Special Issue 2024

Przegląd Zachodni

Journal of the Institute for Western Affairs in Poznań

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Dear Readers,

The current special issue of the journal of the Institute for Western Affairs in English contains a selection of scholarly articles detailing the extremely challenging time that Europe is presently in. A continent that had been growing in peace and security for many decades was jolted by Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has tragically marked the fate of millions of people, and called into doubt the core tenets of international law. In addition to highlighting the flaws and contradictions of earlier policy, the ongoing war tests the resilience and efficiency of institutions and organizations, and the global community as a whole. These issues are analyzed by the authors of articles about the European Union, Germany, Russia and the especially sensitive area of public communication.

Another group of articles highlights challenging encounters in retrospect. Using the cases of Austria and Poland, as well as Israel and the Palestinian Authority, they illustrate the vagaries of memory and feelings that precede the softening of tensions brought on by dramatic historical events. Studies on the history of sports and the post-war history of the Jewish community in Lower Silesia supplement this picture and serve as examples of the search for fresh viewpoints and contexts in the study of the complicated twentieth-century past.

Some articles discuss the importance of religion and confessional institutions in public life, albeit in very different contexts. These days, this field is likewise seeing incredibly rapid changes, but it would be premature to attribute them exclusively to the secularization phenomenon. A hypothesis regarding the evolving forms of religion's presence in social life is likely to result from examining the world at large.

It is worth noting with satisfaction that this special volume of „Przegląd Zachodni" that is now offered to readers was released in the year of the 80th anniversary of the Zygmunt Wojciechowski Institute for Western Affairs in Poznań. Like in previous decades, the Institute's journal blends historical studies with a description of the dynamics of the Polish-German neighborhood today and the changes taking place in Europe. It also suggests areas for future research.

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The European Union in the face of the Ukrainian refugee and humanitarian crisis of 2022-2023

Dynamics – legal and institutional instruments – means of assistance

Introductory remarks

This article analyses the positions adopted by the institution of the EU and its member states in the face of the refugee and humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine that began on 24 February 2022. The analysis is limited in principle to the legal status as at 31 December 2023. The author puts forward two research hypotheses. The first asserts that the European Union and its member states coped much better with the refugee and humanitarian crisis provoked by Russia's aggression against Ukraine than with the migration crisis of 2015–2016, because on this occasion much greater help came from volunteers, national and local NGOs and civil society organisations in the countries receiving refugees, but above all from Polish society, where on a mass scale people provided shelter, even in their own homes, to Ukrainians fleeing the war. The second hypothesis is that a particularly important role in coping with the mass influx of Ukrainian refugees was played by EU instruments of assistance that had existed previously but had not been duly recognised or had remained inactive, such as the temporary protection mechanism for refugees, the Integrated Political Crisis Response mechanism, and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Consequently, the author poses the following research questions. Firstly, which EU member states did the most to assist Ukrainian refugees, and why? Secondly, what was the reason for the high effectiveness of the EU's aforementioned legal, institutional, and assistance instruments? Thirdly, what was the scale of the economic, financial and humanitarian assistance provided to Ukraine by the European Union and its member states?

Dynamics of the refugee and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine resulting from the Russian aggression (2022-2023)

The Russian aggression against Ukraine that began on 24 February 2022 led to one of the largest refugee and humanitarian crises of post-World War II Europe. There were huge numbers of military and civilian victims in Ukraine in 2022–2023 as a result of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and probably also crimes of genocide. The governments of many EU member states, including that of Poland, were taken by surprise by the scale and scope of the Russian operations and the brutality of the aggressors. It is now clear that in this war Russia has made use of the internationally outlawed thermobaric weapons, tortured prisoners-of-war on a wide scale, and committed crimes against the civilian population. Ukrainian civilians have been the victims of shootings and violence, and large numbers of Ukrainian children have been taken to Russia and subjected to Russification. All this was accompanied by a vast amount of military destruction of Ukraine's critical and civilian infrastructure.

On the very day of the invasion, 24 February 2022, at a special meeting in Brussels, the European Council strongly condemned the "unprovoked and unjustified military aggression" that Russia had committed against Ukraine, noting that it constituted a gross violation of "international law and the principles of the UN Charter". The Council also demanded that Russia "immediately cease its military operations, unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its borders recognised by the international community". The European Council also stated that Russia "bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it will cause" and would be "held accountable for its actions". In a spirit of solidarity with Ukraine, the European Council agreed further sanctions against Russia in addition to those that had been imposed since 2014, and asked the European Commission to propose emergency measures (European Council, EUCO 18/22: 1–2).

The EU's demands with respect to Russia were repeated in the Versailles Declaration, adopted at a meeting of heads of state or government on 11 March 2022. This also contained an announcement of temporary protection for all war refugees from Ukraine and the immediate making available of funds from the CARE (Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe) programme and from the REACT-EU instrument, which had been established for the reconstruction of member states' economies after the COVID pandemic. The leaders also commended "European countries, notably at the borders with Ukraine, for

showing immense solidarity in hosting Ukrainian war refugees", and gave an assurance that the EU and its member states would "continue to show solidarity and provide humanitarian, medical and financial support to all refugees and the countries hosting them" (Versailles Declaration, 2022: 1–2).

Just over three months later, on 24 June 2022, the European Council again decisively condemned Russia's "indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure" and called on that country to "immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders". It also demanded that the Russian government respect international humanitarian law, including the provisions on the treatment of prisoners-of-war, and ensure the safe return of "Ukrainians, notably children, who have been forcibly removed to Russia", and gave an assurance that "Russia, Belarus and all those responsible for war crimes and the other most serious crimes will be held to account for their actions, in accordance with international law" (European Council, EUCO 24/22: 2).

One of the many consequences of the Russian aggression was mass movements of the Ukrainian population. According to some estimates, in the initial phase of the war around one-third of Ukrainians were forced to leave their homes and move elsewhere in the country, while approximately six million people fled from the war to neighbouring countries, mainly Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Meanwhile, more than 17.6 million Ukrainians required humanitarian aid, including 6.3 million people who had been internally displaced as a result of the war. Russia's aggression against Ukraine thus led to one of the world's largest refugee and humanitarian crises (UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation, 2024: 10). According to data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023[1] the number of refugees crossing Ukraine's borders with neighbouring countries covered by the RRPs[2] exceeded 28,523,635, out of which 20,722,845 later returned to Ukraine. The largest numbers of refugees

[1] Although the end date for the analysis is stated as 31 December 2023, the figures for individual countries refer to periods ending between 7 November 2023 and 31 January 2024, and for Russia only up to 30 June 2023.

[2] The UNHCR, as the UN agency authorised by the General Assembly to direct actions related to refugees, provided economic, financial and humanitarian aid to war refugees from Ukraine through the neighbouring countries that received such refugees. The aid was provided in accordance with regional Refugee Response Plans (RRPs). The UNHCR's first RRP (for 2022) covered Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria. The second RRP was published in January 2023 and referred to the

crossed from Ukraine into Poland (17,293,665), Hungary (4,230,790), Romania (3,962,700), Slovakia (2,021,965), and Moldova (1,014,515), and the respective numbers of returnees were 14,741,500 from Poland, 3,387,085 from Romania, 1,869,480 from Slovakia, and 724,780 from Moldova (cf. Table 1). In addition, in the same period, some refugees fled to Russia and Belarus: 2,869,100 persons crossed Ukraine's border with Russia, and 16,705 crossed its Belarusian border, although there are no Russian and Belarusian data concerning their possible subsequent return to Ukraine (cf. Table 2) (UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation, 2024:1-2).

Table 1

Neighbouring countries covered by the UNHCR's regional Refugee Response Plan[3]

Country	Date of publication of data	Border crossings from Ukraine	Border crossings into Ukraine
Moldova	28 Jan 2024	1,014,515	724,780
Poland	15 Dec 2023	17,293,665	14,741,500
Romania	29 Jan 2024	3,962,700	3,387,085
Slovakia	14 Jan 2024	2,021,965	1,869,480
Hungary	31 Jan 2024	4,230,790	Data not available
Total		**28,523,635**	**20,722,845**

Source: based on UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation (2024: 1–2).

same countries. Cf. UNHCR, Ukraine Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan (January–December 2023) (2023:30).

[3] It should be borne in mind that the UNHCR statistics are based mainly on data supplied by the governments of European countries. The UNHCR stipulates: "While every effort has been made to ensure all statistical information is verified, figures represent an estimate, and potential further movements cannot be factored for the time being for all countries. Triangulation of information and sources is performed on a continuous basis. Therefore, amendments to figures may occur, including retroactively." Moreover the number of refugees from Ukraine registered under the temporary protection system or similar national protection schemes in Europe may include (1) multiple registrations of the same person in two or more EU countries; (2) registrations that were not completed for various reasons, and (3) registrations of refugees who moved on to other countries, including outside Europe. As regards refugees returning to Ukraine, these are not always permanent returns, because the situation in that country remains highly unstable and unpredictable. Cf. UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation (2024:1-2).

Table 2

Other neighbouring countries: Russia and Belarus

Country	Date of publication of data	Refugees registered in the country	Border crossings from Ukraine	Border crossings into Ukraine
Belarus	31 Dec 2023	39,900	16,705	Data not available
Russia	30 Jun 2023	1,212,585	2,852,395	Data not available
Total		**1,252,485**	**2,869,100**	**Data not available**

Source: UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation (2024:1-2).

Among all Ukrainian war refugees, as many as 5,638,930 registered in European countries, of whom 4,386,445 did so under the EU's temporary protection mechanism or similar national protection schemes (Tables 3–4), while 1,252,485 persons registered in Russia and Belarus (cf. Table 2) (UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation, 2024: 1–2).

Table 3

Countries covered by UNHCR regional Refugee Response Plans

Country	Date of publication of data	Refugees registered under the EU temporary protection mechanism or similar national schemes	Refugees registered in the country
Bulgaria	19 Dec 2023	174,710	51,860
Czech Rep.	31 Dec 2023	581,410	375,590
Estonia	31 Dec 2023	57,035	38,185
Lithuania	22 Dec 2023	83,050	52,305
Latvia	31 Dec 2023	52,120	43,825
Moldova	28 Jan 2024	31,625	120,695
Poland	15 Dec 2023	1,640,510	956,635
Romania	29 Jan 2024	155,035	85,710
Slovakia	14 Jan 2024	134,995	114,270
Hungary	31 Jan 2024	41,065	65,585
Total		**1,904,660**	**2,951,555**

Source: based on UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation (2024:1-2).

Table 4

*Countries not covered by UNHCR regional Refugee Response Plans**

Country	Date of publication of data	Refugees registered under the EU temporary protection mechanism or similar national programmes	Refugees registered in the country
Albania	7 Nov 2023	35	7,495
Armenia	17 Jul 2023	605	605
Austria	31 Dec 2023	107,720	83,980
Azerbaijan	5 Dec2023	110	4,555
Belgium	31 Dec 2023	79,790	75,055
Bosnia and Herzegovina	24 Dec 2023	210	210
Croatia	28 Dec 2023	25,180	24,150
Cyprus	12 Nov 2023	20,565	18,230
Montenegro	25 Dec 2023	10,220	64,240
Denmark	31 Dec 2023	48,680	36,960
Finland	31 Dec 2023	66,010	64,750
France	31 Dec 2023	102,090	69,670
Greece	31 Dec 2023	27,430	27,365
Georgia	30 Dec 2023	670	26,660
Spain	31 Dec 2023	195,165	199,155
Ireland	17 Dec 2023	102,560	102,560
Iceland	31 Dec 2023	3,765	3,795
Liechtenstein	27 Dec 2023	810	575
Luxembourg	14 Nov 2022	6,350	4,220
North Macedonia	24 Dec 2023	405	18,620
Malta	31 Dec 2023	2,330	2,115
Netherlands	31 Dec 2023	146,715	146,715
Germany	2 Dec 2023	1,028,940	1,125,850
Norway	31 Dec 2023	71,120	66,965
Portugal	31 Dec 2023	66,245	59,350
Serbia and Kosovo	31 Dec 2023	2,325	4,105
Slovenia	19 Dec 2023	10,430	10,635
Switzerland	29 Dec 2023	97,035	66,480
Sweden	28 Dec 2023	63,905	41,825
Turkey	29 Dec 2023	4,475	41,390

UK	12 Dec 2023	1,260	250,360
Italy	15 Dec 2023	188,635	169,040
Total		**2,481,785**	**2,817,680**

Source: UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation (2024:1-2).

* Except for Russia and Belarus, for which data are given in Table 2.

Given that the mass influx of migrants in 2015-2016 had taken the European Union completely by surprise, it seemed that it would again have difficulty coping with the exodus of war refugees from Ukraine. However, in contrast to the previous migration crisis, this time assistance was provided on a vast scale by the societies of some EU member states, volunteers, national and local NGOs, and civil society organisations in countries hosting refugees. Ukrainian diaspora communities and refugees themselves also mobilised to ensure that people fleeing from violence received help and protection. According to Eurostat data, Poland was the EU member state that did the most to assist Ukrainian refugees, based on such criteria as public engagement and the scale of assistance, moral support, and the government's diplomatic efforts to persuade other countries to apply assistance measures (EU response to Russia's war of aggression, 2023: 5). Most noteworthy in this context, however, is the contribution of the Polish public, who on a vast scale provided shelter even in their own homes to Ukrainians fleeing the war, arousing genuine admiration from the governments of other countries and worldwide public opinion.

Legal and institutional instruments of the European Union and member states

Temporary refugee protection mechanism

On 27 February 2022, at an extraordinary meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, consideration was given for the first time to the possibility of applying the mechanism for temporary protection of refugees as envisaged in Council Directive 2001/55/EC. That directive had been approved by the Council more than 20 years earlier, on 20 July 2001, in connection with what was then a mass influx of refugees to the European Union, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from Kosovo, resulting from the armed conflicts in the Western Balkans. In those two decades, however, the new legal instrument had never been used. The directive stated that temporary protection was to apply exclusively in extraordinary situations, and ought to provide immediate and

collective protection to displaced persons who were unable to return to their country of origin. The mechanism was intended to reduce pressure on national asylum systems and to give displaced persons uniform rights throughout the EU. It would apply initially for a period of one year, but that period could be extended automatically by another six months, and by a maximum of a further year. The European Commission could also make a proposal to the Council for an additional one-year extension of temporary protection (Council Directive 2001/55/EC:162-171). By dint of two protocols attached to the TEU and TEC in the Amsterdam Treaty version, concerning the positions of the United Kingdom and Ireland (Article 1) and of Denmark (Articles 1 and 2), the terms of the directive did not apply to Ireland or Denmark. However, pursuant to Article 3 of the first of the protocols, the United Kingdom stated in a diplomatic note of 27 September 2000 that it intended to participate in the adoption and application of the directive (Council Directive 2001/55/EC: 163; Protocol 1, 1997: 83; Protocol 2, 1997:84-85).

On 4 March 2022 the Justice and Home Affairs Council unanimously approved Implementing Decision 2022/382, which recognised the existence of a mass influx of refugees from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Council Directive 2001/55/EC. An effect of that decision was the implementation of the mechanism of temporary protection within the European Union in respect of those refugees (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382: 1–6). The implementing decision came into effect on the same day, and was initially effective for one year; the Council subsequently extended it to 4 March 2024. Depending on the development of the situation in Ukraine, it will be possible to extend it for a further year, to 4 March 2025. The implementing decision concerns protection for citizens of Ukraine resident in that country before 24 February 2022, stateless persons or citizens of third countries who before that date "benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine", and family members of the aforementioned persons (Article 2(1) of the decision). Responsibility for the coordination of cooperation and for the exchange of information between member states, in particular the monitoring of capacity to receive refugees and identification of their needs, was assigned to the European Commission, which was to cooperate in that regard with EU member states, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the European Union Asylum Agency (EUAA), and Europol. Under Article 3(2) of the decision, all three agencies were also obligated to provide operational support to any EU member state that requested assistance in coping with the influx of migrants and with the decision's implementation (Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382:5-6).

As noted above, the Council's implementing decision of 4 March 2022 enabled the activation of a temporary protection mechanism for war refugees from Ukraine throughout the European Union (Council Directive 2001/55/EC: 163). This mechanism provided immediate and collective protection to persons fleeing the war. This meant that receiving countries did not have to consider refugee applications individually, although on the other hand the provision of temporary protection did not imply the granting refugee status as defined in the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967 (Article 3(1) of the directive). Persons making use of the mechanism of temporary protection in the EU were permitted to make an application for asylum at any time, but the examination of such an application, if not processed before the end of the period of temporary protection, was to be completed after the end of that period (Article 17(1-2) of the directive). Registration under the EU temporary protection mechanism gave the persons concerned a status equivalent to that of a refugee. That protection ensured due respect for human rights and basic freedoms and for the principle of non-refoulement (Article 3(2) of the directive).[4] Moreover, the establishment, implementation and suspension of the temporary protection system were to be a subject of regular consultation with the UNHCR and other competent international organisations (Article 3(3) of the directive). Pursuant to Articles 12, 13(1-4) and 14(1-2) of Council Directive 2001/55/EC, refugees obtained, among other things, the right to live in the host country for at least one year, access to the labour and housing markets, medical care, and education for their children (Council Directive 2001/55/EC, 2001: 166).

According to UNHCR data, in the period from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023, under the EU temporary protection mechanism or similar national protection schemes of EU member states, including countries belonging to the Schengen area under bilateral international agreements with the EU (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland), and those of third countries (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo, Turkey, and the UK), a total of 4,386,445 refugees from Ukraine were registered. These figures do not include Russia

[4] The non-refoulement principle was codified in Article 33 of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 on the status of refugees. It means that a person who has been refused refugee status must not be deported to a country where they would be at risk of persecution; such a person should be provided with a different form of international protection. Exceptions apply in cases where such a person poses a threat to national security or represents a public danger because they have been convicted of a serious crime (cf. Węc 2017: 29).

and Belarus, which did not introduce national protection schemes. The EU member states in which the largest numbers of refugees were registered were Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic (cf. Tables 3-4) (UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation, 2024:1-2).[5]

The coming into effect of the implementing decision to the temporary protection directive and the decision of the Polish government to open the border to all persons fleeing the war meant that within a short period, several million war refugees entered Poland, the vast majority being citizens of Ukraine. In view of the prohibition on leaving Ukraine that was imposed, with minor exceptions, on men aged between 18 and 60, the war refugees were mainly women with children, and this remains the case today. The Polish government's decision to limit control and registration procedures to a minimum reduced queues on the border, although despite this, in late February and early March 2022, it was necessary to wait upwards of twelve hours to cross into Poland. As noted above, however, a key factor was the mobilisation of Polish society in assisting those fleeing the war. Maciej Duszczyk identified three main groups of war refugees arriving in Poland. The first consisted of persons joining their families or acquaintances who already lived in Poland. In their case it was necessary to provide only immediate assistance in the initial period following their arrival. The second group consisted of refugees who had had no previous contacts with Poland and arrived without acquiring knowledge of the situation. In their case more extensive assistance was required, including such things as the provision of food, organisation of accommodation, and access to schools in the case of children. It was in giving help to this group of refugees that Polish society proved exceptionally able. Some of them subsequently returned to Ukraine, while some moved to other EU countries. The third group contained persons migrating between Poland, Ukraine and other states of the EU – this was a fairly small and mobile group of people who in principle were not in need of support. Most of them have not yet taken a decision as to where they wish finally to settle, but it should not be expected that a large number of persons from this group will choose Poland (Duszczyk, 2022: 1-3).

The efforts made by member states to fulfil the obligations arising from the Council's implementing decision of 4 March 2022 were supported financially

[5] It should be noted here that Ukrainian refugees very often made use of the right, laid down in the Council directive of 20 July 2001, to resettle from one EU member state to another, which led to quite significant changes in the numbers of refugees present in particular countries in the years 2022-2023.

by the EU funds for cohesion policy[6] and for internal policy in relation to migration, border management and security.[7] For this purpose, a decision was taken to enable more flexible use of those funds. On 6 April 2022, the European Parliament and Council approved two legislative instruments: Regulation 2022/562 on Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE), and Regulation 2022/585 amending provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management. In turn, on 19 October 2022, the Parliament and Council adopted Regulation 2022/2039 on Flexible Assistance for Territories (FAST) CARE.

The first of these regulations loosened the rules on use of cohesion policy funds, in particular those from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) attached to the previous long-term financial framework (2014–2020). However, the support from the ERDF and ESF merely supplemented the resources of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Assistance to the victims of Russian aggression was also planned to be provided from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), which was to deal with supplies of food and basic material

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[6] In the 2014-2020 financial perspective the EU had five Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs): the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Cohesion policy was supported by the ERDF, ESF and CF, and the common agricultural and fisheries policies by the EAFRD and EMFF respectively. Under a reform effective from 1 January 2021: (1) the ESF and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) were combined into the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+); (2) the EMFF was renamed the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF); (3) a new Just Transition Fund (JTF) was set up to deal with EU climate policy; and (4) EAFRD was excluded from the ESIFs. Consequently, the five ESIFs in the current financial perspective (2021-2027) are the ERDF, ESF+, CF, EMFAF, and JTF (Article 1(1b) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060).

[7] In the 2014-2020 financial perspective, EU internal policy in relation to migration, border management and security was supported by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) (Regulation (EU) 516/2014) and the Internal Security Fund (ISF). The latter included the instrument for financial support for external borders and visas (Regulation (EU) 515/2014) and the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (Regulation (EU) 513/2014). In the 2021–2027 financial perspective internal policy is covered by AMIF (Regulation (EU) 2021/1147) and the ISF (Regulation (EU) 2021/1149), in addition to the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, which replaced the aforementioned borders and visas instrument and is part of the Integrated Border Management Fund (Regulation (EU) 2021/1148).

assistance for those victims.[8] The changes introduced by way of the analysed regulation concerned, among other things, the possibility of transferring funds between the programmes financed from the ERDF and ESF, the obtaining of 100% EU financing from programmes supported by the ERDF, ESF and FEAD in the 2021/2022 financial year, and the making of additional advance payments for projects so as to render rapid assistance to member states. Flexibility entailed, among other things, the reallocation of thus far unused amounts from the ERDF to infrastructure projects benefiting refugees, for example in providing access to health care and education (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2022/562: 1-5).

Pursuant to the second regulation, provisions were enacted enabling the allocation for Ukrainian refugees of €420m of unspent internal policy funds from the 2014-2020 financial perspective. A change was also made to the rules for the second edition of AMIF, implemented under the new financial perspective in 2021-2027 (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2022/585: 1-5). The main goal of AMIF was now to increase national capacities to cope with the influx of refugees from Ukraine, to improve migration management procedures, and to foster solidarity and a sharing of responsibilities between member states, in particular through assistance in crisis situations and a relocation mechanism, enabling EU countries and other public or private donors to provide additional funds for its functioning.[9] Also made available for Ukrainian refugees was a part of the funds (€10 bn) reserved in the long-term budget for 2021–2027 under the REACT-EU instrument allocated for the reconstruction of member states' economies following the pandemic (Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council (EU) 2022/585: 1-5). It is estimated that in 2022 the European Union earmarked a total of around 17 billion euros as support for member states receiving Ukrainian refugees, made up of €7 bn of unspent EU funds from 2014–2020 and €10 bn under REACT-EU. Member states could make use of these funds to support Ukrainian refugees in meeting urgent needs, such as accommodation, education, health care, and child care (EU solidarity with Ukraine, 2024:6-7).

Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2022/2039 of 19 October 2022 on FAST – CARE made provision for new financial means

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[8] In the 2014-2020 financial perspective, FEAD was engaged in providing food or basic material assistance (clothing, footwear, hygiene products) to those most in need, as well as advice and help to the poorest in coming out of poverty and achieving social inclusion.

[9] The availability of AMIF funds to countries hosting Ukrainian refugees was extended to mid-2024.

for Ukrainian refugees. These strengthened still further the flexibility of use of EU funds, increasing advance payments by an additional €3.5 bn, allowing 100% co-financing of investment projects promoting socioeconomic integration and the social inclusion of citizens of third countries, enabling the transfer of funds not only between the ERDF and ESF, but also with the Cohesion Fund (CF), and assigning 30% of the funds allocated for refugees to local authorities and civil society organisations functioning within local communities (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2022/2039:23-29).

To assist member states in applying the Council's implementing decision of 4 March 2022, the European Commission also issued operational guidelines, offering expert knowledge (a Technical Support Instrument), intended to assist member countries in making full use of EU funds for the hosting and integration of refugees (European Commission, 2022:1-2).[10] It also published guidelines for member states' border control personnel, serving to help them effectively manage traffic on borders with Ukraine and reduce waiting times, without lowering the level of security (EU solidarity with Ukraine, 2024: 7).

Integrated Political Crisis Response

Just three days after the Russian invasion, on 27 February 2022, the Justice and Home Affairs Council took a decision to invoke the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) mechanism (Extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council, 2022:1-3). This mechanism had been established by the Council of the European Union on 25 June 2013, and could be invoked either by the presidency or by any member state, relying on Article 222 of the TFEU (the solidarity clause). It serves the making of arrangements in reaction to various crisis situations, as well as coordinated EU decision-making in case of serious and complex crises, including acts of terrorism. The IPCR had been invoked on several occasions in previous years. In October 2015 the Luxembourg presidency took a decision to invoke the IPCR information exchange procedure for the purpose of monitoring migrant flows, supporting the decision-making

[10] The Technical Support Instrument is an EU programme serving to make available technical knowledge necessary for the implementation of reforms. The support is funded exclusively by the EU (co-financing by member states is not required). The instrument was intended to provide assistance to member states in reducing the economic and social impacts of the crisis related to COVID-19. It is a continuation of the Structural Reform Support Programme (2017-2020), and is managed by the Commission's Directorate-General. Cf. European Commission, Technical Support Instrument (2023: 1-2).

process and enabling the better implementation of agreed measures. In the following month the presidency invoked the full mode of the IPCR mechanism.[11] From then on it could operate in that mode if activated. This allowed the EU to hold successive "round table" meetings with interested parties to discuss and coordinate its response to various migration-related issues. This process was used, among other things, to facilitate the EU's monitoring of the 2021 migration crisis on the Polish–Belarusian border.

In relation to the refugee and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the first IPCR round table technical meeting took place on 28 February 2022. Among issues considered at this and subsequent meetings were matters of humanitarian aid (mainly medical and healthcare items and equipment for providing accommodation), EU support in hosting refugees, and assistance in external border management (for example, in relation to security checks and registrations at borders). The meetings were chaired by the EU presidency with participation by representatives of the European Commission, the European External Action Service, EU agencies, the Ukrainian government, the office of the President of the European Council, and experts (Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa, 2024:1-4).

On 28 March 2022 the European Commission announced a 10-point plan to improve coordination of the reception of persons fleeing the war in Ukraine. It provided for, among others, the following instruments of assistance: (1) launch of an EU-wide platform for refugee registration, called the Solidarity Platform, which would enable the coordination of all actions being taken to handle the crisis, including cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and other organisations from that country; (2) assistance in coordinating the work of the main national transport and information hubs situated at key points on the routes taken by people fleeing the war (border crossings, bus and rail stations, large transit accommodation centres, etc.); (3) strengthening of reception systems and assurance of continuous care of refugees (for example through the Safe Homes initiative for housing refugees in private homes); (4) development of an emergency plan at EU level to ensure coordination of actions to meet medium- and long-term needs of refugees as foreseen in na-

[11] The IPCR, operating in full mode, has four instruments at its disposal: the round table, a special Internet platform for information exchange and collection, a 24-hour contact point for interested parties, and a working group of experts responsible for preparing analytical reports to provide decision-makers with a clear picture of the current situation. The IPCR contact point in Poland is the Government Security Centre (cf. Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa, 2024:1-4).

tional emergency plans; (5) introduction of standard operational procedures and guidelines on the reception and support of children (in particular disabled children and those without carers or separated from family) in relation to fast identification and registration, accommodation, and the prevention of human trafficking; (6) preparation of an EU joint plan against human trafficking and the provision of full assistance to victims of such activity; (7) assurance of adequate resources and funds earmarked to finance the aforementioned actions (The 10-Point Plan, 2023:1-3).

The Solidarity Platform enabled member states to exchange information about persons registered under the temporary protection mechanism or corresponding protection schemes set up under national law. In the coordination of cooperation with national transport and information hubs, the EU Agency for Asylum, in close cooperation with relevant organisations already active locally, became engaged in supplying information on such matters as reception places or minors lacking carers. Responsibility for ensuring continuous care for refugees lay with the European Commission, which cooperated in that regard with member states and the UNHCR. It was also tasked with developing a "common EU index" which member states, EU agencies and other international organisations were to feed into. This served to enable monitoring of changes in the situation with respect to arrivals, to evaluate migration pressure, and to ensure immediate reaction at national level or, when necessary, at EU level. The Solidarity Platform, run by the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, worked with member states and EU agencies, including the European Labour Authority and Europol, to prepare a common plan to counteract threats related to human trafficking and to support potential victims (The 10-Point Plan, 2023:1-3).

On 8 June 2022, the Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted a political conclusions document on children's rights, placing particular emphasis on the protection of those rights in crises and emergencies. It drew attention to the need to protect children experiencing armed conflicts and their effects, citing provisions of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights. In particular, this concerned protection against military conscription, human trafficking, illegal adoption, sexual abuse, and separation from family (Council of the European Union, Conclusions, 2022:1-11). On 27 June 2022 the Council asked member states to ensure that children displaced from Ukraine received free legal assistance and access to health care, to inform children travelling from Ukraine without carers or separated from their families about their rights and to include them under national child protection systems, and to make every effort to ensure that the manner of reception of children conformed to the highest standards (Council of the European Union, Conclusions, 2022:1-7).

Union Civil Protection Mechanism

The third of the EU's assistance instruments for Ukraine was the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). This was established by a Council decision of 23 October 2001 "establishing a Community mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions" (Council Decision 2001/792/EC: 7). This document was subsequently amended on several occasions, for the last time via a regulation dated 20 May 2021 (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2021/836: 1–22). The UCPM would coordinate, at EU level, all responses to natural disasters and to man-made humanitarian disasters. Civil protection included both preventive measures (mitigating the consequences of future emergencies or natural disasters) and current assistance, provided to people in emergencies. This assistance included, among other things, search and rescue actions, supply of medical personnel and equipment and medicines, provision of temporary shelter, and the safe repatriation of EU citizens.

Countries participating in the UCPM include all EU member states as well as the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. It has at its disposal the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which provides round-the-clock monitoring of world events and coordinates any EU response.[12] Like the IPCR, it was established by the Council of the European Union on 25 June 2013. Any country in the world, as well as the UN or its agencies and other international organisations, may request assistance from the ERCC if they lack the capacity to cope alone with a natural disaster or man-made humanitarian disaster. On receiving such a request, the ERCC mobilises and coordinates the assistance offered by member states. Since 2001 the EU's civil protection mechanism has been activated more than 600 times, both within and outside EU territory; for example, in relation to repatriation from Afghanistan (2021), the pandemic crisis (2020-2022), forest fires in Europe (2021-2022), and most recently Russia's war against Ukraine (2022-2023) and the earthquake in Turkey and Syria (2023) (EU civil protection, 2024:1-4).

When on the day of the Russian invasion Ukraine made a request to be included under the civil protection programme, the European Union, on a proposal by Slovakia, immediately activated the UCPM. On 28 February 2022 Poland also established a civil protection mechanism at national level. On

[12] The contact point for the ERCC in Poland (like in the case of IPCR) is the Government Security Centre (cf. Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa, 2024:1-4).

13 March 2022 the EU began evacuating people in need of medical intervention from Ukrainian territory; nine days later an EU humanitarian centre was opened in Lviv, and on 19 April the EU provided €45 million in humanitarian assistance for persons directly affected by Russia's invasion. Not only did the activation of the UCPM prove extremely useful, but the European Commission reported that the provision of assistance to Ukraine was the largest operation carried out within that framework to date. Through the UCPM, EU member states could request items required to meet the needs of persons displaced from Ukraine who were present on their territory, and could make use of EU co-financing of such assistance (EU civil protection, 2024: 3). All member states as well as Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey provided material assistance to Ukraine. The total value of aid given to the people of Ukraine by the EU under the UCPM between 24 February 2022 and 31 December 2023 was €796 million (cf. Table 7). In view of Ukraine's growing need for medical items, the rescEU strategic reserve established in 2019 was also activated; this includes, among other things, a fleet of firefighting planes and helicopters, aircraft for medical evacuation, medical rescue teams and field hospitals, medical stocks and mobile laboratories, means of temporary accommodation, and transport and logistics (EU solidarity with Ukraine, 2024:3-4).

Economic, financial and humanitarian assistance from the EU, its member states and the EBRD for Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees

Apart from the use of the mechanism of temporary protection for refugees and the IPCR and UCPM instruments, the European Union, as well as its member states and financial institutions, provided significant economic, financial and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine in the period under analysis. Economic and financial assistance was meant to support the Ukrainian economy, the management of emergency situations, and rapid reconstruction. In the years 2022–2023, the European Union, together with member states, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), transferred a total of €39.6 billion to Ukraine (cf. Table 5) (Regulation (EU) 2022/2463:1-14). As regards assistance for refugees, the EU transferred €17 billion in that period to member states receiving Ukrainians on their territory, of which €7 billion consisted of unspent amounts from the Structural and Investment Funds for the years 2014-2020, and €10 billion came from the REACT-EU instrument originally designated for repairing social and economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and for

preparing member states' economies for environmental and digital modernisation (cf. Table 6) (EU solidarity with Ukraine, 2024:6-7). In turn, humanitarian aid for the civilian population in Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees hosted in EU member states, assigned in the years 2022-2023 by the EU and member states, totalled €3.746 billion (cf. Table 7) (Regulation (EU) 2022/2463: 5).

Table 5

Financial assistance from the EU, member states and financial institutions to support the Ukrainian economy, emergency management and rapid reconstruction in 2022-2023

Provider	Purpose	Amount in € bn
EU member states	Subsidies, loans and guarantees	9.45
The EU	Budgetary grants and support	2.35
	Macrofinancial assistance	25.20
	EU-guaranteed grants and loans from EIB and EBRD	2.60
Total		**39.60**

Source: based on EU solidarity with Ukraine (2024:1-2).

Table 6

Financial assistance from the EU for Ukrainian refugees, transferred to member states in 2022-2023

Instrument	Amount in € bn
ERDF, ESF, FEAD and AMIF: unspent funds from 2014-2020	7.00
REACT-EU	10.00
Total	**17.00**

Source: based on EU solidarity with Ukraine (2024:6-8).

Table 7

Humanitarian assistance from the EU and member states for the Ukrainian civilian population and refugees in 2022-2023

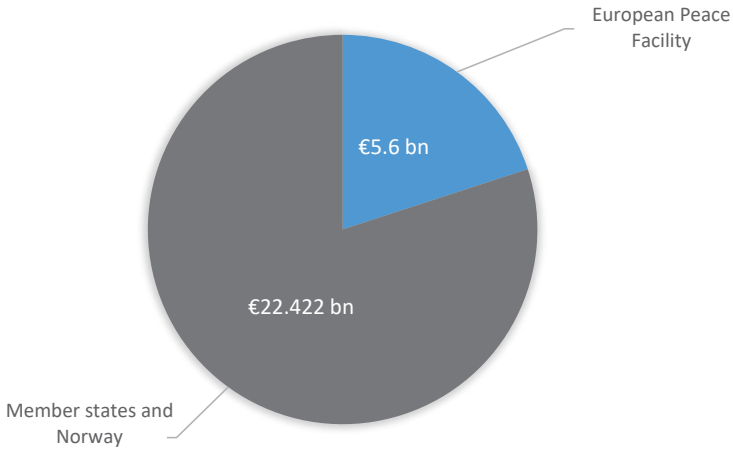
Type of humanitarian assistance	Amount in € bn
EU humanitarian assistance under UCPM	0.796
EU member states' humanitarian assistance	2.100
EU humanitarian assistance for civilian population and refugees	0.850
Total	**3.746**

Source: based on EU solidarity with Ukraine (2024: 3–4).

This means that the total of economic, financial and humanitarian assistance from the EU, member states, the EIB and the EBRD in the period from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023 was as high as €60.346 billion. Adding to that the value of military support, which amounted to €28.022 billion in the same period (cf. Figure 1),[13] the total value of assistance from the EU and its member states and financial institutions provided to Ukraine in the period under analysis was the astronomical sum of €88.368 billion (cf. Figure 2).

Figure 1

Military support in the period from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023

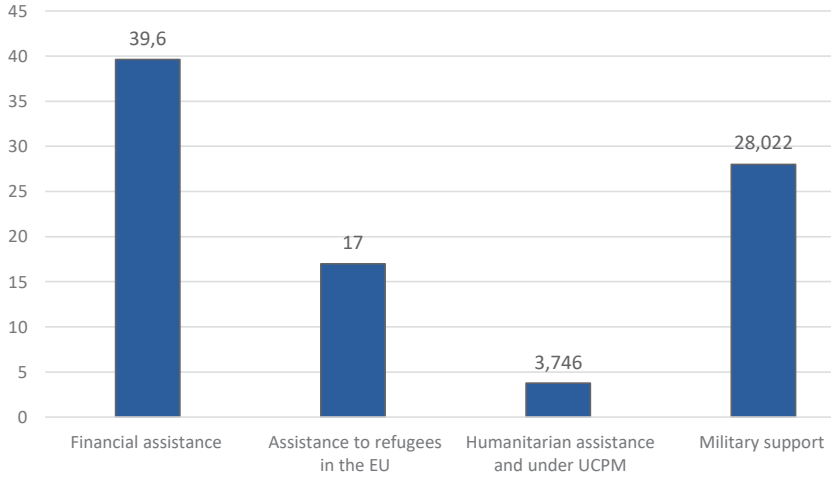


Source: based on EU solidarity with Ukraine (2024: 5).

[13] Military support included amounts assigned by individual EU member states (€22.4 bn), Norway (€22m), and the European Peace Facility (€5.6 bn). On the origin and functional principles of the latter instrument, established in 2021, see Węc (2022: 222-224, 2023: 135-137).

Figure 2

Total financial, humanitarian and military assistance from the EU, member states, the EIB and the EBRD between 24 February 2022 and 31 December 2023



Source: based on EU solidarity with Ukraine (2024:5-6).

Conclusions

Analysis of the available source material has confirmed both of the research hypotheses formulated at the outset. The European Union and its member states coped with the refugee and humanitarian crisis resulting from Russia's aggression against Ukraine much more effectively than in the case of the refugee and migrant crisis of 2015–2016 (hypothesis 1). There were two basic reasons for this success. Firstly, the crisis saw engagement on a mass scale from volunteers, national and local NGOs, and civil society organisations in the countries receiving refugees. Secondly, spontaneous help came from the Polish public, who on a vast scale provided shelter in their own homes to Ukrainians fleeing the war, a fact which won admiration from many Western states and the public there. This is all the more noteworthy given that the influx of war refugees from Ukraine in 2022–2023 was several times greater than the number of war refugees from Syria and Iraq and refugees and economic migrants from African countries in 2015–2016. The role of Polish society was especially invaluable because it was Poland that received the largest wave of refugees. Among the 31,392,735 Ukrainian refugees who arrived in neighbouring countries, as many as 17,293,665 crossed the border

into Poland, compared with 4,230,790 coming to Hungary, 3,962,700 to Romania, 2,869,100 to Russia, 2,021,965 to Slovakia, 1,014,515 to Moldova, and 16,607 to Belarus. The numbers of those returning to Ukraine were as follows: 14,741,500 persons from Poland, 3,387,085 from Romania, 1,869,480 from Slovakia, and 724,780 from Moldova (there are no Russian or Belarusian data concerning returnees to Ukraine). A particularly important role in coping with the mass influx of Ukrainian refugees was also played by EU legal and institutional instruments that already existed but had not been duly recognised or had not been activated, such as the temporary refugee protection mechanism, Integrated Political Crisis Response, and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (hypothesis 2).

In answering the first research question, it can be concluded that among all EU member states, it was Poland that did the most to assist Ukrainian refugees, where the criteria for assessment include public engagement and the scale of assistance, moral support, and government diplomatic activity in persuading other countries to apply means of assistance. Under the EU's temporary refugee protection mechanism or similar national protection schemes of European states – excluding Russia and Belarus, which did not implement such schemes – a total of 4,386,445 persons registered, with the largest numbers being in Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. In answer to the second research question, the high effectiveness of the temporary refugee protection mechanism, Integrated Political Crisis Response, and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism resulted from two causes: first, these legal and institutional instruments were already known in the EU, but had not thus far been activated, whereas their activation enabled a rapid response in the time of crisis; second, this made it possible to bypass the complex and sometimes very arduous legislative process for creating new legal instruments, which might have ended in a similar failure as occurred with the crisis of 2015-2016. Particularly invaluable was the mechanism of temporary protection for refugees, because registration under that mechanism gave the persons concerned a status equivalent to that of a refugee, with all the legal, financial and social consequences (for example, the right to stay in the host country for at least one year, access to the employment and housing markets, medical assistance, and the right to education for children). Furthermore, regarding the third research question, the scale of the economic, financial and humanitarian assistance provided by the European Union and its member states was vast, but this was also Europe's largest refugee and humanitarian crisis since the times of the Second World War. The total value of economic, financial and humanitarian assistance provided by the European Union and its member states and financial institutions,

in the analysed period from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023, amounted to €60.346 billion. Including military support given to Ukraine by the EU and its member states, the total was as high as €88.368 billion.

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ABSTRACT

The European Union and its member states have managed the refugee and humanitarian crisis triggered by Russia's aggression against Ukraine much more effectively than the refugee and migration crisis of 2015–2016. There are two main reasons for this success. First, volunteers, national and local NGOs and civil society actors from the host countries became much more involved in efforts to cope with the crisis. Secondly, spontaneous help was provided by the Polish public, who on a vast scale offered shelter in their own homes to Ukrainians fleeing the war, a fact which won the admiration of many Western countries and the public there. The role of Polish society was especially invaluable given that Poland took in the largest wave of refugees: 17,293,665 people crossed the Ukrainian–Polish border between 24 February 2022 and 31 December 2023. EU legal and institutional instruments that already existed but had not been duly recognised or activated, such as the temporary protection mechanism for refugees, Integrated Political Crisis Response, and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, also played an extremely important role. The total economic, financial and humanitarian assistance provided by the European Union and its member states to Ukraine in the analysed period to the end of 2023 was €60.346 billion, with military support amounting to a further €28.022 billion.

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An infodemic of disinformation regarding COVID-19 in Ukraine

Introduction

During the years 2020-2022, Ukraine, like most countries in the world, was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The first officially confirmed case of infection with the then new virus was recorded in Ukraine on 3 March 2020. By the end of October 2022, almost 5.3 million cases had been detected in Ukraine and 110,000 people died as a result of the infection (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ 29 October 2022). The vaccination campaign against COVID-19 officially began in Ukraine on 24 February 2021 as reported by PHC[1] (2021). The Ukrainian state, as well as Ukrainian society, had to face not only the dramatic course and effects of the pandemic itself, but also an infodemic of disinformation regarding the disease, its origin, course, as well as the actions taken by the authorities to control or at least partially limit the scale of the disease.

After 2020, the information space of Ukraine, like the infospheres of other countries, became a kind of infodemic battlefield, which was filled and saturated with disinformation about the SARS-CoV-2 virus (Demczuk 2021). The term "infodemic" was introduced to public debate by David J. Rothkoph in a 2003 article published in "The Washington Post", in which he compared the development of the SARS epidemic with the way information about the virus spread. In his analysis, he defined the infodemic as a phenomenon that is a combination of facts, fear, speculation, and rumours, which, reinforced thanks to new technologies, was spreading rapidly around the world, negatively affecting the economy as well as political, national and global security (Rothkopf 2003). D. Rothkoph

[1] PHC = Pulic Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (Центр громадського здоров'я Міністерства охорони здоров'я України)

also noticed that the information about the disease itself influenced incomparably more people than did the epidemic that caused it (Zimmer 2020). A similar definition of infodemic has been used since the beginning of 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), with the emphasis on an excess and oversaturation of information making it difficult or even impossible to effectively find and select true, reliable data and recommendations (WHO 2020).

This analysis is an attempt to clarify specific features of the infodemic in Ukraine, a summary of more than two years in which the information space in Ukraine was consistently saturated with varied (both in terms of form and content) disinformation about COVID-19. It should be noted that this is a country that has been at war with the Russian Federation since 2014, which means that virtually every piece of fake news infiltrating the Ukrainian infosphere should be treated not only as a simple disinformation mechanism in a given thematic area, but also as part of broader action aimed at, among other things, weakening the morale of Ukrainian society and the level of trust in state authorities. This is undoubtedly a feature that distinguishes the Ukrainian infodemic from similar processes that took place during the pandemic in other countries. In this regard, it is possible to put forward a working hypothesis that the Covid infodemic in Ukraine had, first of all, a clear external origin (it was largely a single-source). It was also highly adaptive in nature. This was a function of its role as part of a broader disinformation campaign and part of the hybrid war conducted by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its inhabitants. Using the information sphere, manipulating messages and creating a false narrative are integral elements of any hybrid aggression (Gorbulin 2017: 19). In this context, the Covid infodemic in Ukraine may be an example of using a non-military factor as a weapon (that is, weaponisation of the infodemic). In order to verify the hypothesis adopted, the text uses analytical and descriptive methods, which is a universal tool for cross-sectional studies.

The basis of the analysis and the main source of key data is information collected as part of several projects aimed at counteracting disinformation and fighting fake news about the COVID-19 pandemic in Ukraine. The first of them, which is global in nature is the *CoronaVirusFacts Alliance*, in which Ukrainian organisations were also actively involved. It contains almost 1,500 records regarding the disinformation infodemic in Ukraine (Poynter Institute for Media Studies 2022). The second one, of a national nature, was stopfake.org, launched by lecturers, graduates and students of the journalism school of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as a platform originally intended to verify information in connection with Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014. During the two years of the pandemic, the project collected over 700 records with examples

of disinformation activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this article also uses the resources of other fact-checking groups operating in Ukraine, such as: coronafakes.com, detecor-media.com and armyinform.com.ua. The clear dominance of Ukrainian sources and the use of analyses and studies produced primarily by Ukrainian institutions as the bibliographic basis of the article is deliberate. It allows for the presentation of the Ukrainian perspective, which is one of the main purposes of this article.

The infodemic in Ukraine
The structure of disinformation narratives

The first fake news in Ukraine about COVID-19 appeared at the end of January 2020. Some Ukrainian media then provided incorrect information about the alleged detection of the first case of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection in Ukraine (Zhaha, Slipchenko 2021). Over the next ten months of the pandemic, over 250,000 messages related to COVID-19 that bore the hallmarks of disinformation were detected in the Ukrainian internet ecosystem (media, blogs, forums, social networks and instant messengers). These data come from a report prepared by *SemanticForce* at the request of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) at the end of 2000 (https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/ukraine, 20 May 2021). Based on the results obtained in the study, a map of disinformation narratives was created, which consisted of seven main thematic areas, namely fake news about medical masks, disinformation denying the actual level of epidemic threat, conspiracy theories, fake news about vaccinations, pseudoscientific advice, fake news about COVID-19 detection tests and disinformation about infections and quarantine.

Importantly, in late 2020 and early 2021, the most popular source of information about the pandemic in Ukraine was the Internet, especially social networks (42% of responses in the study conducted by *SemanticForce*). In second place were television channels (26% of responses), while in third place were instant messenger groups (22% of responses). Generally, during the period discussed in this study, every third Ukrainian citizen did not use official sources of information at all, and the level of trust in the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was at the level of 28%. In the second half of 2021, the Ukrainian Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security (CKS) presented another collective study on disinformation, which directly linked the Covid infodemic in Ukraine with propaganda activities undertaken by the Russian Federation (Ukrainian National

News Agency 2021). The data included in the report cover the period from March 2020 to March 2021 and were collected by several Ukrainian analytical centres and fact-checking teams.

The structure of disinformation narratives about COVID-19 in Ukraine presented below is universal, regardless of what sources of information are analysed at a given moment in terms of infodemic threats. Significantly, in the case of Ukraine, manifestations of the infodemic and outright disinformation could be observed even in programs broadcast by the country's leading television stations such as Inter, "1+1", "ICTV", and "STB". In late 2020 and early 2021, Ukrainian television officially criticised the Ukrainian authorities for abandoning the production and use of the Russian COVID-19 vaccine, spread conspiracy theories about the origin of the coronavirus, deprecated the sense of using protective masks, and speculated on the safety of vaccines offered by Western companies. (Putsyata 2021: 55).

