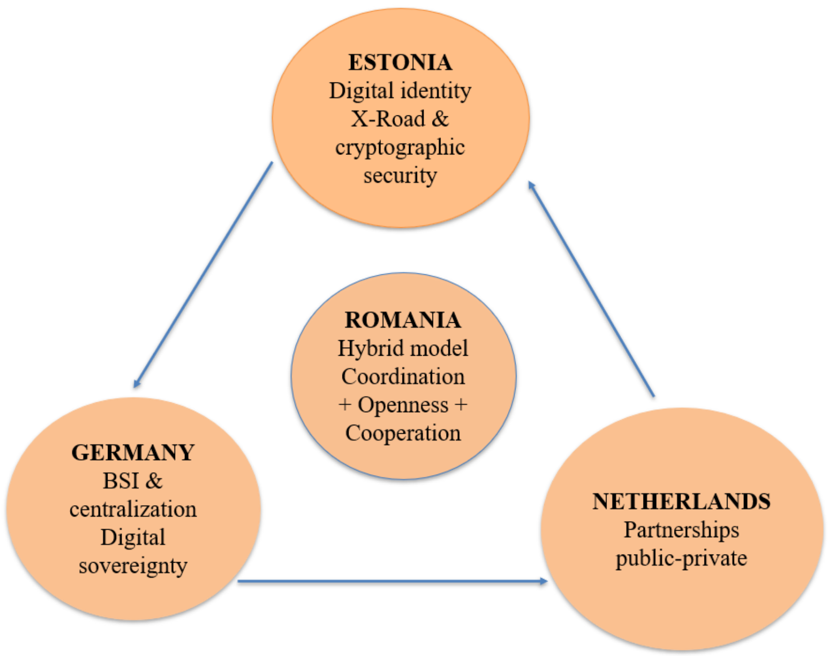
Table 1. Digital governance and cybersecurity models: Estonia, Germany, Netherlands

Country	Model type	Key security feature	The Role of Trust	Relevance for Romania
Estonia	Unique Digital Identity + X-Road	Cryptographic Security and Digital Literacy	An institutional culture based on openness	Interoperability and integrated digital services
Germany	Centralization via BSI + digital sovereignty	National Pivot Authority + NIS Standards	Clear national responsibility	Institutional coordination
Netherlands	Public–private partnerships	Protection of Critical Infrastructure	Transparency and data sharing	Cooperation with the private sector

Source: Author's own work

Figure 1 illustrates how Romania can evolve by integrating European influences, such as Estonia's transparent organizational architectures or the public-private partnerships characteristic of Germany and the Netherlands. This model emphasizes that institutional trust is built through both technological resilience and proactive cybersecurity strategies.

Figure 1. European digital governance models relevant for Romania



Source: Author's own work

5. Analysis of the situation in Romania

5.1. Institutional framework and national objectives

Romania has made considerable improvements in developing its institutional and regulatory framework for cybersecurity, particularly since joining the European Union. The National Cybersecurity Plan 2022–2027 sets out the main national objectives in this area, focusing on the defense of critical infrastructure, interinstitutional administration, and increasing technological resilience. Mureșan notes that these goals clearly align with European directives, but their implementation is often hampered by coordination deficiencies and limited human resources (Mureșan, 2025: 258–259).

The national framework relies on a network of institutions with complementary competences, including the DNSC for managing incidents, the STS for secure communications, the CNCS for policy coordination, and the ADR for implementing digital public services. Table 2 illustrates the complementary and clear distribution of roles among key institutions in cybersecurity, ranging from operational response to strategic coordination and the implementation of secure digital services, emphasizing the importance of collaboration for a resilient digital ecosystem.

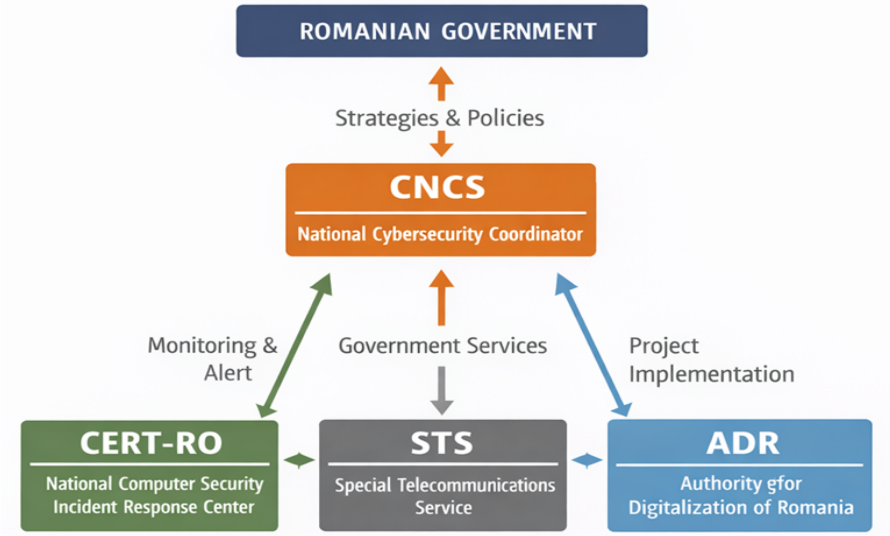
Table 2. The matrix of cyber risks and protection mechanisms in the digital transformation process

Institution	Lead role	Role in the national cybersecurity architecture
DNSC	Cyber Incident Management;	Detection, analysis, and operational response to attacks;
STS	Secure government communications;	Protecting critical transmission infrastructure;
CNCS	Strategic coordination;	Development and harmonization of security policies;
ADR	Public digitization;	Implementation of secure digital services;

Source: Author's own work

Limited inter-institutional coordination and overlapping responsibilities remain major impediments to effective digital governance (Petersons, 2025: 4–5). Farrand and Carrapico argue that European states, including Romania, should strengthen their digital independence through domestic funding and regional partnerships, as excessive dependence on external technologies can undermine national security and responsiveness (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 436). Figure 2 outlines the strategic and legislative framework for cyber resilience in the public sector, emphasizing institutional coordination.

Figure 2. The strategic and legislative framework for ensuring cyber resilience in the public sector



Source: Author's own work

The failure to prioritize digital modernization has kept many institutions stuck in the traditional bureaucratic model, while others have developed isolated digital solutions. As noted by Mărcuț (2021), the lack of coherent digital modernization has led to institutional fragmentation and the absence of an integrated governance framework.

5.2. Emerging threats and structural vulnerabilities

According to CERT-RO reports and European research, the most significant threats to Romania's public digital infrastructure are ransomware attacks, widespread DDoS attacks, data loss, and cyber espionage campaigns. Schneider clarifies the idea that ransomware attacks target institutions that manage large databases and critical infrastructure, exploiting human vulnerabilities and the lack of system upgrades (Schneider, 2025: 4–5). In Romania, such events have compromised medical facilities, local institutions, and administrative platforms in recent years. The same idea is supported by Saeed, who illustrates that the perception of insecurity in the digital environment leads to decreased civic participation and reluctance to use online services (Saeed, 2023: 6). Cyber espionage campaigns and phishing attacks are also on the rise, according to the European Court of Auditors. The lack of interoperability between systems and the use of outdated infrastructure increase the vulnerability of Romanian institutions to state or private actors interested in strategic data (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 7–8).

5.3. Challenges in digital governance and human resources

One of the most frequently mentioned difficulties in the literature is the lack of integrated cyber security governance. Mureșan highlights the fact that the institutions involved in protecting digital infrastructures in Romania sometimes operate in parallel, without a common data transfer platform and without standardized response procedures (Mureșan, 2025: 259). Petersons validates this view, arguing that decision-making fragmentation is a widespread European problem, but in countries with limited resources, such as Romania, its consequences are much more visible (Petersons, 2025: 5). Qualified human resources are a critical element. Civil servants' digital skills are necessary for the effective use of technological tools and for the modernization of public institutions (ANFP, 2026: 2). In this context, Target 185 of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan aims to train 30,000 civil servants by mid-2026; by 30 September 2025, 27,859 participants had obtained certification (ANFP, 2026: 12).

The digitization of public administration must take into account not only services for the public but also the streamlining of internal workflows and the development of staff digital skills, so that digital tools can generate real efficiency (AmCham Romania, 2021: 5–6). Schneider demonstrates that effective implementation of cybersecurity requires human resources to receive ongoing training so that they can proactively recognize threats and respond effectively to incidents, which is often lacking in Eastern European administrations (Schneider, 2025: 3–4). Hulkó adds that the lack of specialized skills is exacerbated by competition with the private sector, which offers more attractive salaries, leading to the departure of IT specialists from the public sector (Hulkó, 2025: 3).

The insufficient digitization of human resources processes remains a significant challenge, as many departments still rely on manual procedures and paper documents. This slows down operations and reduces institutional efficiency (Rovner & Moore et al., 2024). Petersons believes that the lack of interoperability is a systemic risk, as it hinders the transfer of information in real time between authorities and weakens the effectiveness of the response in the event of an incident (Petersons, 2025: 6). Institutional culture is another vulnerable aspect. In many state institutions, awareness of cyber threats remains superficial. Similarly, Saeed notes that citizens' trust in public institutions is conditioned by the way in which they communicate and manage incidents, and that a lack of transparency can quickly erode the relationship between citizens and the administration (Saeed, 2023: 7–8).

5.4. The digital legitimacy of the Romanian state

Citizen trust is the foundation of any effective digital governance. When beneficiaries understand that their data is not being adequately protected, trust in digital services and, implicitly, in state institutions erodes. Hulkó argues that cyber vulnerabilities should be understood not only as technical problems, but also as forms of democratic weakness, because they call into question the state's ability to guarantee fundamental rights in the digital environment (Hulkó, 2025: 4). Therefore, the case of the Romanian state highlights the delicate balance between the ambition for digital modernization and the imperative to strengthen cyber protection mechanisms. In the absence of a security-oriented institutional culture and without continuous investment in human and technological resources, digitization can become a source of vulnerability rather than progress. However, by highlighting European examples and through stronger collaboration between state institutions, the Romanian state can turn cyber security into a real pillar of democratic trust and the legitimacy of digital governance.

6. Cybersecurity and public trust

Mureșan highlights the fact that the protection of personal data has become a central pillar of trust in the exercise of democratic governance, and that cybersecurity is what transforms this trust into institutional capital (Mureșan, 2025: 257–258). Saeed emphasizes that the adoption of electronic public services depends on citizens' trust in e-government channels and on the perceived usability of security and privacy mechanisms

(Saeed, 2023: 5). Digital trust depends on consistent security policies, transparency, and effective incident response.

Schneider (2025) shows that transparent communication of security measures strengthens public confidence in digital governance. In Romania, the lack of a consolidated institutional culture of confidentiality fuels a fragile perception of security. Mureșan notes that, for many citizens, cybersecurity is associated more with a technical risk than with a civic right, which limits the degree of digital participation (Mureșan, 2025: 259). This perception is also reflected in the reluctance to use public online platforms, a phenomenon which, in the absence of a communication strategy, may slow down the process of administrative modernization. Petersons shows that, in the European context, trust in digital governance depends on the combination of three factors: a unified regulatory framework (such as the GDPR), secure infrastructure, and effective public communication (Petersons, 2025: 2–4).

Security incidents have significant social and political consequences, undermining the relationship between citizens and the state. Farrand and Carrapico propose a complementary perspective: cyber vulnerabilities in state institutions can be interpreted as forms of democratic failure, as they reveal the authorities' inability to defend the digital sovereignty of citizens (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 435–453). At the same time, the European Court of Auditors points out that inadequate management of security incidents can have a domino effect, undermining confidence not only at national level but also across the European Union (European Court of Auditors, 2019: 6–7).

7. Public policy recommendations

Digital transformation in Romanian public administration cannot be separated from strengthening cybersecurity. As Mureșan emphasizes, digitalization that is not supported by a solid cybersecurity framework risk becoming a source of institutional vulnerability rather than a genuine form of modernization (Mureșan, 2025: 257–258). In order for digitization to become a means of democratic trust, the Romanian state needs to adopt systemic public policies that are coherent and harmonized with European practices. The first step is to strengthen coordination between the main actors — CNCS, DNSC, STS, and ADR. Farrand and Carrapico demonstrate that the success of the German (through Federal Office for Information Security - BSI) and Dutch models stems from the functioning of central institutions with regulatory and response powers, not just guidance (Farrand & Carrapico, 2022: 437). It would be advisable for the Romanian state to integrate the functions of strategy, monitoring, and response into a coherent national entity with a well-defined mandate and direct decision-making powers.

When it comes to cybersecurity, it cannot be separated from technological infrastructure. According to Schneider, outdated IT systems are the main risk factor in the functioning of digitized public administrations. (Schneider, 2025: 4). Romania must prioritize investments in a controlled transition to EU-certified cloud infrastructures, modernization of public computer networks, and the introduction of common encryption and identity verification standards. In addition to the technological component, the ongoing training of public officials is essential. Recommendations in this regard include developing a National Digital Literacy Program for the Public Sector, with modules on digital/cyber hygiene, response in case of a breach, identifying social engineering attacks, and ethics and responsibility in personal data management. Table 3 details the cybersecurity governance architecture, linking strategic planning with operational response through targeted training modules.

Table 3. The Architecture of Cybersecurity Governance: Linking Strategic Planning with Operational Response

Nr.	Training module	Main content	Objective
1.	Digital/Cyber Hygiene	Best practices for using IT systems	Incident Prevention
2.	Response in the event of a breach	Reporting and Rapid Response Procedures	Mitigating the impact
3.	Identifying social engineering attacks	Recognizing Phishing and Digital Manipulation	Increased vigilance
4.	Ethics and Professional Responsibility	Personal Data Protection and Legal Compliance	Compliance with GDPR regulations

Source: Author's own work

This initiative could be implemented through a partnership between ADR, universities, and ENISA, based on the model of the European Cybersecurity Skills Academy program. It is imperative that the Romanian state take a proactive stance in implementing the European regulatory framework – not just procedural compliance, but rather active participation in defining EU policies. Hulkó emphasizes that digital sovereignty does not imply withdrawal from international cooperation, but rather the ability to contribute fairly to the formulation of global norms (Hulkó, 2025: 4). Therefore, the Romanian state should accelerate the transposition of the NIS2 Directive and the future eIDAS 2.0 Regulation, incorporate European Union certification standards, and actively engage in cross-border interoperability initiatives, such as the European Digital Identity Wallet. Petersons notes that active involvement in digital governance at the European level is not only a technical issue, but rather a form of democratic accountability of public authorities, who have a duty to protect citizens in cyberspace as well (Petersons, 2025: 5–6).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Digitalization represents a structural transformation of the relationship between citizens and the state, with cybersecurity at its core. Citizen trust is a prerequisite for digital governance, while cybersecurity ensures the protection of this relationship.

In Romania, although specific strategies and institutions such as DNSC, STS, and ADR have been established, implementation is often hindered by fragmented inter-institutional coordination and limited human and financial resources. Structural vulnerabilities, such as the lack of interoperability between IT systems and an organizational culture in which information security is understood solely as a technical task, increase the risks associated with cyberattacks. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the institutional framework by establishing a single national coordination body to eliminate overlapping responsibilities and centralize real-time risk assessment. The proposals call for essential investments in EU-certified cloud infrastructure and the implementation of a national program for ongoing digital literacy training for public servants, aimed at fostering a culture of cybersecurity hygiene and proactive threat identification.

Aligning with European standards such as the NIS2 Directive and GDPR will enable Romania to transform cybersecurity into a pillar of digital sovereignty and democratic trust.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Art and Democracy. The Body in Post-Communist Romanian Art

Tudora Crăciun[1)]

Abstract:

I will analyze the transformations of the representation of the body in post-communist Romanian art, arguing that this visual mutation reflects and, at the same time, contributes to the reconfiguration of the democratic imaginary after 1989. During the communist period, the body was integrated into an ideological iconographic apparatus: either idealized in the socialist-realist paradigm of the heroic worker, or disciplined and normed through strict biopolitical control, which particularly affected corporeality. The official body was a total, productive body, subordinated to the abstract community of "the people."

After 1989, in the context of the transition to democracy and the emergence of a plural public space, the body becomes a place of vulnerability, fragmentation and critical exposure. The practices of artists such as Ion Grigorescu, Geta Brătescu or Adrian Ghenie mark a break with the monumental aesthetics of the communist period: the body no longer functions as a symbol of political order, but as a space of traumatic memory, identity instability and confrontation with recent history. If in communism the body was represented as a stable and teleologically oriented form, in post-communist art it often appears distorted, precarious, or self-reflexive.

I will argue that this transformation is not only stylistic, but structurally political: the transition from the collective, ideologically normed body to the singular and vulnerable body corresponds to the mutation from a totalitarian regime of visibility to a democratic one, characterized by pluralism and contestation. In this sense, the representation of the body in post-communist Romanian art becomes a privileged indicator of the democratization process and the reconfiguration of the relationship between the individual, community and power.

Keywords: *Art, Democracy, Body, Post-communism, Romanian art.*

1) PhD Sudent, University of Bucharest, Doctoral School in Philosophy, Phone: 04768971947, Email: tudoracraciun1@gmail.com.

Introduction

The relationship between art and politics is often thought of in terms of reflection or representation: art would mirror the political realities of an era, translating them into images, symbols, or visual narratives. At the same time, art can be used as an ideological tool. Also, the way in which corporeality is represented in a society can reflect the type of political regime that governs it. In these conditions, the body becomes a social construction and a symbolic support of power. Political regimes do not only govern institutions, but shape bodies: they discipline them, expose them, hide them or transform them into emblems of the social order. Starting from these premises, this article investigates the transformations of the representation of the body in post-Decembrist Romanian art, in direct relation to the transition from the communist to the democratic regime. The central hypothesis is that this transformation is not only stylistic or thematic, but structurally political. We are witnessing a shift from the exemplary and ideologized body of communism to the fragmented, vulnerable and plural body of the post-1989 period, which also reflects a reconfiguration of the regime of visibility in Romanian society.

1. Art, Politics, and Regimes of Visibility

Art and politics are closely linked, not only at the level of the artist's message, which can sometimes be an instrument of political propaganda, but we can also see a kind of affinity between the two domains at the level of perception and visibility. While politics determines who can speak, who can represent, and who can participate in public life; art, in turn, configures what can be seen, felt, and imagined. Therefore, some changes at the political or ideological level can be transferred to the aesthetic and art can become a carrier of the political message, sometimes even an instrument of censorship.

In Jacques Rancière's opinion, politics is, above all, a "distribution of the sensible" (partage du sensible): a system of sensible evidence that determines what is common, who belongs to the community, and what forms of experience become recognizable (Rancière, 2004: 12). In other words, the political order is always a perceptual order. We can deduct from this that art is not a secondary domain to politics, because in addition to the role of sometimes supporting existing politics, it can also destabilize it by introducing new forms of visibility. For Rancière, the "politics of art" does not consist in slogans or in the direct thematization of social conflict, but in the capacity of works to rearrange the relationships between the visible, the invisible, the possible and the impossible (Rancière, 2010: 140–151). Thus, an image, an artistically represented body, an absence or a deformation can have a political effect precisely because it modifies collective perception.

Depending on the political regime, totalitarian or democratic, we can also witness different regimes of visibility. In totalitarian regimes, the distribution of the sensible tends towards closure and homogenization. The state aspires to control not only institutions, but also forms of representation, visual memory, etc. It is no coincidence that Claude Lefort defined totalitarianism as the attempt to suppress the constitutive divisions of society and to represent the people as a compact unit. In totalitarian society, writes Lefort, power seeks to merge with law and knowledge, and society is imagined as "a body without cracks" (Lefort, 1986: 279–280). By contrast, modern democracy is founded on the impossibility of such a total embodiment. Lefort's famous formula, "the place of power is an empty place," means that no person, class, or party can claim to be the definitive embodiment of the social whole (Lefort, 1988: 17). In democracy, power is temporary, it is contestable and is no longer identified with the body of the ruler. We are witnessing here a different regime of visibility, where conflict, plurality of images and interpretations are admitted. Visibility is no longer monopolized by the state.

Piotr Piotrowski argues that the experience of totalitarianism produced specific artistic forms in Eastern European countries, marked by the tension between political control on the one hand and strategies of symbolic resistance on the other. Unlike in the West, here we witness a continuous tension between art and politics, as artistic practice was frequently defined by negotiation with power. (Piotrowski, 2009: 15–34). After 1989, art in Eastern Europe became a laboratory of the new democratic public sphere. "Democracy," he notes, "is not a finished political form but a field of permanent negotiation, conflict and visibility" (Piotrowski, 2012: 9). Post-communist art is important precisely because it makes visible the conflicts that official discourses tend to neutralize: inequality, traumatic memory, marginality, precariousness. This tension can also be observed in the Romanian artistic space, where under communism, official art participated in the regime of centralized visibility, to confirm party ideology, but after 1989, the state's monopoly on the image collapsed.

Returning to Rancière's idea that any community is organized through a "distribution of the sensible", that is, through a system that decides what can be seen, who can appear publicly, and what types of experience acquire legitimacy (Rancière, 2004: 12–13), it can be stated that the totalitarian regime of visibility is characterized by the tendency to monopolize this distribution. The state not only administers political institutions, but also the field of images, memory and representations. It decides what is legitimate and what has meaning, sometimes even what has artistic value. In a totalitarian system, plurality is perceived as a threat. Therefore, as Claude Lefort shows, totalitarianism seeks to suppress differences and present the people as a compact unit, reconciled in the figure of the party-state (Lefort, 1986: 279–281). Power no longer appears as a separate and contestable instance, but as an organic expression of the social whole. From this logic also derives its specific iconography: healthy, productive, typified bodies, heroic figures, ordered masses, hyper-visible leaders. Michel Foucault has shown that political modernity produces "docile bodies," that is, useful and obedient bodies, shaped by school, army, factory, hospital, or prison (Foucault, 1977: 135-169). In Foucault's terms, the body becomes simultaneously an object of discipline and a symbolic support of biopolitics: it must be useful, obedient, and recognizable according to the norms of the state (Foucault, 1977: 135-169).

In democracy we witness a different regime of visibility. Here a definitive image of society is no longer possible, as in totalitarianism, but there is room for uncertainty, incompleteness, plurality. Lefort's formula regarding the "empty place of power" expresses precisely the fact that no instance can permanently embody the community, and the public space remains open to interpretations, but also to conflict (Lefort, 1988: 17-26). Consequently, democratic visibility is plural, admitting differentiations of class, gender, identity and orientation, without reducing them to a single image. The two regimes of visibility, specific to totalitarianism and democracy, also lead to different ways of representing corporeality. If the totalitarian regime aestheticizes consensus and order, the democratic regime legitimizes the representation of fissure, ambivalence and contestation. In art, this mutation translates into the abandonment of the exemplary body and the emergence of the precarious, fragmented and vulnerable body.

2. The Body as an Ideological Instrument in Communism

In communist regimes the body becomes a strategic territory of power. Political power controls the individual body and uses symbols of the collective body, by concretely disciplining individuals, on the one hand, and by producing an official image of society as a unitary, healthy and future-oriented organism, on the other. In this sense, the body functions as a means of legitimizing ideology. In Michel Foucault's view, modern power "invests the body," trains it, optimizes it, and integrates it into a system of political and economic utility (Foucault, 1977: 25–26). In Eastern European communism, this investment takes on a particular intensity, as the party-state claims not only the governance of institutions but the integral shaping of social life. In communist Romania, the body was placed at the center of official visual rhetoric. The regime produced a "pedagogy of the gaze," through which citizens were trained to perceive reality through the authorized images of the state (Cordali, 2023: 4-8). The totalitarian gaze was selective and normative and decided which bodies could be exposed and how. For example, posters, press illustrations, films, official works of art ideologically exposed corporeality. We are talking about the body of the worker, the soldier or the leader as expressions of the socialist order. Thus, "visibility itself became a mechanism of discipline" (Cordali, 2023: 27).

For Lefort, totalitarianism attempts to eliminate the separation between state and society, between power and the social body, imagining the community as a transparent totality (Lefort, 1986:. 279-281). The body thus becomes the privileged metaphor of political unity. Although they are intended to be collective representations of popular enthusiasm, orderly crowds, synchronized workers, and sports parades in reality visually transpose the idea of a unitary and orderly society. Consequently, the individual counts only as an organ of the whole.

In Ceaușescu's Romania, the leader's body was publicly displayed, contributing to the cult of personality. Through the official portrait displayed in all institutions, Ceaușescu became hyper-visible and occupied the symbolic center of the community. A symbolic coincidence was thus created between the leader and the people. We can see here a confirmation of Lefort's idea that totalitarianism seeks to reunite imaginary power and society in a single political body (Lefort, 1988: 17-20). At the social level, the body becomes an instrument. After Decree 770 of 1966, the female body was transformed into a demographic resource of the state. Birth rate became a political objective, and motherhood a patriotic obligation. Here, the state intervened in reproduction, sexuality, and private life. Foucault had observed that modern power operates through imperatives of growth, health, and reproduction (Foucault, 1978: 137-139). The Romanian communist regime provides a radical example of this trend.