The structure of (COVID) disinformation narratives in Ukraine according to CKS is as follows:

Conspiracy theories
- The coronavirus does not exist, and international organisations that talk about the threat of an epidemic want to make money from Ukrainians.
- The coronavirus is a global conspiracy.
- The coronavirus is a mechanism by which governments want to control population size and actions.
- Coronavirus spreads via 5G technology.
- Bill Gates wants to implant chips in people in order to control them.

False information about vaccines
- The government wants to "vaccinate" everyone with low-quality vaccines.
- Politicians do not tell the whole truth about the vaccine.
- 'Covishield' is of low quality, even African countries have abandoned this product.
- The vaccine causes "mutations".
- The vaccine poses a threat to health and life, which is why doctors refuse to vaccinate.
- COVID-19 vaccinations is carried out for purposes of population control.

Disinformation aimed at discrediting Ukraine as a state, as well as the Ukrainian health care system
- Ukraine is unable to protect its citizens against the pandemic.
- Ukraine cannot provide vaccines to its citizens.
- The vaccine will be "tested" on Ukrainians.
- Ukraine should use the Russian Sputnik V vaccine, but "external curators" do not allow it.
- Health care reform is ineffective and does not bring results.
- "Sorosiata" (lit. 'Soros piglets' – agents working for George Soros) interfere in the activities of Ukrainian health care.
- The West treats Ukraine as a market for its own vaccines.
- The Ukrainian vaccine is just a pre-election PR stunt.
- Ukrainian authorities are manipulating coronavirus statistics.

Source: Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security (https://spravdi.gov.ua/)

Very interesting conclusions can also be reached by analysing how the topic of the pandemic was used for propaganda purposes in areas beyond Kyiv's control. The so-called infosphere of the unrecognised republics in eastern Ukraine was saturated by Russian propaganda with a large amount of manipulated information, through the help of which they tried to demonstrate the alleged advantage of Russia and the republic authorities over Ukraine and Western countries in the fight against the pandemic. Disinformation spam present in separatist media contained numerous "examples" intended to confirm Ukraine's institutional failure during the pandemic, the disastrous state of the health service and a high level of corruption in the structures responsible for fighting COVID-19. Additionally, propaganda in the occupied territories of the "republics" intensively linked the development of the pandemic with the alleged activation of military activities by the Ukrainian army, the aim of which was to divert the attention of the inhabitants of Ukraine from the growing problems caused by the scale of COVID-19 cases (DII-Ukraine 2021).

Infodemic of disinformation in Ukrainian channels of the application Telegram

From the point of view of this analysis, the dynamics of the infodemic that is dealt with in the Ukrainian segment of the Telegram messenger is deserving of special attention. In recent years, this messenger has significantly increased its market share and has become one of the basic sources of information for many citizens of both Russia and Ukraine. According to research conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), at present Telegram is, next to Viber and Facebook Messenger, the third most frequently used communication tool in Ukraine (KIIS 2021). Since Russia launched its full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the importance of this medium has increased immeasurably, and the messenger has become one of the pillars of Russian disinformation strategies (Ling 2022). Importantly, Telegram is not an ordinary messenger. Users of this application can create their own channels completely anonymously and post virtually any type of information on them. From the very beginning, Telegram has been characterised by a very liberal approach to the content posted by users on their channels and there is almost no element of control or moderation. Therefore, the messenger is an ideal tool for spreading disinformation about topics such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioned by the Ukrainian portal *detector-media*, in the period from July 2020 to February 2021, the "Let's data" company collected and analysed

over 440,000 entries shared in the Ukrainian segment of the Telegram messenger. An examination of the results reveals a noticeable and far-reaching similarity (in terms of content) between disinformation about COVID-19 posted on individual channels in the "Ukrainian" Telegram and fake news disseminated in Ukraine by other types of media. Common themes include claims that Ukraine has completely failed in its vaccination efforts, as well as the often repeated accusation that the Ukrainian side gave up the Russian vaccine solely for political reasons, even though using it was completely logical, profitable and could save the lives of many Ukrainian citizens. Fake news was also frequently disseminated in Ukrainian channels in the Telegram application, emphasising that the West treats Ukraine only as a market for its own vaccines, even those of allegedly lower quality. From many "sources" on the messenger, it was possible to learn that the Ukrainian authorities were manipulating epidemic statistics, and the COVID-19 vaccine was actually being used to control society and is an instrument of advanced social engineering (Ілюк 2021: 9-13).

Russian sources, Ukrainian infosphere

The development of the pandemic in Ukraine was also widely written about and discussed in Russia itself. On more than one occasion, disinformation about Ukraine, disseminated on a vast scale in Russian sources became a specific pattern of infodemic manipulation which could later be found in what was theoretically the "Ukrainian" infosphere. Content about Ukraine available, for example, in the Russian press was very often compiled in an almost exemplary way, consistent with the basic definition of infodemic proposed by D. Rothkoph in 2003. True information, such as the sceptical attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards vaccination, was combined with partial confirmation in facts (independent purchase of oxygen by patients and their families) and completely false content such as the mass flight of Ukrainians to Russia in search of an effective vaccine (Burkovskiy 2020).

References to Russian sources were present in the Ukrainian information space, even in a very direct form. For example, in December 2021, during an anti-vaccination demonstration in Kyiv, demonstrators used banners with a QR code on them, which contained a direct link to the website of the Russian political party "United Russia". The analysis of Russian sources, as well as "Ukrainian" channels spreading disinformation about the coronavirus, makes it possible to conclude that in a situation where a given medium constructs a message not with a Ukrainian recipient in mind, but for a recipient in the

Russian Federation or residents of the occupied territories, the content of the given information changes dramatically. Primitive, negative and fear-inducing disinformation is replaced by a balanced propaganda message encouraging, for example, vaccination and criticising the views of coronavirus sceptics and anti-vaxxers.

Russian and pro-Russian sources of information – the dichotomy of propaganda messages

Message directed to Ukraine	Message directed to Russia
• vaccinations mean death • the vaccine is extremely dangerous • Ukrainian authorities are trying to mutilate children as part of a new phase of vaccination • vaccinations are a form of coercion that violates human rights • appeals such as "think and give up vaccination" • spreading fake news and conspiracy theories	• vaccination is necessary to limit the spread of coronavirus • vaccination is completely safe, and "Sputnik-M" will be produced for children • appeals encouraging vaccination at every level of citizen-state communication • Russia delivers vaccines to various parts of the world, saving many lives

Source: Centre for Counteracting Disinformation at the National Council of National Remembrance Council (https://cpd.gov.ua)

Ukrainian society vis a vis the pandemia and infodemia

In early May and late June 2020, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) published one of the first sociological studies in Ukraine, in which respondents were asked about the origin of the coronavirus and its spread around the world. The majority of Ukrainian citizens surveyed believed that the coronavirus was of artificial origin (66%) and as many as 37% of respondents believed that it was not only specially developed, but also deliberately disseminated in order to reduce the world's population or against some particular country. The remaining 29% of those who believed in the artificial origin of the coronavirus limited themselves to stating that it had been grown in a laboratory, but that its spread had been accidental. Only 18% of respondents believed that the coronavirus originated naturally and later spread naturally around the world (KIIS 2020).

In turn, in an August 2021 survey , only 23.4% of surveyed Ukrainian citizens mentioned the vaccine as an effective protective mechanism against COVID-19. Practically the same result was achieved by preventive measures, such as taking vitamins (22.3%). Most respondents gave the first place in this specific ranking to washing their hands after coming home (54%). The survey

results clearly confirmed that Ukrainian society had a negative attitude towards vaccination against COVID-19 at that time. Over 56% of respondents openly admitted that they were not vaccinated and did not intend to take even a single dose of the preparation. As a result, as reported by DIF[2] in September 2021, the vaccination rate in Ukraine did not exceed 20% in any age group (DIF 2021).

When asked about the reasons for not getting vaccinated, those surveyed in Ukraine first pointed to the insufficient level of vaccine safety (in their opinion) (from 43% to 57% depending on the age group), and then to the occurrence of side effects (from 38% up to 49% depending on the age group), as well as pressure from state structures (from 21% to 36% depending on the age group). Fourth on the list of reasons for refraining from vaccination was the belief that it would not protect them from catching COVID-19 (from 26% to 35% depending on the age group) (DIF 2021). In general, Ukrainian society, in late 2021 and early 2022, was also characterised by a high level of scepticism towards vaccines, and none of the official campaigns promoting prevention against the coronavirus were able to change this situation. According to data from the end of October 2022, 16.1 million citizens in Ukraine received at least one dose (calculating from the beginning of the vaccination campaign) of a COVID-19 vaccine. Just over 2.5 million were vaccinated with the first booster dose, and 75,000 received the second (PHC 2022).

Summary

It is impossible to say clearly how many coronavirus sceptics and vaccine opponents in Ukraine were victims of the infodemic of disinformation about COVID-19, which was inspired and directed by Russia. Undoubtedly, the Covid infodemic in Ukraine was different from similar trends that shaped the information space of other countries around the world in 2020-2022. From the very beginning, the COVID-19 infodemic in Ukraine was one of many areas of massive propaganda influence, the main goal of which was and remains to weaken and discredit the Ukrainian state as such. Covid disinformation was therefore not a plan in itself, but a very significant escalation of the hybrid component of Russian aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 2014. It can also be said that the fight against fake news regarding COVID-19 in Ukraine was a kind of prelude to actions, which this country was

[2] DIF = Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (Фонд Демократичні ініціативи імені Ілька Кучеріва)

forced to undertake in the information sphere after 24 February 2022. The successes that Ukraine has achieved in the information war with Russia after this date lead to the conclusion that Kyiv has learned well the lessons of the infodemic in the years 2020-2021.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to analyse the phenomenon of infodemic in terms of disinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic that shaped the Ukrainian infosphere in the years 2020-2022. The considerations contained in the text focus mainly on the specific features of the issue, and are an attempt to answer the question of how much disinformation regarding COVID-19 in Ukraine differed from analogous trends shaping the internal situation and the infosphere in other countries around the world. The article presents a working thesis that the covid infodemic in Ukraine had, first of all, a clear external provenance (largely a single-source), as well as a highly adaptive nature, as a function and element of a wider disinformation campaign carried out by the Russian Federation towards Ukraine and its inhabitants. The analysis presented made it possible to identify the main elements characteristic of the disinformation infodemic in Ukraine and confirm the dependence of the phenomenon analysed on an external factor, that is the influence of the Russian Federation.

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The cases of Alaska and Svalbard as an example of Russian withdrawal from the concept of Arctic Exceptionalism after 22 February, 2022

Introduction

The Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 brought about many changes in areas miles away from this armed conflict. Many international actors began to question the credibility of the Russian Federation, emphasising that they had lost trust in Russia.[1] The situation in the Arctic also changed. First, seven member states (A7) of the Arctic Council (AC) excluding Russia discontinued participation in its proceedings, which led to a suspension of the forum's activity. It was resumed in June, but the A7 declared that they would refrain from implementing projects which would require Russia's cooperation (Reuters Media 2022a; Bye 2022a; Jonassen 2022b). Arctic states united around the United States (Rosen, Y. 2022), the Nordic states strengthened their defence cooperation (Edvardsen 2022a; 2022b; Jonassen 2022a), and Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO (Henley 2022).

Russia, which has been expanding its presence in the Arctic for a decade, responded by putting its strategic nuclear weapons on the Kola Peninsula on standby, and announced the deployment of 500 additional weapons to the peninsula and investments in the renovation of twenty-eight military bases

[1] Such declarations were made after the attack on Ukraine until the last quarter of 2022. According to Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin, Russia has "lost trust for generations" (France 24 2022). On the other hand, the French Permanent Representative to the UN stated that "If words no longer have any meaning, if truth and lies have equal rights, diplomacy is no longer possible" (Riviere 2022). However, there has been a noticeable lack of similar responses from some of the African, American and Asian states that refrained from unequivocally condemning Russia in the UN General Assembly (UN News 2022).

(Devyatkin 2018; Legucka 2020; Nilsen 2022). Also, military vehicles were seen near the Finnish border (Anglesey 2022). These actions were intended to act as a deterrent, as some Russian troops previously stationed on the peninsula (for example, the 200th Motor Rifle Brigade) had been sent to fight in Ukraine, thereby weakening their operational capabilities in the High North (Bye 2022b; 2022c; 2022d). At the same time, attention was drawn to the alleged illegality of actions taken by the other Arctic states. On 14 June 2022, the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, accused them of isolating Moscow in the Artic Council. These allegations were repeated by Russian diplomats and spread by Russian media, primarily *Kommersant* and the TASS agency, which suggested that the decisions made by the A7 were part of an international conspiracy aimed at excluding Russia from the Arctic. (TASS 2022a; 2022b; Fedotova 2022). In addition, Medvedev claimed that the AC was an international organisation; thus, the A7 were accused of undermining the existing AC rules and violating international law. Indeed, decisions made by this body must be unanimous. Therefore, it was impossible to end its proceedings without Russia's consent. However, decisions made by the AC are not legally binding, as it is not an international organisation (Graczyk and Koivurova 2015: 298–327). Moreover, the decision to isolate Russia was not taken by the AC as such, but was a separate declaration issued by the A7,[2] which in practice resulted in a break in the proceedings.

The case of the Arctic Council was not the only one where the Russian Federation took a strong stand against other countries in the region by resorting to manipulation. In June and July of 2022, the Russian public saw the emergence of accusations against the United States and Norway, which were then taken up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Viatcheslav Volodin said: "Let America always remember: there's a piece of Russian territory, Alaska" (TASS 2022c, Staalesen 2022). Deputy Chairman Pyotr Tolstoy, on the other hand, called for a referendum which would answer the question of whether the local population wished to join Russia (The Moscow Times, 2022). Meanwhile, the Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council, Konstantin Kosachev, accused Norway of violating the Svalbard Treaty of 1920. He was joined by the chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Law, Andrey Klishas, who suggested that Oslo's conduct cast doubt on its rights to the Svalbard Archipelago (TASS 2022c; Staalesen 2022).

[2] It should be noted that there was no mention of depriving Russia of its position as chair of the Arctic Council. Norway declared that it would take over only when the Russian mandate expired in 2023 (Woodrow Wilson Center, 2022).

Rationale

Russian claims regarding Alaska and Svalbard are important for several reasons. During the period analysed, the US was one of the main pillars of aid for Ukraine, and in the face of war sped up the rearmament of Alaska and gradually increased its presence in other parts of the Arctic (Baker 2022; Harris 2022). The US is the most important NATO[3] member, and it is around it that the other countries of the region unite, which increases Russia's isolation. Norway, on the other hand, is the most important European partner of the US in the High North, on whose territory NATO's Cold Response and Trident Juncture exercises were conducted. It also pursued a policy under the slogan "High North, low tension", avoided tensions in the Arctic and continued security cooperation with Russia (Devyatkin 2018), when Russia stopped participating in meetings of the Arctic Chiefs of Defence Staff and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable after the annexation of Crimea (Soroka, 2022: 211). Nevertheless, after the aggression against Ukraine, Norway took a clear stand against Russia (Reuters Media 2022b; Office of the Prime Minister 2022), and it is situated on NATO's front line in the event of an armed conflict – alongside Finland, which joined the alliance in April 2023.

Realising this, the Kremlin did not deny any of the mentioned claimes, and in fact used them on various occasions. Maria Zakharova, spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry, when asked by a CNN journalist about the legality of Russia's seizure of its alleged historical lands,[4] ironically asked "whether the journalist meant Alaska" (РИА Новости 2022). In the Norwegian case, the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned the country's chargé d'affaires and urged her to persuade Oslo to refrain from the alleged treaty violation (Павленко 2022). Thus, the claims that had been advanced at the parliamentary level were taken over by the government level of the Russian administration, and formed part of Moscow's anti-Western policy.

At least some of those making such assertions were closely associated with President Vladimir Putin. Volodin was said to be a member of his "inner circle". Until 2016, he was deputy head of the presidential administration; he was

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[3] At the annual Arctic Circle Assembly conference in October 2022, the head of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, stated that a return to business as usual in the Arctic was doubtful (Arctic Circle Assembly 2022).

[4] On 9 June 2022, at a press conference, Putin compared himself to Peter I and talked about regaining Russian lands (Roth 2022). The issue of Russia's historical claims keeps returning in speeches made by various Russian politicians, including some from the president's closest circle (Grala 2022).

dismissed because of his ambitions, but retained much of his influence as one of the so-called *siloviki* and "defenders of Russia against undesirable influences" (Langton 2022; Stanovaya 2020; Service 2019: chapter 17). Tolstoy was the head of Russia's representation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, until its exclusion from the body. He has been portrayed as one of the president's leading propagandists. Klishas is an oligarch and co-author of the 2020 constitutional amendments enabling Putin to stay in power. His close ties with the Russian leader after the invasion of Ukraine caused European countries to impose sanctions on him (Hyatt 2022; swissinfo.ch 2022; Squires 2022; Associated Press 2016). All of these people are known to have made public statements following the official line of the highest state authorities, and have demonstrated their loyalty to the president. According to Brian Taylor (Taylor 2018: 195), Volodin even regards him as a kind of saviour. In all likelihood, they realised what type of messages would meet with the Kremlin's approval.

At the same time, it should be noted that the accusations and suggestions voiced by these figures were disseminated by foreign media, including Polish ones, which contributed to their longevity (Polska Agencja Prasowa 2022; Zaremba 2022). The message reaching a large part of the audience was that while Norway and the USA were accusing Russia of violating international law, they could also be accused of doing so themselves. Thus, the credibility of both countries was undermined. The gravity of these claims and the status of those making them lead me to take a closer look at these issues.

Arctic Exceptionalism according to the English School of International Relations

After the end of the Cold War, the Arctic was perceived by the countries of the High North as an exceptional region – isolated from international disputes in other parts of the world (Hoogensen Gjørv and Hodgson 2019; Lackenbauer and Dean 2020). According to Heather Exner-Pirot and Robert Murray (Exner-Pirot and Murray 2017: 48), an international society based on norms, multilateralism, international institutions and the balance of power was deliberatedly negotiated in the region. The Exner-Pirot, following representatives of the English School of International Relations, emphasises the crucial importance of norms such as sovereignty or rules-based order for the concept of international society (ibid: 50 and 52). Although after the annexation of Crimea Russia's policy towards Ukraine was assumed to be a challenge for the region's exceptionalism (Käpyla and Mikkola [2015]: 12–17), cooperation be-

tween Western countries and Russia was to remain undisturbed, as the latter was interested in holding the balance of power in the Arctic, which was conducive to maintaining the region's exceptionalism (Exner-Pirot 2020: 316–317; Exner-Pirot and Murray 2017: 55–56).

Such opinions seem to have been justified. Before 2022, Russia, like other countries of the region, generally conformed to the Arctic norms and principles. Russia's claims were based on legal arguments which it presented before the AC or the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (Łuszczuk 2013; Kubiak 2012). Furthermore, it made no claims to the territories of other states, nor did it use the issue of national minorities as a means of pressure. Despite increasing its military presence in the Arctic, Russia did not use its armed forces to intimidate other states, and cooperated with NATO states in the region until 2014, and with Norway until 2022. For Russia, the Arctic was first of all a "zone of peace" (Schaller 2019; Åtland 2008) and then a "territory of peace and communication" (TASS 2017), where the pursuit of national interests was possible while respecting the interests of the Arctic international society.

Research methodology

I adopt the assumption that the sanctions imposed on Russia and the suspension of cooperation within the AC led Russia to lose its "territory of peace and communication". As a result, Russia began to use tools that it had already used in other parts of the world, especially those in the post-Soviet area, and thus abandoned the concept of the "Arctic Exceptionalism". Such tools include making claims to alleged historical Russian territories, protecting the Russian or Orthodox minority, and protesting against alleged violations of international provisions.[5]

[5] These arguments have already been used in Russian policy towards Georgia and Ukraine, but also Latvia, Estonia and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia (Karolak-Michalska 2017; Herpen et al. 2016: 149; Ziegler 2006). As to international agreements, among the most notorious Russian manipulations is the issue of NATO enlargement. As Marry M. Sarotte (2010) has shown, the Russians claim that the Americans promised them that NATO would not expand to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However, the Americans merely raised such a possibility as a part of international negotiations. The promise was said to have been made in separate talks by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and thus cannot be regarded as representing NATO's position on its eastward expansion. Additionally, NATO signed an agreement regulating relations with the Russian Federation (Founding Act 1997).

This article analyses the Russian claims and allegations addressed to the United States and Norway on the Alaska and Svalbard issues. They are considered in the light of the provisions and implementation of the 1867 Russian-American Treaty and the Svalbard Treaty of 1920, as these are fundamental points of reference in both disputes. I then verify whether Russian Arctic policy in these cases violated the principles that underlie the region's exceptionalism within the framework of the Arctic international society, in accordance with the theoretical assumptions of the English School of International Relations.

Alaska

Historical background

In the seventeenth century, Russia organised expeditions in order to reach America sailing along the northern coast of Eurasia. This was achieved by Vitus Bering, and the discovery of Alaska enabled Tsar Paul I to set up the Russian-American Trading Company and to establish a colony (Grinev 2015: 5–16).[6] About twenty settlements were established there, mostly on the coast, but their population never exceeded seven hundred people. From the nineteenth century onwards, ethnic Russians began to dominate among the settlers, whereas Finns and Baltic Germans were considered to make up about a third of the colony's population. The overwhelming majority of them came from the European part of the empire, and they reached Alaska by sea, bypassing Siberia. As emphasised by Ilja Vinkovetsky (Vinkovetsky 2014: 36), this had an impact on the attitude of the Russian elite towards the colony, who saw it "as both the most remote extension of Russia's Siberian frontier and, paradoxically, as a colony that was mentally much closer to St. Petersburg than was the bulk of Siberia."

The colony traded primarily in furs, but the profitability of this venture was questioned in view of the cost of transport to the metropolis. In order to survive, the Company preferred to sell its goods to China, which was closer to it, rather than the distant European part of Russia (Wheeler 1971: 420–421). Nevertheless, for the Admiralty and Tsar Alexander I, Alaska was an element of their global imperial policy, and they intended to protect it as part of the tsarist domain (Nichols 1967: 15). Nicholas I, on the other hand, considered it

[6] For more details on Russian expeditions and colonisation of America before 1799, see Grinëv (2018).

too expensive and with uncertain returns investment, and provocative to the Americans (Vinkovetsky 2014: 49). Despite this, the tsarist government, who no longer treated Alaska as a means of expansion, subsidised the colony. The tsar's indifference to Alaska was quite obvious, and the colony was forced to fend for itself in the face of increasing American whaling activity (Grinev 2015: 24).

The Company administering the colony had many opponents at the tsar's court. From the mid-1840s it recorded worse and worse turnover, and the government, looking for savings after the Crimean War, began to consider the option of selling Alaska, which was deemed "complete uselessness of these colonies for Russia" (Petrov 2015: 61–90; Vinkovetsky 2014: 181–182; Miller 1943: 524). As the territory was adjacent to British possessions and there were fears regarding London's expansion in the direction of Asia, an offer was made to the United States. The first attempts to sell the territory were made as early as 1857, but the transaction was not completed until 30 March 1867.

Russian claims and the treaty provisions

Russian claims to Alaska revolve around three issues. The first is the claim that the state is in fact the property of the Russian Federation. It is based on the assumption that the 1867 agreement did not speak of the sale of the territory, but of its lease. This narrative reflects a long-standing tradition, as it was taught in Soviet schools that this territory was leased rather than sold (Vinkovetsky 2014: 14). The second claim challenges the conclusion of the sale, as the United States, according to this narrative, did not pay the amount agreed in the treaty (Smith-Peter 2015: 2).[7] Finally, the last issue refers to the idea that there is a group of people, most probably of Russian descent, living in Alaska, defying their current status and willing to support the annexation of that state to the Russian Federation.

All three narratives are directly or indirectly related to the 1867 Treaty or its implementation. It is enough to read Article I of the document to learn that "His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias agrees to cede to the United States, by this convention, immediately upon the exchange of ratifications" (*Treaty with*

[7] The sale of Alaska is quite deftly handled by Russian nationalists in their imperial rhetoric. They often refer to a "Judeo-Masonic conspiracy" allegedly underlying the transaction. It also includes a theme referring to a "Polish traitor", a separatist who wanted to both separate Polish lands from Russia and make Alaska independent and act in alliance against the tsarist regime (Znamenski 2009: 359–366).

Russia 1867: Art. I). The term "cede" is of key importance here as it clearly implies a transfer of the entire territory. In the case of a lease, a more appropriate term would be used, for example, "administrative cession" or, more precisely, "territorial leasing" (Bugajski 2013: 55–56).

The document was drawn up in two languages, English and, following the Russian diplomatic tradition of the time, French.[8] By comparing the two texts, it is possible to determine with a high degree of probability what the intentions of its authors were. The English section of the treaty refers to "ceded territory" while the French one refers to "territoire cédé" (*Treaty with Russia 1867*: Art. III), i.e. the sale of territory understood not only as the transfer of land, but also of all undeveloped squares, public buildings, forts and military units and archives at the moment of ratification of the document by both parties. It is emphasised in the documents that the cession is "complete and absolute" ("complète et absolute") (*Treaty with Russia 1867*: Art. II–V). It is noteworthy that this issue was also discussed in diplomatic correspondence at the time, in which the planned transaction was referred to as a "cession" not only by the US Secretary of State William Seward, but also by the Russian ambassador Eduard Stoeckl (Stoeckl 1867).[9] The latter was congratulated on the conclusion of the cession by minister Aleksandr Gorchakov and Emperor Alexander II (Golder 1920: 421). Thus, the Russian government was fully aware that it was selling the territory, not leasing it.

An integral part of this transaction was the payment for the ceded territory. The treaty set the amount at $7,200,000 in gold (*Treaty with Russia 1867*: Art. VI). In 1868, questions were raised whether the American government had met its obligations. This was related to two issues. First, more than a year passed between when the treaty was signed and when Congress approved the payment of the agreed amount.[10] Second, although the full amount was paid, it was rumoured that only $5,000,000 had crossed the ocean to Russia (Dunning 1912: 391–392). This would portray the United States in a bad light as a country that did not want to meet its obligations.

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[8] The official journal of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the *Journal de Saint-Pétersbourg*, was also published in this language.

[9] Stoeckl was convinced that Asia was the future of Russian expansion due to its proximity to the rich harbours in China and Japan (Hunter 1943: 530).

[10] This was related to the claims of the Perkins family and their supporters, who maintained that in 1855 the late Benjamin Perkins was deceived by the Russian spy Rakelevich and his accomplice Ambassador Stoeckel. Some of the congressmen who opposed the ratification of the treaty with Russia concerning the purchase of Alaska supported these claims. Later some of them changed their minds. See Golder (1920: 422–424).

A thorough investigation conducted by the Public Expenditure Commission revealed that the American side had paid the Russian ambassador the full amount agreed to in the treaty. However, he had transferred only 7,035,000 dollars, which created a shortfall of $165,000 (Dunning 1912: 392; Jensen 1975: 127). The commission was unable to determine what had happened to the missing money. Later, historians found a memorandum signed by President Andrew Johnson, indicating that the ambassador had paid certain American journalists and politicians to support the idea of purchasing Alaska and then to push a bill through Congress on the payment to Russia (Dunning 1912: 385–386). Regardless of whether ambassador Stoeckl bribed or just financially supported those advocating the purchase of Alaska, all the evidence we have leaves no doubt that the American government, despite some delays, ultimately paid the 7,200,000 dollars agreed to in the treaty.[11]

As has already been mentioned, the number of colonists in Russian America did not exceed 700 people at its peak, most of the time fluctuating around 600.[12] However, it should be remembered that some members of the native population adopted the Russian language and converted to Orthodoxy (Veniaminov, Nichols and Croskey 1972: 41–54; Vinkovetsky 2014: 127–130, 163–180), which increased the influence of Russian culture. Once the treaty was ratified, Alaskan residents had the right to stay in the region and to practise their religion freely. Russian nationalists have argued in recent years that the Americans have failed to comply with this part of the treaty by making it difficult to learn the language and closing Russian schools (Devonshire-Ellis 2021). However, the vast majority of settlers, the cultural elite of the colony, chose to return to Russia (Lain 1976: 146–149). After that, the number of people speaking Russian at their homes in Alaska steadily decreased, which also resulted in school closures. Tolstoy's calls for a referendum are linked to an event that took place in 2014, when a pro-Kremlin organisation presented, supposedly as a joke, a petition demanding Alaska's return to Russia. At that time,

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[11] Ronald Jensen (1975: 131) referred here, among other things, to the findings of H Miller, according to whom ambassador Stoeckl told his superiors in St Petersburg that he had allocated a large sum of the approximately $200,000 to settle the Perkins case. F. A. Golder (1920: 424) made it clear that this money bought the congressmen's favour. The findings of other researchers seem to support this statement. It should be noted, however, that the Alaska case did not violate the American legislative process of the nineteenth century in any significant way, because bribes are thought to have been an integral part of it (Jensen 1975: 131–132).

[12] Stoeckl pointed out that these were generally the Company's employees and it was impossible to attract other settlers. The number of Creoles, on the other hand, was not higher than 1,200 (Miller 1943: 528).

it was allegedly signed by 37,000 people, but the credibility of these signatures is difficult to verify (Sarhaddi Nelson 2014; Tetrault-Farber 2014). The social base for a potential referendum seems to be insignificant. According to the United States Census Bureau, about 0.7% of American citizens in Alaska spoke Russian (*The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States* 2018b). About 3% of its residents indicated Russia as their place of birth (*The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States* 2018c) and 1.4% declared Russian ancestry (*The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States* 2018a). The number of people of Orthodox faith does not exceed 5% (Pew Research Center 2014). The aforementioned number of people who signed the petition approaches the number of Orthodox people in Alaska, but a large proportion of them are Native Americans who for a long time have had no cultural ties to Russia. Besides, the Alaskan Orthodox diocese is part of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of America recognised by the Russian Orthodox Church.

The claims regarding Alaska encountered in the Russian public space are therefore based on questionable premises. Despite this, Vladimir Chizhov, the Russian ambassador to the EU, when asked in 2014 about Russia's expansionist ambitions, said: "Should I tell Sen. McCain to watch over Alaska? ... It used to be Russian." He immediately added that this was only a joke (Sarhaddi Nelson 2014). Such insinuations were not taken up by the Russian Foreign Ministry at the time; they may have been an individual initiative of the aforementioned Russian diplomat. Furthermore, Putin publicly stated that the 1867 treaty was not threatened (Rupar 2014). In 2022, a similar narrative using known nationalist slogans could be heard from both leading Russian parliamentarians and a Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, which made it an element of official state policy.

Svalbard

Historical background

The history of the Svalbard Archipelago is different from that of Alaska. It was discovered in 1596 by the Dutch sailor Willem Barents. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the English and Dutch, but also the French and Spanish, used to hunt seals, walruses and whales there. Rivalry among the countries, especially between England and the Netherlands, became particularly aggressive, which lead to a reduction in their profits. Finally, they managed to reach an agreement that ended the hunting. It remained in force until the nineteenth

century, when the Russians, who hunted the local walruses until the middle of that century, intensified their activity (Numminen [2011]: 7–8).

Despite this, until the twentieth century Svalbard remained a no-man's land (*terra nullius*), a status characteristic of most islands and archipelagos in the Arctic Ocean. The discovery of coal deposits increased the interest of individual countries in Svalbard. The United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway were the first to make claims, with the intention of establishing a colony there. Russian opposition made them abandon these plans. The problem resurfaced when Norway became independent, but again its plans were thwarted by Russia and Germany, which took an interest in the region. In their attempt to find a solution, Norway, Sweden and Russia proposed that the status of the archipelago as a no-man's land be maintained, but under the administration of Oslo, Stockholm and St Petersburg. The outbreak of the First World War and opposition from Germany and the USA buried that idea (Grydehøj 2020: 269–270; Numminen [2011]: 8).

Only when the global conflict ended could the Svalbard case be settled. At that time, the USA was no longer interested in the archipelago, Germany was isolated on the international stage, and Russia was mired in civil war. In such circumstances, the Entente states decided to reward Norway, which – while formally neutral during the war – had put its merchant fleet at the disposal of the British and lost nearly half of its vessels and about 2,000 sailors (Knutsen 1999: 57). On 9 February 1920, Norway, the USA, France, Denmark, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and the Union of South Africa signed the Svalbard Treaty granting Oslo full rights to the archipelago.[13] The Soviet Union ratified it in 1935 (Closson 2018: 3) in exchange for recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Norway.

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[13] Dariusz Rozmus claims that "under the Svalbard Treaty, the Archipelago does not belong to Norway, but is merely its overseas territory" (Rozmus 2017: 270). Article 1 of the treaty states that the contracting parties recognise "the full and complete sovereignty of Norway over the Archipelago of Spitsbergen; cf. Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen (1920) and Government Statement (1931). D. H. Anderson (2009: 373–374) on the other hand, points out that the treaty in fact regulated the new status of Svalbard in international relations and granted Norway sovereignty over the archipelago pursuant to its own proclamation and the recognition of this sovereignty by the other signatories to the treaty. Furthermore, according to Jensen (2020: 86) the acknowledgement of Norwegian sovereignty in Article 1 was intended to emphasise that it was no different from its customary sovereignty over its other territories. Having been granted sovereignty over Svalbard in 1925, Norway passed the Svalbard Act, recognising the Archipelago as part of the Kingdom of Norway (*Lov om Svalbard* 1925).

Treaty provisions and Russian claims

After the ratification of the Svalbard Treaty, in 1925 Norway passed a law incorporating the archipelago into the kingdom. This marked the beginning of a process during which Oslo continued to emphasise its sovereignty over the territory. This policy included efforts to establish, in 1977, an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Svalbard pursuant to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, the USSR and its satellites, as well as some NATO countries objected to this idea (Pedersen 2009: 323–325). The opposition resulted not only from countries' conflicting interests, but also from the fact that, at the time of the drafting of the treaty, there were no established forms of international regime in maritime law, such as the aforementioned EEZ granting specific privileges to a coastal state. Hence, there were many, sometimes mutually exclusive interpretations of Norway's rights. While Norway's sovereignty over the archipelago or the territorial sea was not questioned, the attitude of individual countries towards the EEZ varied. So as to avoid further complications, at least temporarily, in 1977 Norway established a Fisheries Protection Zone around the archipelago, to which the Soviets objected. The dispute continued after the collapse of the USSR. Since 1998, the Norwegian Coast Guard has repeatedly tried to detain Russian fishing boats on charges of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the zone (Østhagen 2018: 101). It was the conclusion of the Treaty between the Kingdom of Norway and the Russian Federation concerning Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean in 2010 that partially resolved the accumulated problems (Grydehøj 2020: 274; Østhagen, Jørgensen and Moe 2020: 150–168; Tiller and Nyman 2015: 141–148). However, in 2017, when NATO's Trident Juncture exercises were being held in Norway, the Russian Defence Ministry announced that Norwegian policy towards Svalbard might bring a potential risk of war (Nilsen 2017).

Faced with the Norwegian position in the Russian–Ukrainian war, Moscow threatened to terminate the 2010 treaty (Эрозбек 2023). Its main objections, however, focused on the issue of Svalbard's accessibility. Due to the sanctions, Russian trucks could not cross the border with Norway. This also applied to the vehicles heading for the port of Tromsø with supplies for four hundred Russian miners working in Barentsburg on Svalbard. Kosachev and Klishas argued that this meant stopping transit to the archipelago and, in effect, violated Article 3 of the 1920 Treaty and thus called into question Norwegian sovereignty over the territory (TASS 2022c; Staalesen 2022).

The above argument can be reduced to the claim that the violation of the treaty consisted in preventing Russia from transporting supplies to, and consequently accessing, Svalbard, as suggested by Russian lawmakers. Article 3, which is used to support the objections, does indeed refer to this issue. It states that citizens of the signatory states have "equal liberty of access and stay for any reason or object in the ports of the archipelago." Similar rights were granted to the vessels of these states "[n]otwithstanding any rules relating to coasting trade which may be in force in Norway." They also have the right to access Norwegian ports for the receiving and unloading of passengers and goods. Furthermore, no burdens concerning the transit and export of goods that would not apply to Norway may be imposed on any signatory to the treaty (*Government statement* 1931: Art. 3; *Treaty concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen* 1920: Art. 3).

The aforementioned article clearly defines the rights of the signatories. The opinions cited by Russian politicians are based on the assumption that the closure of the borders makes it impossible to use the port in Tromsø. However, the Norwegian government did not prohibit Russia from using it. Russian vessels were still permitted to call at Norwegian ports and Svalbard pursuant to the treaty. This was confirmed by the head of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Anniken Huitfeldt, who stated that there were no objections to delivering supplies to the miners in Barentsburg. The Russians could have shipped them to Tromsø using alternative routes. At the same time, it was emphasised that the sanctions policy did not apply to the archipelago (Staalesen 2022).

The Norwegian government took advantage of the fact that Article 3 of the treaty did not refer to land transport in mainland Norway, but only to sea transport. Russian allegations were based on the assumption that a lack of passage through Norwegian territory practically meant no transit at all, which did not reflect reality. Oslo's firm stance prompted Russia to summon the Norwegian chargé d'affaires (Павленко 2022), thereby granting the claims made by Russian parliamentarians the status of an official government position. In response, the Norwegian government decided on a compromise solution. It sent its own lorries to the border with Russia (Andreassen, Rypeng and Skeie 2022). This, in turn, made possible the transportation of supplies to the port by land. Since the lorries belonged to Norway, there could be no suggestion that Oslo considered claims related to Article 3 to be justified.

Although the Russian government has voiced its objections to Norway's Svalbard policy in the past, these could be interpreted as not that different from the concerns of other countries opposed to the EEZ around the archipelago. Similarly, the warnings issued by the Russian Ministry of Defence, though exaggerated, referred to Norway's policy, which may have been considered con-

troversial. However, the summoning of the Norwegian chargé d'affaires to force Norway to change its policy on sanctions amounted to the Kremlin's identification with the manipulations of those parliamentarians who accused Norway of violating Article 3 of the Svalbard Treaty.

Conclusions

Upon analysing the Alaska and Svalbard cases, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Russian claims were based on assumptions that were not supported by either the provisions of the treaties or their implementation; 2) such a practice showed signs of manipulation used to undermine the sovereignty of the USA over Alaska and Norway over Svalbard; 3) questioning the sovereignty of Arctic states and using manipulation for this purpose stands in contrast to the concept of Arctic Exceptionalism based, among other things, on the acceptance of norms, principles and respect for international law; 4) the fact that the Russian Foreign Ministry accepted a narrative based on manipulation and questioned the sovereignty of Arctic states points towards Russia's withdrawal from the concept of the High North's exceptionalism, at least in the sense in which it has been viewed so far, as confirmed by subsequent changes to its regional strategy, from which cooperation in the AC was removed and in which greater emphasis was placed on national interest and the independence of its Arctic industrial projects (Humpert 2023).

Seeing the unification of the other countries of the region around the USA, Russia recognized it was loosing its "territory of peace and communication" and implemented the tools it used elsewhere (for example, manipulating international arrangements or exploiting minority issues). The High North is becoming a stage for Russia's disinformation policy (Damski 2022), complementing its more extensive activity in this field (see Legucka and Szczudlik 2023).

Russia's retreat from the concept of Arctic Exceptionalism in its current form seems to correspond to similar observations made by other countries in the region, who agree that it will be a source of tensions and incidents in the future (Rosen, K., 2022). This is considered a fundamental withdrawal, even by Russia, from the concept of isolating the High North from disputes, and a shift towards the American idea of perceiving the region as an element of one of the components of the security of individual Arctic states.[14]

[14] George Soroka (2022: 212) notes that Russia had a separate strategy for the Arctic, while the US Arctic strategy was part of its broader defence strategy.

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Keywords: Arctic, Russia, United States, Norway, Alaska purchase, Svalbard Treaty, disinformation, international law, English School of IR

Abstract

This article examines emerging claims in the Russian public sphere over US Alaska and challenging Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard. Both cases are analysed in relation to the theoretical approach of the English school of international relations, assuming the functioning of an international society built on treaty provisions and the norms and principles of conduct, and values common to the members of that society. For this reason, the main part of the article focuses on the analysis of the treaty provisions and their implementation. On this basis, it was concluded that the rhetoric towards Alaska and Svalbard picked up by the Russian government indicates Russia's departure from the norms and principles constituting the Arctic regime (the so-called exceptionalism) and the implementation in the High North of foreign policy tools which, although typical for the Kremlin in other parts of the world, have not yet been applied in the Arctic.

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The German attitude towards Russia in 2005-2021 as an example of political adaptation

Introduction

Vladimir Putin's term in office has been a period of consolidation of Russia's international position. First, Chechnya was reintegrated into the Russian Federation. Then the Russian president thwarted the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine by initiating a conflict in the South Caucasus (2008), and in 2014 he began the process of subjugating Ukraine by occupying Crimea and supporting separatists in the Donbass. Lastly, since February 2022, a full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war has been underway. This chronology of the Russian Federation's expansion seems appropriate to describe the dynamics of change from 2005 to 2021.

Faced with a deteriorating international situation, European states have been forced to adjust their attitudes. In this context, Germany seems to be a particularly interesting case. Its relationship with Russia has fluctuated for three hundred years between rivalry and cooperation. Hence, it seems justified to take as a theoretical basis the theory of political adaptation (which is part of the systems approach, also known as the research approach[1]) and thus also its conceptual framework, which will be outlined in the next section, i.e. the theoretical subsection.

This article focuses on the attitude of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) towards the expansionist policies of the Russian Federation between 2005 and 2021, during Angela Merkel's chancellorship. The structure follows a chronological approach. After presenting the theoretical framework,

[1] For the sake of clarity of argumentation, the author sticks to the term: political adaptation theory, although he fully understands the doubts of researchers who define political adaptation as a research approach.

the paper discusses the position of the federal government before 2005. It then describes the next three sub-periods (2005-2008, 2008-2014, and 2014-2021), and concludes with a summary that also serves as a forecast for the coming years.

This article aims to test the hypothesis that Germany's attitude towards Russia during Angela Merkel's tenure as Chancellor is marked by a process of political adaptation. In these specific circumstances, this should be understood as Germany adapting to changes in the regional environment by influencing its form.

The wide range of topics makes it appropriate to approach the research problem by means of a case study. Its aim is to comprehensively describe a particular community, taking into account a broad set of variables, with the researcher's attention focused on both the values of the variables and the relationships between them (Nowak 1970). It should be clearly emphasised that such research does not deal with random or isolated events, but focuses on a single, specific subject (Sztumski 2005: 121).

This multifaceted nature of the relations described (primarily in the political domain, but also in the economic, social, and cultural spheres) calls for source and content analysis. They will be subjected to a broad source base in the form of official documents, speeches or newspaper articles and analyses (Bäcker, Czechowska, Gadomska et al. 2016: 66).

Theoretical issues

The main premise of the theory of political adaptation is that each state (itself a system) functions in the international environment and forms a supersystem with it. This system evolves through constant interaction, in which relationships are always reciprocal (Pietraś 1989b: 3). The existence of an international system requires only two actors, with interdependencies between them, meaning that the decisions of one determine the behaviour of the other. These interdependencies are crucial when analysing their foreign policies. Interdependence is not limited to cooperation, but it also applies to enemy actors (Wendt 2008: 315-316).

Adaptation has a wide range of applications. It has been borrowed into political science from sociology and psychology and it should be understood as adjustment to new conditions (Dumała 2016a: 24). In political science, it is understood as adaptation to changes in the international environment and the state's independent shaping of this environment (Drygiel 2015: 178).

James N. Rosenau defines political adaptation as an action that helps to maintain basic social structures within acceptable limits (quoted in Rosenau 1980: 3-5, 38), a process guided by the concept of *raison d'état*, which encompasses ensuring both survival and the potential for development. This concept is intrinsically linked to key principles such as security, independence, and cooperation. However, it is important to recognize that the *raison d'état* is subjective, as its meaning varies for different social groups (Pietraś 1989b: 10-11).

Ziemowit Jacek Pietraś defined political adaptation as the state's pursuit of a state of equilibrium between the needs and interests of the state and the demands of the international and domestic political environment (Pietraś 1989b: 19). Adaptation theory distinguishes between two international and domestic environments and two types of adaptation (state and societal). Both environments are subject to constant transformation and interaction, resulting in a constant need to adapt (Dumała 2016a: 26). The following analysis will focus on adaptation as a category related to state foreign policy. The latter refers to any outward-looking stance (Rosenau 1980: 58).

It should be emphasised that the essence of adaptation processes is change in a temporal perspective. It is therefore perceived in a processual dimension. Its actors can be participants in international relations, and its subject scope is different contexts, such as political, economic or cultural (Drygiel 2015: 194-195). The question arises of what initiates the process of adaptation. It is triggered, for example, by a change in the international environment, which causes the state to adapt through changes in foreign policy, domestic policy, or both (Pietraś 1989b: 4). When discussing the process of adaptation, it is hard to overlook the geographical aspect. Tensions at the global level will affect every state in the world, but changes in a distant political region will have only an indirect effect (Pietraś 1989a: 2, 17).

Depending on the dynamics of change that trigger adaptation processes, four states of the international environment can be distinguished, namely

- stable – change is slow, political relations are not organised around values;
- quiet – the dynamics are described as medium-high, the actor's adaptation processes proceed faster as political relations are centred on values;
- oscillating – high dynamics, qualitative changes are taking place, actors are modifying foreign policy objectives and seeking to reorient the organisations to which they belong;
- agitated – very high dynamics, systems organised around core values, competition even in direct armed conflict (Pietraś 1989a: 15-17).

The configurations of the "internal and external state of the decision field" and the states of the environment form a classification of sixteen decision sit-

uations of the actor, six of which can be distinguished for the purpose of this article.

- unsettled – the international environment is calm, slow quantitative changes are taking place, structures are emerging that seek to create conflict;
- external threat – the internal environment is stable, the international environment is oscillating, qualitative changes are taking place;
- serious external threat – the internal environment is calm, the international environment is oscillating;
- very serious external threat – the international environment is agitated and the internal environment is stable, qualitative changes are taking place in the international environment;
- external crisis – the international environment is agitated and the internal environment is calm;
- severe external crisis – the internal environment is oscillating, the international environment is agitated (Pietraś 1989a: 18-20).

The above situations can be stimuli for adaptation processes (Pietraś 1989a: 6).[2] Their dynamics are proportional to the intensity of change (Gilpin 1984: 10).

Adaptation is not merely the result of reality affecting an actor but it also involves awareness — the reflection of this reality within the minds of decision-makers. The process of adaptation begins when actors recognise the phenomena to which they have been exposed (Dumała 2016a: 26). Perception plays a crucial role, first influencing the initiation of adaptation and subsequently guiding the selection of specific solutions (Drygiel 2015: 190). Awareness acts as a filter, shaping how information from the external world is processed. Decision-makers' political awareness comprises two primary images: international relations and their own social context. The goal of adaptation processes is to reconcile these images with reality and confront the challenges that arise.

When the decision maker's awareness is false, an imaginary reality is created. This triggers a process of adaptation to an imaginary reality that exists only in the falsified awareness (Pietraś 1989b: 6). The second threat to the process of adaptation is 'indecision'. By this we mean: the decision to be inactive, the inability to make a decision, as well as the exclusion of certain options from the decision field. All three meanings of 'indecision' come down to a single effect,

[2] When actor A in a political relationship exerts influence on actor B, only when B fully comprehends the nature of this action is a political situation created for B. Then, when decision-makers for B begin adapting to this new situation, their response, in turn, generates a stimulus for actor A. Once A recognises this new stimulus, it becomes a new situation for them.

i.e. a mistake made by the state that affects the foreign policy pursued (Hill 2003: 107).

Changes in the "international social environment" may consist, for example, in the emergence of energy or political problems. They can permeate the state and trigger processes of adaptation in society, which are manifested as pressure on state institutions. In extreme cases, this can lead to a change of government (Pietraś 1989a: 3; Pietraś 1989b: 4-5). The processes of adaptation of states to the international environment are caused by three basic external factors: the actions of participants in international relations, transnational actions, and changes in the tensions in the international decision-making field (Pietraś 1989a: 52). In this context, Ziemowit Jacek Pietraś distinguishes three basic types of state adaptation: passive, creative and active. Passive adaptation is defined as adaptation of the state to stimuli and openness to environmental influences. It also involves the transformation of state structures in line with international stimuli. The conditions to be met are known, but the values behind them are rejected. In this type of adaptation, there is a distinction between intentional adaptation, when the state consciously agrees to accept pressure, and unintentional adaptation, i.e. inertial policy, when the decision-making centre does not agree to accept influence and refrains from acting. We will call the latter sclerotic adaptation. In a dynamically changing international environment, refraining from decisions leads to an increase in international contradictions (Pietraś 1989a: 31-32).