Moreover, in communism the body is associated with productivity. The worker and the peasant appeared as vigorous, serene, oriented towards work and solidarity (Ghenea, 2014). As Piotr Piotrowski notes in his analysis of Eastern European art, socialist realism produced a "visual utopia of social transparency," in which real antagonisms were absorbed into an optimistic image of progress (Piotrowski, 2009: 52-57). The official body knows no failure, illness, or fatigue; it is always represented as vigorous, energetic, and productive.

Consequently, artistic representation was called upon to confirm ideological norms: robust bodies, clear gestures, monumental compositions, affirmative expressions. Vulnerability, deformation, eroticism became suspect. That is precisely why, after 1989, we will witness a change in the representation of corporeality, and art will be able to make visible the fragility, traumatic memory and plurality of real bodies.

3. The Body in Democracy: Vulnerability and Plurality

With the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, we are also witnessing a change in representations of corporeality. Now the body becomes an expression of individual autonomy and difference. We could say that in post-communism the body is both emancipated and precarious. Democratization implies the recognition of the person as a subject of law, holder of civil liberties and private autonomy. This change directly affects corporeality, which regains freedom of movement, sexual freedom and expression, which had previously been confiscated by the state. In Claude Lefort's terms, democratic society can no longer be represented as a single political body, because it is structurally plural and traversed by irreducible differences (Lefort, 1988: 17-26). Consequently, the body no longer appears as a simple organ of the whole, but as the legitimate seat of singularity.

Madalina Asavei states that, in the postcommunist context, the body remains a “site of salvation and resistance” — a place of symbolic salvation, but also of critical resistance (Asavei, 2020: 131). After decades of ideological control, we are witnessing a symbolic recovery of the body’s autonomy. But, at the same time, it retains the memory of previous discipline and reacts to new forms of constraint. It is precisely this double condition that explains why corporality occupies a central place in the postcommunist social imaginary (Asavei, 2020: 131).

Moreover, democratization was accompanied by the reconfiguration of public space, as squares, streets and city centers once again became places of assembly, protest and collective expression. Zoran Poposki observes that in the postsocialist city “spaces of democracy are produced through embodied practices of presence, protest and participation” (Poposki, 2011: 715). In other words, democracy is also visible in the bodies that gather in public space, protest, and thus become visible. We can speak of a performative dimension of democracy, in agreement with Judith Butler, for whom the gathering of bodies in public space constitutes a form of political discourse in itself (Butler, 2015: 58–72). In a post-communist context, the bodily presence in the street compensates for the precariousness of democratic institutions still in formation and reaffirms the sovereignty of citizens.

However, although the changes in the representation of corporeality are visible, we cannot speak of a radical mutation. Cristian Preda emphasizes that postcommunism does not mean a pure rupture, but the slow reconfiguration of inherited structures, including social and institutional practices (Preda, 2011: 598-601). Mihnea Rațiu shows that the contemporary art world and post-communist cultural institutions developed in a tense climate, marked by institutional transition, precariousness and slow adaptation to Western models (Rațiu, 2016: 256-272). Thus, the democratic body appears in a still uncertain space, crossed by economic inequalities and identity uncertainty. Carmen Stoenescu also notes the existence of “continuities and contrasts” between the communist and post-communist periods, suggesting that new forms of freedom coexist with old mental and institutional mechanisms (Stoenescu, 2011: 687-699). Applied to corporeality, this thesis may suggest that the autonomy of the body is always negotiated.

In conclusion, the body in post-communist democracies is neither just an expression of emancipation, nor can it be reduced to the image of simple precariousness. Representations of corporality are tuned to the tension of the moment, oscillating between freedom and vulnerability, between civic participation and economic pressure. If in communism the body was visible only to the extent that it served as an ideological instrument, in post-communism it becomes visible through difference, protest, performance and individual expression. It is precisely this pluralization of corporality that constitutes one of the decisive signs of democratization.

4. The Body in Post-Communist Art in Romania: Memory, Vulnerability and the Pluralization of Representation

I will now trace how the political and social transformations that occurred after 1989 changed the way the body is represented in the Romanian artistic space. While during the communist period the body was supposed to be healthy and productive, in post-communist art it becomes unstable, fragmented and vulnerable. This change can be interpreted as the effect of a new political configuration of visibility. With the disappearance of the ideological monopoly on the image, the body becomes a site of traumatic memory, introspection and contestation. Piotr Piotrowski observes that Central and Eastern European art after 1989 must be read in relation to the specific experience of totalitarianism and transition, not as a simple imitation of Western paradigms (Piotrowski, 2009: 15–34). In the case of Romania, post-December artistic corporality is marked both by the memory of communist discipline and by the pressures of the new market economy. Madalina Asavei shows that in Romanian post-communist art the body frequently functions as a "site of salvation and resistance", a place of self-recovery and, at the same time, a terrain of social criticism (Asavei, 2020: 131–138). The body is no longer triumphant, but is affected by anxieties and subjected to new forms of precariousness. Precisely for this reason, the representation of the body becomes one of the most sensitive areas of articulation between aesthetics and politics. I will continue to analyze the new representations of corporality in post-communist Romanian art through three representatives: Ion Grigorescu, Geta Brătescu and Adrian Ghenie.

4.1. Ion Grigorescu: The Body as an Archive of Control and Freedom

Ion Grigorescu's work is useful in this endeavor because it crosses the two historical periods we are considering, thus offering a unique perspective on the paradigm shift. In works such as Self-Portrait (photographic series, 1970–1980, reexposed and reinterpreted after 1989) or in his performative films, the artist uses his own body as a medium for reflection on control and identity.

Ritual Bath © 1979 Ion Grigorescu
Uploaded on Jun 30, 2023 by James Taylor
https://arthur.io/art/ion-grigorescu/baie-rituala-ritual-bath

Grigorescu's representation of the body opposes the official image of the body under communism. In him, the body appears naked, vulnerable, often uncomfortable. If socialist realism produced exemplary bodies, Grigorescu exposes the contingent, fragile and finite body. We could say that the artist reverses the gaze from the body as a passive object of surveillance, to the body as an instrument of self-observation. Grigorescu's works can be seen as corporeal archives of an existence under control, but also as anticipations of democratic freedom of expression. The body is no longer a symbol of collectivity, but a place of recovered singularity.

Ion Grigorescu's body-art practice can be understood as one of the most radical forms of questioning corporeality in the Romanian context. In his performative actions, films and photographs from the 1970s and 1980s, which were later recovered and reinterpreted, the artist's body becomes simultaneously subject and object, medium and message, space for experiment and resistance.

As Petruța-Iulia Luchian emphasizes in the article dedicated to his practice, Grigorescu "transforms his own body into a laboratory of artistic investigation, testing the boundaries between public and private, between interiority and exposure" (Luchian, 2024). This type of body art is not spectacular, as in Western performance art, but expresses austerity and intimacy. The body is not exposed to provoke, but to register the tension between subject and power. Petruța-Iulia Luchian identifies certain similarities between Ion Grigorescu's creation and Gilles Deleuze's poststructuralism. Both were interested in exploring individuality and subjectivity, a theme that can be observed in the Romanian artist especially in photographs and videos, in which he investigated the relationship between subjective experience and external reality, an investigation that can be associated with Deleuze's concerns related to the theory of subjectivity (Luchian, 2024).

Moreover, Grigorescu's concern with the relationship between body and space, in which art becomes a way of exploring the limits of spatiality, can be linked to Deleuze's concept of the "body without organs", developed together with Félix Guattari (Luchian, 2024). For Deleuze, the body without organs does not designate a body devoid of structure, but a field of intensities that escapes the functional and hierarchical organization imposed by social and symbolic norms (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 149–166).

In this sense, Grigorescu's bodily experiments can be seen as attempts to disorganize the disciplined body (see also Foucault's concept of the "docile body") and to recover a non-normative corporeality, open to flows of experience and self-reflexivity. However, we cannot ignore the difference between the two, because for Deleuze the body without organs is a theoretical construction oriented towards the liberation of desire, for Grigorescu this disorganization is experienced concretely, under the conditions of a regime that strictly supervises and regulates the body. Thus, his body-art is not only an ontological experiment, but also an implicit political gesture. His body becomes an archive of constraint and, simultaneously, an instrument of a fragile freedom. In this sense, Grigorescu's art cannot be interpreted as a total liberation from corporeality, but rather as a liberation of corporeality, with political connotations, as a detachment from a regime that claims absolute control over the body.

4.2. Geta Brătescu: Fragmentation of the Body and the Autonomy of the Subject

In Geta Brătescu's work, especially in works such as Hands or the Medea series, we witness representations of a dislocated, fragmented body, recomposed through artistic gesture. The hand, torso, profile or silhouette appear as autonomous fragments. This aesthetic of the fragment can be interpreted politically. As we have seen, in the totalitarian regime, the body had to appear coherent, transparent and functional, but in Brătescu, the body is open, multiple, incomplete. Under these conditions, we can say that fragmentation becomes a language of freedom. Moreover, the female body in Brătescu is not objectified, but self-reflexive. It belongs to a creative subject that is continuously reconfigured. In this sense, his works anticipate central issues of the post-communist period: identity autonomy, gender difference, etc.

The fragmentation of the body in Geta Brătescu can be interpreted as a form of contestation of the unitary body model imposed by communist aesthetics and ideology. In works such as the cycles Hands, Self-portrait or the Medea series, the body no longer appears as an organic, coherent and stable whole, but is decomposed into autonomous fragments (hands, contours, silhouettes, lines), which suggest presence without enclosing it in a definitive form. This disarticulation can be understood as a critical report on the symbolism of the body in communism. If in the official communist representation the body had to be complete, functional and ideologically transparent, in Brătescu it becomes open, incomplete, processual.

Self-Portrait in the Mirroir © 2001 Geta Bratescu
Added: 16 Sep, 2012 by yigruzeltil
https://www.wikiart.org/en/geta-bratescu/self-portrait-in-the-mirroir-2001

We can also refer to the concept of "body without organs" of Deleuze and Guattari in the case of Geta Brătescu. They describe the body without organs as a strategy of resistance to the hierarchical and functional organization of the body imposed by social and symbolic structures: "the body without organs is not opposed to the organs, but to that organization of the organs called organism" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 158). It is therefore not a question of a denial of the organs, but of the way in which they are rigidly fixed in the body, which determines the identity of the subject.

In this sense, Brătescu's body fragmentation can be interpreted as a visual practice of "dis-organization" of corporeality. The fragments are not remnants of a lost whole, and by dislocating the body's unity, the artist suspends the idea of a body as a closed totality and proposes, instead, a body open to multiple possibilities, a body in the making. The body thus becomes a process, not an object; becoming, not a fixed identity.

4.3. Adrian Ghenie: The Traumatized Body and History as Deformation

In Adrian Ghenie's painting, the body often appears as a deformed, unstable figure, caught between recognizability and dissolution. In works such as *The Trial* (2012), *Pie Fight Study* or the series dedicated to Charles Darwin, faces and bodies are subjected to deliberate pictorial violence: faces melt, identity disintegrates, flesh becomes uncertain matter. Unlike communist propaganda that idealized the body, Ghenie insists on its precarious and vulnerable character. History no longer produces sculptural heroes, but bodies marked by violence and memory. The body is no longer reconciled with history, and painting becomes a space of confrontation (Piotrowski, 2012: 93-96).

The Trial © 2010 Adrian Ghenie
Collection SFMOMA
https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/2010.94

In contrast to the stable and idealized representation of the body in official communist art, Ghenie proposes an unstable, fragmented corporality, a "traumatized body." In *The Trial* (2012), the human figure appears partially recognizable, but subjected to an aggressive dissolution. The face is deformed, features are melted or erased, and the contour of the body becomes uncertain. We can speak here of a form of "traumatization" of the image, in which the painting no longer represents the trauma, but performs it. The thick paste, the violent gesture of the brush, the repeated overlapping and erasures produce an effect of instability that evokes not only physical degradation, but also the impossibility of a transparent representation of the past. In this sense, the body in Ghenie is not only an object of memory, but the place where memory itself becomes problematic. Trauma does not appear as a clear narrative theme, but as a distortion of the visible.

This approach can be linked to the observations of Piotr Piotrowski, who emphasizes that post-communist Eastern European art is marked by a tense relationship with history (Piotrowski, 2012: 93-96). In Ghenie's case, the body becomes the support of this tension, because it can no longer be represented as a coherent whole since history itself no longer represents a unitary narrative. At the same time, bodily deformation can also be seen through the prism of a critique of the official image of power. Unlike the hyper-visible and idealized body of the leader in totalitarian regimes, in Ghenie the body of power becomes grotesque, unstable, subject to degradation. Thus, while the official art of communism produced secure and stable bodies, Ghenie shows us that, after the historical experience of the 20th century, the body can only be uncertain, decomposed and crossed by the traces of a history that has not fully passed.

Conclusions

During the communist period, the body functioned as an ideological instrument. It was simultaneously disciplined materially and idealized symbolically. The state controlled the body through institutions, demographic policies, labor norms, and surveillance mechanisms, while official art produced the image of an exemplary body: healthy, productive, harmonious, subordinate to the collectivity, and integrated into historical teleology. Thus, representations of vulnerability, difference, or ambiguity were excluded. The official body was, in essence, the visual expression of the fiction of a unified social body.

The change of regime in 1989 led to a transformation of representations of corporeality. With no longer an ideological control over visibility, the body ceases to be the image of order. In post-communist democracies, the body appears simultaneously as a bearer of individual autonomy and as a space of new economic and identity precarities. It is freed from the symbolic constraints of the totalitarian state, but it is exposed to other mechanisms, becoming a terrain for the expression of freedom and vulnerability.

In post-December Romanian art, this change is expressed through the abandonment of the exemplary body and the emergence of the plural body. The works of artists such as Ion Grigorescu, Geta Brătescu, Adrian Ghenie and others illustrate a vulnerable and fragmented body, a body traumatized by history. We can say that one of the most significant mutations produced in Romanian visual culture after 1989 is the transition from the model of the exemplary body, specific to the communist regime, to the regime of plural body representation, characteristic of democratic and post-communist society.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Abbreviations Used in Tourism Terminology

Cristina-Gabriela Marin[1)]

Abstract:

Tourism is a complex industry and the understanding of its terminology, especially abbreviations or acronyms can sometimes feel like you are learning an entirely new language. They are used by many companies and organizations for the purpose of conveying the appropriate information to the auditory in a short period of time. Students should be made aware of the importance of acquiring these international conventions in order to avoid being caught off-guard in tourism-related conversation or contexts. Abbreviations and acronyms are heavily used in tourism. The conventions must be strictly followed but they vary between countries and universities. They often exist in a slightly different form in Romanian as well and should not be used instead of the English ones.

My interest in abbreviations has arisen when gathering materials for a dictionary on Tourism terminology. This study has attempted to bring a new approach on a list as comprehensible as possible (comprising 174 examples which we have encountered through the close examination of a corpora which has been selected to assist the research) by revealing not only their abundant number but also their Romanian equivalent. This study is meant to be a useful tool not only for students, but also for the English teachers, because a common drawback that might arise when teaching English for Special Purposes, in particularly, could be the insufficient training of the teacher in this field.

Keywords: *terminology, space saving, individual letters, contemporary English, etc.*

[1)] Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Romania, Phone: 0040765922113, E-mail: gabriela_marin_cristina@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Abbreviations are an important and expanding feature of contemporary English, widely used for convention and space saving. Students need to be familiar with general and academic abbreviations. According to Crystal[2] (The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, 2013:121)" one reason for using abbreviations is the desire for linguistic economy (...) Succinctness and precision are highly valued, and abbreviations can contribute greatly to a concise style. They also help to convey a sense of national identity; to use an abbreviated form is to "be in the know"- part of the social group to which the abbreviation belongs". There is a general tendency to abbreviate words, phrases to save time, effort and space in tourism literature. It could be really intriguing, especially for students, if they do not know what an acronym/abbreviation stands for. According to Adrian Barnet [3] (The Growth of acronyms in scientific literature, Research Gate, 2020: 34)" we report the results of an analysis of more than 24 million articles titles and 18 million article abstracts in tourism literature published between 1950 and 2019. There was at least, one acronym in 19% of the titles and 73% of the abstracts".

TYPES OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations take the form of shortened words, acronyms or other abbreviations, as shown below:

a) Shortened words which are often used without the writer being aware of the original form, for instance „bus" comes from „omnibus" which is hardly used in modern English. However, „refrigerator" is still better in written English then the informal „fridge". „Public house" is now very formal („ pub" is acceptable) but „television" or „TV" should be used instead of the idiomatic „telly".
b) Acronyms are made up of the initial letters of a name of phrase (e.g.: AIDS means Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, B.C means Bristol Channel, E.C.U.K means east coast of United Kingdom or E.E.T which means East European Time)
c) Other abbreviations are read as sets of individual letters. They include names of countries, organizations or companies, etc. Some examples are: USA, BBC, G.B, a.m. or p.m.

2. Materials and Methods

For this paper a large number of authentic materials were collected from official tourism websites, both from Britain and from USA, travelling blogs, online newspapers and magazines and even social media. The outcomes of this research on one hand will contribute to a better understanding and translation of the most common abbreviations used in both in tourism and travel-related situations and on the other hand they will be helpful for further studies in this field. The article has a practical direction by offering an alphabetically list of some of them especially those used in tourism, their meanings are better explained by examples provided and also by offering a Romanian equivalent.

3. Practical approach

Tackling abbreviations and acronyms can be an issue for Tourism students because the worldwide nature of tourism means that the names of the trade bodies, official and regulatory bodies are from many countries. The major providers of hospitability and transport by road, rail, air and sea are all international and the letters that stand for their names are meaningless to the uninitiated. Disregarding the cases where the abbreviation can trigger the regular pronunciation of the abbreviated words (*asap, e.g., etc.*) and ignoring the use or non-use of dots, abbreviations can be grouped according to two orthographic and phonological properties. They can be either spelled in capital or lower-case letters and they can be either pronounced by naming each individual letter (so-called *initialisms)*, as in the USA (/ˌjuː.esˈeɪ/) or by applying regular reading rules e.g. NATO /ˈneɪ.təʊ/. In this section we have looked at a number of abbreviations and we have seen that tourism literature has a quite rich inventory of non-concatenative processes including abbreviations.

A **abt.; ab.** (about)- circa,aproximativ
agcy. (agency)- agenţie
agt. (agent)- agent
ATTN (attention)- atenţie
av. (average)- avarie, medie
B **B&B.** *(b*ed and breakfast)- cazare şi mic dejun
B.C (Bristol Channel)- Canalul Bristol
C **CAD.** (*Canadian dollar)- dolarul Canadian*
CD (Cruise director)- directorul croazierei
CH (Child, Charter)- copil,
charter
Cont. (Continental)- Europa
D **dbl. (double)- dublu, ã**
diam. (diameter)- diametru
Dan (Danish)- danez,ã
Den (Denmark)- Danemarca
dorm (dormitory)- dormitory
DOP (Dominican peso, the main currency of the Dominican Republic)- peso (moneda Republicii Dominicane)
DOT (department of Transportation)-Departamentul de Transport
E **EAME (**Europe, Africa and Middle East)- prescurtare pentru Europa, Africa şi Orientul Mijlociu
EAS (Essential Air Service)- servicii aeriene esenţiale
E.B (English Breakfast)- mic dejun englezesc
E.C. (east coast)-coasta esticã a Angliei
E.C.G.B (east coast of Great Britain) –coasta esticã a Marii Britanii
E.Ch. (English Channel)- Canalul Englez/Canalul Mânecii
e-docs (travel documents provided electronically via email)- documentele de cãlãtorie oferite pe mail

EDEN (European Destinations of Excellence)- destinaţii europene de înalte standarde
E.E.T (East European Time)-ora Europei rãsãritene
EP (European plan, accommodations that do not include meals)- pe plan european, cazare care nu include mese)
Esq. (easquire)- domnului (în corespondenţã)
Eth. (Ethiopia)- Etiopia
EXST (extra seat)- loc suplimentar

F **F/A (**flight attendant)-însoţitoare de bord
FBT (a hotel rate that includes a room with full board plus a spa treatment)- abreviere folositã pentru preţul unei camere care include toate mesele şi acces la spa)
FD (front desk (of a hotel)-recepţia unui hotel
f.d (free delivery)- predare liberã
F&B- (food and beverage)- mãncare şi bãuturã
FFP (frequent flyer program)- program care oferã o serie de facilitãţi persoanelor care cãlãtoresc frecvent
FLIFO (flight information)- informaţii legate de zbor
FOTL (front of the line, used most frequently to refer to priority access programs at theme parks)- termen folosit pentru cei care au prioritate de acces în parcurile tematice
FR. (French, Friday)- Franţa/ vineri
FP (final payment or full pension)- platã finalã
FYI (for your information)-pentru o bunã informare a publicului

G **G. B** (Great Britain)- Marea Britanie
Gb. (Gibraltar)- strâmtoarea Gibraltar
GDB (guide dog for the blind)- câine însoţitor pentru orbi
GDN (room with a garden or a garden view)- camera care oferã vedere/ieşire în grãdinã
GBP (British pound, the main currency of the United Kingdom, its Crown Dependencies (the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) and the British Overseas Territories of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, British Antarctic Territory and Tristan da Cunha.)- lirã sterlinã
GFAX (general facts)- lucruri generale
GPST (group seat request)- distribuire la cerere a locurilor
GTY (guaranty, guaranteed)- garanţie, garantat

H **h.** (harbour, height, high)- port, înãlţime, înalt
HBT(a hotel rate that includes a room with half board plus a spa treatment.)- preţ al unei camere care include douã mese şi acces la spa)
HENRY (acronym for High Earner Not Rich Yet, a fanciful term for a person, typically a younger person, with a substantial cash flow who is willing to spend on travel)- acronym folosit pentru o persoanã tânãrã şi bogatã care cheltuie mult pe cãlãtorii
HRK (Kuna, the main currency of Croatia)- kuna, moneda Croaţiei
HSIA (high-speed Internet access)- acces la internet de mare vitezã

I **IATA (**International Air Transport Association)- Asociaţia Internaţionalã a Transportului Aerian
IC (Independent contractor; an outside sales representative for a travel agency)- un reprezentant de vãnzari al unei companii turistice care lucreazã pe teren
ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization)- Organizaţia Internaţionalã a Aviaţiei Civile
IICCL (International Council of Cruise Lines)- Consiliul Internaţional al Vaselor de Croazierã
ICT (Information and communication technology)- Tehnologia comunicaţiilor şi informaţiilor
IGN (Ignore)- Ignorã
IHEI (International Hotels Environmental Initiative)- Iniţiativa Hotelurilor Prietenoase cu mediul
IHG (International Hotel Group)- grup hotelier international
IIT (International Institute of Travel, a trade school)- Institutul International al Cãlãtoriilor
IN (1. International. 2. Infant. 3. Check-in.)- 1. internaţional, 2. sugar, 3. îmbarcare
inc. (inclusive, incorporated)-inclusiv, încorporat
INF (Infant)- bebeluş
ISLVW (Island view)- care oferã vedere la insula
Inv. (invoice)- facturã

J **Jam** (Jamaica)- Jamaica
Jav. (Javanese) –javanez
JMD (Jamaican dollar the main currency of Jamaica)- dolar Jamaican
JOD (Jordanian dinar, the main currency of Jordan)- dinarul, moneda Iordaniei

K **KK (**Confirmed)- confirmat,ã
KL (Confirmed waitlist)- listã de aşteptare confirmatã
KP (Commission percentage)- procent din comision

L **LAF** (Lowest available fare)- cel mai mic preţ care poate fi oferit
LAG (Liquid, aerosol, gel; the term refers to restricted items aboard airplanes)- termenul se referã la lichidele interzise în avion
Lav. (short for lavatory)- spãlãtorie
lb. (lifeboat)-barcã de salvare
LCAR (luxury car)- maşinã de lux
L.H, lth. (lighthouse)- far
Lith. (Lithuania)- Lituania
LHTL (luxury hotel)- hotel de lux

M **MAAS (m**eet and assist)- politicã a hotelurilor de a întâmpina şi ajuta oaspeţii
max. (maximum)- maximum
MF (1. main floor, mezzanine floor. 2. Monday through Friday.)- 1.etaj principal, mezanin 2. de luni pânã vineri
MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events)- abreviere folositã pentru a exprima o serie de pachete de servicii: întâlniri, stimulente, conferinţe sau evenimente.
min. (minimum)-minimum
MLOS (minimum length of stay)- duratã minima de şedere
MNP (Marine national park)- parc marin national

MPH (Miles per hour)- mile pe orã
MV (motorized vessel)- navã motorizatã
MY (motorized yacht)- yaht motorizat

N **NA (n**ot available. not applicable. no answer. need alternative)- care nu este disponibil, nu se aplicã
N. Dak (North Dakota)- Dakota de Nord
NAR (New arrival information)- informaţii noi
Natl (national)- national
Neb. (Nebraska)- Nebraska
N. Heb (New Hebrides)-Noile Hebride
NE Ld. (North-eastern London)- zona de nord-est a Londrei
N.G. (New Guinea)- Noua Guinee
N.Z (New Zealand)- Noua Zeelandã
Nev. (Nevada)-Nevada
NDA (non-discountable amount)- sumã care nu se poate negocia
NOTR (No traffic rights)-fãrã drept de circulaţie
NWR (National wildlife refuge)- refugiu naţonal pentru animalele sãlbatice

O **o.a** (over all) – în total
o/c (overcharge)- taxã suplimentarã
Occ. (Occident)- Occident
OHG. Official Hotel Guide-ghidul official al hotelului
OMFG. Official Meeting Facilities Guide-ghid al întâlnirilor oficiale
OP-other person- altã persoanã
oz. (ounce, ounces)- uncie, uncii
OUT (Departure date, as from a hotel)- data plecãrii din hotel
OW (One-way)- sens unic

P **pd**. (paid)- plãtit,ã
Pg. (Portuguese, Portugal)- Portugalia, portughez
pkg. (package)- colet
P.L.A (Port of London Authority)- Autoritãţile Portului (Londra)
p.p.t/ppt (prompt)- prompt, imediat
pt. (payment)- platã

Q **q.** (quarantine flag)- pavilion de carantinã
qlty. (quality)- calitate
qnty. (quantity)- cantitate
qr. (quarter)- pãtrime, sfert

R **red.** (received)- primit
rept. (receipt)- chitanţã
r.d (running days)- zile curgãtoare
re. (relating to, in regard to)- cu referire la
reg. (registered)- recomandat, înregistrat
retd. (returned)- înapoiat
RR (railroad)- cale feratã

S **S** (south) - sud
S.A; S. Am.; S. Amer.; (South America)- America de Sud

SHEX (Sundays, holidays excepted)- duminicile şi sãrbãtorile legale exceptate
SHINC (Sundays, holidays included)- duminicile şi sãrbãtorile legale incluse
sq.in. (square inch)- ţol pãtrat
sq. Ft. (square foot)- picior pãtrat
S&L (sea and land)- pe mare şi pe uscat
St. (Statue, saint)- statuie , sfânt
Sub (subway)- metrou
Sw. (Sweden, Swedish)- Suedia, suedez,ã

T **tab.** (the bill, as in a restaurant)- nota de platã
TAC (travel agency commission)- comisionul perceput de agenţia de turism
TC (tour conductor)- ghid
T&D (training and development)- antrenament şi dezvoltare
tr.fr (therefore)- deci, prin urmare
t.d (time and date)- ora şi data
ter. (territory)- teritoriu

V **vs**. (versus,against)- contra
viz. (videlicet, namely)- anume, adicã
vol. (volume)- volum
vt. (voice tube)-portavoce

W **whse** (warehouse)- magazie, depozit
WK. (was confirmed)- a fost confirmat, ã
W.M (weight and measurement)- greutate sau volum
W.W.D (weather working days)- zile lucrãtoare pe timp favorabile
WWDShex (weather working days Sundays and holidays are excepted)- zile lucrãtoare pe timp favorabil exceptând duminicile şi sãrbãtorile legale

4. Results and discussions

Abbreviations and acronyms are both used to shorten words or phrases. The only difference between the two is the way in which they are formed. Abbreviations usually take the first few letters of a word and also end in a full stop. On the other hand, acronyms are mostly formed from the first letter of each word or a phrase. Each area of travel and tourism has its own set of abbreviations and acronyms and this article has attempted to decode 174 of them A (5), B (2), C (4), D (7), E (12), F (11), G(8), H (5), I (13), J (4), L (8), M (9), N (13), O (9), P (6), Q (4) , R (7), S (10), T (7), V (4), W (5). All the abbreviations and acronyms given in the list above are registered in dictionaries, tourism glossaries and sites. Finding abbreviations related to tourism in a general vocabulary can be a slow and laborious task and it is hoped that his paper will provide assistance in a practical way.