Creative adaptation involves overcoming environmental pressures (e.g. to protect identity) and actively seeking a constantly shifting balance between the dynamics of the international and domestic environment. In practice, this means shaping the environment in line with the state's *raison d'être*, while making concessions on less important issues. The essence, then, is to harmoniously combine both above-mentioned strategies of adaptation to preserve identity and develop the state by 'filtering' environmental influences (Pietraś 1989a: 52). The implementation of such an adaptation process presupposes the tolerance of different value systems, recognising them as equivalent.

Active adaptation is the state's refusal to adapt to the dynamics of environmental change. The aim is to shape relations with others independently. As a result, the state shapes the environment according to its own will, which in practice leads to isolationism (Pietraś 1989a: 33).

Finally, it is worth mentioning surrealist adaptation as a consequence of false consciousness. Its implementation means that the state makes efforts to adapt to a situation that exists only in the consciousness of decision-makers or social groups (Dumała 2016b: 29; Pietraś 1989a: 52-53).

In addition to the strategies described above, the position of the state is important. Let us restrict ourselves to two roles (i.e. medium-sized states and powers) because Germany should certainly not be defined as a small state. In a stable environment, medium-sized states and powers will seek active adaptation in order to achieve dominance. A quiet environment is conducive to a diversity of attitudes ranging from creative adaptation (medium-sized state) to active adaptation (superpower). Conversely, in a oscillating state, the superpowers will be inclined to compromise and use creative adaptation while the rest will use passive adaptation. An agitated international environment will favour compromise and the adoption of passive adaptation even by superpowers (Pietraś 1989a: 36-37).

German-Russian relations before 2005

The rich history of German-Russian relations is marked by periods of cooperation and confrontation. It seems that it is mainly the latter that are part of the collective memory (Kosman 2022: 305). One could venture to say that the process of adaptation to the attitude of the partner has often taken place in the mutual relations of both actors. At the same time, Germany has often been accused of basing its *Russlandpolitik* on a historically shameful tradition, i.e. the partitions of Poland (1772-1795), the Rapallo Agreement (1922) or the German-Soviet Pact (1939). The historical relationship with Russia, on the other hand, is not so clear-cut as the Germans clashed militarily with the Russians on several occasions. The latter occupied Berlin in 1760 and 1945. The Second World War was deeply etched in the consciousness of the peoples who experienced its barbarity. The bloodiest battles were fought in lands inhabited by Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians (Żerko 2022: 13). "In history, certain arrangements and situational patterns are repeated. But for the most part, history is a catalogue of the first-time events themselves", wrote Juliusz Mieroszewski in the Paris "Kultura" magazine in 1974 (Mieroszewski 1974: 3). As Stanislaw Żerko comments, "the history of German policy towards Russia is a good example of how looking for analogies usually leads one astray and misleads, especially when comparing incomparable situations"(Żerko 2022: 57).

Adaptation to changes in the international system has been a frequent phenomenon in German-Russian relations. This was particularly intense during the interwar period. The prospect of German-Soviet cooperation outlined in Rapallo became a symbol of Berlin and Moscow working together at the expense of other states. However, by the late 1920s, conflicts were becoming more fre-

quent. One example was the Shakhty Trial (1928), in which a group of German engineers were accused of acting against the Soviet authorities. In the 1930s, the two countries were divided by rival ideologies: Nazism and Communism. The end of the decade, however, saw the conclusion of a German-Soviet non-aggression pact and a secret additional protocol on the division of 'spheres of influence' in Eastern Europe. The pact was finally broken in 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union (USSR) (Żerko 2022: 23-25, 30, 32).

Another change came in 1966, when the 'grand coalition' government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) initiated a "new *Ostpolitik*" However, due to the USSR's preconditions (including acceptance of post-war borders), no breakthrough was made until 1969, under the cabinet of Willy Brandt. The changes in mutual relations were part of an atmosphere of relaxation (*détente*). The New *Ostpolitik*, according to the formula of Egon Bahr (its architect), envisaged "change through rapprochement" (*Wandel durch Annäherung*). The main objective, the reunification of a divided Germany, was also not forgotten (Żerko 2022: 36-37). From the 1970s onwards, all German political forces began to regard the USSR as a key economic and political partner. In this context, it should be recalled that the first gas supply agreement between the two countries was signed in February 1970 (Cziomer 1988: 138). In November 1981, Germany and the USSR concluded another agreement, which doubled supplies. It was also agreed that a gas pipeline would be built from the west of Siberia. Improved relations with the Soviet Union were soon met with accusations against the West German government of disloyalty to the Allies (Żerko 2022: 38-39).

A new phase in bilateral relations was brought about by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to the USSR (October 1988). Soon the most serious problem was to obtain the USSR's approval for reunification. A reluctant Gorbachev agreed for the sum of DM 5 billion (Żerko 2022: 43-44). The Soviet leader's constructive attitude was firmly embedded in the German collective memory, generating a sense of gratitude towards Russia (Kosman 2022: 309). Reunification was even interpreted as the foundation of a 'strategic partnership' (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 5).

The year 1998 saw a generational change at the top of the German government. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder became the first German leader to have no memory of the Second World War. A year later, Vladimir Putin became president of Russia. The new president distinguished himself from his predecessors by his knowledge of Germany and the German language. When he visited Berlin in June 2000, he and the Social Democratic Chancellor forged a bond of friendship. In the spring of 2001, at their initiative, the St Petersburg

Dialogue was established as a forum for discussion between representatives of the two societies. Cultural, scientific and educational exchanges were revived, as were twinning arrangements between cities in both countries (Żerko 2022: 45-46). The final chord of Schröder's tenure as Chancellor was the agreement in 2005 to build the Nord Stream gas pipeline from Russia along the bottom of the Baltic Sea to Germany (Kosman 2022: 313-314).

The rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow was supported by German business circles with the East German Economic Commission (*Ostausschuss*) playing an important role in this context. Economic cooperation is the most important element of the link between the two states. The German government supported the Commission politically and with loan guarantees. Economic contacts have been marked by a high asymmetry in favour of Germany and a focus on the energy sector (see *Russia-Germany Relations* 2006). This was fostered by a deep belief in mutual energy dependence as more than 40 per cent of gas and 30 per cent of oil were imported from Russia (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 12).

The state of the international environment in the period 1989-2005 should be considered stable from a German perspective. The war in Chechnya continued, but the German elite treated it as an internal Russian affair. This was facilitated by the fact of geographical remoteness, which significantly undermined the process of change in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Years 2005-2008

The return to power in 2005 of the Christian Democrats, who were seen as potentially more assertive on Russia than the Social Democrats, raised the question about the shape of foreign policy. The Christian Democrats were only marginally ahead of the SPD in the 2005 election and both formations decided to form a 'grand coalition'. Angela Merkel focused on improving German-American relations. Relations with Russia at the leadership level proved less cordial than the eagerly demonstrated friendship between Schröder and Putin. At the same time, the SPD's participation in the governments led to speculation that the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (previously head of the Chancellor's office), would seek to maintain good relations with Russia. The presence of the Social Democrats in three of the four coalitions formed by Merkel as Chancellor softened Berlin's attitude towards Moscow. It also seems to have slowed down the process of adapting to the increasingly aggressive policies of the Russian Federation. Another is-

sue is that between 2000 and 2008, Russia's process of internal consolidation was underway, with limited impact on the international environment. It was only between 2009 and 2013 that a different party configuration, consisting of the CDU/CSU and the FDP (Free Democrats) was in power. Significantly, the coalition agreement between the Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats lacked the hitherto traditional provisions on a strategic partnership. In November 2005, for example, it was noted that:

> "together with our European partners, we are committed to a strategic partnership with Russia, which we promote in all areas, both bilaterally and at EU level. (...) Russia remains an important partner in addressing regional and global challenges, in the fight against international terrorism and in relations with the countries of our immediate neighbourhood" (quoted in *Gemainsam fűr Deutschland* 2005: 156).

It is also worth noting that in the German political system, the Chancellor is not only the foreign policy maker, but also the mediator and last resort in inter-ministerial disputes. The ministries involved in foreign policy-making are the Ministry of Finance, which decides on European policy, and the Ministry of Defence, which develops Germany's security policy. The other two ministries that influence foreign relations are the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (current name) and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, both of which implement economic policy strategies. In addition, the enormous influence of German exporters remains a constant factor in relations with Russia. By contrast, the role of the German Foreign Ministry is weak (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 30).

However, in her role as Chancellor, Merkel heralded changes in bilateral relations. Above all, she was far more outspoken about the shortcomings of Russian democracy and human rights abuses. The fact that she spoke fluent Russian and had grown up in the former GDR made little difference. The change of form did not disrupt contacts and interests (Kosman 2022: 315-316). In early 2006, with Angela Merkel (CDU) already in office as Chancellor, a conflict emerged in Ukraine over the price of Russian gas. Given the country's transit position, the supply of this raw material to other European countries (e.g. Hungary, Slovenia or France) was periodically reduced. This led to a slow change in the perception of the relationship between the European Union (EU) and Russia, which was also influenced by Gazprom's monopoly on the gas trade, fears of over-dependence or, especially for transit countries, the fear of Russia exerting political pressure by withholding supplies (ibid: 330).

During its EU presidency (January-June 2007), the German government planned a new deal with Russia. Drawing on the *Ostpolitik* of the 1970s, the

idea was to strengthen ties with the Russian Federation in order to consolidate its pro-Western orientation. It was expected that this would automatically lead to a reinforcement of democratic tendencies in Russia. One obstacle was the Russian embargo on imports of certain food products from Poland, which led to Poland's veto in November 2006. Some new EU members felt that Moscow was reverting to imperialism and could threaten its neighbours. There were more and more reports of the Kremlin taking an undemocratic approach in its internal policy. In a survey commissioned by "Der Spiegel" in the spring of 2007, 29% of respondents said that Russia was moving towards Western-style democracy. The opposite view was held by 65% (Żerko 2022: 49). The Kosovo issue also gained ground (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 13-14; Słowikowski 2007). This state of affairs can be described as unintentional passive adaptation, which could be labelled as a policy of inertia. A fitting description of Germany's attitude of abstention, in contrast to the observed resurgence of imperialist ideas in Russia observed in Central Europe, would therefore be sclerotic adaptation. This view was supported by Germany's lack of understanding of the sensitivities of the new EU members, who had had traumatic experiences with Moscow's centre of power not so long before.

The aforementioned reference to *Ostpolitik* was creatively developed by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who to this end, introduced the Partnership for Modernisation initiative in 2007. Initially conceived as a bilateral project, it was soon transformed into an EU project. The document outlining the new approach was framed under the slogan "rapprochement through interdependence" (*Annäherung durch Verflechtung*). It stressed the importance of Russia as a strategic partner, which is indispensable in solving international security problems, supporting the changes taking place there and building an axiological partnership while respecting cultural differences. From a mid-term perspective, it announced the creation of a common free trade zone, cooperation in education, culture and science and, above all, the establishment of an energy partnership (Koszel 2010: 99).

The Partnership for Modernisation initiative was officially announced at the EU-Russia summit in November 2009.[3] However, both parties differed on the priorities of this initiative. For Moscow, modernisation meant improving infrastructure and access to the latest technology. For the EU and Berlin, on the other hand, it was important to strengthen the standards of democracy and the protection of human rights. These divergences led to the failure of the initiative

[3] Almost simultaneously, discussions continued on the Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership project for the post-Soviet republics in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus.

(Kosman 2022: 322-323). The awareness of German decision-makers at this stage could therefore be regarded as false. They created an imaginary Russian reality consisting of a set of good wishes while the Russian elites rejected profound modernisation based on values and focused on the material aspect.

An attempt to enhance security cooperation also failed. The 2008 German Meseberg Initiative called for the establishment of an EU-Russia political and security committee at ministerial level. It was supposed to work out solutions in crisis situations. However, the first attempt to apply this approach (to the conflict in Transnistria) was met with misunderstanding by the EU partners, who were outraged by Germany's unilateral behaviour. Also significant was Russia's disinterest in Moldova's independence (Meister 2011: 8-9; Menkiszak 2014: 22).

The security sector was certainly of greater interest to the Russian Federation. However, Germany's willingness to cooperate in this area went beyond the limits of other European partners. Moscow also expected to be allowed a more paternalistic attitude towards weaker partners in the post-Soviet area.

The failure of the Partnership idea contributed to a growing perception within the Christian Democrat ranks that the Foreign Ministry's approach to Russia was a chimera and based on false premises. Some of the CDU-CSU politicians argued that Europe should refrain from 'lecturing' Russia. This view was voiced in May 2008 by Horst Teltschik, an adviser to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung". Soon the ironic term *Russlandversteher* was coined in Germany to describe Russia sympathisers – people who embraced the claims of Russian propaganda (Żerko 2022: 47). Around 2008, the deterioration of the international situation as a result of Russia's aggressive policy encouraged a diversification of attitudes in Germany. The environment began to take on a quieter tone, with a moderately high level of dynamics and processes of adaptation. This was due to a shift in political relations towards values. There was a growing awareness of the changes within the German elite, which should be seen as the first step in the process of adaptation. This was because perception determines the initiation of the adaptation process and the subsequent choice of a specific solution. On the other hand, according to the actor's decision-making situation, which is a combination of internal and external states, one can speak of a turbulent decision-making situation that resulted from slow quantitative changes. At the same time, there were structures in Russia that tended towards conflict.

At the narrative level, the first controversy that raised alarm bells for the development of German-Russian relations was Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007. In it, the Russian leader accused the

West that NATO enlargement had nothing to do with ensuring security in Europe, but was a provocation that was undermining mutual trust. He asked rhetorically: Why is it necessary to place military infrastructure on Russia's western border? In the ensuing discussion, he used veiled criticism of the West for playing God by imposing a solution to the Kosovo problem. At the same time, he made it clear that such an attitude could turn against its originators (*Speech* 2007). The quoted speech quickly acquired the status of a symbol of an aggressive Russian stance. Adaptively, it can be described as an impulse that, along with the events that followed, stimulated the efforts of NATO member states, including Germany.

The Years 2008-2014

The future of Kosovo, which seceded from the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s, divided the West and Russia. A seemingly minor issue became part of a larger problem and an argument for Russian claims. The question of the possible admission of Georgia and Ukraine into the Alliance divided the international community. The accession of several former Soviet republics was supported by the United States, the United Kingdom and Poland. This was unacceptable to Russia, which criticised NATO enlargement in diplomatic circles in 1999 and 2004. These reservations were particularly understood by the German Social Democrats. This point is aptly raised by Ronald Asmus who argues that after the Alliance's enlargements at the turn of the 21st century:

> "Germany was surrounded by a wide circle of friendly countries, and politicians in Berlin concluded that the country's national interests had been served. While the rhetoric was still in favour of the 'open door' policy, in reality Germany was saturated. The priority now was good cooperation with Moscow" (quoted in Asmus 2010: 200).

The strength of the German voice was confirmed at the NATO summit in Bucharest (2-4 April 2008). Merkel and Steinmeier, like the French president, did not agree to include Georgia and Ukraine in the Membership Action Plan, fearing an escalation in relations with Russia that were already strained after Kosovo's proclamation of independence two months earlier (Kosman 2022: 326). The conclusions of the meeting included vague promises (point 23) about the chances of Georgia and Ukraine joining the Alliance. They stated that: "We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. (...) Today we make clear that we support these countries' applications for MAP" (*Bucharest* 2008). The Bucharest Summit postponed the admission of Ukraine and

Georgia into the Alliance indefinitely. At the same time, it is highly likely that the ambiguous process motivated Russian elites to obstruct the two countries' accession to the Alliance (Kosman 2022: 326-327; Żerko 2022: 51).

The resistance of some members, particularly Germany, highlighted a second threat to the adaptation process, alongside false awareness: indecision, characterised by inactivity and a deadlock that hinders progress, both of which ultimately result in misguided policies. When the undeclared Russian-Georgian 'five-day war' broke out in the Caucasus in August 2008, a serious crisis ensued between Berlin and Moscow. The blatant violation of international law was met with a categorical response from Germany, which began to realise that the Kremlin's aggressive actions could realistically threaten the international order. The war in Georgia therefore marked a breakthrough for some members of the German elite, led by the Chancellor. This became clear at Merkel's meeting with President Dmitry Medvedev, which took place in a cool atmosphere in Sochi on 15 August. Two days later, in Tbilisi, the Chancellor called for international observers to be sent to the conflict zone and declared: "Georgia will be a member of NATO if it wants to be". This led to false speculation about Germany's agreement to such a possibility. Meanwhile, Minister Steinmeier initiated the suspension of the NATO-Russia Council.

Still there has been no fundamental shift in views. This would have been the case if Berlin had thought that isolating Russia was the right thing to do. In the meantime, it supported the French president's mediation by sending the experienced diplomat Hans-Dieter Lukas. The German foreign minister engaged in telephone diplomacy, putting pressure on both sides, soothing the mood and warning against isolating Moscow. The Chancellor seems to have adopted a more sceptical attitude towards Russia, stressing the need to respect Georgia's territorial integrity (Kosman 2022: 327-328; Żerko 2022: 511).

Despite the international crisis triggered by the conflict in the Caucasus, relations between the West and Russia improved relatively quickly, largely due to revelations that pointed to Georgia's complicity in the events. Initial speculation about a breakthrough in German *Russlandpolitik* in August 2008 did not materialise. It turned out that the good relations between Berlin and Moscow were based on firm foundations. Merkel's words on Tbilisi sounded tough, but did not represent a change of position (Żerko 2022: 51). At the same time, on 1 September 2008. Germany vetoed the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Chancellor Merkel also denounced the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, judging this step to be a violation of international law. Berlin refrained from calling for sanctions, not wanting

to antagonise Moscow too much (Kosman 2022: 328). In adaptive terms, such an action is referred to as the exclusion of a variant from the decision-making field and should be described as a third type of 'indecision' detrimental to foreign policy, in addition to those previously mentioned. Russia also benefited from the economic situation, i.e. the onset of the international economic crisis. The growing economic difficulties made the Russian market particularly necessary for the German economy. The German government was keen to have Russian capital involved in rescuing companies that were in trouble. A year after the Sochi meeting, there was no trace of the crisis in mutual relations (Żerko 2022: 52).

However, the war in the Caucasus in August marked the beginning of a change in Russia's image in Germany. Russia began to be seen as an actor that undermines international security. Merkel's assessment also changed; initially, she was critical of the Georgian president's decision to attack South Ossetia. Over time, she changed her position and became more critical of Russia's conduct (Kosman 2022: 328, 350). The earlier perception of Georgia's co-responsibility for the outbreak of the war can be seen as an element of false awareness on the part of German decision-makers, which was more widespread among European leaders. Since 2008, there has been a growing gap between the political and economic narratives in Germany. Although economic relations continued to develop well, the reassessment was significant and gradually began to encompass increasingly broader circles of public opinion and the political scene. Slowly, the view began to prevail that Russia's strength should be measured by its potential for destruction rather than its willingness to cooperate constructively (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 19). Thus, the Russian threat was identified in Germany as an aggravating factor for the environment and its actions were perceived as a security threat.

As an indication of the slowness of the process of moving away from cooperation, the subsequent gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine (February 2009) was seen in Germany as a commercial dispute. It was considered whether work on the Northern Gas Pipeline should be accelerated. Russia's scepticism about the so-called missile defence shield project was also shared (Żerko 2022: 51). On a practical level, after 2008, efforts to diversify energy supplies were intensified. For example, at the end of 2008, Germany and Nigeria signed a letter of intent for an energy partnership. The then Minister of Economy presented a proposal for the creation of state-owned strategic natural gas reserves, and the government adopted a draft amendment to the law on the activities of foreign companies in strategic sectors. The amendment made it possible to cancel acquisitions of companies in the event of a security

threat (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 32). Therefore, increasing emphasis was placed on the German state's adaptation to disturbances in the international environment, particularly the security challenges posed by Russia. With regard to the supply of energy resources, the exclusion of certain options from the decision-making field was abandoned. This strengthened the process of adaptation.

As a consequence of the reorientation of German policy following the events in the South Caucasus, Andreas Schockenhoff, a CDU MP and the German government's plenipotentiary for German-Russian public relations, authored the 2012 Bundestag resolution on cooperation with Russia. Reactions to it proved that attitudes towards Russia run within the parties, not between them. Schockenhoff gave a harsh assessment of the Kremlin's actions. He was criticised by some factions of the SPD and the Greens, as well as by coalition partners, who accused him of provoking unnecessary conflicts. Among others, his ideas were opposed by foreign policy spokesperson Philipp Missfelder, Karl-Georg Wellmann, and Peter Gauweiler, while they were supported by Ruprecht Polenz, chair of the *Bundestag*'s Foreign Affairs Committee. Although the German Foreign Ministry made a mitigating change to the text, Chancellor Merkel supported Schockenhoff. She argued that constructive criticism was not slander (Bidder, Weiland 2012).

At the same time, a much more serious change took place, namely a reorientation towards new regional powers (*neue Gestaltungsmächte*). As a result, new instruments of cooperation with Russia were increasingly avoided. This was because the existing instruments were not being fully utilised. Ideas for a long-term strategy were lacking, with fatigue and frustration being the predominating attitudes towards Russia. The 2013 coalition agreement lacked the previously constant phrasing of building an "energy partnership" with the Russian Federation (see *Deutschlands Zukunft* 2013). Emerging initiatives, such as the Königsberg Triangle, were at best tactical moves aimed at confidence-building. Berlin cabinets were increasingly adopting a wait-and-see attitude towards Putin's team.

The state of weariness described above can be seen as evidence of the use of passive adaptation by the German elite, which consists in adapting to stimuli and adjusting state structures accordingly. More precisely, it would be a kind of intentional passive adaptation, since, as the above description shows, the decision-makers acted in a conscious attempt to wait out the unfavourable policies developed by the Russian president's team. It seems no coincidence that this occurred during Angela Merkel's second government, in which the Free Democrats were the coalition partner of the Christian Democrats (2009-2013). It

should be noted, however, that business ties, including personal ties, remained strong and the potential of the Russian market was large enough for German business circles to deter confrontation between the two countries. However, there was no pressure on the German side to maintain the strategic and special relationship. This was influenced, among other things, by the rise of Germany's position in the EU after the economic crisis (Kwiatkowska-Drożdż 2014: 23, 39). The war in Georgia (2008), the failure of the Partnership for Modernisation project and Putin's return to the presidency (2012) reinforced the change in the perception of the Russian government in Germany, not only among the public, but also in expert and political circles. This change was facilitated, to put it mildly, by Chancellor Merkel's restrained approach. This led to more frequent and open reminders that there were still unresolved contentious issues (e.g. visas, returning cultural property, human rights violations). Frustration was growing with the Russian Federation's lack of willingness to cooperate, aggressive approach and unpredictability (ibid: 10-11).

The Years 2014-2021

A further shock to German-Russian relations came with the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Kremlin's fuelling of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which resulted in a significant cooling of relations. The dynamics of change in the environment took on a oscillating form. Actors modified their objectives and tried to keep up with the ongoing reorientation. In terms of decision-making situations, there was a very serious external threat. In practice, this meant transferring the agitated situation in the international environment to the domestic arena.

However, the position of the German political elite towards Russia remained ambiguous. For Berlin, the occupation of the Crimea was a flagrant violation of the basic norms of international law. The German Chancellor did not mince her words, calling on EU members to adopt a "reasonable but firm course" towards Russia. She was echoed by Minister Steinmeier (Kosman 2022: 350; Żerko 2022: 7, 54). The shooting down of a Malaysian airliner over the Ukrainian Donbas region took on symbolic significance. The death of 283 passengers flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on 17 July 2014 marked a turning point in Angela Merkel's relationship with Vladimir Putin. The German Chancellor was at the forefront of EU leaders calling for a broader package of sanctions, which until then had targeted a small number of Russian actors. A special EU summit sanctioned Russian banks and exports of military

technology and oil extraction (Stempin 2021: 405-407). Another move was to extend the list of oligarchs close to Putin who were banned from receiving funds within the EU.

The Chancellor's reaction to the shooting down of the plane shows that her political leadership was associated with a stronger emphasis on the axiological sphere (Kosman 2022: 351). In the following years, Germany lobbied for an extension of the sanctions. At the same time, efforts were made to maintain dialogue with Moscow. Together with France, Germany took on the burden of finding solutions. The mediation of the two countries (the Normandy format) resulted in the negotiation of the Minsk agreements. The role of Chancellor Merkel deserves special mention because, in the days before the second agreement (February 2015), she held a series of talks in Kyiv, Moscow, Munich, Washington and Ottawa (Koszel 2019: 341). They were not fully put into effect, but it should be acknowledged that the intensity of the conflict was reduced and not allowed to escalate. It should be emphasised that Chancellor Merkel proved to be one of the main advocates of a tough course towards Russia, thus assuming the role of a reliable ally of President Barack Obama. At the same time, she had to deal with pressure from pro-Russian business circles in Germany, as well as with pressure from some SPD politicians (e.g. Steinmeier and Sigmar Gabriel – Foreign Minister 2017-2018) (Kosman 2022: 340-341).

The appeals of the latter, a leading advocate of Nord Stream and closer economic cooperation with Russia, provoked critical media comments. He was accused of naivety and detachment from reality. Parallels were even drawn with the appeasement policy in the 1930s (Żerko 2022: 55). At the same time, the German government, led by a leading CDU politician, did not stand in the way of the Nord Stream construction agreement. However, in the "White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the *Bundeswehr*" (2016), published under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence, Russia was portrayed as a state "openly calling the existing peace order into question", abandoning the policy of partnership with the West and blurring "the borders between war and peace" with hybrid actions, and constituting "a challenge to the security of our continent" (cited in *White Paper* 2016: 31-32).

To sum up the German government's attitude towards Russia in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, it is worth quoting Erhard Cziomer's opinion. He stated that that policy was based on a willingness: to maintain dialogue with Russia, to develop and implement sanctions as an instrument of pressure, and to provide economic and financial support to Ukraine (see Cziomer 2018: 196). In this way, Germany's efforts were part of a creative adaptation of overcoming environmental pressures and actively seeking a shifting balance point

between the dynamics of the international and domestic environment. At the same time, it left room for compromise. Thus, Germany's efforts were part of a creative adaptation, which consisted in overcoming environmental pressures, and actively seeking a shifting balance between the dynamics of the international and domestic spheres while still leaving room for compromise.

Among the major parties (CDU/CSU, SDP, FDP and the Greens) there was a basic consensus on Ukraine. Opposing views, however, were held by *Die Linke* and Alternative for Germany (AfD), as well as by the Eastern Commission of the German Economy (Kosman 2022: 351). Some experts also had no clear opinion. After the sanctions had been in place for a few years, their critics stressed the importance of geographical proximity. It was pointed out that isolation was not in the economic and geographical interests of Berlin and the EU. It was explained that it would be naive to expect a more democratic Russia. Rather, it would be business as usual, as it is in China's interest to keep Russia away from the West. It was also argued that sanctions were primarily affecting the population, not the Russian elite (Kosman 2022: 237). Such a narrative comes across as a departure from false awareness, i.e. wishful thinking. However, the sceptics still failed to see the Russian threat. The more radical Russian sympathisers became engaged, including two former chancellors, Gerhard Schröder and Helmut Schmidt. The latter defended Putin's neo-imperialist policies and questioned the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation (Żerko 2022: 54-55).

Given its steadily growing support on the German political scene, the Alternative for Germany appears to pose the greatest threat to Germany's adaptation process vis-à-vis Russia's expansive policy. The views of this formation, which take into account Russian interests in the post-Soviet region, were emphatically voiced in 2013 by deputy spokesperson Alexander Gauland. He went so far as to say that separating Ukraine or Belarus from Russia would be like separating Aachen and Cologne from Germany. Moscow, on the other hand, has played the role of "godfather in German history", repeatedly rescuing it from collapse and helping with reunification (*Die AfD* 2013). The rise of the AfD, which has been increasingly effective in challenging the mainstream parties since 2015 (the migration crisis), marks a significant translation of the agitated international situation into the domestic arena (see more: *Dlaczego* 2023).

One of Angela Merkel's most recent efforts regarding direct relations with Russia concerned the issue of the poisoning of Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny (August 2020). Faced with denials from the Russian side, the Chancellor became involved in the case and demanded that the activist be brought to Germany, but the Russian authorities initially refused. Tests carried out in a special *Bundeswehr* laboratory confirmed the suspicion of an attempt-

ed poisoning with Novichok. The case intensified tensions between Germany and Russia. It is worth noting that among German experts the scenario of stopping the *Nord Stream 2* project was even considered to be a response to Russia's actions. However, given the progress of the pipeline's construction, the idea of stopping it did not go beyond the realm of theoretical considerations (Kosman 2022: 344-345).

Chancellor Angela Merkel's term officially ended on 8 December 2021, less than three months before the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine. However, the decision to leave was taken much earlier. In October 2018 Merkel announced that she would not seek re-election. One must therefore agree with her view (expressed in June 2022) that she was unable to act despite the impending aggression (Goldenberg, Walsh 2022). Russia withdrew from the Normandy format talks, perceiving that the other side lacked an equal partner offering a guarantee of long-term solutions. At the same time, the departure from the political scene of the "Empress of Europe" – as Arkadiusz Stempin described her (Stempin 2021) – gave credibility to the Russian assessment of the leadership crisis of the "collective West". The end of the Angela Merkel era, together with, among others, Britain's protracted exit from the EU (2016-2020), the rise of pro-Russian populist influence in France (e.g. the 2017 presidential election) or the dramatic American withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, lent credence to the Russian elites' perceptions. This misperception led them to the decision to launch a full-scale war in Ukraine.

As a result, the intensification of tensions in relations with the Russian Federation caused the international environment to shift to an even higher level of dynamism in February 2022. It entered a state of agitation marked by very high dynamics, a system organised around fundamental values. At the same time, in an extreme case, it poses the threat of direct armed conflict.

Conclusions

When Angela Merkel took over as Chancellor, she inherited a developed and deepening relationship with Russia. The environment was stable, but the decision-making situation was already volatile. The Russian Federation was expanding its activities in Chechnya. In the years that followed, the threat level increased. The breakthrough years were 2008 and 2014. The war in Georgia exacerbated the situation. Not directly on Germany's border, but in the neighbouring region, an external threat emerged in the form of an aggressive power, that is Russia.

The indecisiveness of the Western political elite, including Germany, only made the situation worse. It can be argued that the Bucharest NATO summit (2008) is a typical example of 'indecision' resulting from misperception. As a result of the mistake, the aggressor was encouraged to go further.

A dual attitude can be discerned in the approach of Germany under Angela Merkel. On the one hand, there is a false awareness and a consequent over-realistic adaptation, i.e. an attempt to deal with a situation that does not exist in reality but only in the minds of selected social groups. Particularly susceptible to this were social democrats, entrepreneurs trading with Russia, and representatives of the Alternative for Germany. The second attitude consisted in active awareness, taking into account real events and making adjustments to changing circumstances. This is what the decision-making centre led by the German Chancellor tried to do. However, even Angela Merkel was inconsistent in her policy, repeatedly using half-measures and showing reluctance to impose sanctions in 2008. Her efforts gradually shifted from passive, unintentional accommodation to passive, intentional accommodation and finally to creative accommodation.

A breakthrough came only with the seizure of Crimea and the fighting in Donbas (with particular reference to the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner), which could be described as a serious external threat that caused the international environment to begin oscillating. Those changes led to decisive adjustments and to Chancellor Merkel becoming increasingly articulate. However, there are still resistant circles in German society that are marked by a false awareness. Their roots can be found in the long tradition of German-Russian contacts, which are multi-faceted. It should be clearly emphasised that the process of adaptation to Russia's aggressive stance was initiated by the political circles around Angela Merkel. It was delayed by business circles, which emphasised the crucial importance of the economic level in relations with the Russian Federation.

The validity of the article's concept, along with the evidence presented, is illustrated by the events since February 2022, which align with the next stage of an unstable international environment. This interpretation is supported by the widespread view of the ongoing war as a proxy conflict, where Ukrainians are resisting Russian aggression with Western support. Germany's position remains ambiguous and controversial despite claims of the invasion being a *Zeitenwende* (turning point) in German policy. It seems that a real breakthrough did not come until February 2022 when Russia's expansionist policies became plain to see. During Angela Merkel's tenure (2005-2021), only a portion of German society and political elites began to reflect and change, launch-

ing a process of adaptation. However, it was the full-scale war in Ukraine that made this adjustment irreversible. Therefore, it is essential to continue researching German attitudes toward Russia after 24 February 2022, using the theory of political adaptation.

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on an analysis of the German attitude towards Russia as an example of political adaptation. It aims to verify the hypothesis that the German attitude towards Russia is marked by a process of political adaptation, i.e. Germany tries to adapt to the changes in the regional environment and tries to influence its form. The author tries to answer the following question: what kind of strategies of political adaptation have been adopted between 2005 and 2021? The article is divided into several parts. In the first one, besides the introduction, the author discusses the concept of political adaptation. The second part focuses on the description of German-Russian relations before 2005. The following parts analyse the period between 2005 and 2021. The author identifies turning points in 2008 and 2014. The last chapter is a summary and prediction for the coming years. The article is based on official documents, speeches and political actions, press materials and analyses.

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The *Zeitenwende* in German security policy. The Chancellor, coalition parties, and the Christian Democrats debate

The scope of change

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced radical changes to German foreign and security policy in a speech delivered to the *Bundestag* on 27 February 2022 (PP DB 20/19 2022: 1350)[1] as a reaction to the initiation of Russian military aggression against Ukraine. This has given rise to numerous discussions in the arena of German public opinion. It also set clear expectations among Germany's allies and partners, who count on Berlin's committed approach to the war in Ukraine. Both the German political class and broader German society were concerned about the multifaceted nature of the changes announced, as well as the need to re-evaluate the assumptions of the then current policy and caution towards military matters. Calls for a critical reckoning with the achievements of *Ostpolitik* and public discussions and disputes concerning this new course meant that the *Zeitenwende*[2] was strongly dependent on building political support to legitimise the actions taken.

The general perception of the term *Zeitenwende* used by the chancellor was that it signalled a breakthrough, a fundamental turning point in the history of Europe and the world. The root of this compound noun was directly associated with another, earlier key phrase in the postwar history of Germany. The

[1] PP DB, listed in bibliography as "Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag (Plenary Protocol of the German Bundestag).

[2] *Zeitenwende*, named the German word of the year in 2022 (*Zeitenwende amid*…), can be translated in various ways, such as 'changing of the times', 'turning point', or 'epochal shift'. The official translation of Scholz's speech refers to a 'watershed era' (*Policy statement*…). In this article the original German is used throughout.

word *Wende* defined the political turn in the German Democratic Republic in 1989-1990, consisting of a retreat from communism and the adoption by East German society of a course to regain German unity and accept democratic changes. The *Zeitenwende* therefore suggested the announcement of a fundamental change in German policy. However, in reality, the Chancellor did not put the issue in such a literal way. He merely said:

> "We are living through a watershed era. And that means that the world afterwards will no longer be the same as the world before. The issue at the heart of this is whether power is allowed to prevail over the law; whether we permit Putin to turn back the clock to the nineteenth century and the age of the great powers. Or whether we have it in us to keep warmongers like Putin in check" (PP DB 20/19 2022: 1350).

Therefore, Scholz reserved this phrase more to describe international changes brought about by Russian aggression, a return to the era of confrontation and deepening divisions between Russia and the West, between the world of democracy and the world of dictatorship and totalitarianism. However, since he announced specific changes in Germany's position in his speech, the concept of *Zeitenwende* was involuntarily assigned to German politics and became the emblem of this new chapter.

According to the assumptions of realism in international relations, the announcement of such changes should mean that they will translate into a more influential role for Germany within Europe, manifested by attempts to regenerate its own defence policy and providing strong support to Ukraine, especially by taking the initiative in this matter among Western countries. Germany should ensure key leadership not only on the issue of Ukraine, but also on broader EU security challenges and, more broadly, on restructuring relations between the West and Russia, and as a global power, to work to overcome growing divisions with the global South and restore the credibility of the Western-led order (Ischinger 2022).

Although the *Zeitenwende* is essentially a test of German foreign and security policy in the context of its alliances, judging by its complicated course to date, it represents an even greater challenge within the German domestic political context. Stormy discussions and strong differences of opinion both between the government and the opposition, and within the parties forming the coalition, especially within the *SPD*, indicated that Scholz's proposals were not based on broader assumptions developed on the basis of an internal agreement. Making up for this deficiency was crucial to the success of the changes announced. Their effectiveness depended on agreement within an experimental government coalition consisting, for the first time in history, of three par-

ties, on the Chancellor securing support within the government, and, above all, on convincing opponents on the left wing of the *SPD* on the utility of his plans, as well as on a pragmatic reorientation among the Greens. Because the core of changes in foreign and security policy and in the field of energy was a challenge to the core program elements of the second party representing the left. It was unknown whether and to what extent the *SPD* and Green electorates would be willing to accept the changes and consider them a necessary action in the face of the war in Ukraine. On the other hand, due to the scale of the changes announced, the success of the *Zeitenwende* depended on the creation of a cross-party consensus that included the Christian Democrats, although not more extreme opposition parties such as *AfD* and *Die Linke*.

First, it should be noted that the intention to change German policy announced by the Chancellor was not the result of a prepared strategic plan or extensive strategic reflection, but rather of shock and the unexpected realisation that Russian aggression could result in unpredictable risks for Germany. Continuing the assumptions of the previous attitude towards Russia in the field of energy and a conservative defence policy could weaken Germany vis a vis the US and other allies, as well as have a destructive effect on cooperation within the Alliance and the EU in a time of unprecedented challenges. Therefore, the dramatically changing situation revealed the incompatibility of the German position in the allied context. Although President Biden's administration wanted to maintain close, newly developed relations with Berlin and counted on a gradual adaptation of the approach of Chancellor Scholz and the "traffic light" coalition regarding increases in defence spending and taking on the burden of aid for Ukraine, no dramatic exacerbations or attempts to put direct pressure on Berlin could be observed. Chancellor Scholz delayed decisions on military support for Ukraine, focusing more on public opinion and many polarising parliamentary debates.

This intention to make changes to German security policy appeared unexpectedly and therefore could not immediately gain broad support within the ranks of the coalition. The difficulties included poorly established and diversified assessments by the general public and political elites, especially on the *SPD* side, as to actual intentions of Russia, its imperial tendencies and efforts to revise the post-Cold War order, and, over time, also divergences in assessing the implications for Germany of the new western strategy to contain Russia.

The case of changes in German policy, characterised by internal political perturbations in the context of establishing a new course, leads to speculation whether an explanation of this type of state behaviour should take into account the complex, "internal" structure of the state's agency in international relations.

Such a structure should include the ability of the decision-making centre to mobilise internal resources and at the same time consolidate its own concepts in the internal environment in the face of sudden and dramatic international challenges. At the same time, the international (allied) context may be used as a source of justification for the choices made by decision-makers rather than being a driving force for change.[3]

In order to clarify the position of Chancellor Scholz and his decision-making centre (composed of the Chancellor's Office and the Federal Ministry of Defence) regarding a permanent increase in defence spending and Germany's ambivalent involvement in the supply of arms to Ukraine, the key question concerns the possibilities and limitations in building the political consensus necessary for implementing changes. This factor seems to determine the level of success of the *Zeitenwende* due to the aforementioned unique structure of the ruling coalition, composed of parties with clearly different approaches to defence and security issues.

Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the ambivalent nature of the German position on defence spending and especially aid for Ukraine, more than the expectations of the US administration, was determined by the internal context, that is the limited ability of the decision-making centre to build broader supra-coalition support and to manage tensions at the same time. These failures resulted, on the one hand, from the pressure of the *CDU*/*CSU* to increase defence spending and supplies of heavy weapons to Ukraine and, on the other hand, from the deepening differences in the coalition between the supporters of adaptation (the Greens and the *FDP*) and their opponents from the left pacifist wing of the *SPD*.

To verify this hypothesis, it is possible to propose an analysis of both of the main areas of the *Zeitenwende* (defence spending and military support for Ukraine), in a tripartite frame of reference between the decision-making centre and the coalition base, and the main opposition force, that is the *CDU*/*CSU*. The unique role of the centre was supported by important instruments that made it possible for it to have a dominant influence on shaping changes.

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[3] The proposed theoretical point of view, focused on the actor's perspective, does not depreciate the importance of international factors for the formation of the *Zeitenwende*, that is among others: the persuasion that has been going on for several years on the part of the US and other allies and partners to reduce German energy dependence on Russia, increase defence spending in line with Allied guidelines, or provide support to Ukraine in the form of supplies of heavy weapons after 24 February 2022. However, if the alliance were to be a source of changes in German behaviour, then a more typical "realistic" reaction should be observed in the form of taking over a leadership role.

The Chancellery has considerable power in the field of defence policy (as part of its constitutionally established competence to issue directives, known as *Richtlinienkompetenz*), as well as in the field of arms exports, as it heads the Federal Security Council. However, the Federal Ministry of Defence exercises authority over the armed forces in times of peace. The Minister of Defence has influence on arms exports as a member of the Federal Security Council. The remaining coalition partners did not have similar opportunities to exert any influence. Nonetheless the Greens had the opportunity to learn about the motives behind the Chancellor's actions, through two leading politicians, Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, who heads the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action, which issues permits for arms companies to export weapons, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock (also a member of the Federal Security Council and responsible for giving opinions on the political situation in countries importing arms). However, the role of the *FDP*, due to the leader Christian Lindner, in charge of the Ministry of Finance, was crucial for the implementation of the *Zeitenwende* in terms of ensuring an increase in defence spending.

Defence policy and spending increases

For years, the main bone of contention in relations with the US has been Germany's avoidance of financing allied defence expenditures adequate to its political and economic potential. The commitment to increase defence spending by the member states of the North Atlantic Alliance made at the summit in Wales in 2014 was implemented by the governments of the *CDU/CSU-SPD* coalition under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel only partially and with great resistance, and the deadline of 2024 for reaching the 2% of GDP level of funding seemed unattainable. The chronic underfinancing of the *Bundeswehr*, failed attempts to modernise it and delayed arms purchases undertaken after the Russian invasion against Ukraine in 2014 were the result of complex structural and budgetary conditions (Becker, Mölling 2021: 2-4), and above all, insufficient political will of both coalition parties and the decision-making centre (the Chancellor's office and the Ministry of Finance), avoiding projects that would polarise both the governing coalition and public opinion.[4]

[4] Although in absolute numbers defence spending has increased successively (in 2014: EUR 33.4 billion, in 2019: EUR 43.2 billion, in 2022: EUR 50.4 billion), but these amounts in relation to GDP in the years 2014-2022 have not changed much (in 2014 it was a 1.15% share of GDP, and in 2022, 1.39% of GDP (Übelmesser 2023: 20).

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's announcement on 27 February 2022 to increase defence spending to 2% of GDP was therefore a break with previous practice. He proposed establishing a Special Fund (*Sondervermögen*) to finance the *Bundeswehr* and embedding this in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*). This was necessary to ensure financing of the Fund on the basis of loans in order to avoid violating the debt brake under Art. 115. Scholz's plan marked a radical departure from the delayed treatment of defence matters.

The agreement between the coalition parties and the Christian Democrats was confirmed in the *Bundestag* on 3 June 2022 (PP DB 20/42 2022), when the Basic Law was amended by supplementing it with a section of Art. 87 authorising the federation to establish a Fund and to take out loans in the amount of EUR 100 billion (Drs. DB 20/1409)[5], and then an act was passed establishing a Special Fund for the *Bundeswehr* to finance arms and equipment projects until 2027 (Drs. DB 20/2090).

The real determination behind the intention to fund the *Bundeswehr* permanently at the level of 2% of GDP was called into question just one year after the establishment of the Fund, when the detailed plan for defence expenditures of the federal budget for 2024 (Einzelplan 14, hereinafter EP14) lacked a sufficient increase in defence spending that would reflect the intention to ensure their permanent increase, including after the expiration of the Fund's resources after 2027. The total for defence expenditures for 2024 in EP 14 is projected at a level of approximately EUR 51.95 billion (an increase of EUR 1.72 billion compared to 2023), and expenditures from the Fund amounted to EUR 19.8 billion (in 2023 this was only EUR 8.41 billion), which meant that for the first time in German history defence spending achieved a record (Bundeshaushaltsplan 2024 Einzelplan 14, 2023: 5, 71). However, the slight increase in the EP 14 budget with only EUR 1.72 billion contrasted with earlier announcements of a systematic increase in defence spending. Meanwhile, in order to meet the NATO goal of 2% of GDP, a total of about EUR 85.5 billion had to be allocated to defence in 2024. With EUR 51.95 billion in the budget (EP 14) and EUR 19.8 billion from the Fund, the shortfall in the calculation of the NATO recommendation was in practice supplemented with items from outside the ministry's budget plan (Bardt 2023: 5), as well as the shares from other ministries of approximately 13% of the value of the EP 14 budget (Hellmonds, Mölling, Schütz, 2023: 6), and the amount of approximately EUR 8 billion for military aid to Ukraine under Specific Plan 60) (Meyer 2023: 12). Only thanks to these con-

[5] Drs. DB, listed in bibliography as "Drucksachen Deutscher Bundestag" (Printed matter of the German *Bundestag*).

troversial accounting manoeuvres will Germany show an indicator of 2.12% of GDP for 2024 and meet the NATO requirement (Seibel 2023, Gebauer, Kormbaki 2024).

The expansion of large scale defence spending through the Fund had important implications. This instrument caused decision-makers to postpone the need to increase spending in the federal budget itself (EP 14). On the other hand, intra-ministerial calculations from January 2024 showed that after the resources from the Fund are exhausted in 2028, there will be a shortage of EUR 56 billion for continued spending at the level of 2% of GDP and for the continuation of large arms projects (this deficit results from the difference between the estimated amount of needs in 2028 of EUR 107.8 billion and a fixed amount of expenses in the regular budget of EUR 51.9 billion) (Gebauer, Kormbaki 2024). The fact that the entire Fund's resources were planned at the beginning of April 2024 (Budras, Löhr, Schäfers 2024) further deepened the dilemma of how to maintain the expenditure ratio at the level of 2% of GDP in 2028 (that is, according to today's GDP it would be approximately EUR 80 billion) and how to provide funds for the reform of the *Bundeswehr* itself.

The Chancellor and the coalition: mobilising the base

One condition for the success of Scholz's initiative was overcoming reluctance to increase defence spending within his own ranks and to secure unconditional support within the *SPD*. This included both chairman, Rolf Mützenich, an influential politician articulating the need for global nuclear disarmament and the pursuit of peace policies. He also contests the need to increase defence spending and military cooperation with the USA and demands the withdrawal of Germany from the nuclear sharing program in NATO. Many *SPD* parliamentarians from its left wing share his views and are grouped into several bodies (Jusos, "Forum Demokratische Linke 21", "Parlamentarische Linke"). The Chancellor's course, although it was a break with the traditional position of the left, was not fundamentally questioned by the party, which should be considered a success in mobilising his own base. The majority of MPs from the *SPD* supported the chancellor for fear of weakening his position vis-à-vis the Christian Democrats (Gathmann, Gebauer, Hagen, Reiber 2022).

Securing the support of his own political group or, in other words, silencing the main opponents in such a sensitive area for the *SPD* as defence policy was key to the success of the *Zeitenwende* for the chancellor. This situation, in all proportions, resembled two previous political flare-ups involving Social Democratic chancellors. The party's resistance to NATO rearmament plans in

1982 led to the fall of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's government, and in 2001, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder faced a similar problem, although on a smaller scale, forcing his own party to support the decision for the *Bundeswehr* to participate in "Operation Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan.

The potential of for opposition to increased defence spending among the Greens was smaller and did not result from the tradition of a pacifist understanding of security, as in the case of the *SPD*, but rather from an expanded understanding of security including cybersecurity or the prevention of natural disasters as articulated by Minister Baerbock (PP DB 20/42 2022: 4228). Approving the concept of increased defence spending through the Fund was also a real test of flexibility for the Greens. In fact, however, it was the shock resulting from the Russian invasion that was the decisive factor in further pragmatic modification of the party's position and abandonment of their reluctance to strengthen the *Bundeswehr* and the military sector in general.

In a sense, the *FDP* was speaking with two voices. Although it was generally in favour of increasing spending, similarly to the *CDU*/CSU, it primarily emphasised compliance with fiscal rules. For the *FDP*, one condition of support for the Fund concept was most important, namely that increased defence spending would not violate the debt brake rule, which could occur in the event of a sudden increase in in the defence budget. Altogether, this translated into a cautious approach to the Christian Democrats' demand to increase defence spending in the budget.