5. Conclusion

We abbreviate words or phrases to save time, effort or space. This article has attempted to show what an abbreviation / acronym stands for, as it may feel like people are speaking a different language. When confronted to genuine tourism conversations, Romanian students are often unable to understand and use abbreviations recognized in international tourism environments. The names of international organizations, financial strategies, certain economic expressions are often abbreviated and not always translated into the target language thus causing serious vocabulary problems. In many cases abbreviations are widely used without most users knowing that the individual letters stand for. They are widely used in writing and the understanding of them is important for natural language processing applications. Abbreviations are not always defined in a document and sometimes are highly ambiguous. Tourism, which has been an obvious area for anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists for decades, has now become an important site for the study of intercultural communication and translation. Therefore, the challenging of deploying diverse linguistic materials, which often contain abbreviations or acronyms remain and there is a constant need of researching them.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Redefining American Conservatism after 2016: New Intellectual Currents on the Right

Karina-Beatrice Crețu[1)]

Abstract

Over the past decade, American conservatism has undergone a profound ideological reorientation. Traditionally anchored in a fusionist "three-legged stool" of free-market liberalism, social traditionalism, and hawkish foreign policy, the contemporary right is increasingly shaped by debates over first principles and the meaning of conservatism itself. This paper maps three emerging ideological strands—postliberalism, the Claremont school, and national conservatism—and analyzes how each seeks to redefine American conservative thought.

Postliberal thinkers such as Patrick J. Deneen and Adrian Vermeule critique liberalism for eroding the moral and communal foundations of society, advocating a politics oriented toward the common good. The Claremont Institutemilieu, associated with figures such as Michael Anton, argues that America's ruling elites have betrayed the constitutional order and promotes a more combative defense of the founding against perceived regime decline. National conservatives, led by Yoram Hazony, emphasize nationalism, cultural cohesion, and skepticism toward globalism, seeking a conservative realignment beyond both liberal internationalism and libertarian economics.

While distinct in emphasis, these currents collectively represent a significant departure from Reagan-era orthodoxy. Using an intellectual history approach, this study traces how they draw on older traditions—including Catholic integralism, Straussian political philosophy, and anti-globalist nationalism—to articulate rival yet overlapping alternatives to fusionist conservatism. Rather than treating these movements as merely reactive responses to Trumpism, the paper situates them within deeper ideological trajectories in American political thought. In doing so, it illuminates how the post-2016 right is not simply undergoing political realignment but contesting the philosophical foundations of conservatism itself, with significant implications for U.S. democracy, political order, and the future of the American right.

Keywords: *Postliberalism; Claremont Institute; National Conservatism; American Conservatism; Illiberalism*

[1)] PhD Candidate, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Political Science, email: karina-beatrice.cretu@fspub.unibuc.ro

The 2016 U.S. presidential election is often referenced as a moment of political rupture. Donald Trump's victory has fueled a radical reassessment of conservative thought (Borg 2024, 2233–45) and the emergence of a new intellectual realignment on the American right. Where postwar Cold War conservatism had been unified by anti-communism and free-market economics, contemporary American conservatism increasingly wrestles with fundamental questions about its own identity and purpose. Leading conservative thinkers began openly challenging long-held liberal principles, suggesting that Trump's rise was symptomatic of a deeper ideological shift that is likely to influence the substance of the policies expected from future Republican administrations (Field 2021).

This paper examines the American New Right and its visions for the future of conservatism, as well as its efforts to institutionalize these ideas. I argue that there are at least four distinguishable segments of the New Right: the postliberals, the national conservatives, the cultural militants and the alt-right. Although they sometimes overlap, they promote substantially different views for the future of the United States.

Each of these currents claims a distinct lineage in the American conservative tradition, and each aspires to redirect the core principles of liberal democracy toward a new vision grounded in hierarchy, virtue, and nationhood. They share a family resemblance: all believe that the classical liberal consensus of the late-20th century has failed. They regard the post-World War II conservative mainstream – the fusion of free-market liberalism, social conservatism, and hawkish anti-communism – as a spent force, a "dead consensus" ill-suited to contemporary crises (Ahmari 2025). In its place, they propose a reinvigorated illiberal conservatism that unabashedly embraces hierarchy over equality, order over freedom, and homogeneity over pluralism.

In broad terms, postliberal thinkers (such as Patrick Deneen, Adrian Vermeule) draw on Christian natural law and pre-liberal moral philosophy to recast "liberty" as disciplined submission to the common good, rejecting the liberal ideal of unfettered personal autonomy (Deneen 2019, 73–74). The cultural militants (anchored in the Claremont Institute and inspired by West Coast Straussian thought) put forth a revisionist interpretation of American constitutionalism that sacralizes the Founding virtues and demands a combative defense of the "real" American regime against internal enemies (Field 2021). Meanwhile, the national conservative movement (crystallized by Yoram Hazony's writings and NatCon conferences) champions an organic vision of nationhood and sovereignty, rejecting cosmopolitan liberal pluralism in favor of a homogenous, tradition-minded national order (Quast-Neulinger 2021). Finally, the alt-right represents the underbelly of the New Right, they promote a mixture of paleoconservative, christian nationalist and fascist ideas.

The emergence of these movements signals that American political thought is engaged in an "ideological realignment"- a period in which previously stable coalitions fracture and new intellectual frameworks compete for dominance (Chong, Citrin, and Levy 2022). This paper approaches such realignment as a contested struggle over first principles: the meaning of liberty, the proper relationship between individual and community, and the philosophical foundations of democratic legitimacy itself. The analysis draws on primary texts and manifestos from these movements, as well as scholarly interpretations of their intellectual genealogy, tracing how their ideas have evolved and intersected since 2016.

The analysis will unfold as follows. First, I trace the roots of American conservative thought, showing that today`s New Right is part of a long tradition of American anti-liberal thought, rather than as a wholly novel phenomenon. Second, I argue for the classification proposed in this article and examine the four groups in turn. The article concludes by discussing some of the major implications of the rise of the New Right for US democratic future.

Historical Roots: Illiberal Currents in American Conservatism

American conservatism has never been monolithic. It has always encompassed diverse strands that were held together by shared enemies. In the early twentieth century and Depression era, substantial segments of American conservatism embraced isolationism, nativism, and racial hierarchy (Bjerre-Poulsen 2013, 20). Agrarian Southerners defended segregation as integral to civilizational order, while fringe conservatives experimented with eugenics or aligned with the Ku Klux Klan in reaction to immigration and social change. Historian Richard Hofstadter placed the emergence of populist conservatism at the end of the First World War, arguing that disillusionment with American progress fueled a reactionary nostalgia for a pre-modern rural order.

After World War II, such isolationist and conspiratorial currents largely receded as the United States assumed global leadership and anti-communism became paramount (Story 1990). The defeats of Henry Ford's America First isolationists and Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade left these movements marginalized and labeled extremist. Figures like William F. Buckley Jr. deliberately worked to make conservatism “respectable” by expelling extremist elements—most notably by publicly rebuking the John Birch Society in the 1960s (Tanenhaus 2025, 320–326). Yet these expulsions did not eliminate illiberal conservatism; they merely marginalized it.

Throughout the postwar era, paleoconservative impulses periodically resurfaced. Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign, Richard Nixon's appeals to “silent majority” resentment, and Ronald Reagan's attacks on “big government” all gestured toward a strain of populist conservatism skeptical of liberal elites (Judis 2016, 45–65). In the 1990s, this strain reemerged openly in Pat Buchanan's “America First” nationalism, his campaigns against immigration and globalization, and his warnings about cultural decline[2]. Activists like Phyllis Schlafly opposed feminist reforms and interventions abroad, reviving older themes of hostility toward cosmopolitan elites and preference for tradition and hierarchy. Mainstream conservative institutions like *National Review* consistently distanced themselves from such figures, maintaining the boundary between respectable conservatism and dissident paleoconservatism.

The early twenty-first century provided new openings for illiberal voices. The Iraq War's failures rekindled opposition to foreign intervention, echoing prewar isolationism (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 23–60). The 2008 financial crisis and rise of President Obama intensified economic and cultural anxieties. The Tea Party movement (founded 2009) channeled anti-elite sentiment into calls for reduced government and taxes, yet it also harbored nationalist undertones (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, 52–60). Simultaneously, alternative media—online platforms like Breitbart and publications like The American Conservative—cultivated networks of dissident conservatives opposing interventionism, globalization, and multiculturalism. By 2016, these long-suppressed

[2] Patrick J. Buchanan, *The Great Betrayal: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global Economy* (New York: Little, Brown, 1998), 31-60.

strands—isolationism, ethnonationalism, religious traditionalism, and anti-cosmopolitan sentiment—had coalesced into a significant political force. Trump's campaign did not emerge from nowhere; it synthesized paleoconservative themes, populist grievances, and nationalist rhetoric that had been developing for decades (Green 2017, 82–90). Many of his advisers, notably Steve Bannon, actively channeled these ideas into his orbit. Thus, the scene was set for a post-2016 right that openly embraced illiberal impulses long suppressed in the conservative mainstream.

The Post-2016 Turn: Abandoning Fusionist Liberalism

Throughout the Cold War and beyond, the mainstream American Right, embodied by William F. Buckley Jr.'s *National Review*, championed the institutions of liberal democracy (constitutionalism, free enterprise, individual liberty) as defenses against totalitarianism. This grand alliance, often called fusionism, united libertarian economics with social conservatism under a shared commitment to freedom. In practice, what American conservatives sought to conserve was liberalism itself, understood as a political order of personal liberty undergirded by moral tradition.

After 2016, American conservatives made a decisive pivot from fusionism toward a more nationalist, anti-liberal stance. They explicitly link politics to morality and hierarchy, they "promise to impose a Christian worldview on society," and denounce the old fusionist alignment as a "regime" of pluralism and equality run by a cosmopolitan elite (Acton Institute 2022). Pluralist society and civil rights are portrayed as threats to virtue and order, rather than civic achievements (Kcjacques 2024).

Furthermore, conservative discourse has grown markedly more combative. Prominent right-wing writers now explicitly adopt Carl Schmitt's friend–enemy framework, describing politics as existential "war" (Slade 2024). Vice President J. D. Vance openly proclaimed that "our people hate the right people," and urged cultivating enmity toward designated enemies (Kristol and Egger 2024). The widespread conservative belief that the left intends to "subjugate" or "exterminate" traditional Americans and that this looming tyranny must be met with equal and opposite force reflects Schmitt's logic almost verbatim. Schmitt argued that a functioning democracy requires homogeneity and he coldly asserted that "if necessary," democracy means "the elimination or annihilation of heterogeneity" (Democracy Paradox 2020). Though few openly call for abolishing democracy, the new posture comes close. Leaders imply that the nation cannot survive unless its institutions are commanded by those who share the majority's heritage and virtue.

This shift shows how, in the post-2016 right, long-suppressed illiberal impulses (racial hierarchy, moral authoritarianism, exceptionalist nationalism) are re-emerging as central commitments (Pappin 2020).

The New Right is not a monolith, it contains various camps that may disagree what an ideal future looks like. In the next part of the paper I will focus on the four main groups which I believe are at the core of the movement: the postliberals, the national conservatives, the cultural militants and the alt-right.

Postliberal Conservatism

The postliberal current combines Catholic traditionalism with political communitarianism. Postliberals view classical liberalism as a failed experiment. Prominent figures like Patrick Deneen and Adrian Vermeule draw on Aristotelian and Christian thought to reshape conservatism. Deneen's influential book *Why Liberalism*

Failed supplied the movement's most quotable thesis: "liberalism has failed—not because it fell short, but because it was true to itself. (Deneen 2018, 14)" In other words, unfettered individual autonomy has eroded the social and moral fabric that once sustained communities. Postliberals therefore demand a re-grounding of politics in objective virtue and the common good (Kcjacques 2024).

Concretely, postliberals advocate a more activist state that enforces traditional norms. They redefine "liberty" not as personal license but as *"*habituation, training, and education*"* in self-discipline. For example, Deneen teaches that true education is "the achievement of liberty governed by the discipline of virtue," implying that freedom is found in mastering one's desires, not indulging them (Field 2023).

Sohrab Ahmari, another postliberal thinker, warns that unfettered autonomy leads to chaos; the modern West is *"*unfree because it is irresponsible, unbounded, unattached," and "to be fully human is to accept natural and traditional limits." (Ahmari 2019) Following older Christian insights, he argues that fully human life means accepting natural limits. In short, postliberals invert the traditional liberal view: citizens are not born free; they must cultivate virtue through habituation and moral education (Field 2023).

In law and governance, their stance is similarly anti-procedural. Vermeule's *Common-Good Constitutionalism* exemplifies this. Drawing on the long Catholic jurisprudential tradition, Vermeule contends that law's purpose is "ordering to the common good," directing society toward peace, justice, and virtue (Vermeule 2022, 10). Judges and officials, he insists, should not see themselves as neutral arbiters focused on text or intent. Instead, they should explicitly advance moral ends. Vermeule scorns conservative originalism as an "obstacle" to real virtue, arguing that strictly following framers' intent can undermine substantive goods like family and faith (Vermeule 2022, 29). His alternative is unapologetically teleological: for instance, courts should favor laws that protect marriage or public morality even if these conflict with libertarian readings of rights (Baude and Sachs 2022). This approach amounts to a kind of modern integralism, where the law "teaches virtue" rather than merely enforcing neutral rules (Harvard Law Review 2024).

Many postliberals openly call for closer ties between church and state. Vermeule goes further and suggests that the separation of church and state is not neutrality but a secular bias that privileges individualism (Waller 2023). He argues for legally recognizing a dominant religion. Contemporary integralist thought, as articulated by scholars like Adrian Vermeule and Gladden Pappin, draws heavily on earlier Catholic anti-liberal traditions, particularly the work of early twentieth-century thinkers who rejected democratic pluralism in favor of confessional states (Waller 2023).

Other postliberals similarly draw on Catholic social doctrine to reject the dogma of free markets. In *Tyranny, Inc.* and essays, Sohrab Ahmari argues that unfettered markets have spawned a new "private tyranny" of corporate power that impoverishes the middle class and erodes social bonds (Lilla 2024). He calls for economic democracy reminiscent of Catholic social teaching. In a column for *The American Conservative*, Ahmari praises Cardinal Manning's example of marching with striking dockworkers, arguing that Catholic orthodoxy can coexist with robust social reform, not just comforting elites (Ahmari 2022).

Like Deneen and Vermeule, Ahmari sees market "freedom" as a myth unless embedded in moral constraints; he urges reforms (e.g. strong labor rights, anti-monopoly laws) to restore the conditions for community and virtue. He also explicitly deplores the "flight of authority" in the modern world. He marvels that "here is one last authority standing…with a divinely ordained power to decide, to act politically in the truest sense, to bind and loose on heaven as on earth" (Ahmari 2022). In other words, the Pope's sacramental power (even to change laws) is embraced as a model of ordered freedom, rather than distrusted.

In sum, for postliberals, the separation of church and state has failed to protect the common good, and the liberal focus on individual rights has hollowed out social cohesion. They seek to replace the old liberal architecture with what they call a "theocracy of virtue" – a regime where law is explicitly subordinated to a divine or natural moral order (Ahmari 2019). Their vision inverts the mid-20th century fusionist formula: instead of liberal public values and private faith, they propose public traditionalism and only private toleration of divergence (Field 2023). This is an audacious challenge to the American constitutional tradition, emphasizing duty and hierarchy over rights and autonomy.

National Conservatism

The second branch, National Conservatism, emphasizes a strong, culturally homogenous nation-state and rejects liberal internationalism. The leading figure is Israeli-American theorist Yoram Hazony, whose book *The Virtue of Nationalism* (2018) became a manifesto for this movement (Luban 2021). United around 'National Conservative" conferences (NatCons) to share ideas, these intellectuals portray themselves as champions of national identity, viewing language, religion, and shared history as the essence of a nation (Quast-Neulinger 2021, 1091). Hazony is not the only key member of this movement, but as the founder of the Edmund Burke Foundation and the NatCon events, he is the most influential.

Thus, this section will focus mainly on Hazony`s critique against liberalism. Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that under the banner of the NatCon events many members of the factions within the New Right gather. For example, Patrick Deneen, Michael Anton and other intellectuals are active participants in these debates. The NatCon platform serves a multiple role: beyond promoting a christian nationalist view, it acts as a hub for uniting different factions inside the New Right and forming transnational links by organizing conferences in cities like London, Washington, and Rome.

Hazony states the origins of the nation in biblical Israel and 17th-century Protestant covenants: communities bound by a God-woven compact (Hazony 2018, 18). In his view, nationalism is the "best political order," because it preserves each nation's traditions and autonomy.

Who is the enemy? For Hazony, it is liberal "cosmopolitanism." In Hazony's eyes, post-1945 liberal internationalists (here he highlights John Locke, Immanuel Kant and Habermas) advanced a utopian "cosmopolitanism" that insists peace and progress require erasing national distinctions in favor of a unified global order (Hazony 2018, 6). He pointedly labels today's liberal order as the "most dangerous imperialism", accusing it of seeking to abolish independent national regimes through transnational institutions and norms (Hazony 2018, 18). This view turns the conventional narrative on its head: whereas many blame nationalism for 20th-century horrors, Hazony contends that *imperial* ideologies, inspired by Kantian philosophy, are the true menace to freedom.

Religion and culture are central. Hazony argues that American public life "must explicitly reject all forms of egalitarianism" beyond abolishing obvious injustices (Acton Institute 2022). He distinguishes between what he calls "public conservatism" and "private liberalism." In Hazony's ideal society, it is assumed that citizens largely share a common religion and moral heritage. Minorities (Jews, Muslims, gay people, etc.) would live freely in their homes or communities, but they would not shape the public culture or laws. True democracy, he contends, is majoritarian and faith-based, not universalist: he argues that "all nations are born of divine covenant, not consent," implying that sovereignty is a sacred birthright rather than a negotiated bargain (Hazony 2018, 53–54). Significantly, Hazony praises America's commitment to civil rights in the 20th century as a just response to racial injustice, but he rejects more recent egalitarian developments. For example, he argues that equalizing liberal doctrines for women, immigrants, or gay people undermine the "strong public culture shaped by the majority" that he seeks to restore (Acton Institute 2022). In practice, he would roll back many reforms of the past six decades to preserve social hierarchies rooted in tradition.

Rather than a liberal civic public order with private tradition, NatCons demand a traditional public order with private neutrality. Hazony calls for an "inverted fusion" where the government actively promotes religion, family, and patriotism while tolerating diversity only off-stage. He explicitly cites Viktor Orbán's Hungary as an exemplar of "illiberal democracy," and Orbán has made guest appearances at NatCon gatherings.

Furthermore, National Conservatism often functions as a bridge between conventional democratic politics and overtly undemocratic currents: it presents itself as a respectable, "distinguished" movement even as it flirts with "blatant anti-pluralist and anti-democratic alliances" to achieve its aims. NatCon conferences have convened under one roof Trumpists, Straussians, Catholic integralists, and alt-right members, such as admirers of Bronze Age Pervert or even Curtis Yarvin (Sitman and Adler-Bell 2024). At the same time, NatCons insist they support democracy, but only a democracy redefined in communal terms. As Hazony puts it, he does "not want to live in any place" that doesn't cherish liberty, but he blames the late-20th-century "public liberalism" for hollowing out American society (Acton Institute 2022). By their lights, the true freedom worth preserving is collective freedom: the nation's freedom from foreign domination or internal change, and the cultural freedom of the majority's heritage.

In short, National Conservatism represents the repackaging of America's ethno-majoritarian tradition. It revives a vision from the 19th and early 20th centuries: government as the protector of a homogeneous community, not as a neutral umpire among equals. Whereas Enlightenment liberalism defined America as a union of individuals under abstract rights, Hazony & co. define it as a covenanted whole anchored in faith and blood. This call to "make America a Christian nation" is sold as a moderate adjustment of policy, but its logic – subordinating liberal equality to nationalism – is a profound breach with classical American democratic thought (Quast-Neulinger 2021).

Cultural Militants: The Claremont Straussians

Another key strand is often labeled the Claremont or Straussian wing. Centered on the *Claremont Institute* (California) and affiliated thinkers (notably at Hillsdale College), these writers see themselves as guardians of the Founders' moral vision. Influenced by Leo Strauss and his student Harry Jaffa, Claremont intellectuals insist that the American Founding was animated by timeless truths and civic virtue, not mere interest. Charles Kesler, a senior Claremont scholar, argues that modern conservatism became "insufficiently political and insufficiently American. (National Endowment for the Humanities 2019)" He and others critique their colleagues for ceding the language of justice and equality to the Left; they want to revive the Founders' own republican ideal – one in which citizens are willing to sacrifice for the common good. For them, the

Declaration's creed ("all men are created equal") is an objective principle worth defending (Pinkoski 2020). This outlook contrasts with East Coast Straussians (who were more reserved) and with mainstream conservatives who had focused chiefly on markets or tradition.

What distinguishes the Claremont camp is their militancy. Over time they came to view American politics as a life-or-death struggle. This was vividly encapsulated by Michael Anton's September 2016 essay "The Flight 93 Election." Anton warned that the 2016 vote was akin to the passengers of Flight 93 during 9/11: "charge the cockpit or you die." In his metaphor, a Hillary Clinton presidency meant "certain doom," whereas Trump offered a chance (even if risky) to save the republic Claremont Review of Books n.d.). By framing electoral politics as existential struggle requiring extraordinary courage, Anton articulated Claremont's defining conviction: polite debate was obsolete; only patriotic audacity could arrest national decline. Many establishment conservatives were shocked by Anton's apocalyptic tone and dismissed it as alarmist, but his argument struck a chord with a base that felt betrayed by elites. In Anton's telling, American conservatives faced a regime-threatening enemy within, and only extraordinary patriotic aggression could avert national collapse (Papadopoulos 2020).