While planning the 2024 budget, the party preferences described above emerged with even greater force. The government was not willing to significantly increase defence spending due to the rising costs of energy along with climate and demographic changes that required an adequate response in budget planning based on coalition consensus and the reconciliation of various party positions. Efforts in other areas of the *Zeitenwende*, including independence from Russian gas exports, reorientation of the energy supply and energy transformation, have multiplied the scale of the above-mentioned challenges for the economy and society. This has created the potential for challenges by supporters of the *AfD* and *Die Linke* and, as a result, huge pressure to increase the distribution of social provisions (Übelmesser, 2023: 21), as well as intensified expectations and revived competing demands for a pro-social budget policy on the part of the *SPD* and the Greens. The projection of increasing social spending for the years 2022-2026 suggested that the dilemma between the need to continue increasing defence spending through solutions in the budget itself and insufficient budget revenues will deepen, which in turn will make it more difficult to increase defence

spending (Christofzik, 2023: 8-9). Moreover, after the Fund expires, meeting defence needs will coincide with a period of increasing pressure on the federal budget due to the need to meet the costs of energy transformations and social obligations.

The example of spending plans for 2024 shown above shows that Chancellor Scholz's intention was to use creative budgeting to avert a crisis situation for his alliance commitments , and at the same time to postpone the pressure to fulfil the 2% of GDP commitment until the next term of office of the *Bundestag* from 2025 to 2029.

The general reason for the minimalist planning of defence spending was the desire to reconcile growing social spending in the budget with the principle of maintaining budgetary restraint. Both left-wing parties, but especially the *SPD*, were unable, due to their electorates, to limit social preferences in favour of accepting higher defence spending, and the Ministry of Finance, under the direction of *FDP* leader Christian Lindner, was unable to abandon the rule of the debt brake, which was a fundamental element of the *FDP*'s. identity .

The opposition (CDU/CSU) and the coalition: a shaky consensus

Obtaining the votes of the Christian Democrats was necessary to establish the Fund due to the need to create the required two thirds parliamentary majority to amend the Basic Law. Scholz's proposal was based on the assumption that it would be necessary for the coalition to cooperate with the main opposition party, which in turn expected a strengthened transatlantic orientation. The *CDU*/CSU unsuccessfully proposed increasing defence spending to 2%, regardless of the implementation of the Fund, in parallel with an increase in defence spending in the federal budget itself (PP DB 20/30 2022: 2666-2667; 2673-2674). Moreover, unlike the *SPD*, the *CDU*/CSU appealed for the purchase of American F35 aircraft in order to continue Germany's participation in the nuclear sharing program. The issue of defence spending has become a chronic flashpoint between the coalition and the *CDU*/CSU.

The *SPD* opposed the inclusion of defence spending in the Basic Law for ideological and practical reasons (the amount of GDP is not yet known at the time of setting the budget) and was only in favour of the Fund's resources being added to the defence spending in the following years up to the level of 2% of GDP while the Fund mechanism was an exceptional one-off event, in that it would cover an increase in spending on armaments for the *Bundeswehr* only for a period of five years, until 2027 (PP DB 20/30 2022: 2667-2671; Drs. DB 20/1410 2022; Drs. DB 20/1409 2022). This position also meant that after the

funds from the Fund were realised, further increases in expenditures would require further negotiations in order to maintain them at the level of 2% by increasing their share in the federal budget.

The conclusion is that regardless of practical considerations, it was not possible to create a majority for such an increase in defence spending. This was due both to ideological resistance from the leftist factions of the *SPD* and the Greens, and to reservations on the part of the *FDP*, which was interested in maintaining the debt brake.

Another *CDU/CSU* demand that was implemented was the inclusion of a special plan addressing the most pressing deficits and indicating priority arms projects to be financed through a new instrument (*Projekte Sondervermögen*… 2022). This can be seen as in line with the priorities of the decision-making centre, and the Christian Democrats could be satisfied that key projects aimed to implement alliance obligations. The project of purchasing Lockheed F35 aircraft for Germany's participation in the nuclear sharing program now meant confirming the Atlantic line in Germany's security policy.

In the second half of 2023, the conservative manner of constructing defence spending for 2024 based on an increase in expenditures financed from the Fund caused a renewed dispute between the governing coalition and the Christian Democrats, who accused the government of failing to keep its promise of reaching an average of 2% of GDP during the five-year period of the Fund's existence, of increasing expenditures under EP 14 and of downplaying the risk related to failure to finance expenditures at the level of 2% of GDP after the expiration of the Fund in 2027. For the Christian Democrats, what was at stake was Germany's credibility in the alliance and towards its American partner.

Military support for Ukraine

The second aspect of the change in security policy announced by the Chancellor concerned the provision of military assistance to Ukraine. The limited or insufficient dimension of Germany's involvement compared to some other NATO partners (USA, Great Britain, Poland, and the Baltic states) contrasted clearly with its economic and military potential, as well as with its general European and international aspirations. In fact, Germany's delayed, incremental involvement in arms supplies to Ukraine in the first period of the war (until January/February 2023) corresponded to its earlier, rather passive line of conduct in military matters, in this case also inter-

twined with reliance on residual dialogue with Russia. In the next period, the government's actions can be assessed as synchronised with the US approach, and the value of the aid provided can be assessed as constantly increasing.

The Chancellor's position

Scholz's announcement of 27 February 2022 on the supply of portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to Ukraine marked a departure from the previous German position towards Ukraine which disallowed providing it with weapons. It was also a departure from the broader principle of not exporting weapons to countries and regions affected by military conflicts, which had been recently confirmed in the coalition agreement between the *SPD*, the Greens, and the *FDP* (*Mehr Fortschritt*… 2021: 146). The dynamics of the war increased Ukraine's expectations towards NATO countries regarding the supply of not only defensive weapons, but also heavy weapons, such as armour and artillery including missile defence. Criticism from some allies, including Poland and the Baltic states, Ukraine itself, and public opinion was raised not only by the lack of adequate government involvement, but also by the way in which subsequent tranches were communicated such as announcements to the media rather than directly to the Ukrainian side. The size of transfers and, above all, constant delays in the implementation of previously announced deliveries were also targeted. Additionally, the concept of providing aid on a circular basis (*Ringtausch*) was extremely controversial. This involved the compensatory transfer of heavy weapons (Marder transporters and Leopard I and II4A tanks) to allied countries mainly in Eastern Europe such as Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland and Greece, which would in return offer their post-Soviet weapons to Ukraine, mainly T72 tanks and IFV transporters, and the decision-making centre's offers to sell heavy weapons through its domestic producers such as *Krauss-Maffei Wegmann* and *Rheinmetall*. Circular exchange was a key element of the tactic to avoid the transfer of armoured weapons.

Increasing military aid and its scale from some allies, mainly the USA, Great Britain and Eastern European countries, measured in various classifications in relation to their GDP or defence spending, quickly made it clear that Germany was not the leader of this involvement in the initial phase (Ukraine Support Tracker 2022), which could violate the authenticity of its recently announced programme of changes.

As a result of growing expectations within NATO and on the part of the US, which was reflected in the organisation of a special Ramstein format, namely countries willing to provide military assistance to Ukraine in the *Ukraine De-*

fense Contact Group, in the spring of 2022 the Chancellor launched a tactic of dispensing heavy equipment, announcing the transfer of 50 Gepard self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, seven self-propelled howitzers (*Panzerhaubitze* 2000), four MARS II multi-launch missile systems and three IRIS T air defence systems. Later in August, the Chancellor announced the transfer of three more IRIS T systems and five Panzerhaubitze 2000 self-propelled howitzers (PP DB 20/40 2022: 3914), which indicated an intensification of high-quality military assistance (Jungholt 2022).

The Chancellor often communicated the German position on military support for Ukraine as it evolved over time. The following points can be singled out. Scholz emphasised the alliance aspect, namely that Germany should act in accordance with the line established in NATO; Germany continues to supply arms to the same extent as other allies and will not proceed on its own, which is formulated as "*kein Alleingang*" (no going it alone); Ukraine cannot lose the war; there is no question of peace dictated by Putin (*Regierungserklärung*… 2022); avoidance in public statements of the idea that Russia should be defeated; the *Bundeswehr*'s resources cannot be depleted excessively due to obligations to allies; first of all, the supply of armoured weapons is out of the question for historical reasons, that is it would be unacceptable for German tanks to operate against Russia, as a result of which NATO and Germany would become a party to the conflict, and further escalation could lead to a nuclear war (PP DB 20/24 2022: 1925; PP DB 20/40 2022: 3907-3916; PP DB 20/50 2022: 5321). This position communicated that Germany was acting in agreement with its allies but would not be a leader in support for Ukraine, but neither would it avoid supplying weapons; Germany will support Ukraine militarily for as long as necessary to prevent Russia from winning. The refusal to supply armoured weapons on the assumption that it could lead to World War III or nuclear escalation signalled that what was important for the Chancellor was to develop a line of action for Germany that would be secured within the context of the alliance, but would de facto hide Germany's passivity, and at the same time, as was counted on, it would contain a margin of opportunity to start talks with Russia. A positive change occurred in the approach to Ukraine's attempts to directly purchase weapons from German industry, when Minister Habeck approved the above-mentioned order for as many as 100 *Panzerhaubitze* 2000 with delivery in 2024 from *Krauss-Maffei Wegmann* and ammunition from *Rheinmetall* in the amount of EUR 1.7 billion, but without funding from the German government (Murphy 2022).

Chancellor Scholz signalled that he would adapt to the US position, when the Biden administration announced the largest aid package of USD 3 billion.

Scholz, after almost three months of silence, announced on August 24, 2022 further deliveries in 2023 worth EUR 500 million, but again excluding armoured weapons. "We will continue to deliver weapons, from armoured howitzers to air defence systems, month after month" (*Deutschland steht*…2022). This line was also persistently presented by Scholz towards the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Dimitri Shmyhal, during his visit to Berlin on 3 September 2022, suggesting that Germany would not set a precedent because "so far, no tank of Western production has been transferred, and Germany will not act on its own" (*Ukrainischer Regierungschef*… 2022), and then developed this "compensatory" line by offering training in de-mining (together with the Netherlands) and providing equipment and winter equipment for the Ukrainian army, or declaring the main role for Germany in the field of defence air and artillery (*Interview mit Bundeskanzler*… 2022).

However, the extent to which Scholz's course depended on the dynamic development of the situation in Ukraine was shown by the successful Ukrainian counteroffensive in the first half of September 2022. The scale of the challenge faced by the government and the Chancellor personally increased significantly in the context of the alliance, when the decision-making centre was subjected to persuasion from representatives of the US administration, suggesting a change in their position on the supply of armoured weapons (Geiger, Schwung, Sturm 2022). This undermined the chancellor's previous protective approach of waiting for the US decision and avoiding acting on his own (Brössler, Krüger, Szymanski 2022; Gathmann, Gebauer, Hagen, Kormbaki 2022). The Chancellor's position assumed that Germany would not transfer its *Leopard* tanks as long as Washington was not ready to supply its *Abrams* tanks to Ukraine. Under the influence of massive criticism from the *CDU*/CSU and within his own coalition, the Chancellor and the Minister of Defence again felt forced to take compensatory actions in the form of a decision to transfer two more MARS II launchers and 50 Dingo armoured vehicles (*Weitere Raketenwerfer*… 2022), and to agree to sign a contract the *Krauss-Maffei Wegmann* group with Ukraine for the delivery by 2025 of 18 RCH-155 howitzers worth EUR 216 million from the pool of 100 units previously offered to Ukraine (Geiger, Schwung 2022).

The growing differences with the US administration diminished at the beginning of 2023, when the Chancellor unexpectedly declared the transfer of Marder armoured personnel carriers to Ukraine, and later 14 *Leopard* tanks and one battery of the Patriot air defence system, as well as granting consent to the transfer of Leopard tanks to Ukraine by allies possessing this type of tank (PP DB 20/81, 2023: 9644). The decision on this matter was coordinated with the USA, which agreed to donate 50 M2 Bradley infantry

fighting vehicles, and with France AMX-10RC combat reconnaissance vehicles. The breakthrough in Germany's position regarding tanks was made possible thanks to a concession by President Biden, who agreed to transfer *Abrams* tanks to Ukraine. The creation of a "tank coalition" by Germany, which was to include two battalions of *Leopard* tanks provided by willing allies, encountered significant challenges (Geiger, Schwung 2023,). However, this opened the way for aid to be expanded; on 7 February 2023, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius announced another tranche of 100 *Leopard* 1 tanks by the beginning of 2024. The course for a gradual increase in military assistance in 2023 was agreed upon within the decision-making centre. During his visit to Kyiv on 21 October 2023, Minister Pistorius declared that the value of military aid for Ukraine would increase from EUR 4 billion in 2023 to EUR 8 billion in 2024, which was later confirmed by Chancellor Scholz after a compromise was reached on 15 December 2023 within the coalition regarding the budget for 2024.

In this second phase of the war and due to the breakdown of the decision-making centre over the transfer of armour, Chancellor Scholz tried to emphasise the role of Germany as the second largest supplier of arms to Ukraine (EUR 10.04 billion) after the USA (EUR 43.1 billion), taking into account that attention should be paid to the financial value of this assistance provided in various formats, including from the *Bundeswehr*'s own resources, within the *Ringtausch* (Ukraine Support Tracker 2024) and the format from Ramstein.

The previous pattern in the behaviour of the decision-making centre was revived in the summer of 2023 due to the refusal to transfer Taurus cruise missiles with a unique range of 500 km to Ukraine. Scholz believed that this would contribute to the escalation of the conflict, and Germany would become a party to the war. This was because the use of Taurus would require the participation of *Bundeswehr* soldiers in establishing target coordinates, and therefore in selecting Russian targets (Rinke 2024). And in this case, the allied context created a framework for intensifying persuasion, because in the summer of 2023, Great Britain and France first provided similar weapons in the form of Storm Shadow and Scalp, although with smaller parameters, and in April 2024, a similar decision was made by the United States (ATACMS). And again, this time in the face of delayed key aid from the US in the amount of USD 60 billion, Germany, in order to present its commitment, acted "in compensation" by announcing, within the contact group, a significant package of EUR 0.5 billion including a component for needed ammunition and the establishment of an air defence coalition on 18 March 2024 (Grosse, 2024).

Chancellor and coalition: the dysfunction of the base

The evolution of Berlin's position, regardless of US attempts at persuasion, was largely influenced by internal factors such as the lack of sufficient agreement within the coalition itself, more or less covert opposition within the ranks of the *SPD*, as well as the attention paid by the Chancellor's centre to the changing mood of public opinion, which on the one hand condemned Russian aggression, and on the other hand was concerned about possible negative consequences for the socio-economic situation of Germany, which was instrumentalised by the opposition from the right (*AfD*) and left (*Die Linke*) wings of the political spectrum.[6] Due to these circumstances, maximising the supply of heavy weapons could seem problematic for the decision-making centre as well as for the Chancellor's party and its pacifist identity.

It can therefore be noted that in the case of weapons supplies to Ukraine, a similar situation occurred as in the case of defence spending. The breakthrough decision made by the narrow centre required building political support and breaking yet another military related taboo.

The question arises as to what extent the decision-making centre was capable of, or interested in, mobilising the coalition's base of support. The Chancellor justified his reserved stance on supplies by the need to avoid engaging in war and provoking Russia into escalation. This approach was not stabilised within the coalition. Among the Greens and the *FDP*, there were more and more voices sharing the Christian Democrats' arguments for the transfer of weapons. This issue was thus the subject of constant controversy both between the decision-making centre and the Christian Democrat opposition, and within the government coalition itself, between the centre and declared pro-Ukraine supporters from the ranks of the Greens and *FDP*. The intra-coalition dispute, taking place on the classic government-opposition axis, was an important context influencing the Chancellor's course of adaptation.

Despite formal support for Ukraine largely influenced by the shock from the first phase of the war in 2022, the *SPD* actually remained opposed to increasing key aid. There were tensions between the Chancellor's entourage, supported by party co-chairman Lars Klingbeil, and the left wing of the party, headed by faction chair Rolf Mützenich. This faction was dominated by a critical pacifist orientation, opposed to arming Ukraine and calling for a diplomatic solution mediated by China (Teevs 2022). There were few supporters of arming Ukraine such as Michael Roth, the chairman of the *Bundestag*'s foreign

[6] This article omits analysis of the position of these two political parties.

affairs committee. The transfer of armoured weapons, in the opinion of the vast majority of the *SPD*, would be tantamount to Germany entering the war on the side of Ukraine and the risk of nuclear war. This was out of the question due to the party's pacifist identity and the mood in the *SPD* electorate, of which Chancellor Scholz himself was aware (*Regierungserklärung…* 2022). The *SPD*, breaking with the tradition of excluding arms exports, made a giant step forward since the beginning of the war.

In the *FDP*, the group that advocated military support for Ukraine and criticised the Chancellor was relatively active. The *FDP*'s expert on defence policy and chair of the *Bundestag*'s defence committee, Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, repeatedly criticised the Chancellor's policy on Ukraine in the media as did, to a lesser extent, the expert on defence Markus Faber, secretary general Bijan Djir-Sarai, and Johannes Vogel, the party's deputy chair. They demanded the transfer of armour and, like the *CDU*/CSU, expressed the belief that Germany should take an active role (PP DB 20/54 2022: 5876). The head of the party, Minister of Finance, Christian Lindner, traditionally showed restraint and did not comment on the issue of arming Ukraine.

The coalition circle of security policy experts also spawned three- or two-party initiatives demonstrating in the public space, outside the *Bundestag*, support for the supply of heavy weapons, including armour. These caused sharp reactions from the Chancellor and the *SPD*, such as the trip to Ukraine on 12 April 2022 by three parliamentarians, Strack-Zimmermann from the *FDP*, Anton Hofreiter from the Greens and Michael Roth from the *SPD* aroused the anger of the left wing of the *SPD*, as well as of Scholz himself (Feldhoff, 2022).

The most far-reaching evolution of views on arms supplies was observed among the Greens. The voices of individual prominent MPs such as the chair of the European Affairs Committee Anton Hofreiter, who looked favourably at the *CDU*/CSU draft resolutions in the *Bundestag*, were joined by representatives of the Green leadership, co-chair Omid Nouripour and co-chair Ricarda Lang, in connection with the successful Ukrainian counter-offensive in the autumn of 2022 (*Göring-Eckhardt kritisiert…* 2022; Gathmann, Gebauer, Hagen, Reiber 2022), and especially Minister of Foreign Affairs Annalena Baerbock in an interview for "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (Leithäuser 2022). This demonstrated the deepening disagreements both at coalition level and, more importantly, within the government, regarding the supply of armoured weapons and the further distancing of the Greens from the *SPD*. The culmination of the criticism of the decision-making centre was a joint public appeal in mid-October 2022. Members of the *Bundestag* from the Greens and the *FDP* but not the *SPD*, called on the federal government and partners from the EU

and NATO to increase the effectiveness of military assistance for the liberation of the occupied territories, while at the same time demanding that the government take over a leading role for Germany to coordinate actions, because the country was predestined for this due to its potential as well as for humanitarian and historical considerations (Kormbaki, Schult 2022). The chancellor's decision to hand over *Marders* and *Leopards* was welcomed by politicians from the Greens and *FDP*, as well as the *CDU*/CSU.

The issue of transferring *Taurus* missiles, much like the dispute over armoured weapons in 2022, once more sparked deep disagreements within the coalition and between the coalition and the Christian Democrat opposition. The Chancellor was subjected to sharp criticism by the coalition's proponents of military aid. The centre of gravity was the debate in the *Bundestag* on the adoption of a resolution on further military aid, including long-range weapons, which was supported by the coalition parties and the *CDU*/CSU because it did not create any compulsion for the Chancellor to act. The draft coalition resolution was weakened by the left wing of the *SPD*, which prevented a stricter wording. During the debate, its exponent, Ralf Stegner, rejected a competing motion by the Christian Democrats and struck anti-militarist tones, criticising military spending, which was a direct blow to the Chancellor and Minister Pistorius himself (PP DB 20/154: 19,608). However, dozens of representatives of the Greens and *FDP* protested against Scholz's line, arguing for a quick transfer of the *Taurus* missiles (PP DB 20/154: 19,621 et seq.; Drs. DB 20/10375).

On the other hand, it was the evolving attitude of the *SPD*, as in the case of defence spending, that created a circumstance of ambivalent importance. On the one hand, its resistance made it difficult for the Chancellor to make a decision in favour of the transfer of the *Taurus* weapons, and on the other, it was a pretext for the refusal, which could partly suggest that Scholz intends to present himself as a "chancellor of peace" and that he is not an advocate of military aid for Ukraine, which could be evidenced by the financial dimension of Germany's involvement and the large volume of weapons already transferred.

The Opposition (CDU/CSU) and the Chancellor's coalition: an arms supply offensive

From the beginning of the war, the *CDU*/CSU was a supporter of expanding arms supplies to include heavy weapons. This line was uncomfortable for the decision-making centre and its passive approach and resulted in pressure. Thus, on 28 April 2022, a joint resolution of the coalition and the *CDU*/CSU was passed in the *Bundestag*, calling on the federal government to "continue

arms supplies and include heavy weapons and complex systems, for example as part of a circular exchange" (Drs. DB 20/1550; PP DB 20/31 2022: 2721). The circumstances surrounding the creation of this resolution demonstrated the driving role of the Christian Democrat opposition in the *Bundestag*.[7] This consisted in the fact that leading politicians and experts from the *CDU*/CSU continuously admonished the Chancellor to increase arms supplies, and especially to transfer armoured weapons such as *Marder* transporters and *Leopard* tanks, accusing him of disregarding the above-mentioned landmark resolution of the *Bundestag* and taking advantage of difficulties in negotiating with allies from NATO's *Ringtausch*. They contrasted his performance with the positive example of deliveries of advanced weapons from the USA, Poland, Great Britain and the Czech Republic and, arguing that Germany's image was being damaged and with that came a progressive decline in influence within NATO and an inability to lead (PP DB 20/50 2022: 5311 et seq.). Friedrich Merz attacked the Chancellor over his conversation with Putin on 13 September 2022 and his calls for a "diplomatic solution" that would lead to a ceasefire. He accused the Chancellor of proposing negotiations over the heads of Ukrainians, while "Germany is not an intermediary, but stands on Ukraine's side" and "just as the government says that it cannot act alone in the matter of arms supplies, it cannot act alone and demand negotiations regarding a truce" (Gutschker, Schuller, 2022). The draft *CDU*/CSU resolution of 20 September 2022 called on the Chancellor to "take responsibility for leadership" and immediately issue permits for the export of heavy weapons from industrial resources, in particular armoured combat vehicles and more long-range artillery from *Bundeswehr* resources, and also guarantee training by the *Bundeswehr* for Ukrainian soldiers to operate this equipment (Drs. DB 20/3490). This resolution, as well as previous *CDU*/CSU drafts (Drs. DB 20/2347), debated in the *Bundestag*, on 22 and 28 September 2022, justified the need for supplies on allied grounds and were aimed at embroiling the government and the coalition in various contradictions between the fact that significant categories of heavy weapons were transferred, but armoured weapons were not. They contributed to deepening the polarisation in the ranks of the coalition by exploiting the differences between the Greens, *FDP*, and *SPD* (PP DB 20/54 2022: 5870 et seq.; PP DB 20/56 2022: 3175 et seq.)

[7] The *CDU/CSU* used various debates in the *Bundestag*, for example in connection with the EU summit on Ukraine on 30-31 May 2022 (18 May 2022), budget presentation (1 June 2022, 7 September 2022) and its own proposals regarding the supply of heavy weapons (27 July 2022, 22 September 2022).

The controversy surrounding the transfer of *Taurus* missiles showed a near split in the coalition and an almost uniform approach of the Greens, *FDP*, and *CDU*/CSU. Only the need to preserve the coalition and avoid an open conflict stopped the representatives of the *FDP* and the Greens from voting twice in favour of the resolutions of the Christian Democrats on 20 February 2024 and 14 March 2024, demanding the transfer of the *Taurus* missiles (Drs. DB 20/10379; Drs. 20/9143; PP DB 20/154: 19621 et seq.; PP DB 20/157: 20107). The Christian Democrats' criticism and their proposals for the transfer of heavy weapons in the form of armoured weapons to be followed by *Taurus* missiles, strengthened the polarisation within the coalition, but were unable to independently bring about a breakthrough in the position of the decision-making centre. On the other hand, once the Chancellor decided to transfer armoured weapons, adapting his approach to US expectations, the arguments of critics from within the coalition and Christian Democrat critics enabled the tactical integration of pacifist opponents into the *SPD*. However, in the case of the Taurus, the Chancellor did not take into account the change in the US approach regarding long-range missiles because his position was based on complex assumptions regarding a fear of escalation from Russia and the German strategic culture, requiring the consent of the *Bundestag* for the *Bundeswehr* to operate outside the borders of the Federal Republic.

Conclusions

The decision-making centre's efforts to mobilise both its own political base and secure cross-party support in two key areas of the *Zeitenwende*, namely defence spending and military support for Ukraine, have brought about mixed and ambiguous results. The positives include the amendment of the Basic Law and the launch of a special extra-budgetary solution in the form of a Fund for the *Bundeswehr*. However, the issue of continuing the trend of increasing defence spending after 2027 is at present causing major controversy within the coalition. On the other hand, growing military aid for Ukraine was gradual and slow due to the lack of internal political consensus, but eventually allowed Germany to play the role of a key European donor.

Both of these inflammatory issues are among the reasons for the progressive fragmentation of the three-party coalition. The tensions resulting from the varying preferences of the coalition partners and the Christian Democrats were difficult to manage by the decision-making centre, which was additionally confronted with the expectations of the allies, who counted on the Scholz

government to reduce significant deficits in German security policy and to oversee a more active role for Germany.

The new consensus on increasing defence spending was possible because the Scholz government was able to negotiate support from the Christian Democrats, win over the increasingly pragmatic Greens and at the same time convince the left wing of his own party, which had previously protested against the emphasis on military issues in German policy as militarisation. The consensus decisions to increase defence spending in early June 2022 symbolised a break in German security policy, a retreat from the current practice of saving on defence, which, incidentally, was co-authored by Olaf Scholz, who as Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance in Chancellor Angela Merkel's government from 2018-2021.

For the German left, the *SPD*, and the Greens, accepting defence spending on the scale set by NATO, even for the next five years until 2026, meant another important milestone on the way to breaking a current taboo regarding their pacifist approach to security matters. On the one hand, the establishment of a Fund supporting the fulfilment of the allied obligation (2% level of defence spending) and improving the quality of the armed forces strengthened the pro-Atlantic orientation of German security policy, which was problematic for the *SPD* due to the resistance of its pacifist left wing. On the other hand, the decision-making centre's course on increasing defence spending was limited by the preferences of the *SPD* and, partly, the Greens for social spending. These preferences, in turn, conflicted with the views of the third coalition partner, the *FDP*, which was reluctant to violate the debt brake at all. Increasing defence spending was a priority for the Christian Democrats. Open conflict over its continuation at an increased level both between individual coalition parties and between the coalition and the Christian Democrats will be resolved after the next *Bundestag* elections in 2025.

On the issue of military support for Ukraine, the course of procrastination set by the decision-making centre, which sought synchronisation with the position of the US administration, did not have full support in the coalition due to the reservations of the left wing of the *SPD*. The initial inter-party unanimity in favour of arms supplies (joint resolution of the *SPD*, Greens, *FDP*, and *CDU*/CSU parliamentary groups of 28 April 2022) was reinterpreted by the decision-making centre in order to exclude the transfer of armoured weapons. Criticism from some within the *FDP*, the Greens, and above all the *CDU*/CSU, prompted the Chancellor to take compensatory measures in the form of breaking down deliveries of other types of weapons, being active in the Ramstein Contact Group, organising the *Ringtausch* or issuing consent to deliveries by German industry.

The safeguard formula emphasising that Germany would not act on its own (*kein Alleingang*) and would only transfer heavy weapons provided by its allies, that is that they would not provide Western-produced armour, allowed Scholz to avoid assuming the troublesome role of leader until the spring of 2023, when, after a change in the position on the transfer of armoured weapons, the importance of Germany as a leader emerging as Ukraine's most important European military partner began to be gradually emphasised.

The Chancellor, trying to maintain his own original course despite pressure from the Christian Democrats and parts of the Greens and *FDP*, was guided by the intention of maintaining the integrity of his position with the *SPD*, which depended on taking into account pacifist sentiments and the reluctance of the party's left wing to embrace the newly declared *Zeitenwende*. Uncertainty regarding the *SPD*'s acceptance of continuing increased defence spending after 2027 and the party's negative position on the transfer of *Taurus* cruise missiles to Ukraine generally weakened the inter-party consensus and raised questions regarding the government's determination to implement the *Zeitenwende*.

It was the *SPD*'s position on the issue of supplies of armoured weapons and later *Taurus* missiles, as well as Chancellor Scholz's own sense of pragmatism that compelled him to be cautious towards Russia for fear of escalation, including the possibility of it using nuclear weapons. It was an expression of connection with sceptical voices within the party about the use of military force, as well as with the mood of a significant part of the public with a pacifist orientation. The reluctance to violate the taboo on armoured weapons and later the refusal to hand over the *Taurus* missiles was therefore a tribute to the pacifist orientation in the *SPD*, and at the same time an instrument for maintaining influence over the party. At the same time, this course increasingly complicated relations with the *FDP* and the Greens. It was also problematic from the point of view of Germany's involvement as a reliable partner in strengthening the Alliance.

It should be emphasised that the Chancellor's tactics included incremental changes and the successive transfer of other categories of valuable weapons in the form of key air defence systems such as *IRIS* or *Patriot*. Scholz had to take into account not only intense criticism from the *CDU/CSU*, but also the risk of divisions in the coalition due to an emerging inter-party constellation in favour of supplies, consisting of the Greens, the *FDP* and the Christian Democrats, fearing that the Chancellor's course, deferring to *SPD* resistance, would make it difficult to strengthen the Ukraine military. This could also result in a weakening of Germany's position among the allies and, consequently, Berlin's voice on the future of Ukraine and security in Central and Eastern Europe. However,

the Chancellor left no doubt that Germany was on Ukraine's side and repeatedly declared that German support would continue.

The importance of the alliance for the *Zeitenwende* in the area of weapons supplies to Ukraine, that is the problem of possible allied influence on the change of Germany's position. In reality the American administration and allied structures in NATO, so visible earlier in the question of defence spending, cannot be interpreted as a source generating changes in the behaviour of the decision-making centre but rather as an environment modelling its evolution. The alliance served as a safeguard for the adopted course of adaptation, when the Chancellor, who constantly emphasised the *kein Alleingang* formula, excluded the supply of armoured weapons, citing the lack of appropriate arrangements with the USA. At other times he justified the decision to transfer heavy weapons in coordination with the Biden administration (although so far it has not decided to transfer the *Taurus* missiles even though the US has provided ATACSM missiles to Ukraine). The alliance factor also played an important role in the approach of the Christian Democratic opposition and intra-coalition critics when they referred to alliance expectations in order to claim that the Chancellor was creating "divisions in Europe" or even that he was preventing Germany from leading the Alliance and weakening its position within it. For the Christian Democrats, the alliance factor rather energised their pressure on the decision-making centre.

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"'Zeitenwende' amid Ukraine war named German word of the year" "Deutsche Welle" 09.12.2022

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ABSTRACT

Chancellor Scholz's speech of 27 February 2022 in which he announced that his government would make fundamental changes to German security policy in the wake of Russian aggression against Ukraine should, in theory, translate into a more influential role for Germany in Europe. The implementation of the Zeitenwende *(epochal change) is a test for German security policy in the allied context, but also requires the decision-making centre to create stable conditions domestically. It can be assumed that the effectiveness of the change depends on consensus in the experimental three-party coalition government and on securing the partial support of the Christian Democrats as well. A hypothesis can be put forward that the scope and scale of the undertaken turn in these two areas were determined not so much by expectations on the part of the US and other allies as by the domestic context, that is the limited ability of the decision-making centre to build broader supra-coalition support and to manage tensions. The author's aim is to clarify the ability of the decision-making centre to manage the tensions arising from the pressure of the Christian Democrat opposition and the widening divergence within the coalition between the supporters of adaptation (the Greens and the FDP) and its opponents – pro-military force sceptics (the left wing of the SPD). The article, based on the literature of the subject, the press and Internet information, examines two issues, the questions of increased defence spending and arms supplies to Ukraine are analysed through the prism of relations in a tripartite set-up, the decision-making centre, the coalition parties, and the Christian Democrat opposition.*

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Assisted suicide as a form of exercising the right to self-determination in the Austrian legal system

Introduction

Assisting a person in committing suicide was punishable in the Republic of Austria until late 2021 under Section 78 of the Federal Act of 23 January 1974 on Acts Punishable by Judicial Sentence (*Strafgesetzbuch – Penal Code–StGB*)[1], which read as follows: "Whoever induces or assists another person to commit suicide shall be punished with imprisonment of between six months and five years" (cf. Mergel 2017: 159). Involvement in suicide (or literally, self-murder) (*Mitwirkung am Selbstmord*), as defined by the legislature, has been explained by doctrine and jurisprudence as a situation in which a person who is tired of life kills themselves with the perpetrator's complicity (Madea 2007: 633; Hermann 2018: 268). The Constitutional Court (*Verfassungsgerichtshof – VfGH*), in its ruling of 11 December 2020, file no. G 139/2019-71[2], repealed the ban on assisted suicide, in particular the phrase "or assists them in doing so" in Section 78 of the Penal Code (StGB), as incompatible with the Federal Constitutional Act (*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz – B-VG*) [3], with effect from 1 January 2022. At the same time, the *VfGH* called on the legislator to take measures to prevent abuse, in particular to ensure that the decision to commit suicide is not taken under the influence of third parties. After all, those assisting should be sure

[1] Bundesgesetz vom 23. Jänner 1974 über die mit gerichtlicher Strafe bedrohten Handlungen (*BGBl* Nr 60/1974).

[2] The text of the ruling in German is available in the Federal Legal Information System (*Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes – RIS*) at: https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Vfgh/JFT_20201211_19G00139_00/JFT_20201211_19G00139_00.pdf (accessed 31 January 2022) – hereinafter the *VfGH* ruling.

[3] *BGBl*. No. 1/1930.

that the person wishing to commit suicide has indeed made the decision freely and independently (cf. Borkowska 2021: 61-63). The executive and legislative branches responded to the *VfGH*'s call, so that by early 2022 the legal situation in Austria with regard to assisted suicide had changed in a way that corresponded to the *VfGH*'s interpretation of the constitutional provisions.

Both the *VfGH* ruling and the ensuing bills and new legislation have received a great deal of attention in Europe because of their subject matter, which goes far beyond the question of criminalising assisted suicide, as it concerns the understanding of the most essential fundamental rights of the individual, and does so in a liberal way that is hardly possible in many modern legal systems. That, until recently, also applied to Austria (cf. Schmoller 2004: 224).

This article aims to analyse and assess the scope and significance of the normative change in the Austrian legal system initiated by the *VfGH* ruling on the admissibility of criminal liability of assisted suicide, while at the same time redefining the individual's right to self-determination. This study will test the hypothesis that as of 1 January 2022 a change of fundamental importance has taken place in the Austrian legal system with regard to the most important fundamental rights of the individual, in particular the right to self-determination. The study will be conducted primarily using a dogmatic-legal method, and to a lesser extent, a theoretical-legal method.

The concept of assisted suicide and related concepts

In German-speaking countries, the use of the term euthanasia (*Euthanasie*) as a synonym for assisted dying (*Sterbehilfe*) has not been able to spread due to the negative connotations stemming from the racially and eugenically motivated mass murders of sick and disabled people, referred to as "lives not worth living" (*lebensunwertes Leben*) as part of the "euthanasia programme" (*Euthanasieprogramm*) in Germany under National Socialism (cf. Grimm, Hillebrand 2009: 91). In fact as the literature points out, today we are objectively dealing with a broad group of behaviours related to euthanasia, including assisted suicide (Burdziak 2019). However, given the variety of available terms that reflect the facts and knowledge in the field, especially in German-speaking countries, abandoning the use of the term euthanasia does not seem problematic.

Sterbehilfe can be understood, firstly, as assistance in dying or end-of-life assistance (*Hilfe im Sterben*), i.e. support in dying (*Sterbebeistand*) or end-of-life care (*Sterbebegleitung*). End-of-life assistance in this sense consists in supporting the dying person through care, pain-relieving treatment and human

attention. Secondly, *Sterbehilfe* can mean 'helping to die' (*Hilfe zum Sterben)*, thus killing (*Töten*) or allowing to die (*Sterbenlassen*) a dying, seriously ill or suffering person because of their own explicitly or implicitly expressed demand or interest. The second case involves a number of situations, one of which is assisted suicide.

Four forms of assisted dying are usually distinguished: 1. permitting death (*Sterbenlassen*) or passive assistance in dying (*passive Sterbehilfe*), also passive euthanasia – withdrawal of life-prolonging treatment (while maintaining 'basic care' and pain treatment), e.g. disconnecting the patient's oxygen supply device; 2. indirect assistance in dying (*indirekte Sterbehilfe*) or indirect active assistance in dying (*indirekte aktive Sterbehilfe*), also indirect active euthanasia – pain-relieving treatment with acceptance of the (unintended) risk of shortening life, e.g. applying morphine; 3. assistance in suicide (*Beihilfe zur Selbsttötung*), accompanied suicide (*Freitodbegleitung*) or assisted suicide (*assistierter Suizid*) – providing assistance in committing suicide, e.g. by obtaining and making available death-inducing drugs that the person concerned takes themselves; 4. active assistance in dying (*aktive Sterbehilfe*), direct active assistance in dying (*direkte aktive Sterbehilfe*) or homicide on demand (*Tötung auf Verlangen*), also direct active euthanasia – deliberately and actively hastening or causing death, whereby, in contrast to indirect euthanasia, death in this case is not only accepted but also intended, e.g. injection of a drug that leads directly to death.

With regard to the fourth form, in contrast to assisted suicide, the final decision-making power does not lie with the person concerned but with a third party (Hillebrand, Rose, Campe 2020; cf. Pacian, Pacian, Skórzyńska et al. 2014: 21 and Deutsch, Schreiber 2012: 63). There are also other related terms, such as: *(Bei-)Hilfe zum Suizid* (aid in suicide), *ärztlich assistierter Suizid* (doctor-assisted suicide), *Therapiezieländerung* (change of therapy goal), *Therapieverzicht* (abandonment of therapy), *Therapieabbruch* (cessation of therapy), *Sterben zulassen* (permitting death), *palliative Sedierung* (palliative sedation) or treatment at the end of life (*Behandlung am Lebensende*) (Dlubis-Mertens 2014: 7-8; cf. Doroszewska 2019: 56-57; Pacian, Pacian 2011: 11-13).

The meaning of the term assisted dying is therefore very broad. From the perspective of medical science, it applies to people who are dying, who are seriously or terminally ill (physically or mentally), who are suffering unbearable pain or who see no point in continuing to live and who therefore express an urgent desire for "deliverance" through assisted suicide. The subjective scope of end-of-life assistance also includes patients who are permanently unconscious or losing consciousness in the final stages of their illness and who are no longer able to express an opinion on the use of life-prolonging treatment, which is

medically possible but therapeutically questionable, or on the withdrawal of such treatment. The subjective scope of the concept under consideration also includes severely disabled newborns who are not yet competent, whose life expectancy is very low or whose life will involve great suffering (Hillebrand, Rose, Campe 2020).

As can be seen from the above, the German language is very rich and flexible in its ability to create concepts for the purposes of science and practice, which makes it possible to reflect the multitude of aspects of a factual act and legal institution such as assisted death or, in countries outside the German-speaking world, euthanasia. This does not mean that all concepts developed and functioning in other sciences are actually used in legal language and the language of the law. On the contrary, there is considerable reluctance to extend the range of concepts and the associated terminology, which is well illustrated by Austrian legislation. In line with the terminology used in Austria, this article uses the general term *Sterbehilfe* to refer to assisted suicide. The latter, in turn, is understood, as proposed by Erika Feyerabend, as a situation in which a doctor or doctors, or an organisation offering such services, provides a lethal agent. However, the final act, the taking of this agent, is carried out independently by the person wishing to die and therefore, above all from a legal point of view, this act is treated as an expression of the individual's free will. In this case, the control over the last act lies with the person concerned (Feyerabend 2021: 250; cf. Kopetzki 2000: 16).

The individual's right to self-determination according to the *VfGH*

In the ruling declaring § 78 of the *StGB* unconstitutional due to the phrase "or assists them in doing so" and repealing this section of the provision with effect from 31 December 2021, the *VfGH* cited the violation of the constitutionally guaranteed right of the individual to free self-determination as the reason for the unconstitutionality of the criminal prohibition of any third-party assistance in committing suicide. It follows from this ruling that the right to free self-determination, which is derived from the right to a private life, the right to life and the principle of equality, includes both the right to shape one's own life and the right to die with dignity. According to the *VfGH*, the decision to take one's own life must be based on free self-determination. The main principles of the ruling also include the statement that the individual's sovereignty over medical treatment includes, besides the refusal of life-sustaining or life-pro-

longing treatment, in particular the right to die with dignity and the right to be assisted by a third party.

In justifying its position, the *VfGH* pointed out that the democratic legal state established by the Federal Constitution requires freedom and equality for all people. This is expressed, inter alia, in Article 63(1) of the State Treaty of Saint-Germain (*Staatsvertrag von Saint-Germain*) [4], which has been regarded as constitutional law since the adoption of the Federal Constitution on 1 October 1920 by virtue of its Article 149, and which obliges the state to "ensure the full and complete protection of the life and liberty of all inhabitants of Austria, irrespective of birth, nationality, language, race or religion". This obligation and the resulting rights of the individual are specified in a number of fundamental rights guarantees, in particular the right to private life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights[5] and the right to life under Article 2 of the ECHR and the principle of equality between men and women, as stated in Article 2 of the Basic Law of 21 December 1867 *(Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger für die im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder – StGG*) and in Article 7(1) of the *B-VG*, from which also follows the constitutionally guaranteed right to free self-determination. This right includes both the right to lead one's own life and the right to die with dignity.[6]

Citing the ECHR, the *VfGH* relied on Strasbourg case law[7], according to which the refusal to comply with the expressed wish of a suicide seeker to end what they consider to be a profoundly degrading and painful life with third-party assistance constitutes an interference with the right to respect for private life under Article 8 of the ECHR[8] (cf. Garlicki 2008: 11; Gronowska 2014a: 21). Without in any way negating the principle of the inviolability of life protected by the ECHR, the ECtHR has taken into account the fact that, in an era of increasingly complex medical procedures and increased life expectancy, many people fear that they will be forced to live into old age or in a situation of

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[4] The text of the treaty in German is available in RIS at: https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10000044 (accessed 13 May 2022).

[5] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, signed in Rome on 4 November 1950 (Journal of Laws 1993, No. 61, item 284) – hereinafter the ECHR.

[6] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 64 and 65.

[7] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 67-71.

[8] European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter ECtHR) ruling of 29 April 2002, 2346/02, Pretty v. the United Kingdom, paragraphs 61 et seq. – hereinafter the Pretty ruling.

progressive physical or mental impairment, which would contradict their ideas about themselves and their own identity (cf. Citowicz 2007: 34).[9]

The Strasbourg Court also held that the right of the individual to decide when and how to end their life, provided that they are in a position to decide and act freely in this regard, constitutes an aspect of the right to respect for private life within the meaning of Article 8 of the ECHR.[10] This right cannot be guaranteed in a purely theoretical or even illusory manner. [11] At the same time, the ECtHR held that, when examining a claim of a violation of Article 8 of the ECHR, the right to life under Article 2 of the ECHR must also be taken into account. This means that public authorities are obliged to protect vulnerable persons from actions which endanger their own lives and to prevent a person from committing suicide if the underlying decision was not taken freely and in full knowledge of the circumstances.[12]

In the absence of consensus and given the considerable differences in the legal situation in the states parties to the ECHR in this area, the ECtHR assumed that states enjoy a wide degree of regulatory discretion with regard to the right of the individual to choose the time and manner of terminating their life.[13] If the state is guided by liberal principles in this area, it must take appropriate measures to implement them and to prevent abuse. In particular, the right to life protected by Article 2 of the ECHR obliges states to take measures to ensure that the decision genuinely corresponds to the suicide seeker's free will.[14] The latter provision, in turn, obliges states parties to the ECHR to protect the right to life against threats not only from the state but also from non-state actors. This also applies, in certain limited circumstances, to protective measures in favour of persons at risk of suicide.[15] However, it is neither the task nor the duty of the state to protect against a suicide freely desired by a person (cf. Berka, Binder, Kneihs 2019: 286).

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[9] The Pretty ruling, paragraphs 65 and 67; cf. ECtHR ruling of 19 July 2012, 497/09, Koch v. Germany, para. 51 – hereinafter the Koch ruling.

[10] ECtHR ruling of 20 January 2011, 31322/07, Hass v. Switzerland, paras 50 and 51 – hereinafter the Hass ruling; the Koch ruling, para 52.

[11] The Hass ruling, para 60. Cf. ECtHR ruling of 13 May 1980, 6694/74, Artico v. Italy, para. 33.

[12] The Hass ruling, para 54. Cf. ECHR ruling of 5 June 2015, 46043/14, Lambert and Others v. France, para 136 et seq. – hereinafter the Lambert ruling.

[13] The Hass ruling, para 55; the Koch ruling, para 70; the Lambert ruling, para 144.

[14] The Hass ruling, para 56 et seq.

[15] ECHr ruling of 22 November 2016, 1967/14, Hiller v. Austria, para 50 et seq.

Thus, the *VfGH* fully exploited the fact that, as Bożena Gronowska rightly notes, the ECtHR is becoming increasingly open to the problems of people facing the most dramatic decisions in their lives (Gronowska 2014b: 187). Moreover, in Polish doctrine, interpretations of ECtHR case law are cautious, in contrast to Western European doctrine, where the Pretty ruling is already seen as accepting the view that Article 8 of the ECHR contains a qualified right to choose the manner and time of one's own death (Martin 2021: 6). In this context, it should be noted that in the Austrian legal system, in contrast to the German one, the fundamental right to the protection and development of one's personality is constitutionally protected. However, it is not guaranteed on the basis of national legislation, but by Articles 2 and 8 of the ECHR. In fact, Austria has incorporated the ECHR into its legal order as a set of norms of constitutional rank, without excluding its direct applicability (*ohne Erfüllungsvorbehalt*), and therefore the provisions of the ECHR have the same legal effect as norms of national constitutional law. Consequently, in the absence of national fundamental rights, only the Convention fundamental rights apply, which explains why the *VfGH* referred exclusively to the ECHR with regard to the right to life and the right to private life. In this respect, it was obligatory to take into account the Strasbourg case law, as the dualism of interpretation would have been unacceptable (cf. Huber 2020: 68).

The remaining part of the legal analysis had to be carried out by the *VfGH* itself. Thus, the *VfGH* held that the right of the individual to free self-determination with regard to the organisation of their life and the decision about (the time of) death, in a manner consistent with human dignity, derives from the principle of equality set out in Article 2 of the *StGG* and Article 7(1) of the *B-VG*. In its basic content, according to which all human beings are equal before the law, the principle of equality presupposes that every human being as an individual is *per se* different from others. The order of fundamental rights guarantees the freedom of the human being, who is responsible for themselves in terms of their personality and individuality. According to the *VfGH*'s interpretation, the scope of free self-determination includes the individual's decision on how to shape and lead their own life. However, it also includes the decision whether and for what reasons the individual wishes to end their life with dignity. This all depends on the individual's convictions and perceptions and falls within the scope of their autonomy. According to the *VfGH*'s interpretation, the right to free self-determination derived from the *B-VG* includes not only the decision and actions of the suicide seeker, but also the right of such a person to be assisted by a (willing) third party. Indeed, a suicide seeker will often be dependent on the assistance of others to carry out their autonomous

decision to commit suicide because of the method of chosen to carry it out. Accordingly, a person who wishes to commit suicide has the right to a self-determined death and must be able to seek assistance from others who are willing to provide it.[16]

Inadmissibility of the ban on assisted suicide under the *VfGH*

As the *VfGH* itself emphasised, the core of its ruling concerns the first act under § 78 of the *StGB*, i.e. assisted suicide, and not the second act of § 78 of the *StGB*, i.e. inciting suicide. In this context, the *VfGH* stated that the ban on suicide with third-party assistance represents a particularly intensive encroachment on the rights of the individual. Since § 78 of the *StGB*, as analysed by the *VfGH*, prohibited suicide with the assistance of a third party without exception, this provision could, under certain circumstances, induce an individual to commit suicide in a manner unworthy of a human being. This might occur if, through their own free choice, they found themselves in a situation where a life based on self-determination, personal integrity, and identity – and therefore dignity – could no longer be assured. According to the *VfGH*, if the legal system makes it possible for the person concerned to end their life in a humane manner with the help of a third party at a time of their own choice, this can have the effect that the person concerned is able to live longer and does not feel compelled to terminate their life prematurely in an inhumane manner. The person concerned may thus extend their life, as they will be able to commit suicide at a later date with third-party assistance. By imposing an absolute ban on the assistance of a third party to commit suicide, Section 78 of the *StGB* effectively prohibits the individual from deciding to die alone with dignity. In this regard, the *VfGH* did not share the position of the Federal Government (*Bundesregierung*), according to which the legislator has a broad legal and political freedom in regulating assisted suicide. According to the *VfGH*'s interpretation, the provisions of § 78 of the *StGB* concern the existential decision on life and death and thus – to a very important extent – the individual's right to self-determination. In this respect, the *VfGH* found that the legislature did not have a wide margin of legal and political discretion.[17]

As the *VfGH* further stated, the constitutional-legal review of § 78 of the *StGB* was not about balancing the protection of the life of the suicide seeker

[16] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 72-74.

[17] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 79-83.

with their right to self-determination. If there is no doubt that the decision to commit suicide is based on free self-determination, the legislator must respect this. It would be wrong to derive an obligation to live from the right to the protection of life under Article 2 of the ECHR and thereby turn the subjects of fundamental rights into addressees of an obligation to self-protection. Since suicide is irreversible, the corresponding freedom of a person who decides to commit suicide has to be based on a (not only temporary, but) permanent decision. Both the protection of life and the right to self-determination oblige the legislator to allow third-party assistance in a suicide provided that the decision is based on free self-determination and thus on a consciously expressed will. In doing so, the legislator has to take into account that the assisting third party should have sufficient grounds to assume that the suicide seeker has indeed made the decision to commit suicide as a matter of free self-determination.[18]

In its justification of the ruling on assisted suicide the *VfGB* also stated that various provisions in the Austrian legal system show that the legislature attaches central importance to the individual's right to self-determination in the field of medical therapy. In particular, the provisions on patient directives show that the legislature also recognises the individual's right to self-determination with regard to the decision to terminate life. According to the *VfGB*, it makes no difference from the perspective of fundamental rights whether the patient rejects life-prolonging or life-sustaining treatment in the exercise of their therapeutic sovereignty or in the exercise of their right to self-determination, or whether the suicide seeker wishes to terminate their life with the help of a third party in the exercise of their right to self-determination to be able to die with the dignity they seek. In any case, it is much more important that the decision has been made as an exercise of free self-determination.

In addition, in the field of palliative medicine, the Austrian legislature has already explicitly permitted, within certain narrow limits, active (indirect) end-of-life assistance by applying measures to the dying whose benefits in terms of relieving the most severe pain and agony outweigh the risk of accelerating the loss of vital functions.[19] In this form of assistance, the doctor considers the hastening of death through the administration of painkillers as an unavoidable side effect of their action. In this context, the *VfGB* made it clear that, according to the prevailing view in Austria, indirect active assistance

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[18] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 84-85.

[19] See § 49(2) of Bundesgesetz über die Ausübung des ärztlichen Berufes und die Standesvertretung der Ärzte – Ärztegesetz (Federal Act on the Practice of Medicine and the Professional Representation of Physicians – Physicians' Act) 1998 (*BGBl.* I No. 169/1998).

in dying (indirect active euthanasia) does not fulfil the objective elements of homicide. The Austrian doctrine qualifies indirect active euthanasia as socially appropriate behaviour on the grounds that the dying person's declared or presumed interest in pain treatment clearly outweighs their interest in preserving life "at all costs".

The Austrian legal system also allows assisted suicide by omission (passive euthanasia). The application of any medical treatment that affects the physical integrity or freedom of the patient requires the patient's (explicit or implicit) consent.[20] The patient may also revoke their consent at any time. In doing so, it is irrelevant why a patient capable of consenting to a treatment, such as life-saving or life-prolonging treatment, refuses to do so. Passive euthanasia is an example of how the principle of the patient's medical sovereignty is applied: the treating physician must always respect the patient's informed decision as to whether and under what circumstances they consent to or reject the treatment, regardless of whether this decision is medically sound or not. [21]

In summary, the *VfGB* saw a contradiction between the importance of the individual's free self-determination, which is reflected in the constitutionally justified sovereignty of the individual over medical procedures, on the one hand, and the indirect active euthanasia permitted by law and, on the other hand, the prohibition of any assistance in connection with suicide, as laid down in § 78 of the *StGB* in the wording reviewed by the *VfGH*. In its reasoning, the *VfGH* did not overlook the fact that free self-determination is also influenced by various social and economic circumstances. Accordingly, the legislature (also) has to provide for measures (protective instruments) to prevent abuse, so that the persons concerned do not decide to commit suicide under the influence of third parties. In connection with the right to self-determination in the context of suicide, it must also be borne in mind that the actual living conditions that lead to such decisions are not equal in terms of real social relations. Legislative and other state measures are therefore required to counteract the differences in the living conditions of those concerned and to enable everyone to have access to palliative care services.[22]

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[20] Cf. e.g. § 252 et seq. Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch für die gesammten deutschen Erbländer der Österreichischen Monarchie (General Civil Code for the entire German hereditary lands of the Austrian Monarchy) (*JGS* No. 946/1811) and § 110 of the *StGB*.

[21] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 91-95 and 97.

[22] *VfGH* ruling, paragraph numbers 98-100 and 102.

Statutory regulation legalising assisted suicide

In response to the *VfGH* ruling on assisted suicide, the Federal Ministry of Justice established the Dialogue Forum on Assisted Suicide (*Dialogforum Sterbehilfe*), consisting of experts and representatives of civil society, for the purpose of drafting a new legal regulation. This body's work resulted in a final report presented on 28 July 2021. The authors of the report commented, among other things, on the following issues: expanding the availability of palliative and hospice services, ensuring free will and self-determination, defining who is entitled to assisted suicide, how such assistance is provided and who is entitled to provide it, and establishing state supervision. However, the report did not contain recommendations from the participants or a statement from the Federal Ministry of Justice. Instead, it provided an overview of the positions and the basis for further steps to implement the *VfGH* ruling. As highlighted in the general section of the report, the participants of the Forum used different terms to describe assisted suicide, which is reflected in the document; however, in this section the most precise formulation has been used, namely assisted suicide (*assistierter Suizid*). In the following part of the report it is recalled that already in 2011 the Bioethics Committee advocated the use of terms other than *Sterbehilfe*, which is specific to the German language, does not adequately reflect the meaning ascribed to it, and hinders an unemotional and informed debate. The report considers the term *Suizid*, also in its German version *Selbsttötung*, to be neutral from the point of view of prevention.[23]

As a second step, on 23 October 2021, the federal government presented a bill on an advance directive regarding a person's death (hereinafter advance directive) and the expansion of funding for hospice and palliative care services.[24] The government package included a new law and amendments to two laws already in force. The framework law[25] was finally passed on 22 December 2021 and published on the last possible date, 31 December

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[23] Schlussbericht des Dialogforums Sterbehilfe, Vienna 2021, pp. 5 and 34. The text of the report in German is available at: https://www.bmj.gv.at/service/publikationen/Dialogforum-Sterbehilfe.html (accessed 13 May 2022).

[24] The text of the bill in German is available at: https://www.bmj.gv.at/ ministerium/gesetzesentwuerfe/entw%C3%BCrfe-21/Bundesgesetz-%C3%BCber-die-Errichtung-von-Sterbeverf%C3%BCgungen-(Sterbeverf%C3%BCgungsgesetz-%E2%80%93-StVfG).html (accessed 13 May 2022).

[25] Bundesgesetz, mit dem ein Sterbeverfügungsgesetz erlassen wird sowie das Suchtmittelgesetz und das Strafgesetzbuch geändert werden (*BGBl.* I Nr. 242/2021).

2021. From the perspective of the subject of this article, the most important changes include the amendment of § 78 of the *StGB*, the title of which was changed from *Mitwirkung am Selbstmord* (Participation in Self-murder) to *Mitwirkung an der Selbsttötung* (Participation in Self-killing). Its first paragraph was worded as follows: "Whoever induces another person to commit suicide shall be punished with imprisonment from six months to five years". Moreover, a second paragraph was added: "The same punishment shall be imposed on anyone who 1. assists a minor, 2. assists a person with a malicious motive, 3. assists a person who is not suffering from an illness within the meaning of Section 6(3) of the Advance Directive Act (*Sterbeverfügungsgesetz – StVfG*)[26] or who has not been informed by a doctor in accordance with Section 7 of the *StVfG*". The above-mentioned act regulates the requirements and effectiveness of the patient's declaration as evidence of their unchanging, free and self-determined decision (§ 1 para. 1), in specific issues such as: the voluntariness of cooperation (no obligation to provide assistance) and the prohibition of prejudicial treatment on the grounds of assistance or refusal to provide assistance, definitions of terms with the central concept of the person wishing to die (*sterbewillige Person*), the death disposition (in terms of content, premises, information, manner of preparation, documentation and registration, as well as invalidity and revocability), the preparation, the prohibition of advertising and the prohibition of economic gain, as well as administrative fines for violations of these prohibitions. Finally, a provision was introduced in the *Suchtmittelgesetz* (Addictive Drugs Act)[27], according to which pharmacies may dispense preparations in accordance with §§ 3(9) and 11 of the *StVfG*.

According to legislation that is completely new to the Austrian legal system, an advance directive expresses the decision of the person wishing to die to terminate their life independently. It must also contain a clear statement that the person concerned has made their decision freely and in a self-determined manner after being fully informed (§ 5(1) of the *StVfG*). The person wishing to die must be of full age and competent both at the time when the information is given and at the time when the decision is made. There must be no doubt as to the person's capacity to decide (§ 6.1 of the *StVfG*). The decision of the dying person to terminate their life must be made freely and within the framework of self-determination, and must, in particular, be free of error, deception, fraud,

[26] Bundesgesetz über die Errichtung von Sterbeverfügungen (*BGBl.* I No. 242/2021).

[27] Bundesgesetz über Suchtgifte, psychotrope Stoffe und Drogenausgangsstoffe (*BGBl.* I No. 112/1997).

physical or mental coercion and the influence of third parties (§ 6.2 of the *StVfG*). An advance directive can only be made by a person who suffers from an incurable, fatal illness or a serious, chronic illness with persistent symptoms, the effects of which have a lasting impact on all aspects of the person's life, and the illness involves a state of suffering that cannot be remedied by any other means (Section 6(3) of the *StVfG*).

The preparation of an advance directive must be preceded by information from two doctors, one of whom is qualified in palliative medicine, who independently confirm that the person wishing to die is capable of making a decision and has expressed a free and self-determined decision within the meaning of Section 6(2) of the *StVfG* (Section 7(1) of the *StVfG*). The information must at least include the following: the possible treatment or action alternatives that are possible in the individual case, in particular the provision of hospice care and the implementation of palliative medical measures, as well as instructions for the preparation of the advance directive or other legal security instruments, in particular the protective power of attorney (*Vorsorgevollmacht*) and the protective dialogue (*Vorsorgedialog*), the dosage of the preparation and accompanying medication necessary for the tolerance of the preparation, the method of taking the preparation, the effects and possible complications of taking the preparation, the possibility of refusing life-saving treatment by means of a patient disposition, guidance on specific offers of psychotherapeutic counselling and suicide prevention counselling, as well as other counselling offers that may be useful in the individual case (Section 7(2) of the *StVfG*). An advance directive can be validly issued at least 12 weeks after the first provision of information as defined in § 7 of the *StVfG*. If a doctor confirms that the person wishing to die suffers from an incurable disease that will lead to death and is in the terminal phase, such a disposition may be made after two weeks (Section 8(1) sentences 1 and 2 of the *StVfG*). The advance directive must be made in writing before a notary public or a legal expert working at the Patient Advocate's Office, who will provide instructions on the legal aspects of the procedure (§ 8(2) of the *StVfG*).

Conclusions

Assisted suicide is still not explicitly regulated in the legislation of many countries, and the path to its legalisation is paved by court rulings reflecting prevailing doctrinal views on the subject (cf. Weiffen, Heinrichs, Rose et al. 2020). This was also the case in Austria and, a few months earlier, in Ger-

many[28], where no new legislation has yet been passed. Thanks to the *VfGH* ruling and the meticulously implemented legal provisions, Austria has joined the group of countries where assisted suicide is either explicitly permitted or not prohibited, either on the basis of current legislation or in connection with court rulings. These countries include: Switzerland (1942), the United States (1994 – Oregon, 2008 – Washington, 2009 – Montana, 2013 – Vermont, 2015 – California, 2016 – Colorado, 2017 – Washington DC, 2019 – Hawaii, New Jersey, Maine, 2021 – New Mexico), Colombia (1997), the Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2002), Luxembourg (2009), Canada (2015), Australia (2019 – Victoria, 2021 – Western Australia, 2022 – Tasmania, 2023 – New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland,), Italy (2019), Germany (2020), Spain (2021), New Zealand (2021), Ecuador (2024)[29] (cf. Michalek-Janiczek 2010: 35). As can be seen, the group of countries where assisted suicide is considered legal is not large. Therefore, it is necessary to agree with the Austrian Society for a Humane End of Life (*Die Österreichische Gesellschaft für ein humanes Lebensende – ÖGHL*) that the *VfGH* ruling was a historic breakthrough in Austria.[30] As a result, since early 2022 not only passive and indirect assistance in dying but also assisted suicide have been legally permitted, which should be regarded as a significant normative change in the country's legal system. Active assistance in dying, however, remains prohibited.

With regard to the Law on Advance Directives, it should be emphasised that the simple and neutral terminology chosen by its authors, who used the concept of a person wishing to die rather than, for example, a suicide seeker, deserves recognition. Only selected provisions of this law have been presented above, but their example shows that the protective function of the new regulation has been achieved through numerous safeguards for the rights and

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[28] Cf. the Federal Constitutional Court ruling (*Bundesverfassungsgericht – BverfG*) of 26 February 2022 – the text of the ruling in German is available on the *BVerfG* website at: https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Entscheidungen/DE/2020/02/rs20200226_2bvr234715.html (accessed 31 January 2022).

[29] *Warum wurde das Verbot der Beihilfe zum Suizid vom VfGH aufgehoben und wie ist Sterbehilfe in ausgewählten Staaten geregelt?*, https://fachinfos.parlament.gv.at/politikfelder/arbeit-soziales/warum-wurde-das-verbot-der-beihilfe-zum-suizid-vom-vfgh-aufgehoben-und-wie-ist-sterbehilfe-in-ausgewaehlten-staaten-geregelt (accessed 31 January 2022); *Physician-assisted dying legislation around the world*, https://www.bma.org.uk/media/4402/bma-where-is-pad-permitted-internationally-aug-2021.pdf (accessed 9 October 2024).

[30] *Verfassungsgerichtshof. Weg für Sterbehilfe in Österreich frei*, https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/oesterreich-sterbehilfe-verfassungsgerichtshof-100.html (accessed 31 January 2022).

interests of persons wishing to die. At the same time, it is a short law (15 paragraphs), written in simple language and easy to apply; therefore it does not create any legal obstacles either for those who wish to die or for those who wish to assist them. Nor does it create them for those who do not wish to provide such assistance. It is therefore materially neutral with regard to the different motivations and attitudes of the legal subjects. The new regulation thus perfectly reflects the spirit of the underlying *VfGH* ruling, which placed the individual's fundamental right to self-determination at the centre of its considerations, but at the same time pointed to the need for legal safeguards to prevent abuse of this right.

The most important consequence of these considerations, however, is the recognition that the individual's right to self-determination includes the right to die with dignity, which also encompasses assisted suicide. As Ulrich H. J. Körtner rightly pointed out in connection with the *VfGH* ruling, the key question today is what people understand by the concept of a good death (Körtner 2021: 4). Thus, a fundamental change has occurred in the Austrian legal system from the point of view of the most important fundamental rights of the individual (the right to life, the right to privacy and the right to equal treatment), in particular the right to self-determination, as their material scope has been extended (cf. Wimmer, Kepler 2022: 35). In this way, the state has strengthened the sovereignty of the individual, especially the patient, to an extent that is still rare in the world.

In the context of these considerations, it should be noted that the Polish legislature has criminalised assisted suicide through Article 151 of the Act of 6 June 1997 – Penal Code[31] (cf. Gałęska-Śliwka, Śliwka 2009: 20), which is most commonly referred to in Poland as aid in suicide (Budyn-Kulik 2021). It is easy to see that Article 151 of the Penal Code has a similar structure to § 78 of the Penal Code as assessed by the *VfGH*, as the Polish provision reads as follows: "Anyone who persuades or assists a person to take their own life shall be punished by imprisonment from three months to five years." In Poland, however, it is argued that the ban on assisted suicide follows from the constitutional and legal obligation to provide legal protection of life and health to all citizens (Pacian 2016: 19). In this context, even if there is no acceptance of the position of Austrian doctrine and case law, as reflected in the current legislation in Austria, the approach adopted there for interpreting fundamental individual rights, particularly the right to self-determination concerning assisted suicide, deserves attention in Poland as well.

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[31] *Journal of Laws* 2021, item 2345, as amended.

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Keywords: Austrian law, fundamental rights, the individual's right to self-determination, assisted suicide, advance directive

ABSTRACT

In the Republic of Austria, until the end of 2021, assisting a person in committing suicide was punishable by law, which read as follows: "Whoever induces or assists another person to commit suicide shall be punished with imprisonment of between six months and five years". However, the Constitutional Court (Verfassungsgerichtshof – VfGH), in a ruling of 11 December 2020, lifted the ban on assisted suicide, effective from 1 January 2022. At the same time, the VfGH called on the legislator to implement safeguards against abuse. In response to the VfGH's ruling, Austria's executive and legislative branches amended the law on assisted suicide in early 2022, aligning it with the VfGH's interpretation of constitutional provisions. This paper aims to analyse and evaluate the scope and significance of the normative changes in the Austrian legal system, initiated by the VfGH's ruling. This work verifies the hypothesis that, as of 1 January 2022, a fundamental shift occurred within Austria's legal system regarding key individual rights, particularly the right to self-determination. The study was primarily conducted using the dogmatic-legal method.

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Austrian-Russian memory dialogues: modern contexts of historical narratives on the Red Army's actions in Austria

According to the Moscow Declaration issued by the Allies on 1 November 1943, Austria was the first country to fall victim to Nazi aggression (Rauchensteiner 2015: 14). That document anticipated the idea of the Second Republic as a peaceful community, destined to play a positive role in the reconstruction of postwar Europe. This vision proved far-reaching. Following the signing in 1955 of the State Treaty that ended ten years of Allied occupation, Austria became a country that was active on the international stage, while its status of permanent neutrality, reinforced by an economic boom, enabled it – both during and after the Cold War – to play the role of a bridge between East and West.

The defeat of Hitler and the rebuilding of Austria's statehood took place, to a significant if not decisive degree, as a result of Soviet policy, in particular the uncompromising military actions of the Red Army. This self-critical assessment, to be found, for example, in the memoirs of future chancellor Bruno Kreisky, is nonetheless a rarity in Austrian society. Almost 70 years after the 1955 withdrawal of Soviet troops, their image in Austria is immutably negative, strongly coloured both by the ill renown of that army, as recorded in biographical memory, and by Austrians' attitudes to Russia's present-day internal and foreign policy (cf. Zöchling 2012).

This article will identify the specific features and current contexts of the contemporary narratives presented on the pages of opinion-forming magazines from Austria and Russia, representing different political viewpoints, concerning the actions of the Red Army in Austria near the end of the Second World War and after it. The author aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are the differences in and the factors affecting contemporary historical narratives about the Second World War, present in the dominant historical and media discourses in Austria and Russia?
- What are the specific features of narratives concerning the USSR and Russia created by educational institutions and press publications linked to the "reformed" Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) since 2005?
- Is it possible to speak of an Austrian–Russian dialogue of memory, understood as a bilateral process of exchange of views and efforts to develop shared, compromise-based content and forms for historical narratives about the Second World War?

The questions posed are important in so far as history – now more than ever, it seems – serves as a symbolic weapon, a tool in the struggle for truth, justice, identity. It is used to legitimise defined ideas and policies, and even the existence of particular states in a specific form; it is capable of effectively blocking international understandings, and even simply the initial process of dialogue. It can also serve to overcome prejudices and injustices, and thus to give the green light to a long, gradual and arduous process of reconciliation. However, misinterpretation of the lessons of history may lead to political and human tragedies, as evidenced by the events following 24 February 2022, the date of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine.

Coming to terms with history

In what sense do the aforementioned diagnoses relate to the historical identity of Austria and Russia? In the case of both countries one may speak of ambivalences concerning both coming to terms with key facts of twentieth-century history, and the shrouding of those facts in social amnesia.

The historical identity of Austrians after the Second World War was founded on two myths: concerning the heritage of the multicultural, tolerant monarchy of the Habsburgs, and concerning Austria's being "Hitler's first victim" (cf. Timms 1991: 898–907; Karner 2008: 168; Żakowska 2020: 247–254). In distinction from the process of "overcoming" or coming to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) initiated in the Federal Republic of Germany, which from the 1960s onwards sometimes aroused controversy, but progressed relatively freely, similar efforts in Austria as a rule met with much greater resistance. The "victim myth" (*Opfermythos*) enabled the creation of conditions in which the problem of National Socialism could be externalised and treated as secondary for the Austrians, as it was supposedly a part of Germany's history

only, and not of the history of their country (Lepsius 1989: 247–264; cf. Berg 2008: 48).

In the 1980s, however, several factors led to the opening of a debate about the *Opfermythos*: the controversies related to the election of Kurt Waldheim as president of the Second Republic; the rise in the popularity of Jörg Haider as leader of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and the later renaissance of the extreme right in Austrian politics; and reflections connected with the 50th anniversary of Anschluss together with generational replacement, as manifested in the Austrian political culture that sought to come to terms with the past, as well as in the academic world and in art (Berg 2008: 48).

As a result of the transformations which can be considered to correspond to the changes in Germany's historical identity in the late 1960s, a public opinion survey conducted in 1991 revealed that only one-third of Austrians still considered their country Hitler's first victim (Bukey 2000: 233). Social changes were accompanied by changes on the political stage. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky announced in parliament on 8 July 1991 that Austrians bore shared responsibility for the suffering of individuals and whole nations, while on 15 November 1995 President Thomas Klestil admitted, in an address to the Knesset, that some of the Nazi regime's worst cruelties had been perpetrated by Austrians (Berg 2008: 53–54).

Together with political declarations came an atmosphere of repentance and a will to repair historical wrongs. In 1995 the Austrian parliament established a National Fund, recognising Austria's duty to compensate victims of Nazi terror, and in 1997 it proclaimed the fifth of May, the date of the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp, a Day of Reflection on Violence and Racism. In 1998, Chancellor Viktor Klima set up an independent Commission of Historians, which would investigate matters of the appropriation of Jewish property and the use of forced labour by firms that had been nationalised by the Second Republic, and would draw up offers of compensation (ibidem: 53–54). This resulted in the Fund for Reconciliation, Peace and Cooperation (*Fonds für Versöhnung, Frieden und Zusammenarbeit*), which in 2000–2005, among other things, paid sums of compensation amounting to several thousand euro to former forced labourers, and frequently received money from private donors (Ruff 2014: 32, 121).

Austrians also became more open to criticism of their country from outside. In 2000 most Austrians did not deny the legitimacy of the concerns of international public opinion regarding the formation of a coalition between the conservative ÖVP and the extreme right-wing populist FPÖ. Changes in the Austrian culture of memory are also evidenced by the anniversary events

of 2005, which were imbued with the presence of self-critical introspections concerning the history of the Third Reich.

At the same time, Austrian public opinion became less and less tolerant of statements by public figures that undermined the aforementioned critical consensus. This is shown by the media storms that erupted around more or less controversial pronouncements by individual politicians. In April 2005, FPÖ activist John Gudenus expressed a lack of sympathy for a proposal to rehabilitate deserters from the Wehrmacht, put forward in parliament by the socialists and Greens, and was backed by party colleague Siegfried Kampl, who claimed that de-Nazification in Austria had gone too far. Following a press scandal, the latter toned down his statement, underlining the importance of reconciliation and of pardons for deserters, National Socialists, displaced persons and the Sinti and Roma communities, but this did not cool the mood in the media. They considered it unacceptable that he treated Austrians subjected to de-Nazification as belonging to the same category of victims of the Third Reich as concentration camp prisoners; journalists meanwhile entirely ignored the part of his statement appealing for nationwide reconciliation. This may suggest – in the view of Matthew P. Berg – an "increased sensitivity to insensitivity", that is, an aversion to continued acceptance of the forms of communicative memory that took root immediately following the war, whereby Austrians awarded themselves the status of victims (Berg 2008: 54–69).

Combating the "slanderers"

Russians' postwar national identity, on the other hand, was essentially founded on a single myth – the old, multifaceted Messianic myth linked to a vision of an unyielding, undefeated victor-power, a liberator and defender of other nations. Moreover, memory policy in that country was shaped – and to a large degree continues to be shaped – from above, by an authoritarian state and in the spirit of a state ethos (Curanović 2020: 101–141).

Public opinion surveys indicate the key – and still growing – role of the USSR's victory in World War II as the only positive experience that integrates the younger and older generations of Russians. It arouses the greatest sense of pride out of all events in the more than thousand-year history of that country; in 1996 it was named in that context by 44% of respondents, and by 2003 that number had risen to 87% (Гудков 2005: 86–90).

In Stalin's totalitarian state, the Great Patriotic War and the victory achieved therein served above all to reinforce the authority of the country's leader, but

further to cement the division between "foreigners" and "our own". The main line of division was based on the dichotomy of "victors" (the nation and the party) and the "defeated" (Germany and fascism). This logic led to actions that from today's point of view are incomprehensible, such as the Soviet authorities' punishment of Soviets who had been POWs and forced labourers for the Third Reich – for betraying the fatherland, in that they had "refused" to fight to liberate their country, or had even worked for the enemy (Ruff 2014: 39). In the 1970s, under Brezhnev, the place of the "defeated" in official memory concerning the war was taken by the "liberated" – since it was their very liberation that legitimised the USSR's hegemony in Eastern Europe. Also at that time the ninth of May was designated Victory Day, a day off work and holiday for ordinary Russians, especially veterans (Лангеноль 2005: 415–417).

It was only close to the end of the Soviet Union's existence, in the second half of the 1980s, that there arose a new way of conceptualising the narrative about the war – similar to the approach described above that was adopted in Germany in the late 1960s and in Austria in the 1980s – namely viewing it from a perspective of perpetrators and victims. Anti-Soviet intellectuals began to characterise both the victors and the liberated as victims of the Soviet regime. In consequence, the Soviet authorities, and later in particular the first president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, decided on actions related to "coming to terms with history", such as the opening of the Soviet archives and disclosure of previously unspoken or falsified facts, including the truth about the secret protocol accompanying the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact, or about the Katyn massacres. These also had an international dimension: they were linked to support for the idea of reconciliation in Russia's relations with the newly developing democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (ibidem: 416–418).

In internal policy, the aforementioned transformations were reflected in, among other things, deeper discussion of the exceptionally high price paid for victory over fascism and of the need to rehabilitate and compensate a wide range of victims of the Nazi and Soviet regimes. One of the consequences of this was a law signed by Yeltsin in 1995 "On the restoration of statutory rights to Russian citizens being former Soviet prisoners-of-war and civilians who during the Great Patriotic War and in the postwar period were repatriated". This law gave such persons equal status to veterans, and the infamy they had experienced in Soviet times was removed. It should be noted that this was also achieved to a significant degree through the compensation that former Soviet forced labourers received from Austria and Germany (Ruff 2014: 156).

The process related to demythologisation, the "unbronzing" of World War II memory in the 1990s, nevertheless also led to conflict between Russian dem-

ocratic circles, who took a critical attitude to the era of communism, and a significant part of society, including those in authority. Many of those living in the Russian Federation saw this phenomenon as a symptom of a social crisis among Russians and an important factor linked to the erosion of their country's good name in the international arena. The two decades of Vladimir Putin's rule can be seen as a period when reference was made to all of the aforementioned memory cultures, but with the main emphasis placed on cultivating the heritage of the Soviet war heroes and victims and on counteracting any interpretations of history that deviated from the Kremlin's line.

At the present time it may be said, with a degree of simplification, that the memory of the Second World War in the countries of Western Europe contains many shared components – that in this sense it is a universalised memory. In the 21st century in Russia, however, a partially opposite phenomenon can be observed, involving the petrification and reinforcement of a specifically Russian vision of history. After 2008, and particularly since 2014, in connection with the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine, the dispute over the USSR's role in World War II has even become a tool in a "historical war", serving as a component in the multifaceted confrontation between the West and Russia (Clarke, Wóycicka 2019: 84–85). An event viewed in Russia as manifesting a desire for such Cold War-style confrontation was the 2008 decision of the European Parliament to declare the twenty-third of August, the anniversary of the signing of the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact, a European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.[1] A similar interpretation was given in the West to the law signed by Putin on 5 May 2014 serving to prevent the rehabilitation of Nazism, including Holocaust denial. Consternation was aroused by a provision of that law which placed criminal liability on institutions and persons that accused the USSR of participating in starting the Second World War, and also in war crimes and the occupation of Eastern Europe (ibidem: 78–109).

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[1] For example, historian Nikolai Starikov claims that "excessive" concentration on the victims of the Stalinist regime leads to a diminishment of the crimes committed against Soviet citizens by the Third Reich: "First it began to be said that the USSR was culpable for the outbreak of war with Hitler no less than Hitler was himself. Then, that the Soviet Union's losses in the struggle were on the conscience of that country itself, and the Führer was simply compelled to defend himself on 22 June 1941. At present the thesis on the comparability of Hitler to Stalin has become a common denominator in the thinking of Western politicians and Russian liberals" (Стариков 2017: 5).

The unnecessary truth about the *grand peur*?

Due to the different circumstances related to the shaping of memory and historical policy in Austria and in Russia, narratives about the Second World War and the realities of the early postwar years contain different points of emphasis in the two countries. In a situation where since the turn of the century there has been increasing public debate in Austria concerning the myth of that country's being "Hitler's first victim", analysis is also made of the problem of the country's "liberation" and of the "liberators" themselves. In educational discourse this is reflected in attempts to confront different perceptions of reality with each other, and by the same token, in the avoidance of definitive judgements in relation to historical facts. Klaus Bachmann believes that the only fully understandable point of reference then becomes the perspective of ordinary people, individuals, being not so much actors as mute witnesses and often victims of "great history" (Bachmann 2005: 163–169).

A central element of Austrians' perception of the Second World War is the memory of National Socialism and the Holocaust. The topic of the Soviet Union, although that country played a key role in the creation of the Second Republic, is addressed in a reticent and parsimonious manner. School textbooks contain matter-of-fact accounts relating to international policy, including the diplomatic negotiations of the Cold War era, but not relating to the specifics of Austro-Soviet relations. The subject of the fighting carried on in Ostmark territory by the disintegrating Third Reich is covered very concisely, in single sentences speaking of the "particularly heavy battles" fought by the Red Army in Burgenland and its capture of Vienna. Material used as a stimulus for discussion includes a Soviet poster referring to the liberation of Vienna on 13 April 1945 and containing text from the Allies' Moscow Declaration of 1943. The poster is not accompanied by commentary; it appears only in a revision aid for high school students, whose authors suggest one way in which it might be interpreted: "Although the Red Army – together with the other Allies – made a significant contribution to the ending of Nazi rule, the liberation [of the country] by the Red Army was not seen that way by all groups of the population, and particularly not by supporters of the Nazi regime" (Staudinger, Ebenhoch, Scheucher et al. 2013: 77). Also noteworthy is, among other things, a source text that mentions Austrian prisoners-of-war in the USSR and their repatriation. Although it raises thorny humanitarian questions, it fulfils criteria linked to the aim of making the message as objective as possible:

> The USSR was (like Yugoslavia) one of the countries […] that held prisoners-of-war for the longest time, and the conditions in the Soviet camps were decidedly the worst […]. It should be noted here that the Soviet Union, alongside Poland, was the country that suffered most due to the actions of the Wehrmacht. The labour of prisoners-of-war – including Austrians – was treated by Moscow […] as a legitimate part of reparations. (Eisterer 1997: 167, quoted by Staudinger, Ebenhoch, Scheucher et al. 2014: 20)

As regards the description of great politics, the USSR is presented on the pages of history textbooks simply as one of the Allied powers and later occupying powers, while Austria before 1955 is shown as a passive "bargaining chip" and "hostage of the Cold War" (cf. Żakowska 2020: 254–255).

Against the background of the cited narratives, the content of contemporary Russian history textbooks that describe the Red Army's conquest and occupation of Austria seems quite curt. However, in contrast to the Austrian educational material, it consists not of commentaries aimed at disproving myths and breaking down an established culture of memory, but of messages built around the package of information, repeated for decades, about the victorious, liberating march of Soviet forces. From all of the textbooks analysed by the author, one may learn, indirectly or expressly, that Red Army troops, "conducting a powerful attack from the Baltic to the Carpathians", liberated Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and then **freed** Austria.[2]

The monumentalism and pathos of the extensive accounts and photographs of battles fought in Central and Eastern Europe, found in the analysed textbooks, are well illustrated by a quotation from the war memoirs of Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, which – although his battle route did not pass through Austria – in fact refers to the totality of Soviet and Russian narratives about the final stage of the Second World War:

> The roads of Germany were lined not only with sad columns of prisoners. On the roads, simple human joy floated through the country. Crowds of people hailed us with cries

[2] All bolding by the present author. Cf. "Hungary's exit from the war and the capture […] of Bratislava opened the road to Austria; its capital Vienna **was freed**" (Волобуев, Карпачев, Клоков 2021: 200); "Simultaneously with the Vistula–Oder offensive, Soviet troops conducted a powerful attack on a wide front from the Baltic to the Carpathians, in which Poland and Yugoslavia were liberated; they also began to **liberate Austria**" (Волобуев, Клоков, Пономарев, Рогожкин 2020: 178); "On 16 March [1945] the Vienna offensive began, in which […] troops of the second and third Ukrainian fronts completely cleared Hungary, followed by a significant part of Czechoslovakia, and on 13 April after seven days of fighting **entered Vienna**" (Никонов, Девятов 2020: 258–259); "Also in 1945 Soviet troops carried out the liberation of Czechoslovakia and Hungary **and entered the territory of Austria**" (Пазин, Морозов 2019: 260).

> of triumph, greeted us in all languages of the world. One's heart stopped at the sight of this multinational human sea. Many were in rags, nightmarishly emaciated, they could barely stand on their feet, and were holding each other up so as not to fall. But in their eyes – happiness. These were yesterday's prisoners of fascist camps, people whom death had awaited. We liberated them, restored them to life – we, Soviet soldiers […]. (Rokossovsky 1968, quoted by Никонов, Девятов 2020: 259)

There is likely no exaggeration in the words of Austrian journalist Christa Zöchling, who noted, referring to the accounts of Red Army veterans, that the words they associated with Austria were "spring, victory, youth, waltzes, and love" (Zöchling 2012).

The cited narratives, dominant in educational discourses in Austria and Russia, nonetheless remain silent on many facts that would show the military actions conducted in Austria in 1945 in a far grimmer light. Western historians agree that most residents of the Ostmark supported the Nazi regime to the end, and were united above all by a "fear of disorder and Bolshevism" (Bukey 2000: 227). Under the influence of many years of anti-communist propaganda and terrible accounts of events in East Prussia, in the last months of the war they were overcome by what Salzburg historian Ernst Hanisch called the *grand peur*, the fear of a great threat from the East, which went back to stories of medieval Hungarian invasions and of the Turkish wars of the seventeenth century (Rauchensteiner 2015: 220).

Was this justified? On 10 April 1945 the Russians entered Vienna, which had been partly destroyed due to artillery bombardment, but where there had not previously been any fierce hand-to-hand fighting with the civilian population. Theft and looting occurred, begun by the city's inhabitants themselves, and later there were incidents of rape and violence, mainly committed by Red Army soldiers (Bukey 2000: 225). The terror felt by Austrians in connection with the presence of the Red Army, not even in the role of aggressor, is documented by an extract from the chronicles of the Benedictine abbey in Vorau that recounts events of 16 April 1945, when Russian troops marched through:

> A patrol of 10 men (Russians) came first […]. Soon there arrived […] a whole division of people, horses, and vehicles. We were overwhelmed by an indescribable parade of victors. There were trophies from Hungary, horses, cars, beautiful carpets, whole masses of plunder, beds, equipment, everything imaginable. Whole herds of cattle and horses, then again a car looking like a sale display, with pictures of Lenin and Stalin. Their entry to Vorau took place the same as in Hungary and everywhere else. They took a Ukrainian woman off to the hospital, where she was raped by more than 40 Russians. (Rauchensteiner 2015: 268–269)

Also telling are the selection and content of a set of documents reflecting events relating to the Soviet occupation of Austria, collected and published by a team of Austrian and Russian historians in 2005. Many of them are transcripts of conversations and extracts from diplomatic correspondence of leading politicians and military commanders from the two countries. They include examples of subtle attempts by the Austrians to negotiate Russian concessions in relation to the powers of the occupying authorities and the scale of war reparations, as well as efforts on the part of the Soviet authorities to display to Austrians the USSR's humanitarian attitude, which "shows that we are not exacting revenge, especially on Austria".[3] The collection also includes, among other things, many papers previously kept secret, such as documents describing problems with breach of discipline by Red Army divisions in Austria, which refer to "isolated criminal elements" who "forget about military obligations and find pleasure in a decadent way of life, a lust for enrichment, and the satisfaction of base instincts".[4]

Also deserving of attention are contemporary documents recording the concern of the Soviet authorities in Austria about the strong and effective propaganda aimed at the USSR, referring to the ethos of the "bridgehead of Europe" and a "wall protecting Western culture from Bolshevism" – namely slogans analogous to those that had previously been present in Nazi rhetoric.[5] Indeed, how much was borrowed from the rhetoric of the Third Reich by Austrian journalists, politicians, and even priests may be evidenced by a statement by the future bishop of Linz, Josephus Calasanz Fließer, who in a pastoral letter distributed to the faithful in the summer of 1945 claimed that one of the greatest punishments to the German nation for its sins had become the social and ethnic problem of many thousands of shamed German women and their children who would possess "contaminated genetic material, foreign to the race and the nation".[6]

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[3] Document 44: transcript of a conversation of marshal Ivan Konyev with chancellor Karl Renner on the situation in Austria, 9 July 1945. Source: Karner, Stelzl-Marx, Tschubarjan 2005: 207.

[4] Document 127, from "not later than 11 December 1946". Source: Karner, Stelzl-Marx, Tschubarjan 2005: 631.

[5] Document 153 of 19 November 1946: report by USSR secret services on the attitude of the SPÖ to the USSR using the example of a report of a statement by the editor of *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Oscar Pollak, at a conference of socialist parties in Britain. Source: Karner, Stelzl-Marx, Tschubarjan 2005: 715.

[6] Supplement to *Linzer Diözesanblatt* 1945, no. 9, p. 3, after: Putz 2008: 265–267.

The Red Army in Austrian and Russian media discourse in 2005-2022

In the following analysis I will examine on how large a scale and in what context matters relating to the end of the war and the presence of the Red Army in Austria are raised in the contemporary popular and opinion-forming press in Austria and in Russia. To obtain a picture of press discourses representing as broad as possible a spectrum of political views and sections of society, I decided to select the following titles:

- two Austrian weeklies with a left-liberal leaning (*Profil* and *Der Standard*) and one that espouses strictly liberal values (*Kurier*), as well as the conservative daily *Die Presse*; the analysis also included titles associated with the extreme right-wing FPÖ party (*Neue Freie Zeitung*, *Unzensuriert.at*, *Wochenblick*, *Info Direkt*, *Die Aula*, *Freilich*) and information materials placed on the website of that party's educational institute (FPÖ-Bildungsinstitut);
- the largest independent newspaper in Russia, representing right-liberal views (*Kommersant*[7]), the Russian newspaper with the largest readership, printed in tabloid format (*Komsomolskaya Pravda*), and other socially influential titles (*Moskovskij Komsomolets*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, *Argumenty i Fakty*); also analysed were media that may be strictly categorised as taking an anti-Kremlin stance (*Novaya Gazeta*, TV Dozhd, the Ekho Moskvy website).

The selection of particular articles published between 2005 and 2022 was made using keyword search engines available on the websites of the aforementioned publications (and media portals) and on the FPÖ-Bildungsinstitut site. A search was made for texts containing the following keywords: in German, *Rote Armee*, *Zweiter Weltkrieg*, *Sowjetunion*, *Moskauer Deklaration*, *Denkmal*, *Mahnmal*, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, *Opfermythos*; in Russian, *Вена 1945* and *Победа 1945*. The articles thus selected were analysed qualitatively based on the methodology of critical discourse analysis.[8]

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[7] Up to the time of the tightening of rules of media censorship in Russia after 24 February 2022.

[8] The term "discourse" is understood here, following Michel Foucault, as a "unity constituting a given set of utterances". According to Foucault: "The analysis of the discursive field is orientated in a quite different way; we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes. We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was, in what respect it is exclusive of any other, how it assumes, in the midst of others and in relation to them, a place that no other could

As a result of this search, the author collected and studied approximately 70 articles referring directly to the issues mentioned at the outset. The following sections contain synthesised conclusions relating to the threads that most frequently occur in the selected texts, with particular attention to articles that are expressly devoted to the specific historical identity and political views of contemporary Austrians and Russians.

Rape and nationalism

Analysis of the informational articles and texts obtained from Austrian sources revealed significant differences between the mainstream press and the publications linked to the FPÖ. The conservative, liberal and left-liberal press, apart from a self-critical approach to the country's native history, take an equally critical view of the foundations of Russia's current historical policy.

The longest article that the author identified was Christa Zöchling's extensive "recent history study" devoted to the presence of Red Army troops as an occupying army in postwar Austria. This is *de facto* an account of the mentality, motivations and everyday life of the Soviet soldiers. The journalist can be seen attempting to distance herself from and "undemonise" the dark myths surrounding the men of the Red Army, while also recognising the "grain of truth" they contain. It is observed that she tries to understand the Soviet soldiers, who when crossing Austria's borders "had behind them the [war] march that had brought the greatest losses […] during the battle of Vienna alone, with its fervent struggles for every house, another 20,000 of them had perished"; people who "came as saviours but were not regarded as such" (Zöchling 2012). Zöchling devotes much space to the "dark side of the occupation" in the form of 270,000 rapes of Austrian women committed by Red Army soldiers, quoting statistics that imply that as many as one in every two Soviet troops who entered the territory of the Third Reich may have been a rapist. The author does sometimes attempt, however, to understand the how the rank-and-file Russians must have felt when arriving in wealthy Western cities such as Vien-

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occupy." Thus, "if we isolate […] the occurrence of the statement/event […] it is in order to be sure that this occurrence is not linked with synthesising operations of a purely psychological kind […] and to be able to grasp other forms of regularity, other types of relations. Relations between statements […] between groups of statements thus established […] relations between statements and groups of statements and events of a quite different kind (technical, economic, social, political)" (Foucault 1972: 28–29).

na and being exposed there to the temptations of a life of pleasure. The Red Army soldiers suffered miserable conditions, complained of starvation rations, and "did not understand why their chief commissar, in the first months of the occupation, ordered provisions for the army to be distributed among the Austrian civilian population". Ironically, Zöchling writes, what absorbed the Soviet command's particular attention was "wreath-laying ceremonies at the graves of Austrian composers" (ibidem).

Apart from articles dealing directly with the difficult history of the presence of Soviet troops in Austria, a significant number of the selected items are texts with commentaries on the postulates of historical policy in Putin's Russia, particularly since 2012. It can be generally stated that a focus on getting a feeling for the specific national identity of contemporary Russians is more characteristic of the left-leaning weekly *Der Standard* than of the liberal *Kurier*. An example might be a text that appeared in *Der Standard* on the occasion of the Russian celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War:

> Nowhere in Europe had Hitler's war raged with such cruelty as in the Soviet Union. As a war of destruction aimed at conquering "Lebensraum in the East", it was also directed with all its brutality at the civilian population – the elderly, women and children. Almost 30 million Soviet citizens lost their lives. Not only as a result of military action, but also through war crimes, such as the mass murder of Jews and the siege of Leningrad […] In connection with the complicated history of contemporary Russia, in which experiments with socialism and wild capitalism have caused great shedding of blood, [Victory Day] serves as the only celebration that fills all residents […] with pride. (Ballin 2020)

On the other hand, an article by Paul Lendvai in the same magazine, titled "Liberation and slavery", is more critical. This Austrian journalist with Hungarian roots writes that "the history of the Second World War is being written anew by Putin's nationalist 'Great Russia' regime, and the celebration of the anniversary on 8 May is being used instrumentally by falsifying long-known historical facts" (Lendvai 2020). The author takes a critical attitude not only to the nationalist slogans that Moscow promotes, but to the broader phenomenon of the distortion of history and its treatment as a weapon "serving the political interests of the current rulers" in other countries in the eastern part of our continent. In this context Lendvai comments on Russian–Polish relations and on the historical policies currently being pursued in Poland and Hungary. He sees these policies as an example of the "unbroken continuation of nationalism and antisemitism", negative phenomena that cast a shadow over the "day of liberation" (ibidem).

In an essentially polemic fashion, the subject of Russian memory of the Second Word War is taken up by the weekly *Kurier*, combining criticism of a specific historical policy with personal reflections regarding Vladimir Putin. For example, it is stated in a 2013 article that a proposed Russian law introducing punishments for the denial of Nazi crimes in fact concerns "criticism of the cruelties committed by the Red Army" and aims to "silence critics of the Kremlin" analogously to an earlier law that laid down punishments for offending religious feelings (Kreml stellt Kritik… 2013).

Texts published in *Kurier* also feature a tendency to use irony, particularly in reference to the militarised, monumental, imperial setting of Moscow's Victory Day celebrations:

> Russia's president wished to pay homage, in a huge cathedral, to the Red Army, Stalin, and himself […] May 9 was to be his day. Thousands of soldiers in Red Square, cannons roaring, flags fluttering. An uplifting sense of victory, national unity, superiority; Vladimir Putin in the centre, surrounded by such Western politicians as Emmanuel Macron. […] Things didn't go as intended. The president's plans were scuppered – and for the second time in a short period – by the coronavirus. In April, Putin had already had to grit his teeth and postpone the referendum that was to enable him to prolong his time in power. (Peternel 2020)

In turn, the discourse concerning the USSR and Russia delivered by press titles and educational institutions linked to the FPÖ after 2005 alludes distinctly to that party's criticism of the Austrian "policy of shame" and the principles of "political correctness" that are propagated – according to the party's leaders – in left-wing circles in particular. The Freedom Party of Austria, led from 2005 to 2019 by Heinz-Christian Strache, and since 2016 officially collaborating with the Kremlin's United Russia party, sees a positive, "healthy" model of state-created historical policy in the actions taken in that regard by Putin's regime (cf. Hobek 2018: 192–200).

How does this fact influence the FPÖ-linked commentaries on the actions of the Red Army towards the Third Reich? Immediately noticeable is the absence of topics relating to the presence of Soviet troops in Austria itself. This omission is symptomatic in as much as the subject of "thousands of acts of vengeance" wrought by the Red Army is visible at least in articles concerning the martyrdom of the German population expelled from countries of Central Europe after the war (Kluibenschädl 2021).

Secondly, these journalists place strong emphasis on the controversies aroused in Russia by the effacing, in countries such as Poland, of memory of the Soviet fallen and war heroes. For example, an article published in January

2018 in the magazine *Info-Direkt* notes that "the Polish government on 21 October 2017 approved a controversial law on the dismantling of Soviet monuments, as a result of which as many as 230 monuments to the Red Army are to be removed". Similar actions arouse objections from the Russian side, because, according to the writer, "during the Second World War in the Polish lands 600,000 Soviet soldiers died and around 700,000 to one million Soviet POWs [were buried]" (Neues Gesetz… 2018). The removal of Soviet monuments can thus be implicitly understood as a manifestation of the Polish government's policy of "erasing" history.