This militant stance is grounded in a conspiratorial reading of modern history. Claremont writers portray American progressivism (from Woodrow Wilson on) as a "second Constitution" that supplanted the Framers' principles with a technocratic elite Kesler 2014). They analogize today's identity politics and multiculturalism to past totalitarian threats. For example, the Trump-era *1776 Commission* (whose leadership included Claremont's Kesler and Ryan Williams) explicitly labeled progressivism and critical race theory as existential challenges on par with Communism or Fascism. In this narrative, there exists a hidden enemy inside: an entrenched academic-media-bureaucratic "ruling class" whose anti-Americanism undermines patriotism and virtue (Anton 2016). Anton has complained that too many self-styled conservatives prefer "ostrich-like denial" – insisting "everything is fine" – while foundational American ideals are "under mortal threat" (Anton 2023). He and his colleagues bristle at conservatives who "bow and scrape" to the very elites undermining law, limited government, virtue, morality, religion, and free speech. In Claremont's telling, such timidity is tantamount to surrender. True patriotism, they argue, may require outrage and radical measures. Anton's later writings, for instance, float scenarios as dramatic as a "Fourth Turning"-style crisis or even a Caesar-like figure to reassert order if the left's "corrupt oligarchy" cannot be checked (Anton 2023). Other Claremont figures have gone so far as to suggest that America is already effectively split into "Americans" and "anti-Americans," implying that loyal citizens must rally as if in a domestic Cold War (Lindzen 2020).

Claremont does not limit itself to ideas; it cultivates influence. The Institute boasts a *Publius Fellowship* program that since 1979 has trained students and young professionals in its philosophy. Hundreds of alumni – journalists, lawyers, congressional staffers, academics, activists – have risen through this network (Claremont Institute n.d.). Many now occupy key positions in media, policy, and politics. Notable examples include Michael Anton himself, who served in both of Trump's administrations, using those posts to amplify the "America First" creed he had honed at Claremont (Schwartz 2025). Another is Charles Kesler, who co-authored the *1776 Report* on patriotic education under Trump, embedding Claremont-style reverence into official curriculum proposals (Executive Office of the President 2020). In these ways, Claremont has carried its vision into the mainstream: from think tanks to the halls of government, its creed of militant patriotism and Founding fidelity has been propagated.

Today, this "cultural militant" branch of the New Right firmly believes that American survival hinges on a combative defense of virtue. Through outlets like the *Claremont Review of Books* and *The American Mind*, and via its fellowship alumni, it has spread a vision of "total and unflinching allegiance" to the Founders' ideals (Field 2021). Claremont Straussians see the progressive critique of America's past as dangerously corrosive; instead, they urge conservatives to revere the Founding and revive classical republican civic virtue. In short, they have transformed reverence for the American regime into a call to arms: the republic must be fought for as if on a battlefield.

Radical Illiberals: The Alt-Right's Fringe

Beyond these relatively mainstream intellectual camps lies a more radical fringe, often grouped under the broad label "alt-right." This current is explicitly anti-liberal and authoritarian, though its members vary in style. Taken together, figures like Curtis Yarvin, "Bronze Age Pervert," and Nick Fuentes form an illiberal counter-Enlightenment on the right. Each rejects core democratic principles in favor of hierarchy and mythic purpose.

Curtis Yarvin (alias Mencius Moldbug) is the foremost neo-reactionary theorist. Beginning in the late 2000s on his blog *Unqualified Reservations*, Yarvin developed a sweeping "case against democracy," arguing that the American government is fundamentally ruled by an unelected "Cathedral" of left-leaning elites (academics, media, bureaucrats) who manipulate elections (Prokop 2022). Democracy, in Yarvin's view, "produces only incompetence and chaos." His solution is radical: he proposes reorganizing the government like a Silicon Valley firm under a single sovereign CEO with "absolute power", advised by a board (Yarvin 2010). Yarvin explicitly rejects egalitarianism and popular sovereignty; he frames his ideal regime in terms of efficiency and engineer-like mastery over society.

Critics call it a thinly veiled monarchy, but he counters that monarchy is older and more stable than 20th-century ideologies (Unqualified Reservations n.d.). Though decidedly fringe in origin, Yarvin's anti-democratic ideas have exerted a notable influence on the broader American right after 2016. By his own account, Yarvin "stopped believing in democracy" in the mid-2000s and began writing his blog in 2007. A decade later, elements of his worldview found an audience among the cadres of Trump-era conservatism. Venture capitalist Peter Thiel – an early Trump backer – was reading Yarvin by 2009 and echoed his disillusionment with democracy (famously writing "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible") (Prokop 2022). Both Thiel and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson developed enough fascination with Yarvin to discuss his ideas at length. More concretely,Vice President J.D. Vance and other members of the Republican Party acknowledged Yarvin as an intellectual inspiration.

If Yarvin represents a coolly analytical case for ending democracy, the figure known as Bronze Age Pervert (BAP) does so in a flamboyantly cultural and philosophical key. BAP, the pseudonym of Costin Alamariu, represents the alt-right's Nietzschean strand. His self-published 2018 manifesto Bronze Age Mindset became a cult hit among young internet reactionaries (The Hedgehog Review n.d.). In emphatic, meme-laden style, BAP denounces modern liberal society as decadent and weak. He extols the "heroic ideals" of antiquity – strength, daring, spiritedness – and scorns the "slave morality" of equality and comfort (Claremont Review of Books n.d.).

Universal rights and bourgeois decency, he argues, are tools for the weak to bind the strong. Instead, society should be led by fierce, almost mythic elites – today's would-be warriors – while the masses ("bugmen") are discountedm(Russell n.d.). BAP's book rejects feminism, multiculturalism, and liberal tolerance; it even hints at a natural hierarchy of race and sex.

Although published outside traditional channels, *Bronze Age Mindset* exploded in popularity on fringe forums and among dissident conservatives by 2019 (The Economist 2021). Even Michael Anton praised it, noting how its "nihilistic vigor" appealed to youth disillusioned with mediocrity (Claremont Review of Books n.d.). This helped legitimize the text in New Right circles. Similarly, BAP's themes have seeped (often implicitly) into more respectable debates. Some Catholic and traditionalist writers have even lauded his "masculine primordiality," arguing that the rebellion against liberal modernity can be harnessed for religious renewal (The Hedgehog Review n.d.). In effect, BAP's alt-right ideas have become a bizarre kind of catalyst: he and his devotees exemplify a raw anti-egalitarian ethos that resonates with strands of postliberal and nationalist thought. The popularity of Bronze Age Pervert demonstrates just how far the Overton window has shifted; ideas once considered fringe Nietzschean radicalism are now discussed among mainstream conservatives as sources of youthful vigor.

Finally, Nick Fuentes represents the alt-right's street-level, identity-centric faction. A young American nationalist, Fuentes mixes Catholic integralism with white nationalist polemics. On his livestreams and at his America First rallies, he rails against every pillar of liberal democracy: voting rights, pluralism, secularism, equality – all are denounced as betrayals of a traditional social order (Fuentes 2023–2025). Fuentes explicitly champions a "Catholic" vision of America: in his words, "You're either a Catholic or you're with the Jews." He longs for a return to "Catholic monarchy…Crusades…Inquisitions. (Sheffield 2022)" He openly calls for banning homosexuality, non-Christian religions, and non-traditional family life.

He has approvingly invoked the medieval Church's authority and even praised modern theocrats. For example, after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021, Fuentes lauded the Taliban as a model for a "conservative, religious" government and joked that he seeks "Catholic Taliban rule" in the United States (Levy 2021). In Fuentes's ideal world, liberal democracy – which he blames for secularism, social ills, and "decadence" – would be replaced by authoritarian rule enforcing pre-Enlightenment Catholic social norms. On his live-streams, he often literally cheers, "I'm a reactionary… I support autocracy," and derides the 21st century as "trash" compared to a romanticized bygone era (People For the American Way n.d.). Democracy, in his words, has given America nothing but "obesity…divorce, abortion, gay marriage…pornography…[and] diversity." By contrast, Fuentes rants, "Catholic autocracy [has a] pretty strong record. Catholic monarchy…just war…crusades, inquisitions – pretty good stuff. (WBEZ 2022)"

He has denied the Holocaust and uses antisemitic tropes without apology (Owen 2022). Unlike Yarvin or BAP, Fuentes is not a theorist of government; he is a provocateur and organizer. He leads the "Groypers," a radicalized youth movement that in 2020 even launched its own "America First" conference to supplant CPAC (Institute for Research & Education on Human Rights 2020). He gained attention when President Trump met him at Mar-a-Lago (accompanied by rapper Kanye West), prompting outrage over Trump's hospitality to a Holocaust denier (The New York Times 2022). Fuentes lies at the extreme fringe even of the New Right, but his existence underscores the full-throated rejection of liberalism animating some right-wing youth. Where mainstream conservatives recoil at his language, Fuentes's message is clear: democracy and pluralism are worthless, and a racialized, authoritarian Catholic order is the true path.

All three personalities reject political equality, individual rights, and secular neutrality, and they openly disdain the core liberal premise that citizens have inalienable rights regardless of race or creed. In the volatile post-2016 climate, the NatCon events became a platform for these currents: early conferences included Catholic integralists (like Ahmari and Deneen), Straussians, and even admirers of Yarvin and BAP mingling under one tent (Patterson 2022). The presence of Yarvin at a NatCon meeting or the warm reception of BAP fans there showed how fringe ideas have seeped into the conservative mainstream.

At the same time, significant boundaries remain. Claremont Straussians still promote the Founders' equality rhetoric, and they stop short of advocating monarchy. Postliberal Catholics reject overt racism and publicly distance themselves from Nazi analogies, unlike Fuentes. But broadly speaking, all these currents share a family resemblance: they are disenchanted with the old fusionist conservative creed and increasingly illiberal in spirit. They are dissatisfied with procedural democracy and intolerant of elite secular culture. The differences among them are often one of degree. Fringe theorists provide the raw, uncompromising arguments (monarchy for Yarvin, Nietzschean hierarchy for BAP, racial crusade for Fuentes), and more mainstream New Right figures then temper and adapt those ideas into policy proposals or cultural arguments. For instance, Deneen's assertion that "liberalism has failed" has become a rallying cry beyond the integralist niche, and proposals to dramatically centralize executive power echo Yarvin's anti-bureaucracy bent.

In short, ideas that were once confined to an "alt-right" fringe now exert real influence. The techno-monarchism of Yarvin, the Nietzschean elitism of Bronze Age Pervert, and the white supremacist vision of Fuentes each represent an outright repudiation of the Enlightenment creed of liberty and equality. Yet all three have intersected in tangible ways with the broader New Right. Together they supply the most extreme counter-Enlightenment strand on the American right: a set of arguments suggesting that the liberal experiment has failed, and it is time to resurrect older hierarchies (Field 2021). Even if these visions remain partly fringe, they now echo (in moderated form) in think tanks, podcasts, and conferences of the nationalist right.

Conclusion

The four currents mapped above – postliberal Catholic integralists, nationalist authoritarians, Claremont Straussians, and the radical alt-right fringe – mark a sharp break with Reagan-era conservatism. Together they illustrate a comprehensive ideological overhaul: each recasts liberty, equality, and pluralism as threats rather than foundations. All four envision a political order grounded not in individual rights or neutral governance, but in hierarchy, moral virtue, and unified identity. Though differing in emphasis, they share a conviction that liberal democracy's 20th-century consensus is exhausted. The post-2016 right thus looks to older European and pre-modern models – divine law, national covenant, martial virtue – as the remedy for what they see as decadence.

These currents pose a profound challenge to the principles that have underpinned U.S. politics. Their rise signals that ideas once taboo – overt majoritarianism, official religion, even hereditary or technocratic rule – are now back in the conversation among conservative intellectuals and policymakers. If translated into policy, such ideas could erode civil rights, weaken checks and balances, and remake the country as an ethno-religious commonwealth.

On one hand, the New Right's arguments remind us why the Enlightenment ideals of individual liberty and universal rights were adopted in the first place: they protected a pluralistic nation from tyranny of majority impulses. The New Right is, in effect, a counter-Enlightenment questioning that legacy. Their intellectual ferment thus serves as a stark reminder of the foundations of American democracy – and how fragile they may become if the nation embraces a more illiberal path. On the other hand, these debates also reflect real anxieties about social fragmentation and identity in America. The fact that such divergent strands have coalesced suggests the existing political system has left many citizens feeling unheard or threatened by change.

The transformation from fusion to fracture within American conservatism thus represents more than an internal conservative dispute. It signals a fundamental challenge to liberal democratic norms. The stakes, as New Right recognizes, extend far beyond partisan political competition to encompass the basic character of American political order itself.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

Parliament in the Architecture of Separation of Powers in Post-Communist Romania (1991–2003): Between Democratic Centrality and Constitutional Limitation

Mihai Adrian Damian [1]

Abstract:

This paper analyzes the evolution of the Romanian Parliament within the framework of the separation of powers during the post-communist transition (1991–2003). The study aims to examine how the constitutional design established by the 1991 Constitution and revised in 2003 shaped the role of Parliament as a central yet constitutionally limited institution.

The research adopts a doctrinal and comparative approach, focusing on the dynamics of the legislative function, the relationship between Parliament, Government and President, and the impact of Constitutional Court jurisprudence on institutional balance. The findings indicate that, although Parliament is formally recognized as the sole legislative authority, its effective role is influenced by legislative delegation and constitutional review mechanisms.

The paper also highlights the evolution of parliamentary status and the professionalization of legislative activity, as well as the relevance of the Romanian case within the broader context of Central and Eastern European transitions. The study concludes that Parliament remains a key institution of democratic representation, but its position is redefined within a system characterized by interdependence, constitutional control, and institutional balance.

Keywords: *Parliament; separation of powers, constitutionalism, Constitutional Court, legislative function, representative democracy.*

[1] Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Science specialization, Email: damian_mihai_adrian@yahoo.com

Parliament in the Architecture of Separation of Powers in Post-Communist Romania (1991–2003): Between Democratic Centrality and Constitutional Limitation

1. Romanian Post-Communist Constitutionalism: Between Rupture and Institutional Reconstruction

The collapse of the totalitarian regime in December 1989 generated in Romania not merely a regime change, but a genuine constitutional discontinuity, characterized by the absence of a coherent normative framework and by the necessity of a complete reconstruction of state institutions. Unlike other post-communist transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, marked by negotiated or gradual processes, the Romanian case is distinguished by its abrupt and conflictual character, which profoundly influenced the subsequent constitutional architecture (Deleanu, 2013, pp. 42–45).

In this context, the adoption of the 1991 Constitution cannot be reduced to its formal legal dimension, but must rather be understood as the founding act of the new political order. Its legitimacy derived from a constituent process exercised by the Parliament elected in 1990, which combined both legislative and constituent functions. This institutional overlap provided the constitutional text with a democratic foundation, even though it was established in a climate of uncertainty and accelerated reconfiguration of power relations.

Moreover, the 1991 Constitution reflected both a compromise among the emerging political forces of the transition and a normative projection of a constitutional democracy still in formation. From this perspective, the constitutional text did not merely organize political power, but also expressed a strategic option regarding the direction of the Romanian state's evolution.

The central issue of the post-communist period was not exclusively the drafting of a new constitution, but rather the institutional reconstruction of the state itself. The previous regime had functioned on the basis of a formal constitutionalism in which the separation of powers was purely declaratory, while institutions remained subordinated to the single ruling party. Consequently, democratic transition required not only the establishment of new norms, but also the redefinition of relations between public authorities and the creation of effective mechanisms for limiting power.

This reconstruction involved the constitutional entrenchment of the separation and balance of powers, the guarantee of political pluralism, and the establishment of constitutional review. In particular, the emergence of the Constitutional Court as a specialized jurisdiction represented one of the most significant innovations of the new constitutional system, contributing to the transformation of Parliament from an absolutely sovereign authority into a constitutionally limited one (Muraru & Tănăsescu, 2008, pp. 145–148).

Thus, the transition from formal constitutionalism to democratic constitutionalism becomes essential for understanding institutional evolution. While the former is limited to the mere existence of a constitutional text, the latter presupposes the effectiveness of constitutional norms, the protection of fundamental rights, and the functioning of mechanisms of institutional control. Within this framework, Parliament can no longer be conceived as an exclusive center of power, but rather as part of a system of checks and balances in which legitimacy is distributed among several public authorities.

The option for a semi-presidential regime within the 1991 Constitution must be interpreted according to the same logic of institutional equilibrium. The direct election of the President, combined with the political responsibility of the Government before Parliament, creates a dual system of legitimacy intended to prevent excessive concentration of power. In this context, Parliament retains its central role within the legislative process, while coexisting with other centers of democratic authority.

During the transitional period between 1991 and 2003, Parliament played a decisive role in shaping the normative framework of the new social and economic order. The intensity of legislative activity reflected not only the necessity of rapid regulation, but also the complexity of structural transformations. At the same time, this period was marked by institutional tensions and conflicts of competence, which contributed to the progressive clarification of relations between public authorities through the intervention of constitutional adjudication.

Overall, Romanian post-communist constitutionalism cannot be understood as a singular moment, but rather as an evolutionary process characterized by successive adjustments and institutional consolidations. Within this process, Parliament occupied a central position both as a constituent body and as a legislative authority and actor of institutional balance. The analysis of its evolution during the period 1991–2003 allows for a deeper understanding of the manner in which the principle of separation of powers was not only formally enshrined, but also practically configured.

II. The 1991 Constitution as the Foundation of the Democratic Regime: Between Normative Entrenchment and Institutional Balance

The adoption of the 1991 Constitution marks the moment of the legal institutionalization of democracy in post-communist Romania, yet its significance extends beyond the formal dimension of state organization. The constitutional text must be interpreted as the expression of a fundamental political and legal option aimed at reconstructing the legitimacy of power and establishing a normative framework capable of limiting its exercise.

The transition from an authoritarian regime, characterized by the concentration of power and the absence of pluralism, to a democratic system required not only the introduction of new institutions, but also the redefinition of the relationship between authority and citizen. The 1991 Constitution thus established legal mechanisms intended to ensure not only the organization of political power, but also its control, through the entrenchment of the principles of the rule of law, national sovereignty, and political pluralism (Muraru & Tănăsescu, 2008, pp. 145–148).

At the center of this institutional architecture stands Parliament, whose constitutional position reflects the option for representative democracy. Its status as the supreme representative body and sole legislative authority grants the legislature an essential role in the normative configuration of the political system. Nevertheless, this centrality must not be understood in absolute terms, since it is moderated by the mechanisms of institutional control and balance introduced by the Constitution.

The principle of the rule of law constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the new regime. It implies the supremacy of the Constitution and the subordination of all public authorities to legal norms, as well as the existence of institutional mechanisms capable of guaranteeing their observance. In this regard, constitutional review becomes an essential element in limiting legislative power, contributing to the redefinition of Parliament’s role within the constitutional system.

National sovereignty, constitutionally vested in the people, introduces an essential democratic dimension in which the exercise of power is mediated through representative institutions. Parliament thereby becomes the principal channel for expressing the collective political will, although this function is exercised within constitutional limits designed to prevent the parliamentary majority from becoming a discretionary authority.

Political pluralism, absent during the previous regime, is recognized as a defining feature of democracy. Competition among political parties not only legitimizes the decision-making process, but also contributes to the dynamics of institutional balance insofar as the structure of Parliament reflects the diversity of political options (Olimid, 2015, pp. 24–26).

The configuration of the separation of powers in the 1991 Constitution does not follow a rigid model, but rather a flexible one characterized by institutional interdependence. Legislative, executive, and judicial powers do not function in isolation, but within a system of reciprocal relations in which each authority possesses mechanisms of influence over the others. The Government's political responsibility before Parliament, the President's right to request the reconsideration of laws, and the Constitutional Court's role in reviewing legal norms illustrate this logic of institutional equilibrium.

Within this framework, the institutionalization of bicameralism represents an option intended to strengthen the quality of the legislative process and to introduce an additional level of deliberation. The examination of legislative proposals by two distinct chambers serves not only a technical function, but also a political one, contributing to the moderation of potential excesses of the majority and to the refinement of normative content.

The status of Parliament as the sole legislative authority establishes a formal monopoly over the adoption of laws; however, this monopoly is relativized by the existence of legislative delegation and constitutional review. These mechanisms introduce structural limits on the exercise of legislative power, transforming Parliament from an exclusive center of power into an actor integrated within a complex system of checks and balances.

The importance of the 1991 Constitution for Romania's institutional evolution lies precisely in this capacity to combine the normative entrenchment of democracy with the establishment of mechanisms of control and balance. Subsequent constitutional practice revealed both the functionality of this model and its limitations, thereby paving the way for the constitutional revision of 2003.

Consequently, the 1991 Constitution should not be regarded as the final point of democratic transition, but rather as the initial stage of a continuous process of institutional adjustment in which Parliament's role evolves from formal centrality to integration within a system of constitutional equilibrium.

III. The 2003 Constitutional Revision: Between European Integration and Institutional Recalibration

The revision of the Romanian Constitution in 2003 represents a turning point in the evolution of post-communist constitutionalism, marking the transition from a stage focused on establishing the democratic framework to one centered on its consolidation and adaptation. While the 1991 constitutional text reflected the imperatives of institutional reconstruction in a context of political uncertainty, the constitutional reform of 2003 must be understood as a response to the need for stabilization, clarification, and Europeanization of the legal and political system.

The nature of the revision was not disruptive, but rather corrective and adaptive. The constitutional architecture established in 1991 was maintained in its essential lines, yet institutional mechanisms were recalibrated in order to respond both to the practical experience accumulated over the previous decade and to the external requirements generated by the process of European integration. In this sense, the revision appears as a stage of constitutional maturation in which legal norms were adjusted in order to become more functional and coherent.

A determining factor of this reform was European integration. In the context of the advanced negotiations for accession to the European Union, the Romanian state was compelled to adapt its constitutional framework to the principles of the European legal order. This adaptation was not limited to technical modifications, but involved a redefinition of the relationship between domestic law and European law, including the acceptance of the transfer of competences to the institutions of the European Union (Olimid, 2010, pp. 88–92).

By introducing provisions that allow for the integration of European law into the national legal order, the revised Constitution established a structural openness of the Romanian constitutional system toward a supranational level of governance. This transformation had significant implications for the role of Parliament, which no longer retained an absolute monopoly over normative production, but instead operated within a complex legal framework in which European norms became directly relevant.

Beyond its European dimension, the 2003 revision also pursued the consolidation of the rule of law through the strengthening of institutional control mechanisms. In this context, the role of the Constitutional Court was significantly expanded and clarified, transforming it into a central actor in guaranteeing the supremacy of the Constitution and arbitrating constitutional conflicts between public authorities. The strengthening of constitutional jurisdiction contributed to limiting potential excesses of parliamentary majorities and to stabilizing relations between public authorities (Deleanu, 2013, pp. 198–201).

The amendments concerning Parliament reflected the same logic of consolidation and institutional efficiency. The establishment of the duration of the parliamentary mandate, the clarification of the regime of parliamentary immunity, and procedural adjustments concerning the functioning of the chambers sought to strengthen both the stability and the responsibility of the legislative institution. These interventions did not alter Parliament's fundamental role, but adapted its functioning to the requirements of a mature democratic system.

At the same time, the 2003 constitutional revision implicitly addressed a structural problem of the 1991 Constitution, namely the ambiguities existing in the relations between public authorities. Institutional practice during the first post-communist decade had revealed recurring tensions between Parliament, Government, and the President, generated by insufficiently clear delimitations of competences. The amendments introduced in 2003 aimed to reduce these ambiguities and to strengthen the mechanisms of institutional equilibrium.

By clarifying legislative procedures and reinforcing parliamentary control over the Government, the revised Constitution contributed to redefining the role of Parliament in a more functional manner. Parliament remained the center of democratic deliberation, yet it operated within a more clearly articulated institutional framework in which interdependencies among public authorities were more precisely regulated.

The significance of the 2003 constitutional revision therefore lies in this dual dimension: on the one hand, adaptation to the requirements of European integration, and on the other, the consolidation of the internal mechanisms of the rule of law. The Constitution thus became not merely an instrument for organizing political power, but also a dynamic normative framework capable of responding to political and legal transformations.

Within this evolution, Parliament maintained its central role, although in a configuration different from that of the initial stage of transition. From a dominant position in the process of institutional reconstruction, it evolved into an actor integrated within a complex system of governance characterized by pluralism, control, and institutional interdependence.

IV. Parliament within the Architecture of the Separation of Powers (1991–2003): Normative Centrality and Constitutional Limitation

The principle of the separation of powers constitutes one of the defining landmarks of modern constitutionalism; however, its application within the Romanian post-communist system reveals a particular configuration characterized not by rigidity, but by institutional interdependence. The 1991 Constitution, consolidated through the 2003 revision, does not establish an absolute separation of powers, but rather a functional model in which cooperation and mutual control become essential elements of constitutional equilibrium (Vida, 2006, pp. 74–76).

Within this framework, Parliament occupies a privileged position derived both from its direct democratic legitimacy and from its role in the process of producing legal norms. Nevertheless, this centrality must not be interpreted in terms of institutional supremacy, but rather as part of a system in which the exercise of power is limited and conditioned by interaction with the other state authorities.