Supporters of the FPÖ, a party that traditionally opposes the "blackening of the name" of "ordinary Austrians" who, according to the party's rhetoric, simply fought and died for their fatherland in the ranks of the Wehrmacht, might thus identify with the words contained in an article titled "What we might learn from Russia" that appeared in 2017, again in *Info-Direkt*:

> Russia has a more open-minded attitude to the past [than Austria]. For us Austrians, who have accepted the road to Canossa as part of our lives, this is something new. Street actors dressed as Stalin offering photos to tourists, equestrian statues of Russian national heroes decorating every major square, and candles and wreaths placed against the Kremlin walls to commemorate the fallen heroes of the nation. In Russia one can see what it means to be a nation of victors. (Magnet 2017)

Particularly noteworthy, in my view, is the activity undertaken by the FPÖ's Educational Institute (*FPÖ-Bildungsinstitut*) relating to the commemoration of selected events from World War II history, with the participation of important figures from Russian cultural and political life. From the institute's website we learn of a ceremonial showing of the Russian film *Sobibor: The Indestructibility of What is Brittle*, which tells of the revolt and escape of Jewish, Polish and Soviet prisoners from the Nazi concentration camp at Sobibor, which were organised by a Red Army soldier. Those attending the screening and taking part in the discussion that followed included the Russian ambassador to Austria. The rank of the event is evidenced by the fact that extensive commentaries on the "pro-Russian" happening also appeared in the Austrian opinion-forming press. For example, *Der Standard* suggested with apprehension that the event's main message concerned supposed threats to Austria and the entire Western world linked to the inflow of Muslim immigrants (Sulzbacher 2018). This was not without reason: one of those attending the event, FPÖ politician Klaus Nittman, declared in his speech – which was then quoted on the website of the *Bildungsinstitut* – that he is "terrified by the heightening of antisemitism that is spreading [in Europe at the present time] due to uncontrolled mass migration" (ibidem).

Analysis of the quantity and content of articles concerning the actions of the Red Army in Austria did not reveal any marked change of emphasis or narrative threads after 24 February 2022. I would like to consider four articles as examples of efforts by Austrian journalists to address issues relating to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The conservative daily *Die Presse*, in an article about the "commemoration of Soviet victims, but without Putin", noted that "the Russian foreign ministry has once again reminded the Austrian government about the 26,000 Soviet soldiers who gave their lives for the liberation of Austria". However, Matthias Kaltenbrunner adds in the next sentence, in a form of personal commentary, that this action "is one of many examples of the present-day instrumental treatment of the Soviet World War II dead to give justification for the unprecedented attack on Ukraine" (Kaltenbrunner 2022).

The left-liberal *Der Standard*, in a symbolic but extensive article published on 9 May 2022, emphasised that "the war in Ukraine overshadows the ceremonies celebrating the end of the war". David Krutzler noted that international opinion was waiting with bated breath for Putin's speech:

> The Russian president will no doubt complain once again that Red Army's famed victory has been smeared with mud in the West. And there will be verbal attacks on NATO and the USA. Putin will also announce some victory, as he must. But what kind? (Krutzler 2022)

In the view of the present author, however, the strongest criticism of Russia is manifested in articles published in the liberal *Kurier*. For example, a text of 7 May 2022 titled "How the Russian occupiers entered Austria" states unforgivingly that "Austria's liberation by the Red Army in May 1945 had terrifying consequences for hundreds of thousands of Austrian women". We read in the first paragraph:

> When some weeks ago the media published the first pictures of the incoming Russian army, historian Barbara Stelzl-Marx shared the following reflection: How long will it last before this war too reveals all of its terrifying sides? Plunder, rape, senseless violence against the civilian population? (Kramar 2022: 5).

These words carry notable symbolic weight, as they contain accusations against both contemporary Russia and the Soviet Union from which it emerged; not only against soldiers of the army of the Russian Federation today, but against the men of the Red Army, who on arriving in Austria, according to the article's author, lived up to the legend of the "Russian horde" that had gone before them (ibidem).

The fourth of the selected texts also includes some noteworthy content. A long article published on 8 May 2022 in the extreme right-wing *Unzensuriert* relates the views of Herbert Kickl, present leader of the FPÖ, that the end of the Second World War in no way signified for Austrians the "start of an era of happiness and satisfaction" and as such should not be treated as an occasion for celebration. Kickl ascribes much more value to the neutral status that Austria negotiated for itself in 1955, although he maintains that the legacy related to this may be wasted if the Second Republic "irresponsibly" accedes to the idea of an embargo on energy goods that the EU currently wishes to impose on Russia (FPÖ-Chef Kickl… 2022).

The Viennese tuning fork and forgotten heroes

Analysis of Russian press discourse concerning the Red Army's liberation and occupation of Austria indicates the presence of narrative paradigms that differ from those found in the Austrian media. In the whole of the analysed period from 2005 to 2022, neither the popular press close to government circles nor the relatively independent liberal press, nor the tabloids, nor even radio stations and magazines taking an explicitly anti-Kremlin stance took up subjects that were controversial with regard to the dominant Russian historical policy and memory.[9] Demands which come close to the idea of "unbronzing" history can nevertheless be observed in the context of articles in *Kommersant* that refer ironically to the omnipresent political correctness and fears of "summoning the demons of the past", published in 2005, a year described as "drowning in official celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War". This was the paper's response to "Vienna Liberated", an exhibition that was neutral in form and content, prepared jointly and displayed successively by the Austrian and Russian sides (Толстова 2005).

Among the articles in the Russian press alluding to the shared history of Austrians and Russians, particularly those from before 2014, note may be taken of the texts presenting Austria as a positive example of a country that not only refrains from issuing anti-Russian propaganda, but also supports the Russian vision of a world based on multipolarity. An example is an extensive article that appeared on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in November 2008.

[9] Attention should be drawn, however, to the continuously deteriorating situation of such media institutions as TV Dozhd, the Ekho Moskvy radio station, and the independent *Novaya Gazeta*. All of these were closed down by the authorities in March 2022.

Titled "The Viennese tuning fork for a worldwide 'orchestra'", it extols Vienna in nostalgic terms as a city with an "established spirit of harmony, [which] no world problems and cataclysms of history have been able […] to change":

> Let us take, for example, the Vienna opera. In 1945, when Soviet troops […] liberated the city from the fascists, a bomb fell there which directly struck the stage. The theatre suffered colossal losses […]. The building's reconstruction lasted 10 years. In Vienna, however, no one pins the blame for that on, let's say, the Russians […]. [Moreover] in spite of the postwar occupation […] in Austria no one calls that period a tragic one. (Венский камертон… 2008)

Greater amounts of criticism addressed to Austria, including the Austria of 1945, can be found in the Russian press after 2014. For example, the analysed mainstream papers consider it important to inform readers of further cases of "desecration by vandals" of the Soviet war memorial in central Vienna. Journalists also see a link between those acts and current politics. In a 2015 report about Schwarzenbergplatz, where the monument stands, readers learn that "this is not the first desecration of the monument, [because] last year the cube at its base was painted in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, and in previous years the monument had been covered with red paint". The fact that such events ought not to occur is reiterated in the final sentence of the article, in which the *Kommersant* journalist recalls that "according to the international agreement of 1955 that restored sovereignty to Austria, war memorials in the country are under the protection of and are maintained by the Austrian authorities" (Вандалы… 2015).

In 2020 alone, many articles appeared amplifying the contents of documents made public by the Russian defence ministry on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the "liberation of Vienna from German-fascist occupation" (Минобороны… 2020). The press reacted in particular to the information on the fates of Soviet POWs who had been held in Nazi concentration camps. I would like to discuss the content of two texts on this subject. An extensive article in the daily *Kommersant* recalls the actions of Red Army soldiers who on the night of 1–2 February 1945 broke through the wall and barbed wire surrounding the Mauthausen camp, paying particular attention to the experience of the mere nine escapees who survived the attempt. The writer, Alexei Alexeyev, does not spare readers the chilling details of the hunt ordered by the camp commanders, which involved not only SS and Wehrmacht units, but also local farmers and Hitlerjugend members. The action came to be known locally as the "Mühlviertel rabbit hunt". However, the article focuses mainly on the importance of the memory of the escape – and the death of almost 500 Soviet soldiers – for today's Austrians and Russians:

> As for the actions of the prisoners of block 20 of the Mauthausen concentration camp, for a long time in the USSR nothing was known about them. According to the views of comrade Stalin, they were not heroes, but traitors, since they had got themselves taken prisoner. […] The country learned about the actions of the camp prisoners only in 1963, when Sergey Smirnov's book *Heroes of the Death Block* was published. […] But after that they were again forgotten. They were remembered only in the 2000s, when hardly any of the heroes were still alive. In Russia, articles appeared in the press and online, as well as television reports and a documentary film. In Austria several books about the escape from Mauthausen were published, and the repentance-filled film *Rabbit Hunt*[10] became the most popular film of 1994. (Алексеев 2020)

The second article appeared in April 2020 on the pages of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Its author, Igor Yakunin, asserts as a fact that the Russians' martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis is comparable only to that suffered by the Jews. It is in this accusatory manner that the journalist writes of the hellish experience of the Russian POWs held at the Nazi concentration camp in Kaisersteinbruch, 46 kilometres from Vienna:

> Apart from Russians, the camp held British, Americans, French, Serbs, Poles, Romanians. But only the huts for the Russians were surrounded by additional barbed wire, and were not heated in winter. […] Because of the lack of food, beatings, and excessive labour in the camp, the incidence of tuberculosis rapidly increased. […] The sick […], without receiving the necessary treatment, were forced to go a distance of 15 km daily on the way to their hard labour, and were condemned to die. People lost consciousness, and in an unconscious state were buried alive. […] Also characteristic was the way in which the Nazis treated prisoners after their death. A camp cemetery was set up for them outside the walls of Kaisersteinbruch. For the British and Americans a separate fenced area was provided; every grave had a cross and a plaque with forename and surname, date of birth and nationality. Dead Russians were thrown in several rows into 100-metre pits and then covered with earth, and on the top a sign was stuck into the ground showing the number buried. (Якунин 2020)

Yakunin sums up his recollections of the grisly story of the Kaisersteinbruch camp by referring to the need to "give a reminder of the Nazi crimes to all those who blame the Red Army 'for bestial behaviour on the territory of Europe' in 1945" (ibidem).

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[10] Original title: *Hasenjagd – Vor lauter Feigheit gibt es kein Erbarmen*; also given the English title *The Quality of Mercy*.

Conclusions

Taking for exemplary purposes the above analysis of Austrian and Russian press discourse, I believe that several conclusions can be drawn concerning the contemporary contexts of historical narratives concerning the actions of the Red Army in Austria and the Austrian–Russian dialogues of memory. Above all, journalists from both countries derive significant inspiration to recall the events of 1945 from the commemorative events on successive anniversaries of the end of the Second World War and of the signing of the treaty on Austrian sovereignty, such as those of 2005. Particularly in the past decade, however, a factor that has generally inflamed discussion concerning the end of the war has been the events playing out at the present time, such as Russia's conflict with Ukraine after 2013, as well as the "historical wars" conducted by Russia with respect to Poland, for example.

The mainstream Austrian press places its narratives about Russia within the paradigm of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, but they are related less to the unbronzing of Austrian history, and more to criticism of the FPÖ's nationalist rhetoric and the analogous historical policy of the Russian Federation. The articles published there are also marked by a general critical stance towards states and political regimes that violate liberal-democratic values. However, there are also discourses directed towards an "understanding", empathetic view of Russia past and present, although these are less visible than in the German left-wing press, which is associated with the *Russlandversteher* phenomenon (cf. Żakowska 2020: 284–290).

The opposite can be observed in the press and educational institutions linked to the extreme right-wing FPÖ. Its press takes a positive view of many aspects of the political, economic and cultural realities of contemporary Russia, including the nationalist paradigm that is obligatory in Russian historical policy. It also has a tendency not so much to "unbronze" but simply to stay silent about historical facts that may provide a counterbalance to the aforementioned picture. This very likely indicates a tendency towards a utilitarian, pragmatic treatment of history by politicians and journalists who sympathise with the FPÖ. One of the goals of the historical discourses that they create is undoubtedly to contest or even discredit the current official Austrian historical policy, which FPÖ activists believe to be based excessively on guilt, shame and repentance. Selectiveness and utilitarianism in references to the past are also features of the historical policy pursued by the *FPÖ-Bildungsinstitut*; its conciliatory nature is very likely a tool enabling rapprochement and cooperation between the FPÖ and the conservative Russian establishment.

In mainstream Western historical discourses, including Austrian ones, one often finds the idea that a society can set out on the road towards normality only when it begins to challenge the taboo that protects memory and myths from merciless self-criticism (Berg 2008: 70–71; cf. Siddi 2017: 465–467). The liberal order of the Second Republic has enabled Austrians to debate the subject of past national conflicts and neuroses (Bukey 2000: 233), but at the same time makes them sensitive to nationalist, anti-liberal attitudes in other countries. It is partly in this context that we should interpret the fact that when Austrians were asked at the start of this century which country posed the greatest threat to their own, as many as 47% named Russia (Binder 2005: 109).

In turn, in today's Russian Federation, where the period of critical "reworking" of history came in the years of the fall of the Soviet Union and painful "shock therapy", historical memory is perceived to a large degree as an element of "ontological security", a foundation for the "healthy" consciousness of any nation. Russian historian Alexander L. Nikiforov, writing about the laws that govern historical memory, claims that:

> It stores knowledge about cultural and military triumphs and victories, and maintains that about tragedies, but only when they relate to the country's own heroism and sacrifice. That memory cannot, however, contain a vision of crimes in which the whole of society took part. That would be too destructive to the national identity and the nation as such. (Nikiforov 2017: 54)

This diagnosis may be taken as the motto of the contemporary Russian historical narratives about 1945 that have been analysed above. Their strength is the ability to unite citizens in pride in their own nation and state, and to line up to defend its honour. Here also lies their weakness, however. In the discourses conducted within the nationalist paradigm, the goal is not so much dialogue as the correction and condemnation of any interpretations of Russian politics and history that are inconvenient for the Kremlin (Миллер 2009: 13–20; Clarke, Wóycicka 2019: 108).

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ABSTRACT

This article identifies the specific features and current contexts of the contemporary narratives presented on the pages of opinion-forming magazines from Austria and Russia, representing different political viewpoints, concerning the actions of the Red Army in Austria near the end of the Second World War and after it. The main hypothesis is that the analysed narrative threads relate to or reflect the dominant paradigms in contemporary memory policies in Austria and Russia. The author hypothesises further that their frequency and content are significantly influenced not only by the anniversary events related to 1945, but also by current international politics. The author applies the method of critical discourse analysis to press texts published in 2005–2020, which were selected using the quantitative method of keyword research. The study confirms the initial hypotheses, and concludes that Austrian–Russian memory dialogue takes place primarily between right-wing circles in the two countries.

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Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria

Introduction

The Westphalian system restricted state–religion relations to the private sphere, attempting to relegate religion from public life, this being associated with the growing importance of reason and the belief that religion had no influence on other aspects of human life. However, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, attitudes towards religion began to change. Over the past two decades, participants in international relations have begun to look for new strategies to increase their influence. These changes were an incentive to begin research on how religion affects state development and how it can be effectively used in foreign policy. "Religious diplomacy", falling under the public diplomacy category, defined by Beata Ociepka "as a form of dialogue in international political communication, which, by building mutually beneficial relations with partners abroad, helps achieve the state's objectives at international level" (2011: 288), has become such an instrument.

Certainly, "religious diplomacy" as a separate category of public diplomacy is not a new research problem, but it often seems to be underrepresented in Polish scholarship. The author sees "religious diplomacy" as a measure taken by a participant in international relations to use religion to promote their positive image on the international stage. As a result, it is involved in promoting (inter)religious dialogue among participants in international relations, such as nation states and their societies (Fraszka 2021: 559). In turn, Marcin Rzepka identifies it with "the ability to use religion to achieve specific goals, such as promotion […] on the international stage, systematically building the image of a conciliatory country, and above all, one capable of dialogue" (2019: 201).

Alicja Curanović defines it as "a state activity consisting in the use of a religious factor in foreign policy; that is, the whole set of mechanisms for state

cooperation with religious associations in the pursuit of pragmatically defined national interest, use of the international activity of religious institutions, ideas and religious symbols (appropriately interpreted to comply with current political aims)" (2012: 7).

Furthermore, Abid Rohman points out that "the core agenda of religious diplomacy is the interaction between the government, the private sector, religious organisations, or the wider community in an effort to realise religious harmony or efforts to resolve religious based conflicts" (2019: 5–6). "Religious diplomacy [...] can be increased by strengthening cooperation in various fields, especially social culture and education" (ibid.: 13). The definitions quoted above also indicate that "religious diplomacy" focuses not only on the sacred but can also include various events outside the spiritual sphere (cultural events, educational programmes, etc.).

Under the leadership of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) draws on Islamic traditions, religion has become an important instrument of Turkish foreign policy. As part of this policy, Turkey has built mosques, funded religious education, promoted the history of the Ottoman Empire, and extended its own Islamic style of leadership from Latin America to sub-Saharan Africa (Ozkan 2014: 225). Therefore, the promotion of the Turkish model of Islam, which is described as a moderate variety of Islam that can coexist with modernity and multiculturalism, has become a key point of Turkish religious diplomacy (Tabak 2017: 94). This has made "religious diplomacy" an important tool of soft power in strengthening Turkey's international position.

Turkey's political-religious activity in Austria, which is discussed in this article, has been viewed through the prism of "religious diplomacy", which appears to be more than an attempt made by the state authorities to use the religious factor to promote the country on the international stage by influencing and shaping the preferences of the societies of other countries. The article discusses "religious diplomacy" as an instrument of Turkey's foreign policy under the leadership of the AKP. It can be argued that the period of Erdoğan's and the AKP's rule is characterised by increased government commitment to promoting the Turkish model of Islam. Promoting Turkish Islam would become an important aspect of Turkish religious diplomacy among Austrians, especially those of Turkish descent, because for them it is the basis of multicultural life in the German-speaking world. However, it seems fair to say that Turkish religious diplomacy as an instrument for using religion to promote the country among native Austrians has proved ineffective. As a result of the lack of effectiveness in this field, Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria has focused

on mobilising the Turkish diaspora in Austria to take action and on shaping Turkish identity within that community.

The religious factor seems to shape current Turkish policy in Europe. On the other hand, Turkey's actions in this area can also be seen as an attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of another country – as will be illustrated by the example of Austria. The imams, preachers and Quranic teachers sent from Turkey to Austria have been state officials employed by the Directorate of Religious Affairs,[1] a state agency established in 1924. Therefore, Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria will be examined on the basis of the political-religious activities of the Austrian branch of that agency.

According to the Turkish constitution, the Diyanet is a state institution "which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity" (*Constitution of the Republic of Turkey* 2017, Art. 136). Pursuant to this provision, the Diyanet was established to supervise religion, but under the AKP government it has taken on a new role, which is linked to the party's ambitions to make Turkey a leader among Muslim states in the Middle East and a guarantor of stability and security in the region (Smoleń 2011: 85) and to redefine Turkey's position on the international stage. As such, this institution is responsible for promoting Turkish culture and language through religious education programmes, or bridging the divide between Sunni Islam and Turkish nationalism (Tabak 2017: 89–90).

Islam in Austria

The expansion of the Habsburg Empire and the settlement of guest workers in Austria in the 1960s and 1970s are important factors in the history of Islam in Austria. Since then, Austrian Islam has been divided into two separate groups: the Bosnian and the Turkish (Kolb 2020: 373). The 1867 constitution protected religious freedom across the Empire, enabling Muslims to build mosques and practise their faith (Sezgin 2019: 873). The act of 1874 concerning the rec-

[1] There are several different translations of the name of the agency in Polish: *Prezydium do Spraw Religijnych* (A. Szymański, K. Kościelniak), *Urząd do Spraw Religii* (K. Wasilewski, M. Matusiak), *Kierownictwo do Spraw Religii* (J. Reychman), *Dyrekcja Spraw Religijnych* (J. Kapłońska), *Dyrektoriat do Spraw Religijnych* (J. Niemiec). The author uses the name Diyanet (short for Turkish *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*).

ognition of religion provided a legal framework for defining which Christian or non-Christian groups, including Muslims, could be recognised as religious societies. The act granted Muslims additional rights and privileges, such as the right to self-organise and govern their communities through communes, and the capacity to set up Islamic funds (ibid.: 874).

After Bosnia and Herzegovina were conquered by the Habsburgs in 1878, a significant number of Muslims were forced to live under Austrian rule (Kolb 2020: 373). In 1912, with the formal recognition of Islam, the legal status of Muslims in Austria-Hungary began to differ from that of Muslims in other European states (Rayachi 2018: 581–582). The 1919 Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye recognised these rights and privileges, guaranteeing the safety of minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and confirming the capability of every citizen, irrespective of their religion and race, to hold prominent positions in the state (Sezgin 2019: 874).

Islam in Austria gained the status of a religious community, in accordance with international standards, quite early on. In principle, Muslims in Austria were granted the same rights as members of other religious communities, pursuant to the Islam Law (*Islamgesetz*). The law effectively guaranteed their right to practise Islam in public, to freely manage their internal religious affairs, and to establish religious, educational, and social organisations, foundations, and funds (Fürlinger 2010: 186).

In the mid-1960s, these communities began to exert pressure on the government to recognise the imperial laws of 1874 and 1912, which concerned Islam, as binding. In 1979, only the Hanafi school was recognised. The following year, all schools of Islamic law were recognised following a ruling by the Austrian Constitutional Court, which deemed these restrictions unjust (Marechal, Allievi, Dassetto et al. 2003: 165). Nevertheless, in 2008 Austria became the first country to pass a special law banning the construction of minarets, effective in the states of Carinthia and Vorarlberg (Allievi 2010: 33–34).

According to the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Islam has become the largest minority religion in the country – in 2016 it was practised by 8% of the population. The majority of Muslims in Austria observe Sunni Islam. Nearly 8% of Vienna's residents, mainly Turks and Bosnians, but also Afghans, Kurds, Chechens, Iranians, Arabs and Pakistanis, profess Islam. Most of the Muslims came to Austria from Turkey and Yugoslavia in the 1960s as guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) (Lamrani 2019: 82). Consequently, "all Muslims who now live in Austria are immigrants, with the exception of converts, whose number is difficult to estimate; figures given by various sources oscillate between 500 and 2,000 people" (Nalborczyk 2003: 291).

In recent decades, the number of Muslims in Austria has grown significantly, and so have the differences among them. According to 2017 estimates, 700,000 Muslims are living in that country. About half of Austrian Muslims are Austrian citizens. Most of them have Turkish roots. The second largest demographic group is people of Bosnian descent. Shia Muslims and Arabs make up the smallest part of the Muslim community in Austria (Kolb 2020: 373).

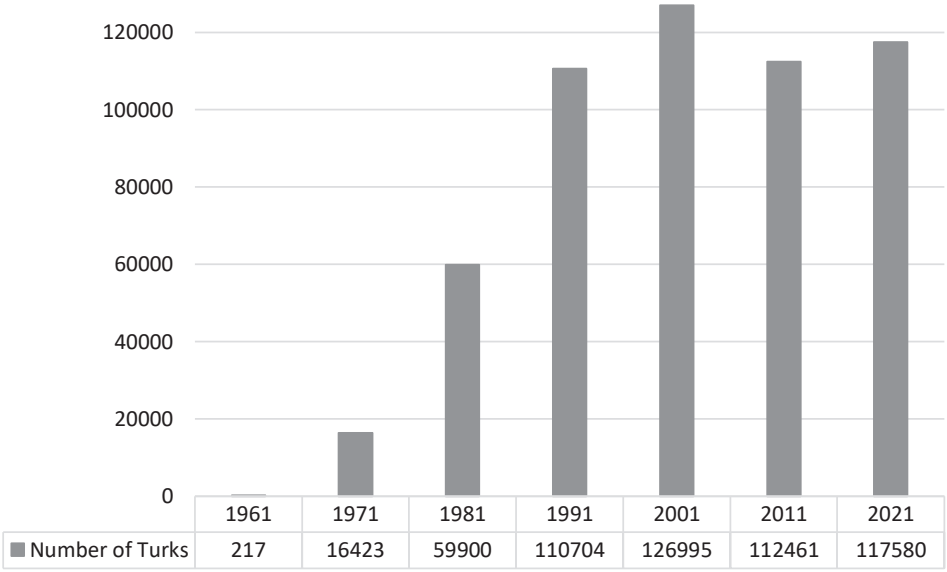
Turks in Austria

The Turkish community in Austria includes ethnic Turks who emigrated from Turkey and their descendants born in Austria, as well as ethnic Turkish groups coming from the Balkans, especially Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, and from the Levant – Cyprus and Syria. Turkish immigrants came to Austria in the early 1960s as workers employed directly by employers and manufacturers, even before their official recruitment agreement was signed. Individual contracts provided for temporary migration from Turkey to Austria, and upon their expiration the workers were supposed to return to their country of origin. Josef Klaus, then head of the Austrian federal government, made a decision to employ Turkish foreign workers. To this end, on 15 May 1964, Turkey and Austria concluded a bilateral agreement. Although Austria and most of the guest workers had no such intention, many of them stayed in Austria and started families there (Aslan, Heinrich 2010: 29–30).

Migration from Turkey to Austria did not start to play an important role until the early 1970s, when the number of workers arriving in Austria each year peaked at over 10,000. According to the 1971 census, there were about 16,000 Turks living in Austria, which accounted for about 8% of the total migrant population. Although official recruitment ended in 1973, the number of Turkish immigrants continued to grow thanks to family reunification, which had a significant impact on their decision to settle in Austria. As a result, a law governing the employment of immigrants was passed in 1975. This law provided financial incentives to encourage immigrants to return to their homeland. Nevertheless, in the mid-1980s, Austria's booming economy needed more workers, and as a result the demand for Turkish guest workers increased. Therefore, regulations that served to keep foreigners out of Austria and limit immigration, such as the Employment of Foreigners Act, which formalised the preferential treatment of Austrians in the labour market, indirectly contributed to the settlement of a previously mobile workforce. Until the end of the 1980s, Turkish immigrants were allowed to enter Austria on a tourist visa (Sievers, Ataç, Schnell 2014: 265).

Figure 1

The number of Turks living in Austria



	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2021
Number of Turks	217	16423	59900	110704	126995	112461	117580

Based on: Statista 2022 and Sievers, Ataç, Schnell 2014: 265.

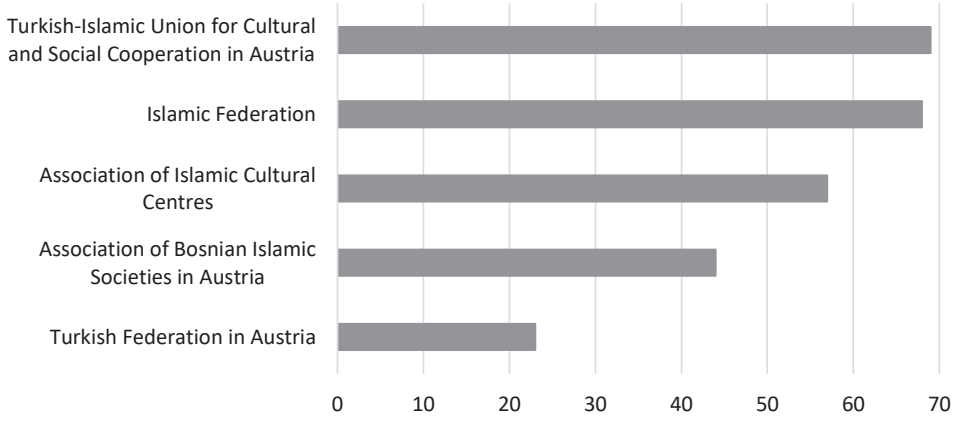
Turks from the Balkans came to Austria as guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by those seeking employment after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989. The most recent wave of Balkan Turks was seen after 2007, and was directly linked to the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union, which gave them the right to move freely as EU citizens. As for the immigration of Turkish Cypriots, most of them fled to Austria after the outbreak of the Cyprus conflict in 1974. Another wave was sparked by Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004. The influx of Turkish Syrians is directly associated with the migration crisis in Europe between 2014 and 2019 and the civil war in Syria. According to the Turkish Embassy in Vienna, there are about 300,000 Turks living in Austria (Minority Rights Group 2022). Therefore, the official statistics published by Austria, including those shown in Figure 1, do not reflect the exact number of people who either fully or partially consider themselves to be Turks. This is also linked to the fact that Austrian residents cannot declare their ethnic origin in official censuses.

Institutionalisation of Islam in Austria

In 1979, the Austrian state recognised the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, IGGiÖ) as the official representative body of the Muslim community. As a result, the IGGiÖ was granted special corporate privileges, including control over Islamic religious instruction in Austrian public schools and the appointment of teachers to conduct such classes. The IGGiÖ targeted all Muslims in Austria, regardless of their background. It also initiated collaboration with the majority of local and national Muslim organisations (Sunier, Landman 2015: 50).

Figure 2

Numbers of branches and mosques run by selected Muslim organisations (February 2019)



	Turkish Federation in Austria	Association of Bosnian Islamic Societies in Austria	Association of Islamic Cultural Centres	Islamic Federation	Turkish-Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation in Austria
Number of branches and mosques	23	44	57	68	69

Source: Statista 2021.

In recent years, there has also been a noticeable increase in the number of its branches in Austria, but only four of them are mosques with minarets, which regularly trigger emotional political debates. These mosques are located in Telfs in Tyrol, Saalfelden in Salzburg, Bad Vöslau in Lower Austria, and

Vienna-Floridsdorf. The last of these is also the largest and most famous mosque in Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich* 2017).

When the Diyanet expanded its network to Europe, it refused to recognise the IGGiÖ's monopoly, arguing that Turks were not sufficiently represented in its bodies. As a result, it began to operate both politically and religiously through the Turkish-Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation in Austria (*Avusturya Türk İslam Birliğ*i, ATİB), which took on the task of promoting the Turkish model of Islam in Austria. This was possible owing to strong Turkish influence, because, among other things, the religious attaché of the Turkish embassy is the head of the Union (Kroissenbrunner 2003: 194).

The ATİB is Austria's largest Islamic organisation, and was founded as an association in 1990. At the time of its establishment it consisted of 31 branches; their number has increased to 69 at present. In recent years, the ATİB has founded and run several Muslim cultural and religious centres with prayer rooms; for example, in Bregenz in Vorarlberg (2000), Schwaz in Tyrol (2003), Lustenau in Vorarlberg (2005), Hall in Tyrol (2006), Vienna, 10th district (2007), Landeck in Tyrol (2009), Vienna, 21st district (2010), and one run by the Islamic Federation in Linz in Upper Austria (2007) – all without minarets (Fürlinger 2010: 190). These communities are financially self-sufficient entities with legal personality. Most of them are located in Vienna and Vorarlberg in western Austria (Fürlinger 2015: 234). The Austrian branch of the Diyanet is in charge of 69 of the 269 branches across Austria (Sunier, Landman 2015: 50). The ATİB had been the largest Muslim organisation outside the IGGiÖ until 2011, when it formally became a member of the latter.

Besides the ATİB, the largest organisations for the Turkish community in Austria include the Islamic Federation (IF) and the Union of Islamic Centres of Culture. The Islamic Federation is the Austrian branch of Millî Görüş, which was founded in 1987 and whose main goal is to serve Muslims of Turkish origin and their descendants. The organisation owns mosques, prayer houses and clubs in Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Salzburg. It also claims to run 68 branches. The Union of Islamic Centres of Culture, in turn, is a Sufi organisation that provides religious services in 57 branches across Austria (Mattes, Rosenberger 2015: 139).

All Muslim organisations in Austria are involved in organising religious festivals and community events. Good examples here are Muslim festivities or community dinners during Ramadan. Additionally, there are celebrations known as *Maulid* to commemorate the Prophet Muhammad's birth, which include the singing of songs and recitation of poetry in honour of the Prophet, and reading of the Quran. During Ramadan, many Muslims give their *zakat*

(obligatory donation) to Muslims in less privileged countries, which helps to strengthen community spirit – the *ummah* (Öktem 2017: 54). Unlike most other organisations, the Turkish organisations are hierarchical and have spread throughout the country (Mattes, Rosenberger 2015: 138).

ATİB's political and religious activities before 2015

The *ATİB* was originally established to provide religious services to discourage Turks living abroad from joining Islamic organisations whose religious views differed from those of the Turkish government. After the AKP had come to power, the *ATİB*, the Islamic organisation with the largest number of members in Austria, completely redefined its policy towards the Muslim community. In this process, the Diyanet is eager to use the infrastructure of *ATİB* associations in Austria (Aslan 2018: 9–10). Besides religious activities, such as offering services with the help of imams sent from Turkey, and running mosques and prayer houses, the *ATİB* promotes folk festivals and other activities associated with Turkish customs (Mattes, Rosenberger 2015: 138).

Another activity of great importance is the burial fund for the repatriation of remains, for which as many as 25,000 Muslim families are registered. This matter is of great importance for Muslims, since it requires ritual ablution of the remains according to sex. The service involves washing of the remains in accordance with the Islamic rite, wrapping in a shroud, the saying of a funereal prayer, and burial with the head facing Mecca. However, because burial without a coffin is prohibited in Austria, Muslims are buried in coffins made of softwood (ATIB Union 2021a).

The *ATİB* also offers educational services, both for children and adults, such as German language courses, tutoring and homework help for the youngest, and various courses such as painting and graphics, professional orientation, reading and writing, rhetoric, values and orientation, and language courses for adults. Moreover, Muslims can attend a variety of seminars dealing with road traffic, professional life, health and addictions (ATIB Union 2021b).

The *Diyanet* promotes the Turkish model of Islam, characterised by apparent moderation, rationality and secularism, as an example or inspiration for Muslims worldwide and in Europe. As a result, the Turkish model of Islam has been put forward as a moderate kind of Islam which conforms to modernity and multiculturalism (Çitak 2010: 620). For the Turks themselves, the Turkish model of Islam "has become a central element of multicultural life in the German-speaking world" (Blaschke 1989: 7), and the authorities in Ankara regard

the *Diyanet* as the true representative of the Turkish nation, which should serve as an institutional model for European countries wishing to consider Islam part of existing national religious frameworks, both in terms of religious concepts, institutional missions and capabilities (Çitak 2013: 177).

There are four principles listed on the *ATİB*'s official website that all branches have to respect. The *ATİB*'s guiding principles are the Austrian Constitution and fundamental rights, and therefore it is driven by such values as democracy, freedom and equality of all people. In addition, the *ATİB* considers itself a non-profit civic organisation that works for a pluralistic society through its social, cultural, and religious activities. The *ATİB* branches operate on a voluntary basis. In order to promote greater tolerance and mutual understanding, the *ATİB* places interfaith dialogue with other religious communities at the forefront. In order to experience and promote peaceful coexistence, the *ATİB* places great value on cooperation with Austrian and European civil societies and non-governmental organisations. The *ATİB* is also committed to aiding and supporting young people's social, cultural or sports education as well as to creating appropriate conditions and infrastructure (ATIB Union 2021c).

According to these principles, the *ATİB*'s activities should focus solely on organising the religious, social and cultural life of the affiliated Turkish-Islamic mosque communities. Meanwhile, the Turkish government provides financial and organisational support to the *ATİB*, thereby ensuring the continuation of its operation. In turn, the *ATİB*'s affiliation to the *Diyanet* has contributed to it being considered a Turkish governmental institution (Çitak 2013: 178). If the *ATİB*'s internal organisation and goals are taken into account, then the organisation can be seen as a Turkish state institution which, operating within the Austrian legal system, is beholden to the Turkish state and the Turkish-Muslim population in Austria (Fürlinger 2015:234).

Table 1

Disputes related to the ATİB's branches

Location	Cause of the dispute	Forms of objection	Final decision
Telfs (Tyrol)	• the construction of a minaret next to the existing Eyüp Sultan Mosque	• a petition against its construction signed by 2,400 people • construction of a smaller minaret met with protests by Muslims	Approved by the local authorities

Reutte (Tyrol)	• conversion of a former car dealership into a religious and cultural centre containing a prayer room, an office, seminar and youth rooms, a shop and two flats	• a protest organised by residents	Approved by the local authorities
Vienna-Brigittenau (Dammstrasse 37, 20th District)	• plans for the extension of a prayer centre	• a petition against its construction signed by 4,000 people • advocating of the relocation of the centre and voices against the Islamicisation of Austria • 700 persons protested in front of the ATİB's centre under the banner 'No mosque in Brigittenau!' (13 September 2007) • demonstration against construction of a Turkish mosque in the centre of Vienna attended by 700 people (14 May 2009)	Approved by the local authorities
Spittal a.d. Drau (Carinthia)	• remodelling of the interior of the house to create a small prayer room, an office and a flat for the imam	• petition against the prayer house. • city council's vote against the redesignation of the building (finally overruled by the State government of Carinthia)	Approved by the local authorities
Mauthausen-Albern (Upper Austria)	• application for the redesignation of a building in order to establish a new centre with a prayer hall, rooms for youth programmes and sports, and a shop	• collection of 2,000 signatures against the project • smearing of the outer walls of the building with racist slogans	Lack of approval from the local authorities
Hörbranz (Vorarlberg)	• selection of a plot (about 960 square metres) for the new centre	• area zoned for enterprises – rejection of an application for the redesignation of the area	Lack of approval from the local authorities
Nenzing (Vorarlberg)	• desire to buy a plot of land from the communal authority to build a mosque	• petition against its construction signed by 200 people	Withdrawal from purchasing the plot

Bad Vöslau (Lower Austria)	• application to the city to build a mosque with two minarets (15 metres high), a dome (12.5 metres high) and several small cupolas, as well as a prayer hall for 130 persons (250 square metres), a tea-house, a restaurant, an office and two classrooms	• protests against the construction • petition known as 'Cultural centre without minarets', which was signed by about 300 persons by the end of January 2008, and in February by 1,470 persons • bulk mailing against the construction project • demonstration against the building of the mosque in the city centre under the slogan 'SOS Abendland' (SOS Occident) attended by 250 people	Approved by the federal government
Bludenz (Vorarlberg)	• plans for a new mosque with a minaret	• arson in the Turkish consulate general in Bregenz, the capital of Vorarlberg • letters and e-mails sent to the mayor by opponents of the mosque • launch of a campaign for a change to the building law to prevent the construction of minarets	Approved by the local authorities

Source: Fürlinger 2010: 190–212.

Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria takes a variety of forms, the most important of which seems to be the running of the *ATİB* branches, especially mosques and houses of prayer. However, while Austrian Muslims support such a policy, it is an emotional issue which causes a great deal of controversy among the local population. This has been the reason for many disputes over mosques and prayer houses run by the ATİB, resulting in attempts to block their redesignation or operation. In the majority of cases, after lengthy negotiations the local authorities approved the plans, but the ATİB had to make major concessions on the final designs.

ATİB's political and religious activities since 2015

The imams' lack of understanding of Austrian society and the shortness of their stay in Austria, combined with a poor command of German, are seen as factors contributing to the isolation and poor social integration of Muslims of Turkish descent in Austria. Therefore, in February 2015, the Austrian parliament passed a new *Islamgesetz* (Islam Law), pursuant to which it is illegal to fund mosques and pay salaries to imams from abroad (*BGBl*. I N 39/2015). Under the new regulations, ATİB imams are no longer entitled to being employed as Turkish state employees in Austria. Additionally, nine imams who accepted salaries from abroad were made to leave Austria (Öktem 2016: 53).

This new Islam Law of 2015 seriously harmed relations between the Austrian government and the *ATİB*. The law was considered an act of hostility against the Turkish government, and Austria was accused of Islamophobia (Aslan 2018: 6). The law prohibits imams from receiving external funding, which calls into question their future in the *ATİB*. The most obvious effect of the new law on Islam is the loss of livelihood by those imams and religious workers whose salaries were previously supported by organisations based in third countries, mainly Turkey (Öktem 2017: 46).

One of the articles of the *Islamgesetz* states that the regions of activity of local member groups of Muslim umbrella organisations should not overlap, which may pose a threat to the survival of the *ATİB*, because regulations require the dissolution of such groups (Skowron-Nalborczyk 2016: 72). On the other hand, the ban applies to Islamic religious associations and their communities, and not associations such as the *ATİB* funded by the Turkish government (Dautovic, Hafez 2019: 45–46). Interestingly, in June 2016, a Turk named Ibrahim Olgun, with close ties to the government in Ankara, was elected new chairman of the *IGGiÖ*, and in December 2018 he was replaced by Ümit Vural – a Syrian Kurd of Turkish origin, who has been repeatedly accused by his opponents of being "Ankara's puppet" and favouring the ATİB in the Shura Council (Schurarat), the highest body of the *IGGiÖ*, which, among other things, elects the chairman of the organisation (Muslims elected... 2021).

Currently, the *ATİB* exerts a strong influence on the activities of the *IGGiÖ* in Austria. An example of such influence may be a large-scale demonstration organised by *ATİB* associations against the Austrian National Council's declaration on the Armenian genocide in 1915 (Aslan 2018: 6). The impact of Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria was also evident during the pro-government protests on the streets of Austria in support of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan after the attempted coup in July 2016. This event made the public

aware of the impact of Ankara's recent actions on the Turkish community in Austria (Öktem 2016: 52–53).

There has also been much controversy over the instrumentalisation of mosques and their use for political purposes to shape the young generation through the Turkish model of "patriotic education". Military drills and training for children, the re-enactment of the Battle of Gallipoli, and swearing on the Quran and sword to protect Turkey from its enemies are just a few examples (Aslan 2018: 7). These actions are inconsistent with the main goals of Islamic religious education in Austria, which include providing children and young people with veritable and reliable information, as well as a deep understanding of their own faith and spiritual direction. And as these children are growing up in a heterogeneous world, another goal is to develop in them a sensitive and open attitude towards diverse cultures and beliefs (Rayachi 2018: 582).

Austria was one of the first European countries to take measures to reduce Turkish influence on its territory. Since 2018, all kinds of Turkish election campaigns have been outlawed in Austria. This was a response to Ankara's decision in 2012 to grant Turks living abroad the right to vote and to be elected, which was meant to strengthen the political ties of the diaspora with the homeland. As a result, Turkish political parties began to place names of diaspora candidates on their voting lists and to cater for their needs and expectations in political programmes (Akçapar, Aksel 2017: 148; Baser, Öztürk 2019: 30–31).

To reduce the power of Turkish religious diplomacy, the Austrian government began organising German language courses and classes for immigrants to improve their understanding of the values of the Republic of Austria. Sebastian Kurz, while still Austrian Minister for Integration, stated that the reforms had been introduced so as to explicitly counteract the effects of Islamic extremism in Austria. In 2017, the Austrian government approved the *Anti-Gesichtsverhüllungsgesetz* (Anti-Face Veiling Act) and prohibited the public dissemination of the Quran (Öktem 2016: 53). Article 2(1) states that

> Anyone who, in public places or in public buildings, hides or conceals their facial features by means of clothing or other objects in such a way that they are no longer recognizable commits an administrative offense and shall be punished with a fine up to EUR 150.00. The administrative offense can be prosecuted with a summary penalty notice according to §50 Administrative Penal Act 1991 of up to EUR 150.00. […] (BGBl. I N 68/2017).

Moreover, in June 2018, Austrian authorities closed down seven mosques affiliated to the ATİB and dismissed 60 of the 260 Turkish imams preaching in Austria, accusing them of being funded by foreign countries (Jones 2020). The decision was taken after an investigation conducted by the Authority of

Religious Affairs into several mosques in Vienna that were financially supported by Turkey (Nazeef 2021). The Imam Hatip school[2] in Vienna, which Milli Görüş set up in 2017 with Turkish funds, was also closed down (Aslan 2018: 7–8).

In addition, Turkish religious diplomacy has faced other challenges. One of them is the increasing secularisation of the Muslim community in Austria, the Turkish one included, as around 15% of Austrian Muslims reject well-established organisational structures and renowned religious figures. This is most evident among second-generation (33.3%) and third-generation (11.1%) immigrants (Kolb 2020: 386). The next problem is that Austrian Turks are often registered in several different organisations across Austria, which prevents full coordination of activities and thus exposes the weakness of Ankara's management of the Turkish diaspora. Furthermore, for the Turkish authorities, the diaspora is not a potential partner but a means to an end, and their actions are focused on hindering the assimilation of Turks living in Austria.

Conclusions

A new approach to public diplomacy and the use of "new" tools such as a religious factor has enabled Turkey to take measures which give it a presence in Turks' everyday lives. Turkey is building its image on the international stage using the religious dimension of diplomacy, the so-called religious diplomacy. One of the reasons for using this type of diplomacy is that religion still plays a significant role in the socio-political life of modern societies. Therefore, "religious diplomacy" has become an important instrument of Turkish soft power when it comes to strengthening the country's international position.

Turkish religious diplomacy is characterised by the promotion of the Turkish model of Islam and the offering of an array of religious services. Turkey helps the Muslim minority in Western Europe and around the world by funding the construction and maintenance of mosques, as well as activities of Quranic schools and other religious organisations. Moreover, by

[2] Imam Hatip schools, founded in lieu of a vocational school to train government employed imams after madrasas in Turkey were abolished by the Unification of Education Act as a result of Atatürk's reforms, are responsible for tutoring the clergy. However, unlike other vocational schools, their curricula included the same amount of religious and secular instruction as traditional secondary schools. Turkish President R.T. Erdoğan graduated from one of these schools (Butler 2018).

remunerating quasi-governmental officials and enforcing religious commands and prohibitions, the government is capable of managing the observance of those religious commands and prohibitions. Other significant actions include the organisation of pilgrimages to Mecca and celebrations of various religious festivals (Szymański 2008: 35). In its foreign policy, Turkey refers to the *ummah* (the worldwide community of Muslims) because the Muslim community is a lever that the Turkish state under the AKP government uses to strengthen its presence in various parts of the world (Muhasilovic 2018: 64).

Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria is conducted through the Austrian branch of the *Diyanet*, the Turkish Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Co-operation in Austria, which is the largest organisation of the Turkish community in the country. The ATİB coordinates religious, social and cultural activities of the Turkish-Islamic mosque communities. When it comes to the legal status of *ATİB*, it can be described as running on two complicated tracks. On the one hand, the *ATİB* is an association established in accordance with the Associations Act (*Vereinsgesetz*), which operates as an umbrella organisation having 69 branches with over 100,000 members across Austria. On the other hand, it is a branch of the Turkish *Diyanet*.

Taking into account what has been said so far, the *ATİB* can be considered an agency of the Turkish government in Austria. Due to this dependency, the *ATİB* is under immense social pressure in Austria, where it is more and more often perceived by native Austrians as a political rather than a religious organisation. Its ineffectiveness is also linked to the attitude of the Austrian community towards Islam, best exemplified by the disputes and objections to the (re) construction of mosques and prayer houses.

All of the above-mentioned factors have contributed to the failure of Turkish religious diplomacy, understood as the ability to use a religious factor to promote the country in Austria and to influence and shape the preferences of Austrian society. In order to promote the Turkish model of Islam and preserve religious rituals, Ankara focused on extending its services mainly to Turks living in Austria, thereby limiting Turkish religious diplomacy to mobilisation of the Turkish diaspora. The Austrian government raised objections to this and introduced many measures with the purpose of reducing Turkish influence in their country. At the same time, this had a negative impact on the relations between the two countries. Turkey's political and religious activities, including those of the *ATİB*, have been significantly limited due to being in violation of the Islam Law.

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ABSTRACT

Turkey's political-religious activity in Austria, which constitutes the research problem of this paper, is analysed through the prism of "religious diplomacy". Therefore, the paper attempts to assess Turkish religious activity in contemporary Austria. The aim of this article is to determine the role and significance of religious diplomacy as a foreign policy tool of Turkey in the era of the rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). It can be argued that this period is characterised by the government's increased commitment to promoting the Turkish model of Islam. It seems that the

religious factor is shaping Turkey's current policy in Europe, but on the other hand, activity in this area can also be seen as an attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of another state – as is shown in the case of Austria. The state of Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria is analysed on the basis of the political-religious activities of the Austrian Diyanet branch, the ATİB. It seems that in this respect Turkish religious diplomacy as an instrument for using religion to promote the country among native Austrians must be considered ineffective. The lack of effectiveness in this field resulted in Turkish religious diplomacy in Austria being reduced to attempts to activate the Turkish diaspora in Austria and to shape a Turkish identity there.

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The evolution of the perceived social authority of the Catholic Church in Poland in the first decades of the 21st century

Introduction

The Catholic Church has held and still holds a special position in public life in Poland. However, in the period analysed, clear symptoms of weakening religiosity in Europe and a resulting reduction in participation in religious practices are already noticeable. The social processes related to the secularisation of public life, the privatisation and individualisation of faith, the deinstitutionalisation of religion, secularisation of people's mentality and selectivity in observing the instructions of the Catholic Church have been and continue to be the subject of numerous analyses.[1] It should be noted, however, that due to the special relationship between religion and politics, rooted in the history of Poland, many researchers have expressed opinions on the apparent difference in the rate of these processes in Polish society. Their slower rate was pointed out and linked to the significant authority of the Catholic Church. In addition, considerations often raised the issue of the influence of the person and teachings of John Paul II on Catholicism in Poland and, consequently, a significant impact on the level of religiosity and the high level of social authority of the Catholic Church. It should, however, be noted that the perception of this authority has been changing in recent years. In Polish society, there are also visible symptoms of an acceleration of all the processes previously diagnosed in other European societies, but they are taking place in different areas of social life and at a different pace.

[1] See, for example, Mariański (2013), Marczewska-Rytko (2010), Firlit, Hainz, *et al*. (eds.), (2012), Grabowska (2022a).

In the 21st century, expectations regarding the proper role of religion in Polish public life and the permissible limits of the Catholic Church's involvement in socio-political affairs have changed dynamically. Therefore, questions systematically arise about how religiosity in Poland and trust in the Catholic Church are evolving, and to what extent secularisation and the processes related to privatisation and selectivity in respecting the principles of faith are specific to Poland. Consequently, an interesting issue is the evolution of the perception of the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland. The primary goal of this study is to describe and explain the evolution in the perceived authority of the Catholic Church in Poland during the time period indicated in institutional, doctrinal, and personal dimensions. Indicating these changes, it is necessary to seek answers to further important questions, such as how the level of trust in the institutional Church has changed, how the religiosity of Polish society has evolved in terms of declarations of faith and in religious practices and declarations of adherence to Catholic morality. The answers to these questions will be the basis for formulating conclusions about the elements of continuity and change in the perceived authority of the Catholic Church in Polish society.[2] The basic research method that made it possible to obtain answers to such questions was the analysis of existing (generated) data.

A description and explanation of changes in the perceived authority of the Catholic Church in Poland must be related to the characteristics of the observed redefinition of authority figures in the modern world. The current perception of the rank of authority figures is influenced by a number of contemporary complex social changes. Undoubtedly, it is possible to identify symptoms of the crisis of authority in Poland and around the world: questioning the need for recognition of those in authority, and sometimes pointing out their harmfulness as well as frequently questioning their substantive and ethical competence. Numerous analyses emphasise the narrowing of the scope of influence of authority figures. Research shows that they are often eliminated only in private life and distanced from their influence in other spheres of life. Therefore, a necessary starting point is to recall the most important concepts of authority that are useful in further analysis. The way authority is perceived determines, to a certain extent, the strength of its influence and the level of influence.

[2] Considerations of length imposed limits on citations of available research results and so the approach to some issues was narrowed down to the most critical areas with an awareness that some relevant issues important in the indicated research area remain outside the analysis.

Authority in public life

It is first is necessary to point out the complexity and multidimensionality of definitional approaches to the concept of authority. The ambiguity of this concept is the subject of numerous interdisciplinary studies and as a result, there are many perspectives, but no clear interpretation of this concept. Invariably, however, in every analysis the meaning resulting from the etymology of the Latin word *autorictas* is strongly emphasised, that is recognition of influence, importance, a person or institution enjoying a special position. Related words include *auctor* – the perpetrator, creator, or master, *auctorizare* – authorised, *auctoramentum* – obligation, *autorictas patrum* – more than advice, less than an order or advice that cannot be ignored (Marcińczyk 1991: 13). The first use of this term in Polish is associated with the German term *Autorität* – understood as authority, seriousness, and an indication of a higher social position thanks to which one can influence other people (Ziółkowski 2012: 21). In the context of the research issues, it is useful to recall the Christian tradition, in which it is assumed that authority means the ability to "testify to the content of rational reality, the ability to guide all people towards a goal" (Szlachta 2004: 28). It is indicated that authority in this understanding works for maintaining social order as well as supporting religion and tradition. In this understanding, authority fulfils the educational functions of a good guide. In the context of further considerations, it is important to stress the actual influence of authority as the ability to change the behaviour of another entity, that is authority, can effectively influence the behaviour and way of thinking of other people. This understanding of authority can also be found in the *Dictionary of the Polish Language*:

> "a person who inspires trust, is an expert in a field or an oracle in moral matters, is respected and has an influence on the behaviour and thinking of other people. An institution, magazine, etc. that influences social opinion, is popular and respected because it represents values or content accepted and recognised by a group." (*Słownik współczesnego języka…* 1996: 31).

Undoubtedly, the power to influence the opinions and behaviour of other people, combined with trust and respect from other people and general respect, are most often indicated in the definitions of this concept. It can therefore be assumed, following Jacek Ziółkowski, that authority is:

> "a dynamic communicative relationship where the subject of authority (role bearer) exerts an effective influence on its recipients, who accept its legitimacy under the influence of values and models preferred in a given system, whether cultural, political, economic etc.

> The subject of authority, in its influence, uses methods that exclude direct and conscious coercion. The relationship of authority has its own domain, which specifies the scope of subordination of recipients" (Ziółkowski 2012: 37).

This emphasises that authority is perceived through the prism of its features, which are recognised and respected by public opinion. In the context of indicating the determinants determining the power and durability of social authority, it is extremely important to underline that it is a process related to the positive acceptance of certain features and values, but the most important basis for recognition is trust. Authority then is primarily based on trust (ibid: 24).

It should be stressed that the power of a given authority is assessed by its effectiveness in influencing three dimensions. The first of these is the amount of recognition and respect its judgments receive. The second is the size of the social space in which its instructions are valid. The third is durability, that is the time span over which its judgments are accepted as valid. Across many analyses, numerous typologies of authority figures can be found (see, for example, Witkowski 2009, Ziółkowski 2012, Marcińczyk 1991, Sieradzan (ed.) 2009, and Wagner 2005). In the area of research outlined here, the definition of moral authority is particularly important. Along with emphasis placed on the importance of the axiological sphere, adjudication in the sphere of morality and the communication of ethical and religious content, it is noted that authority is "ascribed to persons or institutions whose behaviour is consistent with generally valued ethical and moral values" (Ziółkowski 2012: 42).

In the context of the issues analysed here, it is worth mentioning one more important concept. Yves R. Simon presented his definition of authority based on the concept of the common good. He argued that in the process of discovering, describing and convincing others of the importance of specific goals that constitute the common good, those who are authority figures should play an important role (Simon 1993: 30).

As underlined above, approaching authority in terms of a dynamic relationship, mutual influence, and reactions, always involves emphasizing trust as an inherent attribute of authority. This trust is the source of authority's legitimacy and the condition for influence. It is often noted that obedience and submission to authority are justified by many factors, such as wisdom, honesty, experience, and compliance with moral principles, but in each case the fundamental, decisive issue is trust. Trust is the first factor in recognising the influence of authority, but it is often added that the subject of authority should also be a model of reasonable behaviour and social attitudes:

> "so, as if it were a guardian of values that remain highly prized, and which at least some people would still like to defend, such authority is given to someone who tries to remind us of these values, who has not yet doubted their meaning. It is bestowed on institutions that actively protect values." (Skarga 2004: 1).

Prior to further considerations, it should be mentioned that in analyses of the decline in the status of authority figures in modern societies and in searches for explanations of these processes, the main cause is often a decline in the level of social trust. It should be assumed that the dynamic socio-political processes of the modern world favour such changes, and some analyses point to their irreversibility.

An important issue for further considerations is to recall concepts that state that in the modern world opinions on the crisis of authority should not be formulated. Instead, only redefinitions of their role and the way they are perceived should be described. It is stated that the demand for authority figures in the 21st century is no smaller than before, but due to the fulfilment of a different role, primarily of a "wise guide" in a new, complicated world (Wagner 2005: 22). It is stressed that the current trend is to move from "the authority of leaders" to "the authority of examples". The former clearly indicated the necessary choices while the latter instruct and model ways of coping in a world full of possibilities, "show how to move in a world full of choices" (ibid.). The authority described in this way is often called "rational authority" because it is not recognised thoughtlessly.

Tadeusz Sławek, describing the status of contemporary authority figures, stressed that in the modern world the strength of their influence is determined by a lack of involvement in current political disputes: "we know that they exist, but they can only fulfil their mission when they do not participate in the whirlwind and confusion of everyday life, but are summoned to this everyday life" (Sławek 2010: 1). Another distinguishing feature of authority in this concept is that it influences through the power of its decent behaviour, which becomes a model and example for others (ibid.). Therefore, it is strongly emphasised that at present moral authorities are chosen as role models due to their attitudes or moral views.

Bearing in mind the diversity of perspectives in defining the concept of authority, in the analysis of selected research issues, trust is assumed to be the basis for recognising authority and that it is a dynamic relationship in which the subject of authority exerts influence on recipients who accept its legitimacy in connection with the recognition and adoption of a catalogue of specific values and patterns of behaviour. However, the strength and importance of the authority will be evidenced by the effectiveness of influence in three areas, name-

ly recognition and respect of the authority's judgments, the size of the social space in which the authority's recommendations are recognised and durability or the time range in which the authority's judgments are considered binding.

The evolution of trust in the Catholic Church in Poland

Assuming that the level of trust is the most important indicator of the recognition of authority, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of the evolution of the level of trust of Polish society towards the institutional Church and its representatives. It should be remembered that before 1989, the Catholic Church played a special role in Poland and enjoyed a very high level of trust and a specific social position. For wide circles of society, it was an unquestionable moral authority (Mazurkiewicz 2001: 284). In the political system of that time, a significant part of Polish society perceived representatives of the institutional Church as the only representatives of social interests in public life. A strong belief in the important and special role of the Catholic Church in maintaining national identity and maintaining a relatively high level of independence from political authorities resulted in very broad and lasting social support. Many publications point out that in those years the level of trust in the Catholic Church reached approximately 90%. (Nosowski 2008: 1).

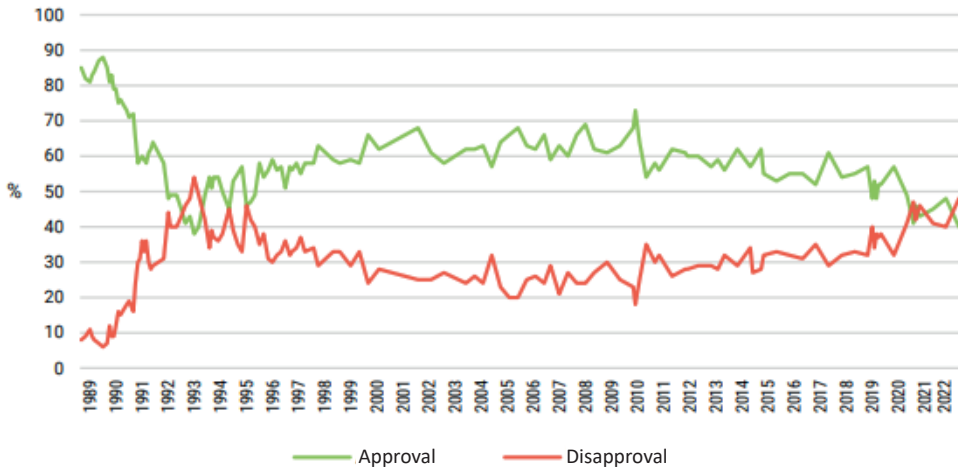
This situation changed after 1989, when, along with systemic transformations, critical assessments of the Catholic Church's engagement in political life appeared. The results of the analyses indicate that in the new reality, a large part of society negatively assessed the involvement of the church hierarchy in the political sphere and its influence on the decisions of the government. Considering the results of many studies, both trust in the institutional Church and approval for the actions of its representatives decreased significantly during that period. In the years 1989-1994, the percentage of people declaring trust in the Catholic Church declined from 87.4% to 40.5% with a simultaneous significant increase in distrust (Baniak 2022: 229). It should be noted that the results of research by the Public Opinion Research Center (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, hereinafter CBOS) in 1993 showed one of the lowest levels of positive assessments and trust in the activities of the Catholic Church (Mariański 2017: 81). In mid-1993, approval for the Church reached a record low level of 38%, while the level of disapproval was equally unprecedented at 54% (Roguska 2022: 84). After 1993, there was a change in this trend and attempts were made to explain this process. Apart from the assumption that the decline in trust was natural after a specific earlier period, it indicates that the basis for

the critical assessment was the negative attitude of part of the Polish society towards cases of direct influence of representatives of the Catholic Church in the political sphere (Nosowski 2008: 3). In the second half of the 1990s, an increase in the level of trust in the area analysed could already be noticed. Before further considerations, it can be concluded that the assumption that the Church's authority was and is supported by distance from current politics is correct. One can agree with the statement that "the more the Church distanced itself from the authorities, the more it moved from the position of a political player to the position of a moral authority, the more trustworthy it became." (ibid: 7).

In the first decade of the 21st century, the level of approval and trust in Church activities was relatively rarely below 60%, often close to 70%, and even higher (Roguska 2022: 86).

Fig. 1

Changes in assessments of Church activities (1989-2022)



Source: Roguska 2022: 87.

From available detailed studies, the results of surveys regarding the level of trust can be referenced. They were as follows, 34.3% expressed strong trust in the Catholic Church, 41.2% declared that it deserves trust, 14.2% that it "neither deserves nor does not deserve trust", while 6% answered it probably does not deserve trust and 2.5% answered that it definitely does not deserve trust (Baniak 2022: 236). In 2010 research by CBOS, 68% of respondents assessed the Church's activities positively, and 23% negatively (Mariański 2017: 82). In 2012, CBOS research results compared the level of trust in various in-

stitutions operating in Poland; 61% declared trust in the Catholic Church and 28% claimed no trust. Very similar results were obtained in the 2014 survey (ibid.). In research published in 2016, the public opinion research centre TNS OBOP presented the following results: 60% declared trust and 33% declared no trust. Anticipating further considerations, it should be noted that in almost every study, young people (18-19 years old) declared much lower trust in the Catholic Church. (Baniak 2022: 240).

Significant changes occurred in 2020, when the positive ratings quickly decreased from 73% to 54% and negative ratings increased from 18% to 35%. Later, the level of positive assessments rarely exceeded 60% (Roguska 2022: 86). The downward trend intensified in subsequent years. It can be concluded that highly publicised, controversial, and reprehensible moral scandals involving priests and the rapprochement between representatives of the institutional Church and the ruling party, which was negatively assessed by some of the faithful, significantly influenced the change in the level of trust. In later studies, it must be added, after a period of numerous public discussions around a documentary by Tomasz Sekielski concerning cases of paedophilia in the Polish Church, the level of positive assessment of the Church dropped below 50% for the first time in twenty years of research, to 48% (ibid.), and in December 2020 for the first time since July 1993, the level of negative evaluation of the Church's activities was higher than the level of positive evaluation, at 47% and 41%, respectively (ibid.). This further decline in trust is also associated with the impact, noticed by society at large, of Church representatives on new legal regulations severely limiting the termination of pregnancy. The latest publication, that analyses Catholic Church activities and the assessment thereof by society, points out that the level of authority of the Church measured by positive assessments of its activities as an institution of public trust in the last decade has decreased from approximately 65% to 48% (Operacz (ed.) 2023: 26).

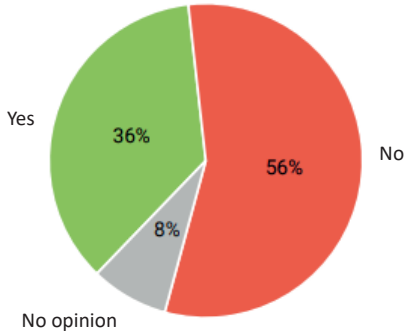
In light of available research, trust in representatives of the institutional Church is also decreasing. In research results from 2022, 36% of respondents declared that among Church representatives there is a person who is an authority in matters of faith and morals (CBOS 2022: 6).

Also, in the case of these results, it should be noted that positive declarations by young people are significantly less frequent. Recognition of Church authority and trust in its representatives was indicated by 21% of people aged 18-24 and 25% of people aged 25-34. The highest results, 49%, were found in people aged 55-64 (ibid: 7). Therefore, when recalling the results of surveys relating to the level of trust in the Catholic Church and its representatives, special attention should be paid to the analysis of young people's answers. The results

of nationwide research on the level of trust among college students in 2012 include the information that 22% of young people expressed trust in priests and bishops and 33% of respondents said that the Catholic Church in Poland helps in formulating answers to important questions related to moral choices while 44% of respondents were of the opposite opinion (Guzik, Marzęcki, Stach 2015: 68). Slightly higher rates of trust in the Church were obtained in surveys conducted in 2007 and 2011 among secondary school students in Kalisz (over 59%) and college students in Poznań (over 55%). In light of these studies, a conclusion can be formulated that diagnoses "a slow crisis of trust in the Church as a social and, partly, moral institution." (Mariański 2017: 84).

Fig. 2

Is there anyone among representatives of the Church who you regard as an authority in matters of faith and morals? Such persons may be clergy or lay people, living or dead, widely, or only locally known.



Source: CBOS 2022: 6.

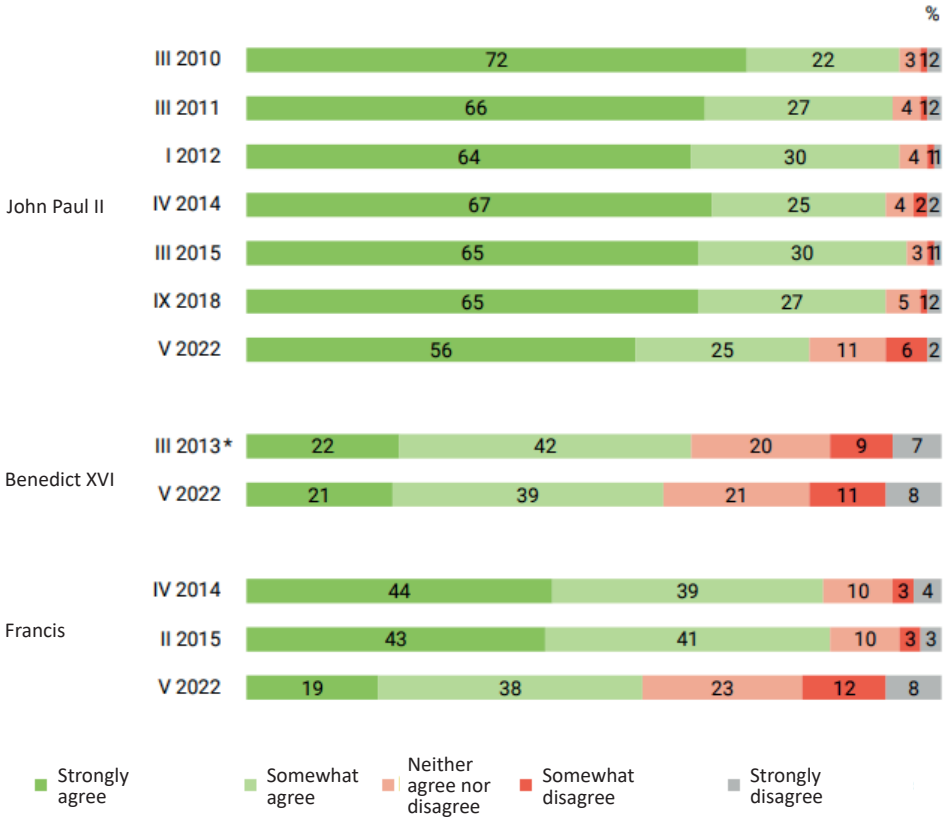
It is also important to remember that at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, young people formulated very strong and unambiguous negative assessments of involvement by institutional Church representatives in political activities. In 2012, 89% of students said that priests should not tell the faithful how to vote, and 78% believed that the Church should not influence the decisions of those in power (Guzik, Marzęcki, Stach 2015: 88). The latest research highlights the disappointment of young people. The Catholic Information Agency's report 'The Church in Poland 2021' found that 50.7% of students declared that the Catholic Church is not an institutional authority for them (*Kościół katolicki w Polsce…* 2021: 3). In the report "The Church in Poland 2023" (Operacz (ed.) 2023), 21.4% of young people indicated "personal beliefs and thoughts" as the reason for disbelief or indifference, and 18.8% expressed "dissatisfaction with the Church as an institution"; and 9.3% indicated "knowledge of negative moral

attitudes of priests" (Operacz (ed.) 2023: 35). It is also important to point out that when asked what young people need and expect in relations with the Church, 35.6% declared "openness of priests to talk about their searches and problems", 28.6% emphasised "the need for places for open meetings, discussions, common rest, rooms, clubs at parishes", and 26.5% indicated the need for a place "where you can always come during a crisis" (Operacz (ed.) 2023: 41).

When writing about trust in representatives of the Catholic Church in Poland, it is necessary to treat separately the figure of John Paul II, who undoubtedly plays a special role in the Catholic Church and in Polish society both among young and older generations. For many years, John Paul II was perceived by Poles as a role model and a figure who significantly influenced their personal choices. In the opinion of many who analysed the results of research from the beginning of the 21st century, it was justified to say that he was perceived "in terms of an icon, a great Pole deserving the title of authority in public life" (CBOS 2022: 1).

Fig. 3

Is the Pope (…) an important moral authority for you?



Source: CBOS 2022: 2.

However, evolution is also visible in studies analysing the role played by John Paul II in the lives of Poles and the impact of his teachings on Polish society. In 2006, the year following his death, the memory of John Paul II and his teachings was very strong. The vast majority of Poles expressed attachment to his instructions and claimed to follow them in their lives. This was reported by 78% of the respondents, and 72% expressed knowledge of his papal teachings and 76% of the respondents assessed that the teachings of John Paul II changed the lives of Polish people (CBOS 2006: 5).

In 2010, five years after the death of John Paul II, just 65%, or 19 percentage points less than just after his death, claimed that they accepted his instructions. The number of people claiming that they do not pay attention to the Pope's instructions on a daily basis has also increased significantly. In 2005, they amounted to 11% of those surveyed while in 2010, 29% with 39% of respondents expressing ignorance of the papal teachings. It should be noted, however, that for 94% of respondents John Paul II remained an important moral authority (CBOS 2010: 15-18). However, at the same time, the impact of John Paul II's teaching on the lives of Poles was becoming less and less significant. The conclusions of the analyses stated that "respondents notice fewer and fewer people in their environment acting in accordance with the Pope's teachings and instructions, and they less and less often describe their behaviour as identical with the Pope's teachings" (ibid: 25). The results of subsequent research indicated that from the death of John Paul II to 2010, the number of people declaring knowledge of his teachings systematically decreased and the group of people declaring ignorance of it in research was growing, especially among the youngest respondents. It is worth mentioning, however, that in the years in which the Pope was beatified and canonised, this downward trend slowed down significantly and, to some extent, even reversed. (CBOS 2018a: 3).

Despite the trends indicated above, in 2018 a significant percentage of the Polish public still recognised John Paul II as a moral authority, and 92% considered him an important person in their lives (in 2015, there were 95% of such people). It should be noted that John Paul II was indicated as a moral authority in 99% of cases in the group of people identifying themselves as believers and observing the principles of the Catholic Church, but also in 90% in the group of "believers in their own way" and in 56% of people defining themselves as "undecided or non-believers" (CBOS 2018a: 6).

It should be remembered, however, that in the 2022 survey, questioning of Pope John Paul II's authority was already visible by approximately one third of the youngest respondents, up to 24 years of age, as well as residents of large cities and those materially best off. It should be noted that the percentage of

people questioning the moral teachings of two subsequent popes, Benedict XVI and Francis, in the indicated group of respondents reaches and sometimes even exceeds 50% (CBOS 2022: 3). Of course, declared faith or its lack and participation in religious practices are of key importance for the attitude towards popes. However, even those who do not participate in religious practices and who question the authority of John Paul II's successors, reject him much less often, as indicated in the research, as 44% in this group recognise John Paul II's authority (ibid.).

It should be recalled how carefully the specific events related to the illness and death of Pope John Paul II in 2005 were analysed. Some people considered them so momentous and important that they drew conclusions about the "generational nature" of these events and predicted lasting consequences in the attitudes of Polish society, especially among young people (Koseła 2008: 99). Already then, however, there were also voices that doubted the realization of this potential. In the context of further considerations, an extremely important point is that when forecasting the durability of the attitudes displayed during the "week of mourning" in 2005, it was noted that the most important factor determining the stability and continuation of this phenomenon will be the presence in the Polish institutional Church of those whom young people will be able to identify as authorities and role models. It was stressed that "the crowds revealed their hunger for authentic religion, authentic authority" (Mazurkiewicz 2008: 118). However, soon afterwards, in 2005, the opinion was formulated that "John Paul II taught young people a Church that they will not find in Poland" (Nosowski 2008: 6). It is important that already in those years, despite the relatively high trust of young people of that time in the institutional Church, they accepted its teachings regarding the broadly understood sphere of morality in private life with great distance. (Rogaczewska 2008: 150).

Religiosity of Polish society: declarations of faith, religious practices, and concordance of professed faith with the social teachings of the Catholic Church

An important area of research must be the influence and effectiveness of the authority of the Catholic Church as manifested by recognition of and respect for its judgments, the size of the social space in which these judgments apply and their durability. Therefore, the degree of religiosity of Polish society should be analysed. While emphasizing the complexity and multidimensional-

ity of the concept of religiosity, it should be noted that this concept was chosen to be understood as a declaration of faith and religious practices, as well as the issue of compliance of the professed faith with the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

The evolution of religiosity in Polish society after 1989 shows that initially the level remained relatively stable, which is worth emphasizing, in the group of young people surveyed as well (Mariański 2017: 24). However, in the years 2006-2015, visible changes took place, making it possible to conclude that a few years after the death of John Paul II, tendencies toward secularization occurred. These changes were recorded in both younger and older generations (ibid.). Nowadays, there are different definitions of the pace of these changes in particular periods, such as creeping or galloping secularisation, or milder statements about the processes that bear the hallmarks of secularisation. In the context of further considerations, it is worth recalling Janusz Mariański's accurate finding:

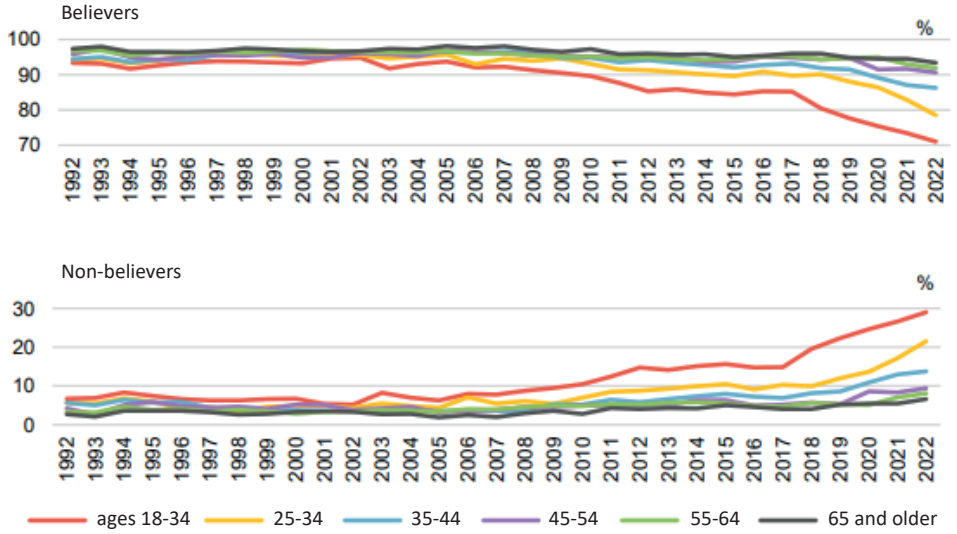
> "in Poland, a positive attitude towards the Church is important as an indicator of personal religiosity. Anyone who does not trust the Church and whose assessment of it as an institution is negative shows a significant tendency to limit their participation in religious practices and even to weaken their faith. Religiosity and church-going behaviours are very closely linked in Poland" (ibid: 79).

Changes in religiosity indicate that an initial period of relative stability in 2006-2015 was followed by deeper changes, slower in declarations of faith and much more rapid in terms of level of practice. It should be assumed that in this matter the influence of the activity and subsequent departure of John Paul II was also significant, and in the following years the public opinion noted controversial issues and reprehensible events that, in the opinion of the faithful, discredited representatives of the Catholic Church.

By the end of the 1990s, between 91-96% of people described themselves as believers (CBOS 2020: 1). In 2005, the level of declaration of faith remained at 96%. Later, it began to decrease slowly but systematically: by 2020 down to 91% and by 2022 it had decreased to 87% (Grabowska 2022a: 6-9). Among the youngest respondents (18-24 years old), there was an increase in non-believers from 7% to 29%, and a decrease in believers from 93% to 71% (ibid: 9). In other age groups, the rate of decline in those declaring their faith was smaller; in the 25-34 age group by 15 percentage points, and among the oldest Polish women and men over 65 by 4 points (ibid.). The percentage of non-believers grew from 5% in 1992 (rather non-believers and complete non-believers) to 13% in 2022 (ibid.).

Fig. 4

Declarations of religious faith by age during the period 1992-2022



Source: Grabowska 2022a: 8.

It is important to point the differences between urban and rural communities. In large cities, changes in declarations of faith are more profound, from 91% declaring themselves to be believers in 1992 to 67% and 33% declaring themselves to be non-believers. In smaller towns there was a decrease of 7 percentage points. The report pointed out the need to assume that in large cities (Warsaw, Krakow, Łódź, Wrocław and Poznań) every third resident indicated that they do not believe (ibid: 10). Once again, it is necessary to point out significant research results in relation to the declarations of young people. Research in 2021 indicated that over 25 years of research, the decrease in expressions of faith among young people was approximately 20%, and before further consideration, it should be mentioned that the decrease in religious practices in this group of respondents reached approximately 50%. (*Kościół katolicki w Polsce…* 2021: 3).

Despite the reduction in declarations of faith, data from the "Church in Poland 2023" report confirm that religious faith is still important in Polish society. In 2023, declarations of faith among older generations reached 88%, but it is extremely important to highlight visible generational differences. Declarations of faith in God are highest in older generations, declining in middle generations, and significantly lower in younger generations. Some commentators, analysing these differences, formulated the conclusion that, regarding religiosity, "there are two worlds in Poland, those under 40 years of age and those

over 50 years of age, with an intermediate group made up of those in their 40s." (Przeciszewski 2023: 2).

Therefore, particular attention should be paid to an analysis of the evolution of religiosity among young people. In the conclusions of research conducted in 2005 and in late 2005 and early 2006 it was stated that the religiosity of young people is characterised by selectivity and the privatisation of faith (Zaręba 2008: 231). In studies of school and university youth, the vast majority of respondents declared attachment to faith and religious practices, but very diverse attitudes to observance the principles of the Ten Commandments were revealed (ibid.). The conclusions of some studies at that time stated that the importance of morality for young people was relatively high. However, young people, perceiving the world as promoting attitudes of individual competition, presented a "double personality". In the first, private layer, the importance of morality was very important to them, while in the second, public layer, they adopted permissive attitudes, which they perceived as being promoted in public life (Świda-Ziemba 2008: 160). Also, in a consideration of other studies of youth in selected Polish cities (including in 2009 and 2016), it was found that youth environments accept the Church's competences in moral and social matters to a lesser extent than do adult Poles in general (Mariański 2017: 97).

It is worth mentioning further important analyses conducted in 2012, which confirmed the selectivity regarding Catholic Church teachings and the individualization of faith among young people. A large group of students surveyed expressed distance and critical opinions towards the institutional Church. A total of 44% stated that the institutional Church does not meet "expectations regarding moral problems and needs of the individual" (Guzik, Marzęcki, Stach 2015: 197). In the light of the results of CBOS research in 2022, 69% of young people considered themselves believers while 12.3% considered themselves to be non-believers (Przeciszewski 2023: 2). In 2023, only about half of young people declared faith in God (*Religijność młodzieży…* 2023). It is also important to note that the research shows how moral scandals revealed among representatives of the Catholic Church have significantly affected the reduction of the level of religiosity among young people. A total of 21.7% of young people declared that awareness of the disclosed events "definitely affects" the level of religiosity, and 13.7% that "rather influences" it (*Kościół katolicki w Polsce…* 2021: 3).

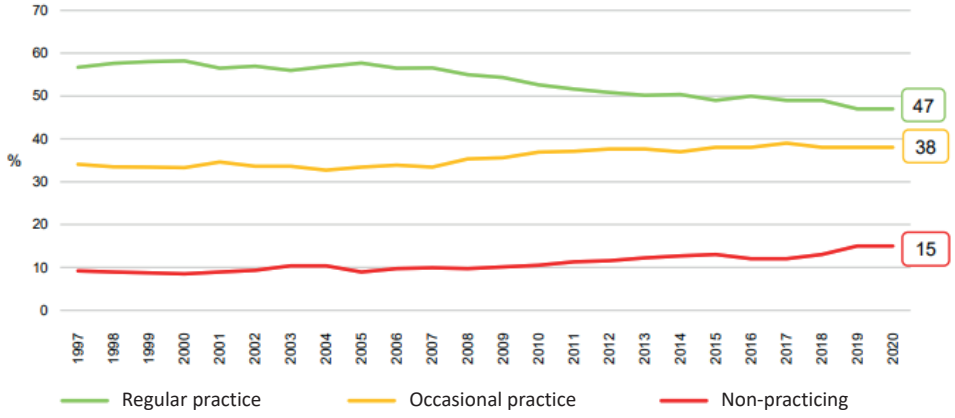
The religiosity of Polish society regarding their professed faith is also measured by compliance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the propensity to participate in religious practices. Comparing the research results, two cycles of stabilization and two cycles of decline in religious involvement

are highlighted. It is indicated that until 2005, the share of respondents who both believed and practiced was 57-58%, and the share of non-believers and non-practitioners was 3% (CBOS 2020: 3). In the years 2005-2013, research results indicated a reduction in the first group to 50%, and an increase to 6% in the second group, and a small increase in the group of those who believe and practice irregularly from 32% to 35% (ibid.). The research results from 2013-2018 indicate the stabilisation of the analysed declarations at an almost unchanged level, but the declarations from 2019 and 2020 show a renewed decline in religious involvement (ibid.). It should also be noted that in the earlier period of very large declines in trust in the Catholic Church, in 1993, there were no significant declines in the level of religious practices (Nosowski 2008: 5). It is possible to agree with the conclusion that at that time, despite weaknesses of the Church and the mistakes of its representatives which had been revealed, there was a strong sense of connection with the Church. As a result, the frequency of declarations of faith and religious practices did not decline dramatically. It can also be assumed that the person and authority of John Paul II played a decisive role in this. Social opinion researchers emphasise that after 2005, that is after the death of John Paul II, there was a gradual increase in the number of people stating that "they believe in their own way" (CBOS 2018b: 4). In the years 2005-2010, the percentage of such people increased by 14 percentage points. At the same time, the number of people declaring themselves to be "believers and followers of the Church's instructions" decreased from 66% in 2005 to 46% in 2010 (ibid.). Regular practice in the years 1997-2007 was at a level of 57-58%. Then it began to decline, and in 2013-2018 it stabilised at a level of 49-50%. In 2019 and 2020, the level of regular practice was 47%. (CBOS 2020: 2).

The results of research from 2017, in which only 21% of respondents stated that one should "have clear moral principles and never deviate from them", should be considered both as important and symptomatic (CBOS 2017: 2). The same research also showed a significant increase from 57% (in 2013) to 69% of people stating that "decisions about good and evil should be primarily an internal matter for every person" (ibid.). Based on the research results, it can be concluded that since 2019, the process of withdrawing from regular religious practices has accelerated, and data from 2020 indicated that, based on the combination of declarations of faith and religious practices, 47% of the Polish public identified themselves as believers and regular practitioners, over 37% as believers while practicing irregularly, 7% as believers and non-practitioners, and 7% indicated a lack of faith and participation in religious practices (CBOS 2020: 4).

Fig. 5

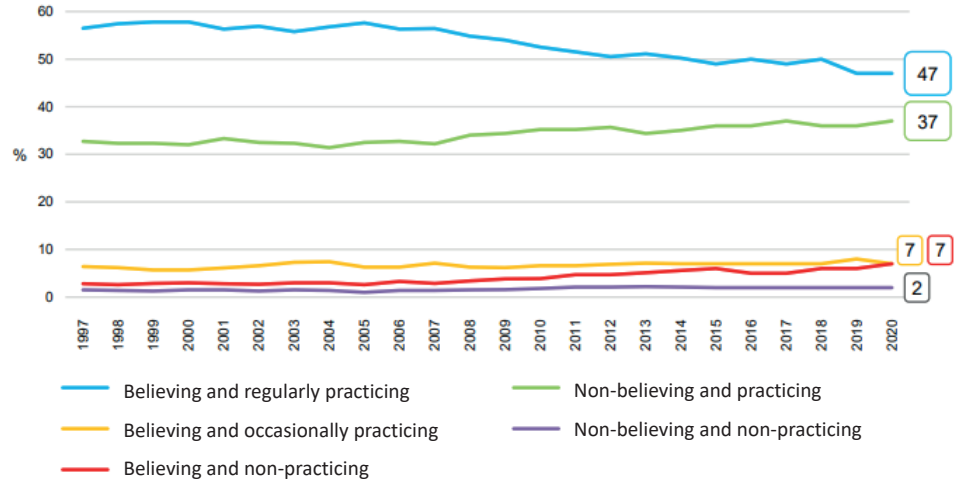
Declarations of religious practice



Source: CBOS 2020: 3.

Fig. 6

Declarations of faith and religious practice



Source: CBOS 2020: 4.

For many years, a higher percentage of regular practice has been declared by older people. Differences in declarations of practice between residents of large cities and smaller towns should also be noted. In large cities, only 25% practice regularly, while 44% declared no practice (Grabowska 2022a: 15). In

a summary of the latest data in the "Church in Poland 2023" report, it was stated that the number of people declaring regular religious practice has decreased by one third in the last twenty years (Przeciszewski 2023: 2).

Conclusions

In a dynamically changing world, the perception of the role and importance of authority figures and the expectations formulated towards them are changing. The process of evolution of perceived authority of the Catholic Church in Poland is conditioned by many factors, some global in nature and some specific to Poland. Important factors include the deepening processes of secularisation of public life, the privatisation of faith, the deinstitutionalisation of religion, and, consequently, the secularisation of people's mentality and selectivity in observing the instructions of the Catholic Church. All these processes, which have been observed in the world for many years, are also visible in Polish society. Many analyses attempt to determine their importance and speed, mostly without coming to clear conclusions. Regardless of whether the latest research results will be a symptom of "creeping" or "galloping" secularisation, this process certainly also affects the scale, strength, and scope of the Catholic Church's authority in Poland.

Undoubtedly, the basis for the strength and effectiveness of the Catholic Church's authority, both in the institutional and personal dimensions, is the level of trust. Trust is also associated with the expectation of transparency in the actions of Church representatives and the possibility of identifying them as role models. However, a significant number of Catholics in Poland concluded that the Catholic Church does not meet these expectations and is also unable to provide satisfactory answers to contemporary problems. Consequently, Poland, like other European countries, is becoming a country with diverse religiosity. It is worth emphasising that the relatively slow decline in declarations of faith and the much faster decline in the level of practice occurred most rapidly among the youngest respondents and among residents of large cities.

A lower level of trust implies a lower level of authority, and it must be recalled that changes in Polish Catholicism were and are also conditioned by controversial and reprehensible events that, in the opinion of the faithful, significantly discredited Church representatives. In the light of the survey results, it can be at least partially confirmed that the Church as an institution and priests are failing and disappointing, especially young people. It is also necessary to recall the high level of disapproval of Catholic Church activities in the

political sphere. An interesting explanation is that it illustrates and accurately diagnoses the difficulty and problematic nature of the situation, pointing out a two-way relationship: "because the Church is judged more negatively, it is less accepted, but also because the actual presence of the Church in public life (where it is present) is less and less accepted, so it is judged worse and worse" (Grabowska 2022b: 111).

The thesis that in the modern world there is a shift away from the "authority of leaders" in favour of the "authority of examples" seems to be justified. As indicated in the text, this second type of authority works by virtue of decent behaviour, becoming a model and example for others based on trust. It is therefore worth mentioning the results of the research in which respondents formulated their comments on what, in their opinion, are necessary actions that can strengthen the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland. The most important recommendations were to avoid the involvement of Church representatives in politics, to consistently explain cases of paedophilia and other moral scandals, and to "strive less for money and material goods." (CBOS 2022: 9).

However, it should be recalled that despite the above-mentioned issues, the Catholic Church remains an important authority for a relatively large part of Polish society, and a significant number of respondents point to John Paul II as a personal moral authority. However, in many respects this did not translate into their attitudes and choices, proving the strength of the processes of privatisation of faith and selectivity in the assimilation of religious principles. The conclusion of the "Church in Poland 2023" report that although the Church is no longer a universally recognised authority, it remains important in some respects for a large part of the believers in society appears to be accurate. The Church's authority, measured by positive assessments of its activities as an institution of public trust, is weakening, but the level of declarations of faith and openness to individual, deeper religious experiences is still relatively high, so perhaps there will also be room to strengthen other areas of influence. The complexity of the issue and sometimes a certain ambiguity of the research results do not allow for the formulation of fully conclusive conclusions, especially regarding the future of the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland. When emphasising the processual nature of authority, it is necessary to emphasise the changing dynamics of building, consolidating, and weakening the power and influence of authority that are typical of this relationship. When making predictions about the strength and effectiveness of the influence of the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland, this issue should be linked to determining to what extent the Catholic Church is able to take action that will strengthen or regain the trust it once had, especially among younger people.

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Keywords: Catholic Church, authority, Polish society, Catholics, religion

ABSTRACT

The Catholic Church has held and still holds a special position in Polish public life and the importance of its social authority is often emphasised. In the period analysed, however, there are clear symptoms of weakening religiosity in Europe and a related reduction of participation in religious practices. The social processes related to the secularisation of public life, the privatization and individualization of faith, the secularisation of attitudes and selectivity in observing the instructions of the Catholic Church have been and are the subject of numerous analyses. It should be noted, however, that due to the specificity of mutual relations and dependencies between religion and politics, rooted in the history of Poland, many researchers have expressed opinions about the apparent dissimilarity of these processes in Polish society and have pointed to their slower course and the still important and significant authority of the

Catholic Church. However, there is a prevailing agreement that the perception of this authority is changing, and this is related to the weakening of trust in the institutional Church, a lack of trust in many of its representatives and the negative assessment of clerical involvement in politics. Therefore, an answer was sought as to how quickly and how deeply the perceived authority of the Catholic Church in Poland is changing in institutional, doctrinal, and personal dimensions. As a result of the research, it can be concluded that trust in the institutional Church is decreasing, a slow decline in declarations of faith can be observed, and the process of abandoning religious practice is more rapid. In each case, the biggest changes are related to the attitudes of young people. In the light of prevailing opinions, if the Church wants to regain a high level of social authority, it should avoid political involvement, honestly deal with moral scandals, and, above all, follow the same principles that it professes.

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Jewish religious extremism in the face of the peace process and Oslo Accords

Introduction

Radicalism and extremism in the modern world take on a variety of forms, from political to religious, ideological, moral, economic, or environmental. Movements and political and social organisations of all kinds that use aggressive rhetoric to achieve particular aims are not a new phenomenon in the sphere of either national or international security. However, this does not change the fact that they constantly remain a challenge to the security systems of countries around the globe. As regards religious extremism, the greatest interest is aroused by issues relating to Islam. This is linked to the processes, transformations and phenomena of a social, economic and cultural nature that have emerged since the late 1970s, leading to the rebirth and intensification of fundamentalist tendencies within that faith. Relevant events here include the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the war in Afghanistan and the formation of Al-Qaeda, the war fought in Lebanon in 1982–1985, and the first Gulf War (Adamczuk 2011: 199). Interest in Middle Eastern issues and the threats associated with Islamist ideology has led to a situation where the notion of religious fundamentalism is associated almost exclusively with Islam. Manifestations of violence and acts of aggression inspired by other religions are not as frequently recognised. It should be borne in mind that all of the great religions, including Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism, have extreme factions that use radical methods to pursue their goals (Izak 2015: 183). These create a real threat to the functioning of states, and pose a challenge to the security system as a whole.

This article will analyse Jewish religious extremism at both individual and collective levels, and will examine the attitudes, behaviours, actions and rhetoric of radical individuals and groups with regard to the peace process and

the Oslo Accords. Analysis will be made of the radical Jewish movements and their leaders, as well as acts of terrorism carried out by individuals. The study's working hypothesis is that actions by Jewish extremists, as both individuals and groups, are directed against the agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and represent an attempt to undermine the peace process. The research questions accompanying the hypothesis will concentrate on two issues: what methods, means of communication and forms of action have been or are used by Jewish radicals, and how their activity has affected or currently affects Israel's sociopolitical situation and internal security. In this context one may also pose a question concerning the evolution of radical Jewish movements. The research approaches used in this study include the behavioural, institutional-legal, and historical methods. Consideration of the hypothesis and of the above questions will be supported by an analysis of the political behaviours of selected groups and individuals and of the terms of the Oslo Accords, and a historical outline of and description of changes in the process of emergence of Jewish extremism over the years.

The Oslo Accords – general provisions and their significance for the peace process

The 1990s should be seen as a watershed and a turning point for relations between Israel and Palestine. This situation was influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar world, which initiated a change in the architecture of international relations and security. The Palestinian cause, of which the countries of the Eastern bloc had been the greatest advocates, lost its protectors. The beginning of Israeli–Palestinian talks was possible for two reasons. The first was the redefinition and remodelling of the policies of the PLO, the roots of which can be found both in the loss of support from communist countries, and Yasser Arafat's decision to support the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (Szydzisz 2018: 30–31). The latter led to the suspension of aid to the PLO by the Gulf states and to a worsening of the organisation's image in the international arena. The second reason was the coming to power of the Israeli left in 1992. The formation of a government by Yitzhak Rabin and the Labour Party opened a path to negotiations with the PLO. In previous years Israel had not wished to enter into any discussions with that grouping. Thus, the events of the early 1990s should be considered a new chapter in Israeli–Palestinian relations. An opportunity for direct negotiations arose, which gave hope for an improvement in relations between the two sides (Szydzisz 2019: 188).

The start of the peace process and the signing of the Oslo Accords led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority (also known as the Palestinian National Authority)[1] as an administrative structure formally governing the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The most significant Israeli–Palestinian agreements include such documents as the Declaration of Principles signed on 13 September 1993 (known as Oslo I), the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area (Cairo Agreement) of 4 May 1994, and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995 (known as Oslo II). For the purpose of analysing the attitude of Jewish extremists to the agreements with the Palestinians, it is valuable to take a closer look at these legal instruments, to define their regulatory frameworks, and to evaluate their practical implementation and *modus vivendi*. The road to the signing of the Israeli–Palestinian accords and the drafting of the aforementioned documents is a very broad topic, but is not the main area of interest of this article. For present purposes, a description will be given only of the most important provisions on the establishment of the Palestinian Authority which may have influenced the behaviours and attitudes of Jewish religious radicals with regard to the peace process.

The signing of the Declaration of Principles was primarily of symbolic significance, since it was the first official agreement between the two sides of the conflict. It had for the most part a more general character, and it only superficially sketched out arrangements in such areas as elections, jurisdiction, and matters of public order in the area governed by the Palestinian Authority. However, taking account of the document's annexes and protocols, it is seen that it addressed in quite a detailed manner matters relating to the creation of the structures of that authority (Jarząbek 2012: 158). A significant element in the context of the status of the new structure was Article V, which referred to a transitional period (supposed to last for five years) and negotiations on its final status. That article stated that such questions as the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements, determination of borders, foreign policy, and security (*de facto* the most important elements of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict) would be reviewed only in the course of negotiations on the final status (Declaration of Principles 1993: Article V). The document provided for the transfer of competences to the Palestinian National Authority in such areas as education, culture, social care, direct taxation, tourism, and health (Declaration of Principles 1993: Article VI). Among other general matters included in that agreement were laws and military orders, economic cooperation between Israel and Palestine, and cooperation with Jordan and Egypt. In spite of the

[1] The two names are used interchangeably in this article.

symbolic value of the first document signed by the parties to the conflict, the Declaration of Principles was very limited in scope. While it may be considered a mark of pragmatism that the most controversial issues were set aside to a later date, the facts that the strategic goal of the peace negotiations was not specified, the political future of the Palestinian Authority as regards its possible transformation into a future state was left undefined, and the general nature of the document allowed much discretion in its interpretation are evidence of its numerous defects. With hindsight it may be concluded that most of the terms of the Declaration of Principles, though constituting a historic agreement, were of more a declarative than a practical nature.