The Romanian constitutional model reflects a functional separation of powers in which competences are distributed among authorities, yet their exercise inevitably involves mechanisms of cooperation. Parliament adopts laws, but legislative initiative largely belongs to the Government, while the implementation of norms is carried out by the executive. This distribution does not diminish Parliament's role, but rather places it in a relationship of interdependence with the other branches of power, thereby contributing to the stability of the political system.

The relationship between Parliament and the Government represents one of the clearest expressions of this interdependence. The legitimacy of the Government is conditioned by the vote of confidence granted by Parliament, which establishes the political responsibility of the executive. At the same time, parliamentary control instruments—questions, interpellations, and especially the motion of censure—allow the legislature to sanction governmental activity and influence the direction of governance.

Nevertheless, the relationship between these two authorities is not unilateral. The Government actively participates in the legislative process through legislative initiative and by benefiting from mechanisms such as legislative delegation. This dual involvement transforms the legislative–executive relationship into one of competitive cooperation, in which each authority influences political decision-making without monopolizing it.

Relations between Parliament and the President introduce another dimension of institutional equilibrium specific to semi-presidential regimes. The direct election of the head of state grants the President a distinct democratic legitimacy, which may generate tensions in relation to Parliament. The constitutional mechanisms established to manage these relations—the right of promulgation, the possibility of requesting reconsideration of laws, and the referral of laws to the Constitutional Court—reflect a form of indirect control over legislative activity.

Conversely, Parliament possesses instruments for sanctioning the President, including the procedure for suspension from office in cases of serious violations of the Constitution. This possibility demonstrates that institutional equilibrium is not constructed exclusively in favor of the executive, but rather presupposes a distribution of control mechanisms among public authorities.

A decisive role in maintaining this equilibrium belongs to the Constitutional Court, which functions as an arbitral institution between public authorities. Through constitutional review and the settlement of constitutional legal conflicts, the Court contributes to the delimitation of competences and the prevention of institutional abuses. Its jurisprudence has had a significant impact on clarifying the relations between Parliament, Government, and the President, transforming the Court into a central actor within the system of checks and balances (Constantinescu, 1998, pp. 118–121).

The period between 1991 and 2003 highlights the dynamic nature of this institutional equilibrium. Constitutional practice was marked by conflicts and tensions that tested the limits of the normative framework and required interpretative interventions by the Constitutional Court. These developments do not indicate a dysfunction of the system, but rather its process of maturation, in which constitutional rules are clarified through application.

The constitutional revision of 2003 intervened precisely within this context, strengthening the mechanisms of cooperation and mutual control among public authorities. Through the adjustments introduced, institutional equilibrium became more stable, while the role of Parliament was redefined in a more precise manner without diminishing its importance.

Overall, Parliament's position within the architecture of the separation of powers cannot be reduced to the idea of formal centrality, but must instead be understood as part of a complex system of interdependencies. The effective functioning of this system depends not only on constitutional norms, but also on the manner in which they are interpreted and applied in practice.

V. The Evolution of the Legislative Function between 1991 and 2003: Between Formal Centrality and Normative Competition

The legislative function represents the core of Parliament's powers and the principal mechanism through which political will is transformed into legal norms. During the period 1991–2003, this function was subjected to structural pressures generated by the complexity of the post-communist transition, leading both to an unprecedented intensification of legislative activity and to significant transformations in the manner in which legislative authority was exercised.

In the first years following the adoption of the 1991 Constitution, Parliament was placed in the position of constructing almost entirely the normative framework of the new democratic state. Essential fields such as property rights, the organization of public administration, the electoral system, and the functioning of the market economy required rapid and substantial regulation. This legislative dynamic reflected not only the need for institutional adaptation, but also the profoundly transformative character of the transition itself (Vedinaș, 2020, pp. 52–55).

Nevertheless, the intensity of the legislative process was accompanied by a certain degree of normative instability generated by the frequency of amendments and by the sometimes experimental nature of the adopted regulations. This reality indicates that the legislative function was not exercised within a stable and predictable framework, but rather in a context of continuous adjustment in which legal norms were frequently revised in order to respond to social and economic developments.

A defining element of this period was the expansion of legislative delegation and the Government's increasing use of ordinances. Although the Constitution established Parliament as the sole legislative authority, institutional practice revealed a partial redistribution of normative power in favor of the executive. The necessity of rapidly adopting regulations in a context of accelerated transformation justified the frequent recourse to this mechanism.

This evolution generated a structural tension between Parliament's formal centrality and the Government's growing role in the normative process. Legislative delegation does not eliminate Parliament's role, since ordinances must subsequently be approved by law, but it introduces an element of normative competition that redefines the balance between the legislative and executive branches.

At the same time, the legislative procedure underwent a process of institutional consolidation intended to increase both the efficiency and the quality of parliamentary deliberation. The development of the chambers' internal regulations, the strengthening of parliamentary committees, and the clarification of the stages of the legislative process contributed to the professionalization of legislative activity. These developments indicate a transition from a phase of intensive normative production to one of procedural structuring.

An essential role in shaping the legislative function belongs to the constitutional review exercised by the Constitutional Court. Through its interventions, the constitutional jurisdiction established the limits of legislative activity, reinforced the principle of bicameralism, and prevented potential abuses by parliamentary majorities. The Court's jurisprudence had a direct impact on the drafting of laws, contributing to the disciplining of the normative process (Vida, 2006, pp. 132–135).

Within this context, the legislative function can no longer be understood exclusively as a prerogative of Parliament, but rather as the result of a complex interaction among multiple authorities. Parliament remains the formal center of the legislative process, yet the effective exercise of this function is influenced by executive intervention and judicial review.

The significance of the evolution of the legislative function during the period 1991–2003 must therefore be analyzed beyond the quantitative dimension of normative production. It reflects the transformation of Parliament from a dominant institution of transition into an actor integrated within a more complex system of governance characterized by institutional interdependence and normative pluralism.

Within this dynamic, Parliament preserves its essential role in defining the legal framework of the state, yet it no longer exercises exclusive control over the normative process. This reality does not indicate a diminution of its importance, but rather an adaptation to the logic of contemporary constitutionalism, in which power is distributed and limited through multiple institutional mechanisms.

VI. The Status of the Parliamentarian in the Constitutional Transition (1991–2003): Between Representation, Autonomy, and Responsibility

The analysis of Parliament's functioning within the Romanian constitutional system cannot be carried out exclusively at the institutional level without taking into account the legal and political status of the parliamentarian. The manner in which the representative mandate, the regime of incompatibilities, and the guarantees related to the exercise of parliamentary office are configured directly influences both the quality of the legislative process and the legitimacy of the representative institution.

During the period 1991–2003, the status of the parliamentarian underwent significant evolution, reflecting the transition from an incipient phase of democratic representation to one characterized by professionalization and institutional consolidation. This transformation must be analyzed within the broader context of redefining Parliament's role within a system of power based on equilibrium and mutual control.

A central element of this status is the representative mandate, which enshrines the principle that a parliamentarian represents not merely the interests of the electoral constituency, but the general will of the political body. The prohibition of the imperative mandate reflects this fundamental option of democratic constitutionalism, guaranteeing both the freedom of deliberation and the decisional autonomy of parliamentarians. At the same time, such autonomy does not exclude political responsibility, which manifests itself through periodic elections and the continuous relationship between representatives and the electorate (Muraru & Tănăsescu, 2008, pp. 175–178).

The regime of incompatibilities constitutes another essential dimension of parliamentary status, being designed to protect the integrity and independence of the legislative function. The prohibition against simultaneously exercising functions capable of generating conflicts of interest contributes to maintaining Parliament's autonomy and preventing the concentration of power. The evolution of this regime during the analyzed period reflects the concern for strengthening transparency and public accountability within a society undergoing democratization.

Parliamentary immunity must likewise be interpreted within the logic of protecting the parliamentary function rather than as an individual privilege. The protection granted to opinions and votes expressed in the exercise of the mandate ensures the freedom of parliamentary debate, while the regulation of procedures concerning the criminal liability of parliamentarians seeks to preserve a balance between institutional independence and legal accountability. The debates generated by this institution during the period 1991–2003 highlight the difficulty of distinguishing between the necessary protection of the mandate and the risk of excessive use of such guarantees.

A relevant process for understanding the evolution of parliamentary status is the professionalization of legislative activity. In the first years of transition, the lack of institutional experience and the diversity of parliamentarians' professional backgrounds influenced the functioning of the legislature. Subsequently, the development of Parliament's internal structures, the strengthening of parliamentary committees, and the increasing use of technical expertise contributed to transforming parliamentary activity into a more specialized and efficient one.

This professionalization possesses not only a technical dimension, but also an institutional one, insofar as it contributes to the creation of a parliamentary culture based on consolidated rules, procedures, and practices. In this regard, the evolution of parliamentary status reflects not merely the individual adaptation of political actors, but also the maturation of the parliamentary institution as a whole (Ionescu, 2019, pp. 214–217).

The significance of these transformations must be analyzed in correlation with the general evolution of the constitutional system. The status of the parliamentarian is not an isolated element, but rather an essential component of the mechanism through which political representation is achieved and the legislative function is exercised. The consolidation of the representative mandate, the clarification of incompatibilities, and the redefinition of parliamentary immunity contribute both to strengthening Parliament's legitimacy and to increasing its institutional efficiency.

Within this framework, the parliamentarian fulfills a dual role: that of representative of the political will and that of participant in a complex institutional system characterized by equilibrium and mutual control. The evolution of parliamentary status during the period 1991–2003 highlights the transition from formal representation to functional representation adapted to the requirements of a consolidated democratic state.

VII. The Jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court in Shaping the Separation of Powers: From Arbitration to Normative Construction

One of the defining elements of Romanian post-communist constitutionalism is the role played by the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court in the effective shaping of the separation of powers. Within an institutional system undergoing consolidation, constitutional norms were not always sufficient to clearly delimit the competences of public authorities, which made the interpretative intervention of constitutional jurisdiction necessary.

Established by the 1991 Constitution, the Constitutional Court rapidly exceeded its formal role as guarantor of constitutional supremacy, becoming an active actor in defining institutional equilibrium. Through its jurisprudence, the Court did not limit itself to reviewing the conformity of legal norms, but contributed to the development of a genuine constitutional doctrine that directly influenced the functioning of the political system (Vida, 2006, pp. 118–121).

An essential field in which the Court's intervention proved decisive concerns the settlement of constitutional legal conflicts. These conflicts, generated by divergent interpretations of institutional competences, revealed the limitations of the constitutional text and the necessity of an authority capable of providing binding interpretations. In the relations between Parliament, Government, and the President, the Court established the legal benchmarks of institutional cooperation, thereby contributing to the stabilization of power relations.

In particular, the jurisprudence concerning legislative delegation illustrates the tension between Parliament's formal centrality and the expansion of the Government's normative role. Although the Constitution establishes Parliament as the sole legislative authority, the practice of using governmental ordinances raised important questions regarding the delimitation of competences. The Court intervened in order to affirm the limited and exceptional character of legislative delegation, emphasizing that such delegation could not lead to the marginalization of the legislature. Through this interpretation, the Court reaffirmed Parliament's role, but within a framework of controlled normative competition.

The protection of the principle of bicameralism constitutes another relevant example of the Constitutional Court's constructive role. Through its decisions, the Court imposed respect for the role of both chambers within the legislative process, sanctioning procedures that would have allowed the bypassing of bicameral deliberation. Consequently, bicameralism no longer appears merely as a structural option, but also as a procedural guarantee of legislative quality.

At the same time, the Court's jurisprudence contributed to defining the limits of parliamentary majorities. Within a democratic system, electoral legitimacy cannot justify the arbitrary exercise of power, while constitutional review becomes the instrument through which such limitations are achieved. By invalidating normative acts contrary to the Constitution, the Court established that the will of the majority must conform to the constitutional framework, thereby consolidating the principle of the rule of law (Muraru & Tănăsescu, 2008, pp. 260–263).

The impact of constitutional jurisprudence, however, extends beyond its corrective dimension. During the period 1991–2003, the Constitutional Court contributed to the development of a constitutional culture in which the rules of institutional interaction were clarified and internalized by political actors. In this sense, its role may be interpreted not merely as one of arbitration, but also as one of normative construction of the constitutional system.

This evolution demonstrates that the separation of powers is not a static reality established exclusively through constitutional text, but rather a dynamic process shaped through interpretation and institutional practice. The Constitutional Court thus becomes an essential actor within this process, contributing to the transformation of constitutional principles into effective rules governing the functioning of the state.

Overall, the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court played a decisive role in shaping institutional equilibrium in post-communist Romania, consolidating both Parliament's position and the mechanisms designed to limit political power. Through this contribution, the Court emerged as one of the central pillars of Romanian democratic constitutionalism.

VIII. Comparative Dimension: Constitutional Transition in Central and Eastern Europe Between Convergence and Institutional Diversity

The analysis of Romanian post-communist constitutionalism cannot be adequately conducted in the absence of a comparative perspective capable of contextualizing domestic developments within the broader framework of transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. The collapse of communist regimes at the end of the 1980s generated, throughout the region, processes of constitutional reconstruction oriented toward the establishment of the rule of law, the protection of fundamental rights, and integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

Although these objectives were common, the methods through which they were pursued varied significantly, reflecting differences in legal tradition, political culture, and historical context. Romania, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic provide relevant examples of this diversity, each state adopting distinct institutional solutions in response to the challenges of democratic transition (Olimid, 2010, pp. 112–115).

At the constitutional level, the states of the region opted for models inspired by Western constitutionalism, yet adapted to national particularities. The 1997 Constitution of Poland consolidated a democratic regime emphasizing governmental responsibility and constitutional review, while Hungary initiated its transformation process as early as 1989 through a profound revision of the existing constitution. The Czech Republic, in turn, adopted a new constitutional text in 1992 within the context of post-federal state reorganization.

In all these cases, Parliament occupied a central position in the process of normative transformation, acting as the principal authority responsible for adopting the legislation necessary for democratic transition. This institutional convergence highlights the role of the legislature as an essential instrument of democratic reconstruction within the post-communist space.

Nevertheless, institutional differences remain significant. Some states opted for consolidated parliamentary regimes in which the executive depends directly on the parliamentary majority, while others, such as Romania and Poland, adopted hybrid institutional formulas characterized by the coexistence of direct presidential legitimacy and governmental responsibility before Parliament. These options reflect attempts to balance governmental stability with the necessity of limiting executive power.

Within this context, the role of Parliament in transitional processes appears as a regional constant; however, the exercise of this role is influenced by the constitutional architecture specific to each state. In Romania, the intense legislative activity during the period 1991–2003 illustrates both the scale of social and economic transformations and the pressure of adapting to European standards.

Compared to other states in the region, Romania's constitutional evolution is distinguished by a relatively high degree of normative stability. The 1991 Constitution underwent only one major revision, in 2003, without being entirely replaced, unlike other constitutional systems that experienced more radical transformations. This stability may be interpreted as the expression of an institutional equilibrium sufficiently flexible to permit adaptation without the necessity of constitutional ruptures (Iancu, 2015, pp. 184–186).

The comparative perspective therefore highlights a dual reality: on the one hand, the existence of common tendencies within post-communist constitutionalism directed toward democracy and the rule of law; on the other hand, the diversity of institutional solutions adopted to achieve these objectives. Within this framework, Parliament emerges as a fundamental institution of political representation, although its role is configured differently depending on the logic of each constitutional system.

Overall, comparative analysis not only complements the understanding of Romanian constitutional evolution, but also makes it possible to emphasize its particularities. Romania's experience illustrates the manner in which a relatively stable constitutional framework can sustain a profound process of institutional transformation under conditions of continuous adaptation to both internal dynamics and external requirements.

IX. Conclusions: Parliament Between Democratic Centrality and Constitutional Limitation

Romania's constitutional evolution during the period 1991–2003 highlights a complex process of institutional transformation in which the transition from an authoritarian regime to a constitutional democracy was not merely the result of adopting a new fundamental text, but rather the outcome of a continuous dynamic of adjustment and consolidation of the mechanisms governing the exercise of power. The 1991 Constitution established the normative framework of this transformation, yet the effective functioning of the system was shaped by institutional interaction, political practice, and the intervention of constitutional jurisdiction.

The present analysis demonstrates that Parliament occupied a central position within the constitutional architecture, both through its role as the sole legislative authority and through its function of democratic representation. During the initial stage of transition, this centrality manifested itself through intense legislative activity intended to create the normative framework of the new political and economic order. Nevertheless, this position did not translate into absolute institutional supremacy, but was progressively integrated into a system of equilibrium and mutual control (Deleanu, 2013, pp. 312–315).

One of the essential outcomes of this evolution consists in the redefinition of the legislative function in terms of institutional interdependence. Although Parliament remained the formal holder of legislative authority, constitutional practice highlighted the growing role of the Government in the normative process, as well as the impact of constitutional review upon legislative activity. In this regard, the legislative function can no longer be conceived as a monopoly, but rather as a distributed process in which the intervention of multiple actors contributes to shaping the normative outcome.

The jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court played a decisive role in this transformation, surpassing the function of formal control and contributing to the effective construction of institutional equilibrium. Through its interpretations, the Court established the limits of public authorities' competences and strengthened the principle of constitutional supremacy, transforming the separation of powers from an abstract principle into an operational mechanism.

At the same time, the evolution of parliamentary status highlights the importance of the individual dimension of political representation within the constitutional system. The professionalization of parliamentary activity, the consolidation of the guarantees of the representative mandate, and the clarification of the regimes of incompatibilities and immunity contributed to strengthening both the legitimacy and the efficiency of the parliamentary institution.

The constitutional revision of 2003 marks the moment when these developments were integrated into a more coherent normative framework adapted to both internal and external requirements. In particular, European integration generated an opening of the constitutional system toward a supranational level of regulation, directly influencing Parliament's role within the normative process.

The comparative perspective confirms that Romania's constitutional evolution fits within a broader regional model of transition toward constitutional democracy characterized by convergence with regard to fundamental principles, but also by diversity in the institutional solutions adopted. In this context, the Romanian specificity lies in maintaining a relatively stable constitutional framework capable of sustaining significant institutional transformations without resorting to major normative ruptures.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that Parliament's role within the architecture of the separation of powers cannot be reduced to a formal position of centrality, but must instead be understood in terms of functional integration within a complex system of governance. Parliament remains the fundamental institution of democratic representation, yet the exercise of its powers is conditioned by interaction with other public authorities and by compliance with constitutional limitations (Iorgovan, 2005, pp. 41–44).

This perspective allows for a reinterpretation of Romanian post-communist constitutionalism in which the emphasis shifts from the formal entrenchment of constitutional principles to their effective functioning. In this sense, the period 1991–2003 represents not merely a stage of transition, but the foundational moment of a constitutional culture in which equilibrium, control, and responsibility become defining elements of the exercise of political power.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Impact of the Right of Access Principle on Determining the Applicable Law in Cross-Border Insolvency Proceedings: A Comparative Analytical Study

Muhammed Khariy Qsair [1)]

Abstract :
This research attempts to map the conceptual contours of the principle of right to access in cross-border insolvency cases and analyzes its functional connection with both the recognition of foreign proceedings as well as conflict of laws rules about these cases. The work seeks to present interpretative standards that harmonize the demands of international judicial aid and the guarantees of national sovereignty and parties in insolvency, without forgetting the legislative gap from which most national systems lack tools to regulate this relationship. The study used a three-level comparative analytical method, particularly a descriptive analytical approach for analyzing legislative and contractual texts, a comparative method that compared American, European, British and Singaporean systems as well as inductive critical methodology for international judicial precedents issued between 2006-2023. The research found that the principle of the right to access is not only limited to the procedural aspect but encompasses an objective functional consequences which establishes a presumption of jurisdiction of the law of state in which main proceeding were initiated (lex concursus), despite its rebuttable nature. The study showed that there is no full international consensus regarding the relationship between recognition and the determination of the applicable law, indicating a legislative gap. He also stated that the concept of Center of Main Interests (COMI) is still the main technical axis in this system, though it suffers from an ambiguity existing in its formulation and requires to be reassessed. The scholar has been calling for utilising the functional priority model, i.e. applying (lex concursus) law to core regulatory issues, keeping (lex situs) law for real rights and treating public order narrow as due exception not general rule.
Keywords*: Cross-Border Insolvency, Right of Access, Conflict of Laws, Recognition of Foreign Judgments, UNCITRAL, Public Policy***.**

[1)] Assist Professor, PhD, University of Thi Qar, Faculty of Law. Professor of Private International Law for Graduate and undergraduate Studies. E-mail lawp1e20@utq.edu.iq. E-mail legalur@yahoo.com

The Impact of the Right of Access Principle on Determining the Applicable Law in Cross-Border Insolvency Proceedings: A Comparative Analytical Study

The research problem:

The law of cross-border bankruptcy has undergone important changes in the last decades, leading legislators, judges and legal scholars to reconsider established views within conflict of laws regarding the appropriate standard used to determine which law is relevant in a bankruptcy case with effects that reach beyond a national legal system. In this regard, access constitutes a first-degree procedural principle that encompasses foreign parties (creditors, debtors and some other representatives from foreign courts) who can satisfy their right of access to the courts and participate in judicial proceedings in states other than those where bankruptcy originated (Westbrook et al., 2023, p. 45).

This issue gains exceptional importance in light of the increasing frequency of international bankruptcies, as the assets, debts, and contractual relationships of debtors are spread across multiple countries, making the determination of the applicable law extremely complex. Does the exercise of the right of access affect the process of determining the applicable law? And can such a procedural principle restrict a substantive conflict rule related to determining international jurisdiction? These questions embody the fundamental research problem.

A segment of modern jurisprudence believes that granting access rights to foreign bankruptcy representatives directly impacts the issue of recognizing foreign bankruptcy proceedings and determining the center of main interests of the debtor as the most relied-upon connecting factor in contemporary legislation. Meanwhile, another segment views this right as merely a procedural mechanism that does not affect the substantive foundations of conflict of laws in bankruptcy (Omar, 2022, p. 112).

Research Objectives:

This research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Drawing the conceptual framework for the principle of access in cross-border bankruptcy proceedings and outlining its legislative and contractual textual foundations.
2. Analysis of the conflict of laws principles applied in determining the applicable law to international bankruptcy proceedings in light of international instruments and comparative national legislation.
3. Revealing the actual impact of the principle of access on the mechanisms for determining the center of main interests (COMI).
4. Review of relevant comparative case law and its evaluation in light of modern international standards.
5. Formulating a balanced approach that reconciles the requirements of the right to access and public order in international bankruptcy procedures.

Research Hypotheses:

The research is based on the following hypotheses :

Hypothesis One: The principle of access directly influences the determination of the applicable law to cross-border bankruptcy proceedings, particularly through its impact on the center of main interests (COMI) criterion.

The second hypothesis: The right of access establishes a standard of international procedural public order, limiting the authority of states to restrict the participation of foreign parties in their local bankruptcy proceedings.

Hypothesis Three: The unification of access rights rules at the international level contributes to enhancing the ability of the international bankruptcy system to coordinate and cooperate among different jurisdictions.

Reasons for choosing the topic

The reasons for choosing this topic stem from a series of scientific and practical considerations, the most prominent of which are the phenomenon of cross-border bankruptcies has become one of the most present legal issues in contemporary international practice following successive financial crises and the rise of the digital economy, in addition to the scarcity of Arab studies that address this issue through a comparative methodological analysis. Additionally, the principle of access rights, which was established by the UNCITRAL legislative model, has not been sufficiently scrutinized in terms of its impact on conflict of laws rules. Furthermore, recent judicial decisions—particularly those issued by American and European courts—have revealed precise practical issues that warrant study and evaluation.

Research Methodology:

Given the complexity of an issue that can be approached from different branches of law, this study employs comparative analysis as its most appropriate methodological tool. The first part uses textual analysis of texts from UNCITRAL, the European Insolvency Regulation and Chapter 15 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code as well as comparisons between legislative and judicial experience from the United States, European Union, United Kingdom and Singapore. This research also draws on doctrinal analysis of the opinions expressed by public and comparative private international law scholars, examining leading judicial precedents that revolutionary the contemporary trends in these domains.

I. The Concept of Access Rights in Cross-Border Bankruptcy Proceedings

I.1.The conceptual foundation of the right to access.

Access Rights as one of the most used procedural rights in international law on cross-border insolvency. In this research, access means the right under law of foreign insolvency representatives and foreign creditors to approach directly in courts of foreign countries and partake in judicial proceedings relating to debentures bankruptcy without seeking any relevant previous authorization or going through complete recognition procedures (Wessels et al., 2022, p. 78).

The UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency (adopted 1997 and amended in 2022) has implemented the infrastructure for this right, devoting Articles 16–20 to it, specifying that the foreign insolvency representative is granted complete litigation capacity before national courts upon recognition of its foreign proceedings.

The committee emphasized in its interpretative commentary on these articles that the right of access constitutes the first pillar for achieving international cooperation in the field of insolvency and that depriving foreign insolvency representatives of this right hinders the achievement of justice for all creditors and stakeholders (UNCITRAL, 2023, p. 34).

The right of access in bankruptcy proceedings is characterized by essential features that distinguish it from the general right to litigate; it is, first, a conditional right that depends on the nature of the recognized foreign proceedings; second, a right restricted by the necessity of not violating the public order of the enforcing state; and third, a reciprocal right that, in principle, requires a cooperative relationship between the concerned judicial systems (McCormack, 2023, p. 156).

I.2 .The international legislative foundations for the right to access

There are numerous international instruments that have established the right of access in cross-border bankruptcy proceedings, which can be reviewed as follows:

I.2.1. The UNCITRAL Model Law of 1997 and its amendments

The model law are designed to distinguish direct access (the right of the foreign bankruptcy representative to approach the courts before a formal decision is made on recognition) and extend access (which follows from the full recognition of foreign proceedings and in itself involves applying various measures of assistance). This distinction has also resulted in various practical challenges, including to what extent the suspension of individual proceedings automatically applies at the direct access stage (Paulus & Dammann 2022: 203)

The UNCITRAL Model Law is the leading international reference in this area, having been adopted by over fifty countries to date, including the USA, UK, Japan, Singapore, and Mexico. This statute enshrines three synergetic principles: the access right, recognition of foreign proceedings and cooperation between judicial and administrative authorities (two complementary laws where one extends this system to the file). The 2022 amendments were introduced to improve the protection of access by broadening the description of the overseas insolvency representative and streamlining provisional recognition procedures (UNCITRAL Working Group V, 2022, p. 18).

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I.2.2.The amended European Insolvency Regulation No. 2015/848

The amended European Regulation No. 2015/848 is considered the most developed regional legal framework for regulating cross-border insolvency. It establishes an access regime within an integrated system based on the criterion of the center of main interests as the governing standard for determining international jurisdiction and applicable law simultaneously. The regulation distinguishes between main proceedings and secondary insolvency proceedings, establishing the principle of consultation and cooperation between the appointed administrator in the main proceedings and their counterpart in the secondary proceedings (Virgos & Garcimartín, 2022, p. 89).

The regulation has led to a highly significant outcome, as determining the center of main interests in a specific member state results in the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of that state to initiate main bankruptcy proceedings, with its law applying to the substance of the dispute, which is known as the "principle of unity and limited universality" (Balz, 2022, p. 67).

I.2.3.Chapter 15 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code

In 2005, the American legislator incorporated Chapter 15 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code. Bankruptcy Code) inspired by the UNCITRAL Model Law, and this chapter has unprecedentedly enshrined the right of access for foreign bankruptcy representatives in U.S. legislation. Chapter 15 allows a foreign bankruptcy representative to directly approach the U.S. court to request recognition of foreign proceedings, whether they are main or non-main, with the resulting assistance measures ranging from an immediate stay of proceedings to the complete transfer of asset management (Leimbach et al., 2023, p. 312).

II. Criteria for Determining the Applicable Law in International Bankruptcy

II.1.Traditional Jurisprudential Theories

International legal doctrine has witnessed an in-depth debate regarding the governing principle for determining the applicable law in international bankruptcy proceedings, with two opposing theories contending in this matter :

II.1.1.The first theory: The theory of unity

The Unity Theory is based on the premise that bankruptcy proceedings should be singular and comprehensive, initiated in one country and automatically extending their effects to other countries. This theory is based on the logic of economic efficiency and achieving equal treatment for all creditors regardless of their nationalities and the locations of their assets (Gurrea-Martínez, 2022, p. 44). 44). Its proponents believe that the multiplicity of procedures leads to the fragmentation of the bankruptcy estate and the unequal treatment of creditors, which undermines investors' confidence in the international legal system.

II.1.2.The second theory: The theory of pluralism

In contrast, the pluralism theory asserts that each state has a legitimate interest in applying its own law to assets located within its territory, to creditors residing within it, and to contracts concluded under its law. Proponents of this theory argue that the automatic recognition of foreign bankruptcy proceedings involves a violation of national sovereignty and undermines the interests of local creditors (LoPucki & Doherty, 2022, p. 198).

II.2.The center of main interests (COMI) as the governing criterion:

This article concludes that the COMI criterion, as the ideal connecting factor for determination of applicable law and international jurisdiction in bankruptcy proceedings.

The principle of this criterion is that the governing law is the law of the place regularly and habitually administering the interests of a debtor which can be found out by third parties (Horton, 2023, p. 88).

EU and US lawmakers have created a presumption in law that the company's registered headquarters is a presumption of where its main interests lie. But such a presumption is rebuttable by contrary evidence. This assumption has resulted in major legal problems, motivating some corporations to "forum shop" (i.e., move their official headquarters right before starting bankruptcy proceedings) so that the selected jurisdiction best dresses them with the law (Pottow, 2022, p. 77).

The criterion that should be adopted to define the center of main interests would, according to this researcher, need to be based on substantial economic data rather than merely legal formalities and it found the existence in a given state of three integrated elements — these are namely the effective operation of management activity at the project stage; concentration of essential assets; and stability or durability of basic contractual relationships. In this sense, if modern jurisprudence can be said to have produced some catchall principle, it holds that the external appearance of the company before creditors is the best rule (Westbrook et al., 2023, p. 122).

II.3.The applicable law in bankruptcy and the principle of territorial sovereignty:

The determination of the applicable law in bankruptcy proceedings intersects sharply with the principle of territorial sovereignty in cases known as "partial bankruptcy," where the debtor has assets distributed across multiple countries. In these cases, European legislation tends to apply the law of the state where the assets are located (lex situs) to movable and immovable assets, while the law of the original jurisdiction (lex fori concursus) is applied to procedural matters and the distribution of priorities among creditors (Moss et al., 2023, p. 245).

The European Insolvency Regulation retains a number of exceptions to the principle of applying the law of the state where the proceedings are opened, as it refers to the law of the other state concerning real rights on assets subject to the law of a third state, employment contracts, and real estate transfer contracts, which is doctrinally expressed by the principle of "legal immunity" (Paulus & Dammann, 2022, p. 189).

III.The Impact of the Right of Access Principle on the Center of Main Interests (COMI)

III.1. The right of access and the issues of verifying the center of main interests

The most complex issues of access rights emerge when it comes to judicial verification procedures of the claim of the center of main interests in a specific jurisdiction. Granting the foreign bankruptcy representative direct access to the courts before completing the verification procedures for the center of main interests may lead to the implicit legitimization of foreign jurisdiction before the necessary judicial examination is completed (Gurrea-Martínez, 2022, p. 56).

Some researchers indicate that EU courts have faced numerous cases where a third party challenged the validity of the determination of the center of main interests after a foreign court issued its automatic orders to stay proceedings based on access rights, resulting in a conflict between the decisions of multiple courts, all of which affect the distribution of a single block of assets (Wessels et al., 2022, p. 134).

The researcher argues that the most appropriate solution lies in explicitly linking the right to direct access to the stage of provisional recognition so that the measures resulting from direct access are limited to conservatory and procedural ones only, without affecting the substantive decisions related to determining the applicable law on the essence of the dispute. This approach is consistent with the recent amendments proposed by UNCITRAL Working Group V (UNCITRAL Working Group V, 2022, p. 29)

III.2.The right to access and the phenomenon of shopping by specialization

The phenomenon of forum shopping is one of the most serious issues arising from the unregulated exercise of the right of access in cross-border bankruptcy proceedings. This phenomenon manifests when the debtor resorts to transferring their official headquarters or relocating their center of administration to another jurisdiction before filing for bankruptcy, with the aim of benefiting from a more flexible law or prioritizing their interests at the expense of creditors (LoPucki & Doherty, 2022, p. 215).

Take a look at the following cases where the pattern has emerged as clear: The debtor rushed to start proceedings in the most attractive jurisdiction and used access -- which really means filing for stay orders before anyone else can take share on whether their courts have competent jurisdiction. This led to the need for legislation in both the European Union and the United States, which would include rules restricting cases of a change of the center of main interests during the pre-insolvency suspicion period before opening proceedings (McCormack 2023 pp178).

III.3.The researcher's opinion on the balance between the right of access and the principal place of business test:

The researcher believes that the basic problem here is not because of the conflict between the right of access and above-mentioned criterion of center of main interests in itself, but because there isn't an international unified procedural mechanism that coordinates between stage of access and stage concerning prove correctness of jurisdiction. Thus the right of access should be viewed as a procedure based temporary precautionary right, which is not operative in itself for any undecided or founded substantive case on identical topic or issue at hand but ensures and prepares an adequate venue/ground to carry this out properly with due process rights consideration to make sure fairness where parties involved are afforded opportunity. Such interpretation resonates with the rationale of the UNCITRAL Model Law and is supported by the explanatory note accompanying the law, which explains that a right of access does not equate to automatic recognition of foreign procedures or acknowledgement of foreign jurisdiction legitimacy (UNCITRAL, 2023, p. 52).

IV. Comparative Jurisprudence in Light of the Right to Access

IV.1. American judicial precedents

A: The case of In re Fairfield Sentry Ltd (2013):

One of the most notable precedents on access rights under Chapter 15 is the case of Fairfield Sentry Ltd. The facts, as summarized in the decision, are that the hedge fund Fairfield Sentry was registered in British Virgin Islands; it was declared bankrupt there and its directors petitioned for recognition of the British Virgin Islands bankruptcy proceedings in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for Southern District of New York under Chapter 15. The decision concluded that in validating the determination of the center of main interests for purposes of recognizing a foreign bankruptcy proceeding under British Virgin

Islands law, it does not prevent the foreign bankruptcy representative from exercising its right to access a U.S. court and make its application there, thus demonstrating that these types of questions surrounding independence are separate from jurisdictional ones (In re Fairfield Sentry Ltd., 714 F.3d 127, 2nd Cir. 2013).

This ruling established a firm legal principle that the recognition of right of access does not require any previous determination regarding center of main interests and permitted foreign bankruptcy representatives to appear in U.S. courts seeking emergency precautionary measures while jurisdiction verification procedures were still ongoing. While this is a sensible approach from the technical or procedural side, if it lacks safety safeguards it could lead to exploiting for forum shopping purposes (Leimbach et al., 2023, p. 345).

B: The case In re Ocean Rig UDWInc.c. (2017)

The case of Ocean Rig UDWInc. c uncovered one of the most egregious examples of abuse in the principal place of business officer manipulation where a massive maritime company, Ocean Ri—registered in Cypru—movedd its head office to Cayman Islands just prior commencement of the proceedings and then filed for recognition with u.s. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District on New York based off this access under chips 15. The Court granted this request, recognizing the Cayman proceeding as "main proceedings" (Inre Ocean Rig UDWInc., 570 B.R. 687, Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 2017).

A significant number of workshops, scholarly productions and academic conferences have taken place in the aftermath of this case-specifically for those who understand that to recognize these jurisdictional procedures is a great judicial failure legitimizing the use of the right of access as an instrument through which one can achieve, not international cooperation, but forum shopping (Pottow 2022: 91). While the influence of these criticisms on the research is conclusive, the researcher supports them and considers that in such cases it is necessary for courts to objectively investigate whether the center of main interests has changed as a condition for accessing the legal order.

IV.2.European Judicial Precedents

A. The case of Eurofood IFSC Ltd before the European Court of Justice (2006)

Although the case of Eurofood IFSC Ltd was issued prior to the recent amendments to the European Insolvency Regulation, it remains an indispensable legal and judicial reference in interpreting the principle of access rights in the European context. The facts of the case revolve around Eurofood, a subsidiary of the Italian Parmalat Group, registered in Ireland. When the parent company was declared bankrupt in Italy, the Italian court sought to initiate comprehensive main proceedings that would extend to the Irish company Eurofood. The European Court of Justice ruled that the registration of the company in Ireland creates a conclusive presumption of the existence of its main center of interests there, and this presumption can only be disregarded by strong evidence to the contrary (Case C-341/04, Eurofood IFSC Ltd, ECJ 2006).

This case established the principle that the right of access for foreign bankruptcy representatives does not justify infringing on the rights of creditors who relied on the law determined according to the declared center of main interests. It also confirmed that the notice of right of access must provide creditors with the opportunity to contest the validity of the jurisdiction determination (Virgos & Garcimartín, 2022, p. 102).

B . The case of Schmitt v. Deichmann GmbH (German Court of Appeals - 2021):

This German case added a new dimension to the interpretation of the right of access in the context of asset-heavy family businesses. The facts of the case involve creditors of Deichmann, a company that declared bankruptcy in the Netherlands, challenging the Dutch representative's right to approach German courts, demanding the freezing of the company's German assets before the jurisdiction issue is resolved. The Court of Appeal ruled that the access granted under the European Insolvency Regulation justifies the acceptance of the precautionary request immediately upon submission, with a separate date set for deciding on jurisdiction and determining the applicable law (OLG München, Az. 31 Wx 246/20, 2021).

The researcher believes that this ruling provides a balanced procedural model that achieves the goal of the right to access in safeguarding assets without harming the rights of local creditors in verifying the validity of jurisdiction and the applicable law.

IV.3. Judicial precedents in Asia-Pacific countries

Singapore: Case (2019) of Re Zetta Jet Pte Ltd :

This case, decided by the Singapore High Court, marks a significant milestone in the recognition of access rights in courtroom jurisprudence within the countries across the Asia-Pacific region. That involves Zetta Jet, a private airline based in Singapore, and against which the United States has sought bankruptcy protection in American courts when it was also declared bankrupt in Singapore. Dealing with the request of the American representative, for its part, the Singaporean court acted according to unified access principles that emerged (as a function of legislative choice) from the Singaporean legislator's adoption in 2017 of the UNCITRAL Model Law, ultimately deciding to coordinate between the two proceedings on a mutual basis through joint cooperation protocol [Re Zetta Jet Pte Ltd [2019] SGHC 53].

Otherwise, this judgment is a model to follow when faced with jurisdictional clashes in which parallel bankruptcy proceedings can be found, the rest of its exposé shows that access can serve as a two-fold sword, an instrument to grab hold of power but also a leeway towards the fruitful co-operation between court systems internationally.

V. Balancing the Right of Access and Public Order in International Bankruptcy

V.1. Public order as a restriction on the right of access

The right of access is not an absolute right in any modern legislative system; rather, it is subject to the restriction of public order, like all other procedural rights. International legislations have unanimously agreed that national courts have the authority to refuse to grant the right of access or recognize its measures if doing so contradicts the public order of the state whose courts are being appealed to. In this context, a fundamental question arises: What is the criterion used to assess this conflict? Is it sufficient for there to be a conflict with certain substantive legal provisions, or is it required that there be a conflict with the fundamental principles of the legal system? (Omar,2022,p,135).

International jurisprudence — particularly in light of the interpretation of the European Insolvency Regulation and the American Chapter 15 — has settled on the notion that the public policy exception should be applied narrowly, limited to cases where foreign proceedings explicitly violate fundamental rights or essential constitutional principles. The American judiciary has affirmed this approach in several cases where the lawsuit was dismissed due to the lack of conflict between foreign proceedings and public policy, despite differences in distribution rules (Horton, 2023, p. 99).

V.2.Protecting local creditors against foreign access rights :

The issue of protecting local creditors is one of the most prominent challenges facing the international bankruptcy system when applying the right of foreign access. Granting the foreign bankruptcy representative access and halting individual proceedings may result in the freezing of local creditors' claims until the proceedings in the foreign country are concluded, which could harm them if the applicable foreign law establishes priorities different from those guaranteed by their national law (Moss et al., 2023, p. 267).

A series of legislative and judicial solutions have addressed this issue, the most notable of which are requiring the foreign bankruptcy representative to provide sufficient financial security before granting access, exempting creditors whose rights arose under local law from the effect of the stay of proceedings, and allowing appeals before local courts against decisions issued by foreign courts that affect the rights of local creditors (Wessels et al., 2022, p. 156)

The researcher emphasizes that the most appropriate approach is to adopt a dual system that reconciles the requirements of international cooperation with the necessity of protecting local creditors, similar to what American law has adopted with its system of non-main secondary proceedings that allow local creditors to claim their rights according to their national law in a parallel and non-obstructive phase to the main proceedings abroad.

V.3.Prospects for development and legislative reform

The researcher concludes this study with a series of reform proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the right to access without compromising the requirements of procedural justice and protecting the affected parties.

First: It is proposed to amend Article 16 of the UNCITRAL Model Law to require the foreign bankruptcy representative, when submitting the initial access request, to provide a detailed report on the reasons for determining the center of main interests in the foreign state, along with documented evidence of the absence of arbitrary changes prior to the commencement of proceedings.

Secondly: It is proposed to establish a specialized international judicial body or resort to international arbitration to resolve jurisdictional disputes between countries when multiple bankruptcy proceedings involve a single debtor, provided that this body is granted the authority to bind the parties.

Thirdly: It is proposed that bilateral judicial cooperation agreements between countries include a special chapter on bankruptcy procedures that explicitly defines how the right to access and exchange information related to the center of main interests is exercised.

Fourth: The researcher recommends that developing countries and Arab countries, in particular, join the UNCITRAL Model Law or adopt national legislation inspired by its provisions, given the rapid expansion of their multinational companies in international operations, which necessitates the availability of a clear legal framework to regulate cross-border insolvency cases.

Conclusion: Results and Recommendations

First: the results

Given the depth of analysis provided, the research has arrived at a number of key conclusions that are summarised as follows:

1.This also facilitates the implementation of cross-border bankruptcy proceedings in a sense that it is a most technical but indeed implying infringements into the procedural boundary, therefore, it is becoming an indispensable energy source within the system, still carrying a quite procedural principle -- one might not make too much efforts to define but acts on such fundamental necessity of need for judicial collaboration across entities and continents. Yet further application remains possible only if clear legal safeguards against its abuse as a vehicle for forum shopping are provided (LoPucki & Doherty, 2022, p. 223).

2.The principle of right of access indirectly influences the assessment of centre of main interests (COMI); indeed, a request for access does not typically require explicit additional arguments to be accepted and hence strengthens the validity of the determination as to foreign jurisdiction — which decouples from it in terms by transferring the burden of proof on any other conclusion to the contesting party.

3. Both the American, European and Singaporean comparative judicial experiences took different approaches to address the accessibility right where all share the need for an autonomous jurisdictional control over whether or not to consider as victorious of its full legal effects in light regarding the determination of the place of interest.

4. The reviewed judicial precedents reveal that the most pressing issue is not related to the principle of the right of access itself, but rather to the mechanisms of procedural timing. The synchronization between granting access and issuing precautionary measures on one hand and resolving the issue of jurisdiction on the other is what gives rise to most practical problems.

5. The public policy exception to the right of access remains of limited and narrow effect in the international context, as courts generally adopt a restrictive interpretation of this exception, preventing its invocation as a pretext for excluding the recognition of foreign proceedings.

6. It is observed that developing countries, including Arab countries, mostly lack a clear legislative framework that regulates cross-border bankruptcy procedures and the related access rights, exposing their international companies to significant legal risks when faced with financially international crises

Secondly: Recommendations

1. Calling on Arab countries to join the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency or adopt unified national legislation that adopts the principle of access and clearly and transparently defines its controls and mechanisms for implementation. The demand for Arab countries to join the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency or adopt unified national legislation that embraces the principle of access and clearly and transparently defines its controls and implementation mechanisms.

2. Including provisions for cross-border bankruptcy and the right of access in regional economic agreements between Arab countries, particularly within the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League, which contributes to reducing cases of jurisdictional overlap and conflicting rulings.

3. Enhancing judicial training in the field of international bankruptcy and conflict of laws, and exchanging judicial expertise between countries in the region and those with advanced experience in this field.

4. Urged UNCITRAL bodies to continue efforts to codify access rights principles within binding instruments — not just as model laws — to enhance legal certainty in the international insolvency framework.

5. Adopting "Judicial Cooperation Protocols" between national courts in multi-jurisdictional cases as a regulated judicial practice, inspired by the model established by the Singaporean Zetta Jet case.

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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Relevance of Writing Practice

Cristina Maria Andrei[1)]

Abstract:
Is writing practice still necessary in the current world of digitalization? The question is obvious since, whatever message is meant to be transmitted, is subdued to the autocorrect system of any computer software. The word settings are designed to provide the user with possiblities of correction in terms of spelling and grammar as well as replacements of mispelled words. Modern computerized systems detect and provide options which are intended to generate accurate messages at a fast pace. It is thus a constant "struggle" for the English teachers to enhance "writing" in classes and demand students to perform certain tasks connected to it since their tendency is to check it constantly on various devices. Taking into account the above-mentioned aspect, is the writing skill still important to be taught during English classes? Should the teacher focus on it to the same degree as reading, listening and speaking? Is it beneficial to devote time in order to perform writing activities or is it just a waste of time? Are students really involved in improving it when computational intelligence offers them free and immediate support?
Keywords: *writing, computerized system, English, students*

[1)] Senior Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages; Phone: 0040745704884; e-mail: cristina_ndr@yahoo.com

Writing in the era of AI

Teaching writing has become such a challenge for language teachers lately because most students make use of the recently appeared digital tools to solve written tasks. The evolution is obvious; the emphasis has shifted from using a pen and paper to typing on computer, from using books to selecting sites, from using imagination to finding support online. As a consequence, writing pedagogy has been subdued to major shifts and teachers have had no choice but to adapt and come up with other ways of engaging students in writing. The old writing practice style when the learner was guided through the use of various types of dictionaries, books which enhanced productive writing by extending short sentences into longer ones or using connectors and providing samples of writing types are mere "patterns" of the past. Just as Kavakli and Hanci-Azizoglu mention (2020:93), the intrusion of the digital world in the teachers' lives made them change and adjust their methods and strategies of teaching. The authors pointed out the necessity to adapt to the various levels and needs of the students. In the past, the traditional way of teaching required all kinds of objects that can be found in a class from boards to books, from pens and pencils to printed or copied materials. Students used to write a lot and their focus relied mainly on the hard copies they had in front of them. At the opposite end, the digital era, the learning environment suffered a shift, facing the students with a large number of online tools which provided the new generation of learners with a "multicolored learning environment". The adaptation period took a while in the case of teachers but for the current students was an amazing opportunity to discover new and interesting learning possibilities and to experience something new and attractive.

Technology has created a new path for language teaching relying on devices such as: computers, smartboards, tablets or phones. All of them provide helpful resources for improving the writing skills and for "skipping" plagiarism. They are eye catching and promise to turn the writing skill into a clear and easy process, in most cases free of charge. How can learners still be attracted to writing on a piece of paper when technology provides them with immediate support?

Digitalization is not something specific to the teaching process. It has expanded and has affected, in a positive or negative way, all the activity sectors. In terms of teaching, digitalization has brought significant changes to the learners who study at home for various reasons. It has widened the horizons for new opportunities which have diminished or even cancelled the barrier or the gap created between those who physically attend classes and those who don't. At a certain point, almost all learners have been faced with online classes during the Covid period. The impact was enormous in the sense that many learners got accustomed to using online sites for improving their skills and for discovering new ones. Famous universities have become accessible to people of all ages from all over the world providing equal opportunities for everybody. Nehru (2021:59) highlights the great influence that digitalization had on most scientific fields from agriculture to banking to aviation and automobile industry. It has basically overwhelmed most activity sectors but for education it meant more than just a change, It revolutionized the teaching activity, "doing wonders" by permitting leaners form all over the world to have full access to a wide range of classes and by offering the chance to join whatever courses they needed to attend, getting in touch with educators from top universities and experts in their related field of knowledge.

Benefits and downsides of online writing sites

The number of online writing sites has increased at a fast pace offering free or paid educational support to all the learners interested in developing this skill. These sites are well-structured covering a wide range of vocabulary resources and grammar aspects as well as drafts meant to structure the ideas and conceive a pattern in your mind. Besides including solutions to exercises, videos, tutorials, materials and other resources, the sites are stimulating and eye-catching. Accessing them makes the learner feel more comfortable from many points of view. On the one hand there is the advantage of using them in the personal environment whenever it is necessary, on the other hand it is the lack of peers that can make the learner's experience free of anxiety. Yet, no matter the degree of positive stimulus these sites may generate in students, the teacher remains a constant source of inspiration and orientation. As Algbury (2025:230) mentioned in his book, "for academic writing development, platforms like Grammarly, Quill Bot, and AI powered writing assistants provide automated feedback on grammar, punctuation, cohesion and tone. However, these digital tools cannot really take the place of the teacher but they may be good for directing the learners towards spotting their own mistakes and may stimulate them to verify the studied texts by themselves; moreover, they can follow the structure of the sentences and see if some items keep repeating or are used in the wrong way. The immediate feedback is beneficial for their own correction and may give the learners a hint about the errors that keep appear; this way, "linguistic accuracy" develops and evolves.

Thus, such online sources add, improve and give the learner the option of getting a deeper understanding of the notions acquired during classes. They could be perceived as additional sources of inspiration and support meant to deepen or improve the efficiency of the learning process. They are however more commonly used as a method of self-teaching by those who have a high level of the English language than by students who are beginners. One reason may be the "fear" generated by the lack of proper language background, mistrust when it comes to selecting the right sites or simply a lack of "courage" to appeal to technology. Low-level English students may feel more comfortable when there is some emotional support from the part of the teacher or positive reinforcement which may take away the "fear" of making mistakes and trying new writing tasks. An elementary level student doesn't feel strong enough to be autonomous when learning because they consider they are not good enough and their success relies on the teacher's support and implication in the class. Basically, these students need to boost their confidence in performing activities on their own and identify sites which can provide them with the right feedback and knowledge. The language teacher should therefore suggest extra help with individual learning by using a mix of teaching tools: classical and modern ones and should point out the idea that technological advances are meant to add extra value to the in-class teaching process, not to replace it completely. Classroom interaction is preferable at all times due to the connection that is set between peers and with the teacher but getting independent study is valuable as well. The different perspective of various language learners on autonomy has also been observed by Barcena, Arus &Read (2013:27) who mentioned that the results are much more obvious in the case of learners that aim at achieving higher language levels. These students are prone to become independent learners due to their solid foundation and personal conviction that they master and understand the target language.

The principal target of the English teacher should be the students' progress by achieving the writing activities easily and without feeling the burden of a "heavy workload". Whether a beginner, intermediate or advanced student, the "work" involved should be a "two-party" one: student-teacher, in-class materials- online ones, group work-pair work, independent study-collaborative one. The main idea is that teaching a foreign language nowadays has become a complex blending of group work, pair work, teacher-centered approach, learner-centered one, modern and traditional one. There is a constant shift and a constant cooperation, all based on the word "adapt": adapt materials to the level of the students, adapt the method of teaching to the students' desires and requirements, adapt the online degree of inclusion in the class, etc. Yang, Chang & Pei (2020:654) argue that the language teachers are the ones who decide on the selection of the materials to be taught in order to fulfil the various levels of the students and skim the data that is transferred to the learners in such a way as to direct them towards individual writing. A mix of "data technology" with traditional writing teaching bring a slight improvement to the teaching act by making it more "scientific" and enriching contributing to a real development of the writing skills. Thus, "English teachers can design writing tasks that are consistent with occupation competence and closely related to daily life bringing freshness to students' English writing."

The variety of materials and teaching techniques work well when learners encourage each other to perform the tasks. Pair work and group work ensure an easier acquisition of the information provided by the teacher and offer practical and emotional support to anxious students or to those who have a lower level of the English language. Mixed-level groups, mixed teaching techniques and tasks, turn the teaching process into an interactive and interesting one which facilitates and improves learning. As Ispas emphasized (2023:246) the "cooperative learning" is one of the most essential strategies when it comes to "development in academic teaching" because it adapts to a wide range of students, the degree of difficultness can vary and a large number of instruction modes can be used to suit the needs of learners from audio to visual ones, from individual to pair work or group work from traditional to technology supported activities, etc. This "can generate an inclusive and supportive learning environment in Englis courses".

Technology-based activities create a lovely learning environment especially for the young generation who is so accustomed to it. The numerous sites which offer writing guidance in English are well-designed, eye-catching and user friendly. Learners prefer them because they know there is no human being behind the screen to "judge" them so they don't feel any pressure to perform. The positive side is that learners can practise anytime they want and the feedback is spontaneous, concrete and short. Typing on computer is another plus as learners don't feel the "burden" of writing effectively on a piece of paper. It is done rapidly, without overthinking or overanalyzing the content. Nowadays students are more connected to technology and find handwriting tedious, time consuming and hard. As Barbuceanu (2020:242) mentioned, one of the most important characteristics of Information and Communication Technology is linked to the immediate response or "instant gratification" provided by "the real time access to content and online information" which creates a virtual bond among the worldwide users. All these technological advances have given birth to whole new system which is fed by fast access to information. To keep up with these economic and technological shifts, the educational sector should integrate technology to effectively direct and supervise the enormous flux of information.

However, the instant connection to the virtual world comes with "a price". The temptation is big and most of the time leads to plagiarism. It is extremely hard to avoid a "solution" that is fast and effective. Even conscious learners that need to perform a writing task may appeal to online sources when they come across difficulties in generating ideas or when being confused. What may start just as a “peek”, may turn into “copying” or “borrowing” ideas. Learners don’t allow themselves the time to process the task knowing they have something “handy’. Even if the real intention is not meant to rely on the knowledge generated by AI, once an article is read, it is absorbed unconsciously by the reader and transferred involuntary on the paper. Thus, the first risk involved when using AI writing support is plagiarism. As Kimberlee (2025:7) points out, the widespread availability of AI powered writing tools generates amazing support for offering content which increases the danger of academic integrity by opening paths to plagiarism. Although these tools are undoubtedly useful in generating text, in brainstorming and creating drafts, there is a huge possibility to “fall” in the trap of unintentional plagiarism since AI generates output that replicates uncredited sources as well as intentional exploitation. Some users deliberately copy the work on purpose thus threatening undermining academic credibility and breaching basic ethical norms.

Teachers could make learners discover the pleasure of writing by making the process exciting and challenging. Small steps could be taken at the beginning to make it seem simpler and funnier. Transforming short sentences (in the case of beginners) into complex ones, complex sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into short compositions will strongly contribute to developing essays that will gradually improve. Providing samples of compositions and a structure to respect can increase the chances of success. Moreover, adding extra materials related to the vocabulary items specific to the given topic facilitate the task and give learners a hint about what they really have to do. Working in pairs or in groups could increase personal confidence and provide further stimulus. Limiting the number of words and offering a correct period of time for achieving the writing activity are equally essential. Integrating technology when teaching writing in the English class should be regarded as a “stimulus” if learners are taught how to use it to their own benefit. Artificial intelligence could enhance a wider perspective of the topic and could stimulate creativity if used efficiently. If teachers draw learners’ attention on the fair use of AI, then, the entire writing experience could be a positive one. According to Behera (2026:32), the swift evolution of AI requires a constant debate related to the effort of harmonizing the “innovation” of technology with moral constraints. Educational institutions have to come up with concrete policies that set fixed boundaries to the use of AI to avoid compromising academic truthfulness. Explicit frameworks for the use of AI support and honest use of it and discourage academic dishonesty. Furthermore, integrating AI in the learning environment should not be perceived as a threat but should be embraced as an educational aid which improves learning and stimulates creating thinking. Mastering AI augmented learning is crucial and, if students learn how to “surf’ AI responsibly by keeping academic integrity, then they may turn into “digital” champions.

What can a teacher do to encourage students to rely on their own “forces” when they feel helpless in creating compositions? Are there any possibilities to avoid the frequent appeal to technology?

One strategic aspect is to stimulate students with topics that are of great interest to them and a clear “direction” to follow under the direct supervision of the teacher. Reynolds and Teng (2021:73) emphasize that educators should “provide students with writing assignment guidelines so that students are able to structure their work more effectively and confidently”. When these parameters come from a reliable authority figure like an educator, students develop strong confidence when dealing with writing tasks. Students place great importance to the materials offered by the teacher and they generally prefer this to online writing resources which are “prepared by a source they are not familiar with”. This way, learners save precious time that would otherwise be allocated to checking unknown online writing tools. Furthermore, proactive students can proceed to generating consultation sessions for receiving constructive feedback reports.

The drawbacks of using the technology in class can be diverse and therefore it is not advisable to rely mostly on it. Besides the tendency to “copy” the ideas found on internet, learners may rely on the easiness in finding information on-the-spot and may stop practising the writing skills. Writing, just like all the other skills, requires constant effort and involvement, otherwise it cannot be mastered successfully. Fast access to online support can lead to a lack of proper effort and involvement knowing that no person will analyse their work. Other negative aspects may include the long exposure to the screen of the computer which, in time, may affect the eyesight and the lack of encouragement which a teacher can offer while performing the task. The error correction is done while writing so the learner might get used to this without focusing on the way the words are written. Therefore, when asked to put pen to paper, the learner doesn’t pay enough attention to the spelling of the words and the essay may not be a qualitative one. Pytash (2013:4) underlines that typing on keyboards has lately replaced the old handwriting method taught in schoos and this is majorly due to the the technology ”flood”. Instead of physically shaping each letter by hand, children are now stimulated to become proficient users of pre-rendered keys. This aspect is not exactly positive since writing is an activity connected to our brain so it is rather a mental exercise; the way we use our hands is strictly connected to the activity of the brain, helping to process information and developing our cognitive abitlities and thus, our education.

Teachers’ Evolution in the Digital Era

Teachers should keep the pace with the rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence. Quite hard to do that since the free time is limited and the technology is under continuous modification. Personal study and research create room for improvement but institutions also play a role in ensuring AI training. Teachers need proper guidance about how to use technology in class, in a creative way, and what tools to use when teaching. Most of all teachers should draw learners’ attention on ethical writing. Originality should be maintained at all costs and should be the principal focus of a writing task. Azar S. (2026:201) concludes that the accelerating evolution of technology ”foreces” the educator in ELT to become „experts” in mastering digital tools thus needing urgent speciliased professional training. As artificial intelligence systems evolve, teacher need to understand how to navigate AI tools effectively when guiding students in developing language proficiency and writing practices.

AI can’t replace the presence of a teacher in the class because learners need various degrees of coordination and they have particular needs that have to be met. Each individual is different and the teacher has to identify the right means to make the learner perform and become a proficient user in writing. Still, smart technology cannot be ignored; it’s part of our lives now and should be integrated when teaching with great care and with a proper strategy to maintain the authenticity of the written paper.

Hints for improving writing

One of the main reasons students give up putting too much effort in developing proper writing skills is the amount of time they have to spend in order to achieve the task.

Digitalisation has offered them fast access to information and makes everything seem simple and effective. That is the reason why most learners don't have the level of patience required to perform a writing activity which needs active involvement and longer time to process. The lack of proper vocabulary, the fear of making grammar mistakes or the imaginative side which differs from person to person form a barrier which hinders the learner. The temptation to abandon is high and if the task is part of a teacher's assignment, then the solution learners embrace is appealing to AI research tools such as Gemini or Chat GPT and others which provide them with immediate solutions. Proficient writing needs however constant practice and guidance. The learner has to be given instructions regarding the number of words and the time limit during which the writing activity has to be ready. It is nevertheless advisable to avoid imposing a strict time slot at the beginning because the learner doesn't possess the right abilities to produce a written task. Moreover, the learners should be encouraged to make up a "structure" of the composition before proceeding to real work. A "body" of the essay would be helpful in keeping the learner on the right track and not get sidetracked. The repetitions of some vocabulary patterns and grammar structures as well as getting used to connectors and sample essays may offer the learners a stimulus to try and remain interested in the topic. Williams (2018:52) notes that a major impediment to writing practice is that many learners are hesitant because it demands too much time; finding the right vocabulary expressions is slow but with constant effort and regular practive it boecmes easier and easier. Furthermore, by creating a structured plan and selecting the key language in advance accelerated the writing process. Thus, the main secret is a core preparation before starting wrting. An amazing trick before starting writing is to brainstorm some words and phrases instead of proceeding to full sentences. It's as simple and useful technique for producing high quality writing tasks.

The stress factor is also relevant. If the learner is not convinced that he/she can carry out the activity successfully, then the chances are low. Negative thoughts can hinder imagination and may lead to a mental blockage that can be hard to overcome. Fluency doesn't develop on a hesitant learner and needs reassurance that the result will be satisfactory. Creating short sentences, revising each paragraph and concentrating on the planned structure can generate writing confidence and enhance the learner to perform better in the following writing tasks. The key to success is consistency and the trust in the personal abilities that hard work pays off. Learners have to be aware that English is a flexible language so being strict is no use. Moreover, there are various styles of writing: formal or informal and general writing or business writing ask for different approaches. Written samples are useful for guiding the learner and directing him/her towards the right writing path. It is essential to understand the subject you are planning to write about and decide on a clear strategy and draft. Beginners should rather maintain a simple form of the composition until they get more familiarised with complex structures otherwise there is a risk of becoming confused and anxious which may generate a failure. The learner should be directed towards a clear goal and be encouraged to express personal ideas (if it is the case), come up with arguments (when necessary), follow the structure, choose a relevant opening and ending and pay attention to punctuation and other aspects which ensure a correct elaboration of a composition. Accuracy is one of the main components of the writing skill and learners need to be aware of its importance. Computer programs support the writing process by providing spelling and editing help in general. The good part is that, when a paper is finished, the learner has the certainty that it is correct. The downside is that this instant correction makes the learner distance mentally from the effort involved in completing a writing task. The only struggle would be keeping to the topic and the structure. A paper-based writing task is thus more complex because the learner has in view all the components of the writing skill and doesn't rely on the computer back-up.

Conclusions

In a nutshell, I believe that AI and other online tools are amazing discoveries which could be used to turn the teaching process into an interactive and exciting experience. Writing may no longer be perceived as a tedious activity but as a stimulating one. Learners may "plunge into" the vast amount of information provided by internet to "land" onto useful tips and ideas that could guide the writing activity towards a positive output. Such tools are a wonderful source of support when used at home for personal improvement since correction is done instantly and the vocabulary items suggested are according to the language level required. The learner has to identify the right way to "navigate" through all theses piles of data to identify his/her own original style in writing. Managing an online tool as a source of inspiration is quite difficult because, occasionally, notions are involuntarily remembered and the risk of being "copied" is high. Still, many "language learning institutions integrate ChatGPT for practising real-time dialogues, allowing students to engage in conversations that mimic native speakers. Quillbot is used by students to rephrase sentences and practise varying levels of language complexity, fostering better understanding and writing skills". (Asirvatham, 2025:47)

All these online technological innovations have their own benefits for the entire writing process. When accessed with a conscious behaviour, just as an informative source of assistance, they become beneficial tools for enhancing and producing the "narrative stream".

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-History, politics and ideologies in modern and contemporary Europe
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-Comparative policies, sustainable growth and urban planning
-Constitution(s), legality & political reforms
-Discourse, language and social encounters
-E-government and social development
-E-government, comparative policies and strategic approaches
-Economics, financial law and policy mechanisms
-Education, media & social communication;
-Education, political culture and language skills
-Education, social inclusion and regional policies
-Elections, social innovation and public policies
-Environment, biodiversity and climate change
-EU policy cooperation and resilience facilities in (post)pandemic context
-Global environment and cultural heritage
-Historical narratives and political history (XIX-XX centuries)
-Historiography, history studies and policy mechanisms
-Human development and social action
-Integration, identity, and human rights in European systems
-Judicial encounters and public policies
-Knowledge transfer and competitiveness in regional economies
-Law panel on legal, economic and social patterns of the democratization process
-Law, administration and transitional justice
-Law, legal studies and justice reform
-Law, transitional justice, democratization
-Legal and constitutional patterns of the democratization process
-Legal and social patterns of the democratization process
-Media analysis and transition
-Media analysis, public discourse and democracy
-Media, online communication and politics
-Political culture and citizen participation
-Political culture and language skills
-Political culture, civil society and citizen participation
-Political culture, rights and civil society
-Political culture, values and language skills
-Political events, resilience and social action
-Political history studies and policy mechanisms
-Political history, collective memory and cultural heritage
-Political leadership, democratization and regional security
-Political parties, electoral systems and electoral campaigns
-Political sciences panel on politics, governance and social culture
-Politics, governance and social change
-Politics, governance and social culture

-Post-communism and collective memory
-Public policies, social behavior and education
-Religion, cultural history and education
-Rights, identities, policies & participation
-Security and diplomacy in national and Euro-Atlantic environment
-Security encounters in the pandemic context
-Security, foreign policy, social movements and citizenship
-Security, social movements and citizenship
-Social economy, climate change and sustainable development
-Social economy, knowledge transfer and sustainable development
AI-Driven Markets and Democratization: Accuracy, Governance and Innovation Cultural Heritage and Politics in Contemporary Societies
AI, Finances, banking & digital market
AI, Human Development and Societal Security: Policy, Health, and Law
Democratic Transitions and Consolidation Digital Humanism and Sustainability: Technologies for the Sustainable Development Goals
Economic Resilience in Global Development: Trade Exchange and ESG Policies Environmental Governance, Social Movements and International Law in the Digital Age
Geopolitics and Security in Post-Communist Space
Governance and institutional transformation in democratic societies: public administration, accountability and policy frameworks
Governance, Democracy and Political Ideologies: Civic Engagement and Inclusion Institutional Responsibility and Political Polarization
Law, constitutionalism and the rule of law in contemporary political systems
Media Writing, Language and AI-Driven Communication
Political culture, values and language skills
Public Policies, Governance and Social Resilience: AI, Education, Professional Development and Sociological Perspectives
Resilience, Youth Careers and Policy Strategies in the Information Age
Visual Politics: An Interdisciplinary Approac

Organizing details (Conference location/ organizing details e.g. meals, coffee breaks/ mode of presentation of the papers to be announced in due time)

The registration fee covers:
* Conference attendance to all common sessions, individual and special panels
* Conference materials (including the Book of Abstracts of the Conference)
* Conference program 2026 for all registered participants
* Certificate of attendance for CEPOS Conference 2027 (offered at the end of the CEPOS Conference 2026)
* Certificate of attendance for CEPOS International Associated Research Workshop 2027 (free for registered participants attending the workshop). Main topics of the panel:

- *Policy indexation* of international journals in international databases and services;
- *Open access* policy of the international journals;
- *Data and statistics* within an international indexed conference;
- Use of *online applications* for social sciences research;
- Methods and *themes of research* provided by CEPOS (2021-2026);
- *Publication* in an international indexed journal;
- *Indexing and statistics* for social sciences journals in international databases;
- *Academic profile* in international databases;
- RSP Manuscript Submission Guidelines;
- Publication, editing support and *citation metrics* for social sciences journals.

* 15 minutes Oral presentation / Poster Presentation for every author and presenter
* Publication of the Conference Papers in the International Indexed Journal Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques.
Previous publication of the 2012-2026 Conference papers is available at: http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/acces.php

CERTIFICATES OF ATTENDANCE

Certificates of attendance will be offered at the end of the conference.

INTERNATIONAL INDEXING OF REVISTA DE STIINTE POLITICE. REVUE DES SCIENCES POLITIQUES. Revista de Stiinte Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques is an International Indexed Journal by:

ERIH PLUS
ProQuest
EBSCO
CEEOL
KVK
Gale Cengage Learning
Index Copernicus
Georgetown University Library
Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB
Journal Seek

Listings and updates in international databases, services, and library catalogues recorded in March 2026, coming from:

Universität Zürich Journal Database, Switzerland
Zurich Open Repository and Archive
https://www.jdb.uzh.ch/id/eprint/21535/

Royal Danish Library, Denmark
https://soeg.kb.dk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99123026492405763&context=L&vid=45KBDK_KGL:KGL&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

SwissCovery, Swiss Library Service Platform (SLSP) Switzerland
https://swisscovery.slsp.ch/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991170234587405501&context=L&vid=41SLSP_NETWORK:VU1_UNION&lang=de&search_scope=DN_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=41SLSP_NETWORK&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

Science On University Achievement Information System by University of Lodz, Poland
https://son.uni.lodz.pl/.../ULbfee0e874c6a41c4a00d516e09.../

Le réseau vaudois Renouvaud Sciences et Patrimoines, Switzerland
https://renouvaud1.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991021158885602852&context=L&vid=41BCULAUSA_LIB:VU2&lang=fr&search_scope=SP_libraries_and_CDI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

Rebiun Catálogo de la Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias y Científicas, Spain
https://rebiun.baratz.es/.../b2FpOmNlbGVicmF0aW9uOmVzLmJh...

KOBV Kooperativer Bibliotheksverbund Berlin Brandenburg, Germany
https://portal.kobv.de/simpleSearch.do?index=internal&plv=2&sortCrit=score&sortOrder=desc&hitsPerPage=&query=1584-224x&formsearch=%E2%9C%93#resultlistForm

Katalog der Teilbibliothek Diakonie, Gesundheit und Soziales der Hochschule Hannover, Germany
https://opac.tib.eu/DB=4.5/LNG=DU/SID=f438f44d-1/CMD...

Latest international indexing updates 2025 (March 2025) of the *Revista de Științe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques* (selective list 2019-2025)

Universität Zürich Journal Database, Switzerland
Zurich Open Repository and Archive
https://www.jdb.uzh.ch/id/eprint/21535/

Royal Danish Library, Denmark

https://soeg.kb.dk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99123026492405763&context=L&vid=45KBDK_KGL:KGL&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

SwissCovery, Swiss Library Service Platform (SLSP) Switzerland
https://swisscovery.slsp.ch/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991170234587405501&context=L&vid=41SLSP_NETWORK:VU1_UNION&lang=de&search_scope=DN_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=41SLSP_NETWORK&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

Science On University Achievement Information System by University of Lodz, Poland
https://son.uni.lodz.pl/.../ULbfee0e874c6a41c4a00d516e09.../

Le réseau vaudois Renouvaud Sciences et Patrimoines, Switzerland
https://renouvaud1.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991021158885602852&context=L&vid=41BCULAUSA_LIB:VU2&lang=fr&search_scope=SP_libraries_and_CDI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224x&offset=0

Rebiun Catálogo de la Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias y Científicas, Spain
https://rebiun.baratz.es/.../b2FpOmNlbGVicmF0aW9uOmVzLmJh...

KOBV Kooperativer Bibliotheksverbund Berlin Brandenburg, Germany
https://portal.kobv.de/simpleSearch.do?index=internal&plv=2&sortCrit=score&sortOrder=desc&hitsPerPage=&query=1584-224x&formsearch=%E2%9C%93#resultlistForm

Katalog der Teilbibliothek Diakonie, Gesundheit und Soziales der Hochschule Hannover, Germany
https://opac.tib.eu/DB=4.5/LNG=DU/SID=f438f44d-1/CMD...

EP Library Catalogue – European Parliament Library Catalogue
https://europarl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991001117790704886&context=L&vid=32EPA_INST:32EPA_V1&lang=en&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=sub,exact,Europe%20de%20l%27Est%20--%20Politique%20et%20gouvernement,AND&mode=advanced&offset=0

Ghent Unversity Library
https://lib.ugent.be/en/catalog/ejn01:1000000000726583

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid Research Portal
https://researchportal.uc3m.es/display/rev184334

J-Gate Social Science & Humanities Indexed Journal List
https://www.kitsw.ac.in/Library/2022/JSSH%20Journal%20List.pdf

https://europub.co.uk/journals/revista-de-stiinte-politice-revue-des-sciences-politiques-J-11661

Universiteits Bibliotheek Gent
https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/ejn01:1000000000726583

Publons
https://publons.com/journal/540040/revista-de-stiinte-politice/

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
https://researchportal.uc3m.es/display/rev184334

Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar
https://primo.qatar-weill.cornell.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=974WCMCIQ_INST:VU1&docid=alma991000575074006691&lang=en&context=L&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine

Reseau Mirabel
https://reseau-mirabel.info/revue/3046/Revista-de-Stiinte-Politice

Bond Library University
https://librarysearch.bond.edu.au/discovery/fulldisplay?vid=61BOND_INST%3ABOND&docid=alma9930197890502381&lang=en&context=SP

Ghent university library
https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/ejn01:1000000000726583

The Royal Library and Copenhagen University Library Service
https://e-tidsskrifter.kb.dk/resolve?umlaut.locale=da&url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&ctx_tim=2020-04-11T21%3A23%3A41%2B02%3A00&ctx_id=&ctx_enc=info%3Aofi%2Fenc%3AUTF-8&rft.issn=1584-224X&rft.search_val=1584-224X&rft_val_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Ajournal&rfr_id=info%3Asid%2Fsfxit.com%3Acitation

Glasgow Caledonian University
https://discover.gcu.ac.uk/discovery/openurl?institution=44GLCU_INST&vid=44GLCU_INST:44GLCU_VU2&?u.ignore_date_coverage=true&rft.mms_id=991002471123103836

Open University Library Malaysia
http://library.oum.edu.my/oumlib/content/catalog/778733

Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, United States
https://searchworks.stanford.edu/?q=469823489

Cornell University Library, Ithaca, United States
https://newcatalog.library.cornell.edu/catalog?search_field=publisher+number%2Fother+identifier&q=469823489

University of Michigan Library,
https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog?&library=All+libraries&query=isn%3A469823489

Pepperdine Libraries, Malibu, United States
https://pepperdine.worldcat.org/search?qt=wc_org_pepperdine&q=no:469823489

University of Victoria Libraries , Victoria, Canada
http://uvic.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?ho=t&fvf=ContentType,Journal%20Article,f&l=en&q=1584-224X
Academic Journals database
http://journaldatabase.info/journal/issn1584-224X

University of Zurich Database
https://www.jdb.uzh.ch/id/eprint/21535/

California Institute of Techonology - Caltech Library
https://www.library.caltech.edu/eds/detail?db=poh&an=98646324&isbn=1584224X

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=STABI_BERLIN&url=http%3A%2F%2Fstabikat.de%2FDB%3D1%2FCHARSET%3DISO-8859-1%2FIMPLAND%3DY%2FLNG%3DDU%2FSRT%3DYOP%2FTTL%3D1%2FSID%3D8dda05f3-1%2FSET%3D1%2FSHW%3FFRST%3D1&signature=eBtSKEx2BuW-HASpUsCT39FB3vQpIm6cGAajCH-kz44&showCoverImg=1
Union Catalogue of Belgian Libraries
http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=VERBUND_BELGIEN&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unicat.be%2FuniCat%3Ffunc%3Dsearch%26query%3Dsysid%3A7330250&signature=Dxe-cVFWjMO1W4HpEAWW_ERyKR4oiGWXLGFinWk8fNU&showCoverImg=1

The National Library of Israel
http://merhav.nli.org.il/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=ULI&docid=NNL-Journals003477656&context=L&lang=en_US

Verbundkatalog GBV
http://kvk.bibliothek.kit.edu/view-title/index.php?katalog=GBV&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgso.gbv.de%2FDB%3D2.1%2FCHARSET%3DUTF-8%2FIMPLAND%3DY%2FLNG%3DDU%2FSRT%3DYOP%2FTTL%3D1%2FCOOKIE%3DD2.1%2CE900d94f2-d%2CI0%2CB9000%2B%2B%2B%2B%2B%2B%2CSY%2CA%2CH6-11%2C%2C16-17%2C%2C21%2C%2C30%2C%2C50%2C%2C60-61%2C%2C73-75%2C%2C77%2C%2C88-90%2CNKVK%2BWEBZUGANG%2CR129.13.130.211%2CFN%2FSET%3D1%2FPPNSET%3FPPN%3D590280090&signature=OmwA_NLtwvdaOmmyeo7SUOCEYuDRGtoZqGXIK-vTY1o&showCoverImg=1

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https://copac.jisc.ac.uk/search?&isn=1584-224x
ACPN Catalogo Italiano dei Periodici, Universita di Bologna
https://acnpsearch.unibo.it/journal/2601620

Bibliothèque Nationale de Luxembourg
https://a-z.lu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=BIBNET&docid=SFX_LOCAL1000000000726583&context=L

National Library of Sweden
http://libris.kb.se/bib/11702473

Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University
http://sfx.lib.byu.edu/sfxlcl3?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&rfr_id=info:sid/sfxit.com:azlist&sfx.ignore_date_threshold=1&rft.object_id=1000000000726583&rft.object_portfolio_id=&svc.holdings=yes&svc.fulltext=yes

Catalogue of Hamburg Libraries
https://beluga.sub.uni-hamburg.de/vufind/Search/Results?submit=Suchen&library=GBV_ILN_22&lookfor=1584-224x

Edith Cowan Australia
https://ecu.on.worldcat.org/search?databaseList=&queryString=1584-224X

University College Cork, Ireland
https://ucc.summon.serialssolutions.com/?q=1584-224X#!/search?ho=t&jt=Revista%20de%20Stiinte%20Politice&l=en-UK&q=

York University Library, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/muler82857

The University of Chicago, USA
https://catalog.lib.uchicago.edu/vufind/Record/sfx_1000000000726583

The University of Kansas KUMC Libraries Catalogue
http://voyagercatalog.kumc.edu/Search/Results?lookfor=1584-224X&type=AllFields

Journal Seek
http://journalseek.net/cgi-bin/journalseek/journalsearch.cgi?field=issn&query=1584-224X

State Library New South Wales, Sidney, Australia,
http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au/search~S1/?searchtype=i&searcharg=1584-224X&searchscope=1&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBMIT=Search&searchlimits=&sear

chorigarg=i1583-9583

Electronic Journal Library
https://opac.giga-hamburg.de/ezb/detail.phtml?bibid=GIGA&colors=7&lang=en&flavour=classic&jour_id=111736

Open University Malaysia
http://library.oum.edu.my/oumlib/content/catalog/778733

Wayne State University Libraries
http://elibrary.wayne.edu/record=4203588

Kun Shan University Library
http://muse.lib.ksu.edu.tw:8080/1cate/?rft_val_fmt=publisher&pubid=ucvpress

Western Theological Seminar
https://col-westernsem.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991001225541104770&context=L&vid=01COL_WTS:WTS&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224X&facet=rtype,include,journals&mode=Basic&offset=0

Swansea University Prifysgol Abertawe
http://whel-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=44WHELF_SWA_VU1&reset_config=true#.VSU9SPmsVSk

Vanderbilt Library
https://catalog.library.vanderbilt.edu/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991043322926803276&context=L&vid=01VAN_INST:vanui&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,1584-224X&offset=0

Wissenschftszentrum Berlin fur Sozial
https://www.wzb.eu/en/literature-data/search-find/e-journals?page=searchres.phtml&bibid=WZB&lang=en&jq_type1=IS&jq_term1=1584-224X&jq_bool2=AND&jq_type2=KS&jq_term2=&jq_bool3=AND&jq_type3=PU&jq_term3=&offset=-1&hits_per_page=50&Notations%5B%5D=all&selected_colors%5B%5D=1&selected_colors%5B%5D=2

Radboud University Nijmegen
https://zaandam.hosting.ru.nl/oamarket-acc/score?OpenAccess=&InstitutionalDiscounts=&Title=&Issn=1584-224&Publisher=
Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB (Electronic Journals Library)
http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/detail.phtml?bibid=AAAAA&colors=7&lang=de&jour_id=111736

The University of Hong Kong Libraries
https://julac.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,1584-224x&search_scope=My%20Institution&vid=HKU&facet=rtype,include,journals&mode=Basic&offset=0

Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic
https://s-knihovna.mup.cz/katalog/eng/l.dll?h~=&DD=1&H1=&V1=o&P1=2&H2=&V2=o&P2=3&H3=&V3=z&P3=4&H4=1584-224x&V4=o&P4=33&H5=&V5=z&P5=25
University of the West Library
https://uwest.on.worldcat.org/search?queryString=1584-224x&clusterResults=off&stickyFacetsChecked=on#/oclc/875039367

Elektron ische Zeitschriften der Universität zu Köln
https://www.ub.uni-koeln.de/IPS?SERVICE=METASEARCH&SUBSERVICE=INITSEARCH&VIEW=USB:Simple&LOCATION=USB&SID=IPS3:2d1c5acebc65a3cdc057a9d6c64ce76e&SETCOOKIE=TRUE&COUNT=15&GWTIMEOUT=30&HIGHLIGHTING=on&HISTORY=SESSION&START=1&STREAMING=on&URLENCODING=TRUE&QUERY_alAL=1584-224x&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_EDS=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_KUGJSON=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICE.SEARCH_KUGUSBWEB=on&SERVICEGROUP1.SERVICEGROUP.USB:Default=on

EKP Pulications
https://ekp-invenio.physik.uni-karlsruhe.de/search?ln=en&sc=1&p=1584-224X&f=&action_search=Search&c=Experiments&c=Authorities

Valley City State University
https://odin-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?query=any,contains,1584-224X&tab=tab1&search_scope=ndv_everything&sortby=rank&vid=ndv&lang=en_US&mode=advanced&offset=0displayMode%3Dfull&displayField=all&pcAvailabiltyMode=true

Impact Factor Poland
http://impactfactor.pl/czasopisma/21722-revista-de-stiinte-politice-revue-des-sciences-politiques

Universite Laval
http://sfx.bibl.ulaval.ca:9003/sfx_local?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_ctx_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&ctx_enc=info:ofi/enc:UTF-8&ctx_ver=Z39.88-2004&rfr_id=info:sid/sfxit.com:azlist&sfx.ignore_date_threshold=1&rft.object_id=1000000000726583&rft.object_portfolio_id=&svc.fulltext=yes

Universität Passau
https://infoguide.ub.uni-passau.de/InfoGuideClient.upasis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22

BSB Bayerische StaatBibliothek
https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/metaopac/search?View=default&oclcno=502495838

Deutsches Museum
https://opac.deutsches-museum.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=dmm&Language=de
Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt
https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=3&Language=de&View=thi&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+[2]

Hochschule Augsburg, Bibliothek
https://infoguide.hs-augsburg.de/InfoGuideClient.fhasis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22

Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf, Zentralbibliothek
Freising, Germany
https://ffwtp20.bib-bvb.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=ffw&Language=de

OTH- Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Regensburg, Hochschulbibliothek
OTHBR, Regensburg, Germany
https://www.regensburger-katalog.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Query=1035%3d%22BV035261002%22IN%5b2%5d&View=ubr&Language=de

Staatliche Bibliothek Neuburg/Donau , SBND,
Neuburg/Donau, Germany
https://opac.sbnd.de/InfoGuideClient.sndsis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22

Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Eichstätt, Germany
https://opac.ku.de/TouchPoint/start.do?Branch=0&Language=de&View=uei&Query=35=%22502495838%22+IN+[2]

Bibliothek der Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Berlin, Germany
https://hu-berlin.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?institution=HUB_UB&vid=hub_ub&search_scope=default_scope&tab=default_tab&query=issn,exact,1584-224X

Hochschulbibliothek Ansbach, Ansbach, Germany https://fanoz3.bib-bvb.de/InfoGuideClient.fansis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22

Bibliothek der Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
Frankfurt/Oder, Germany
https://opac.europa-uni.de/InfoGuideClient.euvsis/start.do?Query=10%3d%22BV035261002%22

University of California Library Catalog
https://catalog.library.ucla.edu/vwebv/search?searchCode1=GKEY&searchType=2&searchArg1=ucoclc469823489

For more details about the past issues and international abstracting and indexing, please visit the journal website at the following address:
http://cis01.central.ucv.ro/revistadestiintepolitice/acces.php.

CONFERENCE INTERNATIONAL INDEXING OF THE PAST EDITIONS (2014-2026)

CEPOS Conference 2026

The **Sixteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 20-21 March 2026) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 11 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases
ConferenceAlerts
Conal Conference Alerts
https://conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=Romania
CEPOS (site oficial – secțiunea Upcoming 2026)
https://cepos.eu/upcoming2026
Conferencelists.org
https://www.conferencelists.org/event/cepos-16th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
ConfFinder (Conferences in Romania)
https://conffinder.com/pagesconference/ConferencesListing?country=Romania&utm_source=chatgpt.com
Events notification
https://eventsnotification.com/event/61037
Conferencesked
https://www.conferencesked.com/conference_details/15391/cepos-16th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny
Conffinder
https://www.conffinder.com/pagesconference/ConferencesListing?country=Romania
Sciencedz
https://www.google.com/search?q=16th+cepos+international+confernece+2026&oq=16th+cepos+international+confernece+2026&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIJCAEQIRgKGKABMgkIAhAhGAoYoAHSAQkxMDMyOWowajSoAgGwAgE&client=ms-android-motorola-rvo3&sourceid=chrome-mobile&ie=UTF-8#ip=1
Conference daily

https://conferencesdaily.com/european-studies-conferences
Scholarly meet
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://scholarlymeet.com/country/fr&ved=2ahUKEwikirrDuqeSAxW7wAIHHfhgE2c4FBAWegQIKRAB&usg=AOvVaw3pIVukONrNS4lLm1n6yU_R
Conferencealertz
https://www.conferencealertz.com/conferenceslist?country=Romania

CEPOS Conference 2025

The **Fifteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 14-15 March 2025) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 14 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:
Indexation links:
https://academic.oup.com/jcs/article-abstract/67/1/csaf001/7997508?redirectedFrom=PDF
https://scholarlymeet.com/events/ca73318d-42a7-4b5e-bcca-635e0aa1c46b
https://conferences365.com/conferences-in-romania
https://conferencewiki.com/conference-listing/MzA4
https://www.conferencelists.org/event/cepos-15th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/
https://www.sciencedz.net/en/conference/110381-cepos-15th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny
https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=262202
https://conferencesdaily.com/cities/craiova
https://cepos.org/upcoming/
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379144286_CENTER_OF_POST-COMMUNIST_POLITICAL_STUDIES_CEPOS_Book_of_abstracts_of_the_14th_International_Conference_After_Communism_East_and_West_under_Scrutiny_Craiova_Romania_15-16_March_2024
https://conferencewiki.com/conference-detail/Cepos-15th-International-Conference-After-communism-East-and-West-under-scrutiny
https://www.conferencelists.org/romania/
https://www.conferencesked.com/conference_details/10148/cepos-15th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny
https://conffinder.com/pagesconference/ConferencesListing?country=Romania

CEPOS Conference 2024

The **Fourteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 15-16 March 2024) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 11 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:
Indexation links:
CEEOL https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=1195305
ProQuest, Part of Clarivate
https://www.proquest.com/docview/2863220849/CC02F21AE4DB44F1PQ/1?accountid=50247&sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals
Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press)
https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/csad066

Oxford Journal of Church and State-Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press) (Vol. 65, nr 4/2023) în secțiunea Calendar of Events JCS (publicare 28 Noiembrie 2023)
Conference Alerts
https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=254313
Science DZ
https://www.sciencedz.net/.../100575-14th-international...
10 Times
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under...
The Free Library
https://www.thefreelibrary.com/CEPOS+NEW+CALL+FOR+PAPERS...
Conference 365
https://conferences365.com/.../14th-international...
World University Directory
https://worlduniversitydirectory.com/edu/event/...
Conferences daily
https://conferencesdaily.com/eventdetails.php?id=1625192
Gale Cengage Learning USA https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA766112846...

CEPOS Conference 2023

The **Thirteenth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, 17-18 March 2023) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 5 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:
Oxford Church & State Journal:
https://academic.oup.com/jcs/articleabstract/65/1/168/7044222?redirectedFrom=fulltext

10 Times: https://10times.com/after-communism-east-andwest-under-scrutiny

Conferencesite.eu:
https://index.conferencesites.eu/conference/57510/13th-international-conference-after-communism-eastand-west-under-scrutiny;

Schoolandcollegelistings
:https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS

Conferencealerts : https://conferencealerts.com/showevent?id=247851

CEPOS Conference 2022

The **Twelfth International Conference** After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, 18-19 March 2022) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 6 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:
https://www.conferenceflare.com/events/category/social-sciences-and-humanities/art-history/

Vinculation International Diciembre 2021 newsletter n 99
https://issuu.com/fundacionargeninta5/docs/diciembre_2021_fundaci_n_argeninta-ai_ok?fr=sZjg2NjE5NTg3OTY

https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS

https://10times.com/company/cepos
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=238529

https://www.sciencedz.net/conference/82995-cepos-international-conference-2022-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

CEPOS Conference 2021
The Eleventh International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 19-20 March 2021) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 5 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

https://academic.oup.com/jcs/advance-articleabstract/doi/10.1093/jcs/csaa064/5941887?redirectedFrom=fulltext

https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=229654

https://www.sciencedz.net/en/conference/72628-1thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny

https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny

https://worlduniversitydirectory.com/edu/event/?slib=1thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny-2

CEPOS Conference 2020
The Tenth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (27-28 March 2020) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 7 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Scichemistry
http://scichemistry.org/ConferenceInfosByConferenceTopicId?conferenceTopicId=57

Oxford Journals
https://academic.oup.com/jcs/advance-articlepdf/doi/10.1093/jcs/csz078/30096829/csz078.pdf

Conference alerts
https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=215370
https://www.sciencedz.net/en/conference/57625-10thinternational-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny

Intraders

https://www-intradersorg.
cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.intraders.org/news/romania/10
th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-westunderscrutiny/
amp/?amp_js_v=a2&_gsa=1&usqp=mq331AQCKAE%3D#a
oh=15737604302246&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co
m&_tf=De%20pe%20%251%24s&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.i
ntraders.org%2Fnews%2Fromania%2F10th-internationalconference-
after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny%2F

10 times
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-underscrutiny

The conference alerts
https://theconferencealerts.com/event/46428/10th-internationalconference-
after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

Scirea
https://www.scirea.org/ConferenceInfosByConferenceCountryId?c
onferenceCountryId=75

CEPOS Conference 2019

The Ninth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 29-30 March 2019) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 6 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Oxford Academic Journal of Church & State https://academic.oup.com/jcs/article-abstract/60/4/784/5106417?redirectedFrom=PDF

10 Times
https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

Conference Alerts
https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=205682

Researchgate
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327905733_CEPOS_9TH_INTERNATIONA
L_CONFERENCE_AFTER_COMMUNISM_EAST_AND_WEST_UNDER_SCRUTI
NY_2019?_iepl%5BviewId%5D=sjcOJrVCO8PTLapcfVciZQsb&_iepl%5Bcontexts%5
D%5B0%5D=publicationCreationEOT&_iepl%5BtargetEntityId%5D=PB%3A3279057
33&_iepl%5BinteractionType%5D=publicationCTA

The Free Library
https://www.thefreelibrary.com/9th+INTERNATIONAL+CONFERENCE+AFTER+C
OMMUNISM.+EAST+AND+WEST+UNDER...-a0542803701
Science Dz.net
https://www.sciencedz.net/conference/42812-9th-international-conference-after-
communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

CEPOS Conference 2018

The Eighth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 23-24 March 2018) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 15 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Conference Alerts, https://conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=186626
Sciencesdz, http://www.sciencedz.net/conference/29484-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

ManuscriptLink,
https://manuscriptlink.com/cfp/detail?cfpId=AYAXKVAR46277063&type=event

Maspolitiques,http://www.maspolitiques.com/ar/index.php/en/1154-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

Aconf, https://www.aconf.org/conf_112399.html

Call4paper,https://call4paper.com/listByCity?type=event&city=3025&count=count
Eventegg, https://eventegg.com/cepos/

10 times, https://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny
Biblioteca de Sociologie, http://bibliotecadesociologie.ro/cfp-cepos-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny-craiova-2018/

Science Research Association http://www.scirea.org/topiclisting?conferenceTopicId=5
ResearcherBook http://researcherbook.com/country/Romania

Conference Search Net, http://conferencesearch.net/en/29484-8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

SchoolandCollegeListings,
https://www.schoolandcollegelistings.com/RO/Craiova/485957361454074/Center-of-Post-Communist-Political-Studies-CEPOS

Vepub conference, http://www.vepub.com/conferences-view/8th-International-Conference-After-Communism.-East-and-West-under-Scrutiny/bC9aUE5rcHN0ZmpkYU9nTHJzUkRmdz09/

Geopolitika Hungary, http://www.geopolitika.hu/event/8th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/

CEPOS Conference 2017
The Seventh International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 24-25March 2017) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 10 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

Ethic & International Affairs (Carnegie Council), Cambridge University Press-https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2016/upcoming-conferences-interest-2016-2017/

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS LIST http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2017/03/7th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

CONFERENCE ALERTS-http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=171792

10TIMES.COM-http://10times.com/after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

Hiway Conference Discovery System-http://www.hicds.cn/meeting/detail/45826124
Geopolitika (Hungary)-http://www.geopolitika.hu/event/7th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/

Academic.net-http://www.academic.net/show-24-4103-1.html

World University Directory-http://www.worlduniversitydirectory.com/conferencedetail.php?AgentID=2001769

Science Research Association-http://www.scirea.org/conferenceinfo?conferenceId=35290

Science Social Community-https://www.science-community.org/ru/node/174892

CEPOS Conference 2016
The Sixth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 8-9 April 2016) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in the following international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS-http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2016/04/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/
Oxford Journals – Oxford Journal of Church & State-http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2016/02/06/jcs.csv121.extract

Conference Alerts-http://www.conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=Romania
Conferences-In - http://conferences-in.com/conference/romania/2016/economics/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/

Socmag.net - http://www.socmag.net/?p=1562

African Journal of Political Sciences-
http://www.maspolitiques.com/mas/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=450:-securiteee-&catid=2:2010-12-09-22-47-00&Itemid=4#.VjUI5PnhCUk

Researchgate-
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283151988_Call_for_Papers_6TH_International_Conference_After_Communism._East_and_West_under_Scrutiny_8-9_April_2016_Craiova_Romania

World Conference Alerts-
http://www.worldconferencealerts.com/ConferenceDetail.php?EVENT=WLD1442
Edu events-http://eduevents.eu/listings/6th-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny/

Esocsci.org-http://www.esocsci.org.nz/events/list/

Sciencedz.net-http://www.sciencedz.net/index.php?topic=events&page=53
Science-community.org-http://www.science-community.org/ru/node/164404/?did=070216

CEPOS Conference 2015

The Fifth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny (Craiova, House of the University, 24-25 April 2015) was evaluated and accepted for indexing in 15 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases:

THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF CANADA, CANADA-
http://natocouncil.ca/events/international-conferences/

ELSEVIER GLOBAL EVENTS LIST-
http://www.globaleventslist.elsevier.com/events/2015/04/fifth-international-conf

GCONFERENCE.NET-
http://www.gconference.net/eng/conference_view.html?no=47485&catalog=1&cata=018&co_kind=&co_type=&pageno=1&conf_cata=01

CONFERENCE BIOXBIO-http://conference.bioxbio.com/location/Romania

10 TIMES-http://10times.com/Romania

CONFERENCE ALERTS-http://www.conferencealerts.com/country-listing?country=Romania

http://www.iem.ro/orizont2020/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/lista-3-conferinte-internationale.pdf
http://sdil.ac.ir/index.aspx?pid=99&articleid=62893

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM-http://www.nationalsymposium.com/communism.php
SCIENCE DZ-http://www.sciencedz.net/conference/6443-fifth-international-conference-after-communism-east-and-west-under-scrutiny

ARCHIVE COM-http://archive-com.com/com/c/conferencealerts.com/2014-12-01_5014609_70/Rome_15th_International_Academic_Conference_The_IISES/

CONFERENCE WORLD-http://conferencesworld.com/higher-education/
KNOW A CONFERENCE KNOW A CONFERENCE-http://knowaconference.com/social-work/

International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications (IJONTE) Turkey http://www.ijonte.org/?pnum=15&

Journal of Research in Education and Teaching Turkey-http://www.jret.org/?pnum=13&pt=Kongre+ve+Sempozyum
CEPOS CONFERENCE 2015 is part of a "consolidated list of all international and Canadian conferences taking place pertaining to international relations, politics, trade, energy and sustainable development". For more details see http://natocouncil.ca/events/international-conferences/

CEPOS Conference 2014
The Fourth International Conference After Communism. East and West under Scrutiny, Craiova, 4-5 April 2014 was very well received by the national media and successfully indexed in more than 9 international databases, catalogues and NGO's databases such as:
American Political Science Association, USA-http://www.apsanet.org/conferences.cfm

Journal of Church and State, Oxford-http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/01/23/jcs.cst141.full.pdf+html;
NATO Council of Canada (section events/ international conferences), Canada, http://atlantic-council.ca/events/international-conferences/

International Society of Political Psychology, Columbus, USA-http://www.ispp.org/uploads/attachments/April_2014.pdf

Academic Biographical Sketch, http://academicprofile.org/SeminarConference.aspx;
Conference alerts, http://www.conferencealerts.com/show-event?id=121380
Gesis Sowiport, Koln, Germany, http://sowiport.gesis.org/; Osteuropa-Netzwerk, Universität Kassel, Germany, http://its-vm508.its.uni-kassel.de/mediawiki/index.php/After_communism_:_East_and_West_under_scrutiny_:_Fourth_International_Conference

Ilustre Colegio Nacional de Doctores y Licenciados en Ciencias Politicas y Sociologia, futuro Consejo Nacional de Colegios Profesionales, Madrid, http://colpolsocmadrid.org/age

RSP MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

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Paper title: For the title use Times New Roman 16 Bold, Center.

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E.g.: Anca Parmena Olimid*, Cătălina Maria Georgescu**, Cosmin Lucian Gherghe***
* Associate Professor, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407******, Email: parmena2002@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)
** Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407******, Email: cata.georgescu@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)
*** Lecturer, PhD, University of Craiova, Faculty of Social Sciences, Phone: 00407******, Email: avcosmingherghe@yahoo.com. (Use Times New Roman 9, Justified)

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Abstract
The abstract must provide the aims, objectives, methodology, results and main conclusions of the paper (please submit the papers by providing all these information in the abstract). It must be submitted in English and the length must not exceed 300 words. Use Times New Roman 10,5, Justify.

Keywords
Submit 5-6 keywords representative to the thematic approached in the paper. Use Times New Roman 10,5, Italic. After the keywords introduce three blank lines, before passing to the Article text.

Text Font: Times New Roman: 10,5

Reference citations within the text
Please cite within the text. Use authors' last names, with the year of publication.

E.g.: (Olimid, 2009: 14; Olimid and Georgescu, 2012: 14-15; Olimid, Georgescu and Gherghe, 2013: 20-23).

On first citation of references with more than three authors, give all names in full. On the next citation of references with more than three authors give the name of the first author followed by "et al.".
To cite one Article by the same author(s) in the same year use the letters a, b, c, etc., after the year. E.g.: (Olimid, 2009a:14) (Olimid, 2009b: 25-26).
References:
The references cited in the Article are listed at the end of the paper in alphabetical order of authors' names.
References of the same author are listed chronologically.

For books
Olimid, A. P. (2009a). *Viaţa politică şi spirituală în România modernă. Un model românesc al relaţiilor dintre Stat şi Biserică*, Craiova: Aius Publishing.
Olimid, A. P. (2009b). *Politica românească după 1989,* Craiova: Aius Publishing.
For chapters in edited books
Goodin, R. E. (2011). The State of the Discipline, the Discipline of the State. In Goodin, R. E. (editor), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 19-39.

For journal Articles
Georgescu, C. M. (2013a). Qualitative Analysis on the Institutionalisation of the Ethics and Integrity Standard within the Romanian Public Administration. *Revista de Ştiinţe Politice. Revue des Sciences Politiques*, 37, 320-326.

Georgescu, C. M. (2013b). Patterns of Local Self-Government and Governance: A Comparative Analysis Regarding the Democratic Organization of Thirteen Central and Eastern European Administrations (I). *Revista de Ştiinţe Politice. Revue des Ştiinţe Politice*, 39, 49-58.

Tables and Figures
Tables and figures are introduced in the text. The title appears above each table.
E.g.: Table 1. The results of the parliamentary elections (May 2014)

Proposed papers: Text of the Article should be between 3000-5000 words, single spaced, Font: Times New Roman 10,5, written in English, submitted as a single file that includes all tables and figures in Word2003 or Word2007 for Windows.