In turn, the Gaza–Jericho Agreement, often overlooked or under-recognised in publications dealing with the peace process, was more visibly relevant to the functioning of the Palestinian National Authority, since it regulated such everyday questions as administrative, legal and financial affairs (Jarząbek 2012: 163). Article V of the document concerned matters of jurisdiction, marking out the powers of the Palestinian National Authority in territorial, personal, and functional terms. The division of competences meant that in judicial matters the Palestinians would have authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and that all residents of those territories would be subject to that authority with the exception of Israelis. However, that authority would not include such matters as public affairs, internal security, and foreign relations (Gaza–Jericho Agreement 1994: Article V). Economic matters were regulated in what was known as the Paris Protocol, signed on 29 April 1994 (Annex IV). The document laid down a customs policy between the two sides, as well as standards for the functioning of the Palestinian economy (ibidem: Article XIII). Also of interest were the provisions in Annex III stating that offences committed in Jewish settlements or by Israelis in the territories of the Palestinian Authority would be subject to Israeli jurisdiction. Moreover the document gave Israel the right to arrest "non-Israelis" if they were suspected of committing an offence against the state of Israel or Israelis. The Palestinian National Authority was further obligated to submit reports to Israel concerning crimes committed on their territory (ibidem: Annex III Article I). We observe here a marked disproportion in the prerogatives of the Palestinian and Israeli justice systems, given that Israelis were not required to abide by Palestinian law, while Palestinians were subject both *de facto* and *de jure* to Israeli law.

In turn, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II), signed on 28 September 1995, concerned above all the administrative division of the West Bank. This is a highly complex issue, because that document was extended by other agreements and separate legal instruments,

which leads to discrepancies in the data found in source materials. One might mention at the very least the separate division of the city of Hebron into zones H1 and H2.[2] The document's seven annexes covered all of 300 pages, which complicates the task of presenting the most significant points of this agreement. The West Bank was to be divided into three zones: A, B, and C. As to the details of this division, the agreement referred to the accompanying maps and schedules (Interim Agreement 1995: Article XI). These assigned authority and control in the various zones. Zone A, covering 3% of the West Bank, was to be under full Palestinian control; zone B (24% of the territory) was to be administered by the Palestinian National Authority but with the stipulation that Israel would be responsible for security; and zone C, which was the largest in terms of area, was to be fully controlled by the Israeli side. This last zone covered 74% of the West Bank (Kosiorek 2021: 256). The general provisions of the peace accords state that the Palestinian Authority governs the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but in the case of the former area the articles of subsequent agreements significantly complicate the Authority's freedom of action. Oslo II placed 74% of it under *de facto* Israeli control, while in a further 24% the Jewish state enjoyed prerogatives in matters of security. Given that zone C is the area with the greatest development potential, this points to an inequality in the territorial division (ibidem: 256). On 23 October 1998 the Wye River Memorandum was signed – a further agreement relating to the West Bank, under which Israel was to transfer a further 13% of the territory to the Palestinian government (Strużyński 2013: 89). To date, however, only the initial stage of the agreement has been implemented, under which Israel transferred only 2% (Beinin 1999). Other matters regulated in Oslo II included the structure of the Palestinian Authority (referred to consistently in the document as a "Council"), elections to the Palestinian bodies, and the powers of the Palestinian National Authority in relation to, among other things, executive authority (Interim Agreement 1995).

The Oslo Accords should be seen on the one hand as a turning point in relations between Israel and Palestine, in view of the symbolic dimension of the Declaration of Principles, which was the first agreement of that kind between the two sides. On the other hand, numerous limitations were placed on the Palestinian Authority as compared with the Jewish state, in the areas of legislation, administration, security, and justice. It is certainly noteworthy that the agreements did not define the future political shape of the Palestinian National Authority or settle matters relating to the transformation of that

[2] This division was established by the Hebron Protocol signed on 17 January 1997 by Yasser Arafat and Benjamin Netanyahu.

structure into a state. They also lacked provisions concerning the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Another point of contention is the inequality between Palestinian and Israeli law. These arguments were raised by Yasser Arafat's opponents, who noted the absence of any reference to the formation of an independent Palestinian entity, which might have seemed to be the PLO's main goal. The setting aside of the most critical matters may be regarded as a mark of pragmatism, but given that agreements have still not been worked out with regard to matters of Jewish settlement, the status of Jerusalem, or Palestinian refugees, this depreciates the significance of the peace process. There were also voices of criticism in Israeli circles. It was feared that the Israeli–Palestinian agreements and the whole of the peace process would lead to the creation of an Arab state on land which – according to advocates of a Greater Israel, for example – belonged to *Eretz Israel* (the Land of Israel). Although the documents establishing the Palestinian National Authority had numerous defects, for extremist circles the symbolic and ideological overtones of the agreement were of greater significance. Opposition to the peace process comes in particular from the groups and individuals promoting Jewish settlement and referring to the religious and Messianic concepts of Zionism. These include extremist fractions that use violence and other radical methods to propagate their views. We shall attempt to examine the origins and roots of selected political groupings. This, in the light of the documents described above, will help to analyse the attitude of Jewish religious extremists to the peace agreements reached with the Palestinians.

Roots and origin of Jewish religious extremism

In the state of Israel there currently exist two radical social groups whose views are based on religious factors. These are the ultra-Orthodox Jews (*haredim*), who desire to organise the public and national space on the principles of *halakha* (Jewish law), and the religious Zionists, who link the idea of Zionism with Judaism and view the Land of Israel in Messianic categories (Szydzisz 2012a: 210–214). It should be noted that in both cases the groupings and their ideologies are not uniform, and they interpret religious questions differently depending on their individual aspirations. The ultra-Orthodox Jews are a community with internal differences also in political matters, while among religious Zionists not all circles are radical. The present study will analyse the second group, out of which emerged the elements that today challenge the Israeli–Palestinian agreements. The roots of the fundamentalist Jewish groups founded

on the idea of religious Zionism go back to the late 1960s, and are linked to the activities of two radical organisations: the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) movement and the Kach party. Their chief declared goals were based on representing the interests of Jewish settlers and promoting the colonisation of Palestine in the light of the Greater Israel concept. Both used aggressive rhetoric and initiated various kinds of actions with the use of violence and terror. It should be noted, however, that the Kach party was more confrontational in nature, and racism and rhetoric based on arguments of force served as a foundation for its ideology. In the case of Gush Emunim, acts of terror, probably inspired by a small number of radicals, were organised at grass-roots level. For the purposes of this article, it appears desirable to discuss the activities of these groups, because their worldview had a significant influence on the thinking and motivation of present-day radical Jewish movements and individuals.

The Gush Emunim movement was established formally in 1974, but its existence dates back to the Six-Day War, in which Israel annexed the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank including East Jerusalem. In view of its psychological and political consequences, this conflict was an event of special importance for Israeli society. The state of Israel now administered a territory four times larger than prior to the war, making it in some sense a regional power (Shapira 2012: 307). Another consequence was economic growth and improved living standards for Israelis (ibidem: 321). The organisation's unquestioned leader and personal authority was rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, who had made an impassioned speech three weeks before the June war. In his sermon the rabbi lamented the division of Palestine that had been made pursuant to UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947. In his view, the Land of Israel, being God's Kingdom, was not something that could be given up. Israel's annexing of territories as a result of the war of 1967 began to be interpreted as an instance of divine intervention that was to lead to the recovery of the lands to which the chosen nation was entitled (Krawczyk 2007: 111). In the light of the subsequent changes to Israel's political map, rabbi Kook's inflammatory speech was taken by his supporters as prophetic. Zvi Yehuda was expanding on the ideas of his father, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Abraham Isaac Kook (Cohn-Sherbok, El-Alami 2002: 14), who emphasised the unity between the Land of Israel, the Nation of Israel, and the Torah. Key to his thinking was an unbreakable bond between the Jews, the lands where they lived in Biblical times (including Judea and Samaria), and the principles of Judaism (Szydzisz 2012b: 169). The fervour of Zvi Yehuda Kook and his supporters was not quelled by the next conflict with the Arab states – the Yom Kippur War. Indeed, it confirmed the confidence of Gush Emunim's

leader in the righteousness of his views. The Israeli victory, bought with heavy losses, was presented by the organisation as a failure to use an opportunity given by God, for which activists blamed the secular Zionists. They believed that the state should be run on the basis of religious principles and its own identity in the light of the doctrine of Zionist redemption. According to Gush Emunim's rhetoric, the war and the losses incurred therein were a punishment and warning from God, resulting from the poor use of the lands acquired in the Six-Day War. Redemption could be obtained only by settling Jews in the new territories. This gave the movement mass appeal, and it came to include both religious and secular Jews. It expanded its social base with the aim of increasing Jewish presence on the lands annexed in the war of 1967. Many attempts were also made to establish illegal colonies in the West Bank (Bolechów 2007: 89). The organisation never became an official political party, and did not have its own coherent programme. Its main demands were set out in the manifesto that brought the Bloc of the Faithful into existence. This indicates that the "great awakening of the Jewish nation which will fully bring to life the Zionist vision, conscious that this vision comes from the Jewish heritage of Israel and that the fulfilment of that task is equivalent to the redemption of Israel, and with it the whole world" (Gierycz 2014: 486) concerns five areas: the propagation of knowledge and education (the bond linking the Land of Israel, the Nation of Israel, and the Torah, Jewish ethics, Zionist consciousness and the national mission); love of Israel; *Aliyah* (immigration to Palestine); settlement in the Land of Israel; and a resolute foreign and security policy (Szydzisz 2012c: 277–278). Settlement was a key element of the document, as members of the movement saw it as an element of the divine plan of deliverance (Gierycz 2014: 286). The colonisation of Palestine was expected to lead to the realisation of the conception of a Greater Israel, much desired by the organisation's activists (Feige 2011: 181).

Gush Emunim opposed the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, which took place on 26 March 1979. Under this agreement, Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control, in return for a normalisation of diplomatic relations (Lipa 2018: 313). This entailed the removal of Jewish settlers from that area, which might be considered a political failure on the Bloc's part. There was a decline in the organisation's activity, and in the following years its presence and influence waned significantly, causing it to change the nature of its actions. In 1980 the Gush Emunim Underground was set up, and this quickly transformed into a terrorist organisation (Spinzak 1986: 14). The most notorious acts of aggression that it committed included car bomb attacks on the Palestinian mayors of Ramallah and Nablus, Karim Khalaf and Bassam

Shakaa, in which the former lost a leg and the latter both feet. A bomb planted in the car of the mayor of Al-Bireh, Ibrahim Tawil, was detonated by an Israeli sapper who lost his sight as a result of the explosion (Krawczyk 2007: 167). An attack with tragic consequences carried out by activists of the Bloc of the Faithful took place in Hebron on 26 June 1983. On that occasion the terrorists struck an Islamic university, killing three people and wounding 33. A year later the same group planned a similar attack on the university in Bir Zeit, which they were forced to postpone due to a decision to close the university. It was replaced with a plan to blow up five Arab buses along with their passengers. Detailed plans for the attack were drawn up, but it was foiled by Israeli services (Spinzak 1986: 14). The group also planned to destroy the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which was meant to provoke a global nuclear conflict and, according to the extremists, bring on the coming of the Messiah. The terrorists spent two years preparing for the attack, making a careful reconnaissance of the location. Once again, the attack was never carried out, this time due to internal divisions within the organisation (Bolechów 2007: 100–102).

The Gush Emunim movement provides a context in which one can observe the evolution of religious Zionism. It is an example of a group whose idealistic dream linked to the settlement of Palestine and the Greater Israel concept became transformed into armed actions of a terrorist nature. This was connected to the weakening of the organisation's influence, which pushed its most radical members to set up an underground wing. The heirs to the political ideas of Gush Emunim in Israel today are to be found in the Yesha Council, formed in 1979 and being the institutional successor to the Bloc of the Faithful (Szydzisz 2012b: 169). Its purpose is to safeguard the interests of Jewish settlers, among other things by developing infrastructure and securing the borders of the state of Israel. Another of its goals is to prevent the creation of a Palestinian state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean (myesha.org.il). Another institution linked to the activities of Gush Emunim is Amana, which also represents Jewish settlers (Szydzisz 2012b: 169).

The second extremist organisation representing religious Zionism is the Kach party. As in the case of Gush Emunim, the activities of this group were based on the role of a personal authority. This was rabbi Meir David Kahane, who was born in 1932 into an Orthodox Jewish family in Brooklyn, New York. In 1968 he founded the Jewish Defense League, whose main declared aim was to protect the Jewish population against acts of intolerance. The rhetoric of Kahane himself and of his group reflected the "besieged fortress syndrome". The rabbi claimed that the whole world was hostile to the Jewish nation (Kraw-

czyk 2007: 142–143). In the name of protecting Jews, the League initially came out in opposition to African American movements: Black Panther and Black Power. In 1969–1972 it carried out terrorist attacks on Soviet institutions and diplomats. The reasons for these attacks were said to be the deterioration of US–Soviet relations and a desire to draw attention to the situation of Jews in the USSR (ibidem: 143). The enemy was defined on ideological grounds: the African American organisations that used the "black power" slogan had adopted the Marxist-Leninist concept of revolutionary struggle against capitalism and imperialism (Wojnowski 2020: 127).

Meir Kahane came to Israel in 1971. His emigration was dictated by the multiple criminal cases being pursued against him in the United States. The Jewish Defense League's acts of aggression did not diminish after his departure, and in 1975 and 1976 the organisation carried out a series of operations in New York, in which the targets included the Polish consulate, Iraq's UN delegation, and the American Communist Party (Krawczyk 2007: 144). After Kahane settled in Palestine, he founded a new organisation, Kach. This group was of a more radical nature than Gush Emunim, and in its convictions it went further than the leaders and supporters of the latter organisation. Its ideology was of a highly racist, extremist, and terrorist nature. In contrast to rabbi Kook and the mass political movement that he had founded, Kahane proposed radical methods with respect to the Arab populace, which he referred to as "dogs", along with other no less offensive invectives. He claimed that the Arabs ought to be expelled from Israel, and this was to be done by force. Another solution that he put forward was the physical elimination of the Arab people (ibidem: 145). The Land of Israel could thus be "cleansed" of unwanted tenants by means of expulsions or even more aggressive and confrontational forms of action. His odium was not directed solely against Arabs. In professing the supremacy of the Jewish nation, Kahane also discriminated against North African Jews who lived in Dimona (a Jewish settlement about 35 km from Beer Sheva). Developing the chauvinistic and religious version of the "chosen people" idea, he also spoke with disdain of Christians and other nationalities. In his view, the enemy was the entire non-Jewish world. As in the case of Gush Emunim, the motivation of the Kach party was the ideology of the Messianic Zionism of redemption. Kahane also referred in speeches to the Six-Day War, identifying it with the liberation of Israel. He blamed the Israeli government for failing to perform what he regarded as the obligation to expel the Arab population from *Eretz Israel* (Bolechów 2007: 102). He wrote: "When Israel liberated its lands in 1967, the reasonable thing that ought to have been done was to expel these vermin from there. However, we are not

normal. We are not reasonable. We have allowed all of them to remain – the murderous Ishmaelites, who are not able to live with the Jews or with each other" (ibidem: 102–103). According to Ehud Spinzak, Kahane's ideology can be placed somewhere between those represented by Gush Emunim and the *haredim*. On the one hand, when he lived in the ultra-Orthodox community in the United States, he shared its aversion to the secular Israeli establishment on the grounds of its "sinful and non-Jewish character" (Spinzak 1998: 119). On the other hand, like the Gush Emunim movement, he deified the Six-Day War and its consequences in the process of building the State of Israel (ibidem: 119). Rabbi Kahane was an opponent of democracy, claiming that such a political system was unacceptable in Israel, as he considered it contradictory to the idea of Zionism (Krawczyk 2007: 149). The leader of Kach also rejected the document constituting the Jewish state – the 1948 Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel – which promised to foster "the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants" as well as "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex" (Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel 1948). Clauses of this type were unacceptable to the leader of Kach.

To emphasise his defiance of the state and the Israeli political decision-makers, whom he referred to in his speeches as, among other things, "pathological, sick lefties", the rabbi established an armed wing of his party, called the TNT (*Terror Neged Terror*, 'Terror Against Terror'). This group carried out bloody attacks in the West Bank against the Arab population, Christian missionaries, and Jews holding different views (Bolechów 2007: 103). It is estimated that in 1980–1984 TNT carried out more than 380 armed attacks, in which 23 Palestinians died, around 200 were injured, and some 40 were abducted (Szydzisz 2012a: 221). Kach's armed wing continued its terrorist operations in subsequent years, and there was no change in its situation or tactics following Kahane's death.[3] In 1993 the organisation admitted responsibility for attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank (Bolechów 2007: 103). Kach was a major threat to Israel's internal security, since on the one hand, it inspired terrorist acts, while on the other, it provoked revenge attacks by Arabs. Rabbi Kahane and his group brought about a change in the state's perception of security, which had hitherto been largely focused on external threats from hostile Arab coun-

[3] Meir David Kahane was shot and killed in New York in 1990. This led to a split in the group, with one fraction, based in Tapuach, being led by his son Benjamin Kahane, who founded the organisation *Kahane Chai* (Kahane Lives). In the year 2000 Benjamin Kahane was himself assassinated (Bolechów 2007: 103; Krawczyk 2007: 155).

tries (ibidem: 103–104). By propagating extremism, radicalism and racism on the basis of a cult of force, the Kach party caused a remodelling of the list of dangers to the state of Israel away from the external and towards the internal dimension, and threatened to trigger a spiral of violence within the country.

Analysis of the two aforementioned groups, Gush Emunim and Kach, leads to some interesting conclusions. One may point out the links between these radical organisations that grew out of religious Zionism. The examples given of terrorist acts planned by the Gush Emunim Underground are attributed by some sources to supporters of Meir Kahane (Szydzisz 2012a: 222). An example of the closeness and convergence of their viewpoints, apart from matters of ideology, goals, and use of the argument of force, was the apparently insignificant fact of the choice of the settlement serving as the Kach party's base. This was Kiryat Arba, situated a short distance from Hebron, and founded with the assistance of supporters of the Bloc of the Faithful and one of that organisation's influential leaders, Moshe Levinger. It was established in 1970 through the use of *fait accompli* tactics and the exertion of effective pressure on the Israeli government. Hebron is of great significance to the Jews, being a holy city of Judaism (Waxman 2019: 173). Still today, the settlement's residents are seen to adhere to the idea of religious Zionism even in its radical forms, as will be described in the following sections. The groups also have successor organisations in present-day Israel, as has been mentioned in relation to Gush Emunim. The Kach party, which was the first group to come out in opposition to the peace process, is also a foundation for radical Jewish movements in Israel today. With regard to the interpenetration of those groups in the past, the Bloc of the Faithful also provides an ideological foundation for today's Jewish extremists who oppose the Oslo Accords.

Hilltop Youth and *Zo Artzeinu*: civil disobedience movements

Israel's political scene is a diverse, multi-party, sociocultural mosaic. Some parties claim in their programmes to represent parts of society both in the social and religious dimensions and in terms of identity. An example is the Shas party, which represents the interests of ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Jews. In turn, the constituency of the group called United Torah Judaism consists of ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazim (Szydzisz 2012b: 175). Although not all ethnic or religious groups have specific political representations, the formula shows how diverse a country contemporary Israel is. It may be concluded that the party system of the Jewish state is one in which individual groups shape their

programmes according to not only social, but also geographical, religious and ethnic determinants. This is particularly interesting in Israel's case, given that within each of the spheres mentioned we can observe much diversity and divergence. The Gush Emunim movement and the Kach party grew out of a divergent environment referring to the concept of a Greater Israel. The ideology based on religious Zionism, which linked redemption to the rhetoric of the colonisation of Palestine and the need to secure the interests of Jewish settlers, was not a new current within Israel. The publicity that the groups attracted was related to the current political situation in the country. The re-emergence of organisations with religious-nationalist foundations took place as a result of the Six-Day War of 1967. This was followed by the Yom Kippur War six years later. The two conflicts served as a political instrument that made it possible to build a social base and tools for spreading the groups' ideology and propagating their demands. It should be noted that these organisations also took actions in violation of Israeli and international law, namely the founding of unauthorised settlements, and that this did not meet with any significant sanctions from the Israeli authorities (Galchinsky 2004: 117–118).

In the context of unauthorised Jewish settlement, which remains a constant obstacle both to the peace process and to Israeli–Palestinian relations, one may pose a question about the function of the law and by the same token the condition of the state of Israel in this sphere. The problem concerning outposts established in violation of both internal and international law gives rise to many controversies. Pro-settlement groups and institutions sometimes give the impression of being above the law. In 2017 the Knesset passed a law regulating settlement in Judea and Samaria which *de facto* allows the retroactive legalisation of the status of Palestinian land on which Jewish settlements have been built. In present-day Israel, therefore, there are situations where Palestinians can suffer confiscation of their property, for compensation, based on laws that apply retroactively (Law on Settlement in Judea and Samaria 2017). Numerous cases of neglect and failure to respect the rights of non-Jewish members of society have emboldened Jewish extremists to resort to violence and terrorism. Thus, the goals espoused by Kach radicals and Gush Emunim fundamentalists have not been forgotten. Other radical Jewish movements reflecting the views of Zvi Yehuda Kook and Meir Kahane have appeared on the Israeli sociopolitical scene, such as Hilltop Youth (*No'ar HaGva'ot*) and *Zo Artzeinu*. The latter movement developed a political structure attempting to gain a place on the Israeli political stage, which is evidence of the support that part of Israeli society gives to the concept of religious Zionism based on the Greater Israel idea. The ideology of both movements is a reflection of the demands of Gush Emunim

and Kach, and their activity involves acts of vandalism and aggression directed against the peace process, Arabs (including Arab Christians), left-wing Jews, Palestinians, and even the Israeli security forces.

Hilltop Youth is a group consisting mainly of young Jews opposing state policy in both institutional and regulatory dimensions, and taking action against the peace process. It is not clear exactly when the organisation was established. It is a group of loosely affiliated extremists using violent methods and concentrating on the propagation of Jewish settlement. In some sources the origins of the youth opposition group are dated to 1998, when then foreign minister Ariel Sharon told young settlers that they should "grab the hilltops". The comments were a protest against the Wye River agreements that had been forged that same year (Kershner 2005: 184). The new generation of Jewish religious extremism, linking the idea of Zionism with Judaism and the Land of Israel, is not a cohesive political party with a strict hierarchy and established leadership. It is a dispersed organisation, whose members form multiple groups within a single movement. Created from below, drawing on the legacy of Meir Kahane, it is not oriented solely towards political or social activity (Pokrzywiński 2015: 92). Hilltop Youth is known for numerous acts of violence inspired by rebellion against the system. In spite of the lack of a political leader of the sort that Zvi Yehuda Kook was for Gush Emunim, its political leadership is centred on rabbis from nationalist-religious circles and persons engaged in the Jewish settlement process. One of these is Abraham Ran, whose actions motivated young Jewish radicals to promote the aim of colonisation. They began to establish settlement networks close to Palestinian villages in order to implement an organisation of the state on their own principles, that is, based on Jewish tradition and religious considerations (ibidem: 92). A change in the focus of activity towards offensive actions directed against the Israeli authorities and uniformed services could be observed in 2005, in relation to the decision by Ariel Sharon – now prime minister – to withdraw settlers from the Gaza Strip. In the light of that decision, radicals linked to Hilltop Youth accused the Israeli government of betraying the nation, which strengthened their inclination towards civil disobedience. This manifests in aggression and hostility towards state institutions, including the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) (ibidem: 92–96). One of the movement's most recognisable members is Meir Ettinger, the grandson of Meir David Kahane, known for his hatred of the secular conception of the state of Israel and his desire to expel the Arabs from the country in order to recreate the biblical Israel. In view of his numerous ideological and political similarities to his grandfather, he is referred to as the "ghost of Meir Kahane" (Juergensmeyer 2017: 51). Aggressive rhetoric and incitement to aggression have landed

Meir Ettinger in court. He was detained in July 2014 in connection with the murder of a Palestinian family in the village of Duma. According to Shin Bet (Israel's internal intelligence service) he was also planning to incite a revolt with the aim of overthrowing the secular state of Israel. This plan was divided into four stages: public relations, recruitment of activists, outbreak of the revolt, and a phase of disturbances. At present, Meir Ettinger's activity in the sociopolitical space poses a threat to the internal security of the Jewish state. Numerous restrictions have been imposed on him; for example, he is banned from entering the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and from having contact with more than 90 persons, and he is subject to a curfew (Levinson 2016).

The *Zo Artzeinu* movement is a more numerous and socially diverse group than Hilltop Youth. It was founded in 1993 by Israeli activist Moshe Feiglin and his acquaintance Shmuel Sackett (Pokrzywiński 2015: 98). The group was set up as a response to the Oslo Accords, which in Feiglin's eyes brought not only ideological consequences. The organisation's founder interpreted the peace agreements in terms of the security of the state. According to his rhetoric, they were a threat to Israel's stability. However, this did not prevent him from also arguing his case on an ideological and religious basis. Feiglin said: "After Oslo I became aware that the right wing was doing something bad, and the only way to repair that state of affairs was to introduce someone loyal to Likud, someone loyal to Judaism and the Land of Israel" (Presler 2008). This statement is a clear indication of views that reflect religious Zionism. It should be remarked that Feiglin made quite effective and well-judged use of the sociopolitical conditions. Mentions of matters relating to the security of the state and citizens of Israel had the potential to win over Israelis to a significant degree, in view of the recently ended First Intifada, which had reduced the trust felt towards the Arab part of society. Moshe Feiglin claimed that the actions of the Israeli authorities in signing the Oslo Accords would mean that Israel would not survive another 50 years (ibidem). The group's leader also emphasised that the nation was sovereign and that the state ought to serve its citizens, not the converse. The organisation thus expressed objections to the actions of the Israeli government and disagreement with its decisions. The group's structure is similar to that of Hilltop Youth, which was also dispersed and networked, but above all anonymous. This meant that members who criticised political decision-makers and the Arab population felt a sense of impunity and unaccountability (Pokrzywiński 2015: 98).

Although *Zo Artzeinu* represents circles that stand against democracy in the state, basing their actions on civil disobedience with respect to the state's structures, institutions, and armed forces, it has a less radical character than

Hilltop Youth. While the latter's members and leaders are accused of murders of Palestinians, the actions of *Zo Artzeinu* have consisted of blockades of state infrastructure (roads and buildings), confrontations with uniformed services, and protests against the governments of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. One demonstration was attended by 100,000 citizens, leading to the blocking of roads and in effect the paralysis of the transport system (ibidem: 99). Moshe Feiglin decided to expand and formalise his existing political activity. The *Zo Artzeinu* movement evolved into Manhigut Yehudit – a group that joined with Likud in the year 2000. Feiglin won a seat in the nineteenth Knesset (knesset.gov.il). Ultimately, however, he lost his influence within the Israeli right wing, and together with his supporters announced plans to create a new party called *Zehut – Tnua Yehudit Yisraelit* (Identity – Israeli Jewish Movement) (Kornbluh 2015). It may be asked whether the emergence on the Israeli political stage of structures based on opposition to the authorities' actions, civil disobedience and activities aimed at damaging the state reflects well on the country's political system. Moshe Feiglin, someone who has his ideological roots in circles with a religious Zionist foundation, and who opposes the Oslo Accords, was able – by entering the Israeli parliament in 2013 – to elevate his demands to the level of the state itself.

Both organisations, in view of their rhetoric, methods and means, are perceived as extremist. Despite the different levels of aggression in their actions, they have been equally effective in hampering the peace process. In 2011–2014 the media reported on acts of vandalism aimed against left-wing Jews, Arab Christians and the Israeli security forces, where the methods, means and choice of targets pointed to the involvement of members of Hilltop Youth. In 2011 graffiti reading "death to traitors" was painted on the door of the house of an Israeli activist (Rozenberg 2011). In October 2012 the radicals targeted a Franciscan monastery in Jerusalem, writing slogans in Hebrew insulting Jesus Christ at the entrance to the site. Two months later more inscriptions insulting Christians were discovered, this time at an Armenian cemetery. A further act of aggression took place in May 2013, again in Jerusalem, against the Abbey of the Dormition, and a month later a Christian cemetery in Tel Aviv was attacked in a similar manner. In July of the same year, an abbey being one of the most valuable historical monastic sites in the Holy Land was profaned. In the following month the Salesian convent in Beit Jimal was attacked with a Molotov cocktail, and graffiti with the words "death to gentiles and revenge" was left (Izak 2015: 206–207). In April 2014 in Galilee the car tyres of an Arab resident of the village of Muawiya were slashed and the star of David painted on the vehicle (Yaakov 2014). The writing of aggressive slogans and graffiti in

Muslim and Christians sites of worship and other places is known as the Price Tag Policy, in reference to the compensation and price that are to be paid by the Palestinians, the Israeli authorities, state institutions and security services for the actions taken to limit unauthorised Jewish settlement (Guiora 2014: 107). The extremists, in making their demands and developing and propagating settlement in violation of Israeli and international law, commit acts of vandalism and violence aimed against other circles with differing political views or religious orientation. This leads to uncontrolled offensive actions that have far-reaching social and political consequences.

The impact of Israeli extremist attacks on the peace process

The 1990s brought a breakthrough in Israeli–Palestinian relations, the peace process created an opportunity to conduct direct negotiations, and the creation of the Palestinian Authority – in a still somewhat incomplete and uncertain form – was a signal that Israel was now willing to talk to the Palestinians after many years. However, between the signings of the Oslo agreements other events took place that not only weakened, but also effectively held back the peace process. These were the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in Hebron, and the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. Certain similarities and differences may be discerned between these incidents. Organisations propagating civil disobedience and opposing the Oslo Accords created an atmosphere of distrust within the country towards the Israeli government, Rabin in particular, and encouraged the most radical elements to resort to extremist actions in the form of individual terrorism. Those extremists emerged from religious Zionist circles or were sympathisers or members of the groups already described. Also not without importance was the evolution of the circles that propagated Jewish settlement, which took their version of religious Zionism encompassing Judaism, the Land of Israel, the Jewish nation and the Torah, and reshaped it over time into a rhetoric that permitted the use of violence. This resulted in an intensification of antagonism and hatred between Jews and Arabs.

On 25 February 1994 a Jew of American origin and Kach party member, Baruch Goldstein, opened fire on Palestinians at prayer in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Freishtat 2010). The attack cost the lives of 29 Palestinians and two Israelis, and left dozens of people wounded (Krawczyk 2007: 176; Szydzisz 2012b: 169–170). The terrorist himself was killed by a desperate and angry crowd. He had apparently said previously that the Arabs were a "disease" (Krawczyk 2007: 176). The act of terror was inspired by the person of Meir

Kahane, who had been a model and mentor for the perpetrator. Goldstein had had connections with Kahane's political beliefs from the beginning, joining the Jewish Defense League while still resident in Brooklyn (ibidem: 176). His hatred of the Arab population went so far that as a military doctor he refused medical assistance to Druze Arabs who served in the Israeli army, stating that he had no intention of helping any non-Jews. An attempt was made to remove him from the army as a result of this stance, but it was unsuccessful, since Goldstein had influential supporters in the military (Bolechów 2007: 104–105). The response of religious-nationalist groups to the massacre was disturbing, and served as a signal to the Israeli authorities to take steps to improve the country's internal security and create mechanisms to protect against terrorist attacks carried out by Jews. As a result of the bloody attack, the authorities decided to outlaw the Kahane and Kahane Chai organisations (Krawczyk 2007: 155–156). The attacker posthumously became a hero to extreme fundamentalist groups, and posters glorifying his actions appeared on the streets. His funeral in Jerusalem attracted more than a thousand radicals, who shouted slogans such as "death to the Arabs" (ibidem: 176). Praise for the act of aggression that led to intensification of the spiral of violence in the country also came from rabbis. Citing religious arguments, they manifested anti-Arab slogans (ibidem: 176). Baruch Goldstein was buried in the Kiryat Arba settlement where he had lived.

This, the political centre of the Kach party, a settlement established with the use of *fait accompli* tactics by Moshe Levinger and Gush Emunim sympathisers, was an ideal place for spreading fundamentalist propaganda. Goldstein's grave became a pilgrimage site and a sanctuary for Jewish extremists. Numerous concerts and events were held to honour the terrorist's memory, and settlers' children wore badges with the slogan "Dr Goldstein has cured Israel's disease" (Bolechów 2007: 104–105). Even today in Kiryat Arba one may observe an attachment to the radical representatives of religious Zionism. One of the settlement's landmarks is Kahane Park, which retains that name despite the outlawing of the party. Another key site is Baruch Goldstein's grave, but no longer in the form of a place of worship: in 1999 Israel's Supreme Court ordered the army to remove the shrine that bore an epitaph praising the terrorist act (ibidem: 104–105). On multiple occasions it has been the site of acts of violence and clashes between Israeli activists and Jewish settlers. In June 2008 settlers prevented activists from the Breaking Silence group from visiting Kiryat Arba, despite the fact that the visit had been approved by the Israeli police (Weiss 2008).

In consequence of the escalation of violence and the support and praise for the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre expressed by Jewish settler groups representing religious Zionism, another unprecedented terrorist act took place –

the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin on 4 November 1995. This individual attack was the work of another ultra-right nationalist, who was an admirer of Baruch Goldstein and his actions. Yigal Amir justified his act on religious grounds, claiming that God himself had ordered him to murder the prime minister. This was the result of the activities of radical Jewish movements, which had initiated a series of uncontrolled offensive actions having far-reaching social and political consequences. Ideological fuel for the attack, besides Goldstein's inspiration, may have come from the demands of *Zo Artzeinu*, which also expressed objection to Rabin's decisions and opposed the Oslo Accords. As the assassin had expected and intended, the crime paralysed and significantly slowed down the peace process (Czapiewski 2014: 125). In Amir's eyes, Rabin had sacrificed the survival of the Jewish state and nation in the name of concessions to the Palestinians (Bolechów 2007: 105-106). This was in accordance with the rhetoric of *Zo Artzeinu*, which also perceived the agreement with the PLO in terms of the national interest, while also referring to religious factors. Rabin's assassination was the culmination of the actions taken by Jewish religious extremists against the peace process begun in Oslo. It led to the suspension, slowing down and paralysis of that process (Rabkin 2007: 163). Yigal Amir had achieved his goal. Nevertheless, the murder of the Israeli prime minister is not an isolated case of offensive actions directed against the agreement with the PLO. We should also recall the activities of radical Jewish groups like Hilltop Youth and *Zo Artzeinu*, their ideological and political roots, their impact on sociopolitical life, and the fact that these are not the only radical religious groups active in the state of Israel, now or in the past.

Conclusion

While this article has sought to analyse Jewish extremism in the face of the Oslo Accords, it has not exhausted the topic of radical Jewish groupings. Jewish radicalism and religious extremism grew in the lap of religious Zionism, based on the Greater Israel concept and propagating illegal Jewish settlement. They are not a new element of the Israeli sociopolitical mosaic. Undoubtedly, as the examples cited here have shown, radical Jewish movements have been and still are a significant challenge for the country's internal security. Hilltop Youth and *Zo Artzeinu*, which grew out of Gush Emunim and Kach, are the new generation of Jewish religious extremism. Through the activities of these groups, the combination of Zionism with religious factors has evolved into acts of a terrorist nature, as may be seen in the case of all of the groups described here – with

the exception of *Zo Artzeinu*, although this should not trivialise that group's impact on the escalation of violence and internal destabilisation. Its activities, based on civil disobedience and aggressive rhetoric against prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, may have encouraged Yigal Amir to commit his crime, and certainly helped find justification for it on both religious and political grounds.

It remains problematic that a place has been found for this type of viewpoint in the Israeli parliament. It should be asked whether this is desirable for the country's national security. Doubts are also raised by the slowing of the peace process, which indicates that following the changes of government in the wake of Rabin's assassination, the Israeli authorities to some extent succumbed to the extremists' pressure. This is manifested in, among other things, the lack of prospects or desire for further dialogue on the most critical issues in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The final status of the Palestinian National Authority has still not been negotiated.

All of the organisations discussed here have mutual links. The most distinct bond is their ideology, which opposes any compromises with the Arabs, and thus rejects the existence of a Palestinian Authority in any form. This being the case, it is necessary to confirm the hypothesis that the actions of Jewish extremists at both individual and group level are directed against the agreements with the PLO, and represent an attempt to undermine the peace process. It should also be acknowledged that these actions achieve the intended effect. Jewish extremists use or have used for this purpose various methods, forms of action, and means of communication. They demand the development of unauthorised Jewish settlement, not shying from aggressive rhetoric and acts of terror aimed at Arab Christians, Jews with other viewpoints, the Israeli security forces, or even the highest state officials. Radical Jewish movements pose an enormous threat to Israel's security, state structures, institutions, and members of society. They destabilise the internal situation and provoke social unrest. They represent a challenge to the country's internal security system, as the rhetoric used by the groups described here may incite the most extreme elements to acts of aggression similar to the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre in Hebron or the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

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Keywords: Jewish radicalism, religious extremism, religious Zionism, Jewish settlements, Israeli–Palestinian conflict, terrorism

ABSTRACT

This article analyses Jewish religious extremism in both individual and collective forms, and examines the attitudes, actions and rhetoric of radical individuals and groups in relation to the peace process and the Oslo Accords made with the Palestinians. The research problem concerns the impact of the

activity of radical Jewish groups on the sociopolitical situation in Israel and the internal security of the country. The main hypothesis is that the actions of Jewish extremists, as both individuals and groups, are directed against the agreements with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and are an attempt to undermine the peace process. The related research questions focus on two issues: the methods and forms of action used now and in the past by Jewish radicals, and the consequences of their actions. In this context, the evolution of radical Jewish movements is also examined. The research is conducted using behavioural, institutional-legal, and historical methods, and confirms that Jewish extremist activity is not only a serious threat, but also a challenge to Israel's national security.

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The Jewish population in Lower Silesia after the Second World War (1945–1950)

Some remarks on the state of research and new research perspectives

The history of the Jewish population in Poland has become an important and frequently discussed topic in recent years.[1] The development of Jewish studies in the country has resulted in an increased number of new scholarly and popular science publications, the establishment of academic centres conducting research on Jewish history and culture,[2] but also activities in the public sphere, of which the most important is the POLIN Museum, as well as other smaller institutions and various educational projects.[3] Among the many works published in Poland in recent years, studies of the Holocaust constitute quite a significant part. The history of the people who survived and lived in Poland after 1945 has been of somewhat less interest to scholars. Nevertheless, there has been a significant increase in the number of publications in recent years. We may take, for example, the series titled *Z dziejów Centralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce* ("From the History of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland") published by the Jewish Historical Institute, which includes interesting studies on Jewish life in Poland in the years 1945–1950. In addition to this series, one can find books discussing such problems as migration (Węgrzyn 2016), anti-Semitism (Dahlmann 2018; Grabski *et al.* 2019; Kwiek 2021) and diplomatic

[1] Undoubtedly, 1989 was an important moment in this context, although even earlier, in the 1980s, works discussing Jewish topics had been published.

[2] Besides the well-established centres of Jewish studies in Kraków and Warsaw, a Department of Jewish Studies has been established at the University of Wrocław in recent years. Research is also progressing in other centres, for example, Łódź, Lublin and Rzeszów.

[3] The Museum of Mazovian Jews in Płock is a good example of such activity.

relations (Szaynok 2007a), which are relevant to both the immediate post-war period and the communist era. A special place among these studies is held by the book *Następstwa zagłady Żydów 1944-2010* (*The Aftermath of the Holocaust of Jews 1944–2010*) (Adamczyk-Garbowska *et al.* 2012). Another study deserving mention here is the first monograph on Jewish life in Poland after the Second World War (Kichelewski 2021).

Undoubtedly, part of the research deals with the history of Jews in Lower Silesia, an area incorporated into Poland in 1945, where Holocaust survivors began a new life not only literally but also metaphorically. This article presents the current state of research on the post-war (1945–1950) history of the Jewish population in the region.[4] Moreover, its goal is to point out new trends and perspectives, and, to some extent, identify some research areas that may prove extremely valuable for the development of further studies. At the same time, the paper indicates clearly what has been of interest to researchers in recent decades, what has been written on the subject, and on what – in terms of phenomena, places, characters, etc. – researchers have focused. Bearing in mind both the adopted goals and limitations of space, I make only occasional reference to the findings, interpretations and polemics contained in the cited works.

The following literature review can be considered another contribution to the debate on this issue, but also a specific presentation of research questions (perhaps not always obvious) and archival sources. The publications to be discussed refer to the immediate post-war period, i.e. the years 1945–1950, but sometimes, mainly due to the context or ongoing processes, they go beyond that time frame. This period was crucial for the organisation of the structures of Jewish life – it was then that Jewish committees functioned as basic, secular institutions of Jewish life (separately from religious organisations). The starting date of the period is unquestionable – it is the year that saw the end of the Second World War and of the Holocaust. It was also the time when the settlement of Polish Jews in the Western and Northern Territories began. In turn, the year 1950 saw the reorganisation of the structures of Jewish life, linked to the consolidation of the communist system. Zionist parties had recently been banned in Poland, and in October of that year the Jewish committees and the Jewish Association for Culture and Art merged to form the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland.

Lower Silesia, on which the works referred to in this article focus, is a separate matter. It should be remarked here that in some publications the authors

[4] I have analysed and presented research conducted in Poland and published in Polish (and on some occasions in English, German or Hebrew).

refer to the present-day administrative borders of Lower Silesia, although in the post-war times the borders of the Wrocław voivodship (1946–1950) did not coincide with the modern territorial division, as they included, among others, part of today's Lubusz voivodship (including Żary and Żagań) and Opole voivodship (Brzeg, Namysłów).

The Jewish population in Lower Silesia after 1945

Jewish settlement in Lower Silesia is an important part of the post-war history of Jews in Poland (Rykała 2007). It is also a major aspect of the narrative regarding the so-called Recovered Territories.[5] It would not have been possible if it had not been for the former prisoners of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp (now Rogoźnica near Strzegom), who decided to remain in the newly incorporated areas – the region where they had been liberated by the Soviet Army in May 1945.[6] Relatively quickly, in the following month, a group of surviving prisoners declared their eagerness to build structures of Jewish life in these areas, demanding support from the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) in Warsaw. The issue of Jewish settlement in Lower Silesia was a subject discussed by Jewish leaders in the country in the summer and autumn of 1945 (Misztal 1992; Szaynok 1994). These talks, which were approved by the communist authorities, resulted in a decision to send to that region a large number of Jewish repatriates from the USSR, who arrived in the first half of 1946 (Głowacki 2004; Marciniak 2014). Therefore, by the middle of the year there were over 40 Jewish committees in the Wrocław voivodship with which approximately 90,000 Jews were registered, accounting for almost half of all survivors residing in Poland at that time (Szaynok 2000). Among the most important Jewish centres, with several thousand to more than ten thousand inhabitants, were Wrocław, Dzierżoniów, and Wałbrzych, followed by Legnica, Bielawa, Kłodzko, Pieszyce, Jawor, Kamienna Góra, Jelenia Góra, Bolków, and many other smaller towns. In the wake of subsequent events, primarily anti-Semitism and the Kielce pogrom, in the second half of 1946 Lower Silesia became a place of great importance for Jewish migrants fleeing across the so-called green border in the Sudety Mountains and further through Czechoslo-

[5] Primarily in a religious context, but also in a social context, for example, in the recently published synthesis *Region or regions?* (Kucharski *et al.* 2022).

[6] It is worth noting that for the Jewish prisoners, the actions of the Red Army meant an actual experience of liberation.

vakia (Szaynok 1995; Aleksiun-Mądrzak 1996; Semczyszyn 2018; Wieczorek 2019). It was also a time when the size of the Jewish community in the province diminished. Another important wave of emigration occurred after 1948, when the state of Israel was established (Stola 2010).

When briefly discussing the history of Jews in Lower Silesia just after the war, an aspect which should be mentioned is the well-developed structures of Jewish life. First and foremost, there was the Voivodship Committee of Jews for Lower Silesia (*Wojewódzki Komitet Żydów na Dolny Śląsk*, WKŻ) in Wrocław, with Jakub Egit as chairman;[7] however, one should not forget about the Congregation of the Mosaic Faith (from 1949 the Religious Association of Judaism) which was active in almost 30 towns, as well as numerous political parties, youth organisations and cultural institutions. Undoubtedly, in the latter category, the most important was the Jewish theatre whose building was erected in Wrocław and opened in April 1949. Furthermore, apart from the Jewish press titles published in Polish (*Nowe Życie. Trybuna Wojewódzkiego Komitetu Żydowskiego na Dolnym Śląsku*) and Yiddish (*Niderszlezje*), mention should be made of sports, a well-developed education system (including private education), and economic life. A manifestation of the latter was the so-called productivisation – efforts made towards the employment of Jews in various sectors of the economy.[8] In addition to numerous cooperatives established and run by Jews, the presence of Jews in the mining industry in the Wałbrzych region and in agriculture in the Dzierżoniów area was emphasised at that time, which was in line with communist propaganda. Such rich and varied Jewish activities were fairly quickly curbed by the policy of the communist authorities. In addition to the abovementioned mass migration, it was the decisions of the dignitaries – the liquidation of the Zionist parties in 1949–1950, the changes introduced to cooperatives, the blocking of funding for Jewish activities from foreign institutions such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the merger of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP) with the Jewish Association for Culture and Art to form the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland – that led to the limitation or, in fact, the degradation of the rich Jewish life in Lower Silesia in 1945–1950. And although some Jewish communities continued to be active in the following years, they did so in completely different conditions, in smaller communities and having

[7] An important contribution to our knowledge about this period comes from Jakub Egit's early post-war publications and his memoirs published in the 1990s (Egit 1947, 1991).

[8] Between 1946 and 1947 there existed the office of the Commissioner for the Productivisation of the Jews, established by the communist authorities.

different opportunities than before. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that researchers consider Jewish community life to be unique, bearing in mind both what was going on in the country and what happened to Holocaust survivors.

The beginnings and development of research

The first researcher to describe the post-war history of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia was Samuel Bat, whose article on the subject was published in *Rocznik Wrocławski* in the early 1960s (Bat 1961). Around the same time, Arnold Goldsztejn, the then headmaster of the Sholem Aleichem High School in Wrocław, was conducting his research. In 1962, his short article on the post-war history of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia was published in *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* (Goldsztejn 1962), and in 1967, the same journal published his article on the productivisation of Jews in the region (Goldsztejn 1967). His doctoral dissertation, supervised by then associate professor Marian Orzechowski and defended at the University of Wrocław in 1969 (Goldsztejn 1969), was a summary of his research on this subject. The years 1967–1968 and the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland at that time were not conducive to scholarly debates about Jewish history. This also affected research topics and the publishing market, and so it is not surprising that the aforementioned doctoral dissertation was not published. Goldsztejn took up the topic again at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, when he published an article in a collective volume devoted to the history of Jews in Silesia (Goldsztejn 1991). This book followed a conference held at the University of Wrocław in 1988. A few years later, in 1994, another volume was published, which this time dealt with the history of Jews in Poland and Silesia (Matwijowski 1994). In addition to the abovementioned publications, two important articles on Jewish life in Lower Silesia were published in the 1980s: one by Hanna Shlomi in Hebrew in the Israeli journal *Gal-Ed* (Shlomi 1985), and another by Kazimierz Pudło in *Rocznik Dolnośląski* (Pudło 1988).

Among the pioneer scholars in this field, one should not forget about Szyja Bronsztejn who, as early as the 1960s, published three articles following his research surveys (Bronsztejn 1963, 1964, 1970) in the *Bulletin of the Jewish Historical Institute*. He returned to this topic in two studies published in the early 1990s (Bronsztejn 1991a, 1991b). The first book dealing with the history of Jews in Lower Silesia after the Second World War was also written by Bronsztejn, who was an economic historian and a statistician affiliated with the University of Wrocław. Published in 1993, the book became an important reference

point for further research (Bronsztejn 1993). Many of the topics that it covered were discussed only briefly, drawing readers' attention to selected problems. The following year, Bożena Szaynok defended her doctoral dissertation on the Jewish population in the region in the years 1945–1950. The dissertation, supervised by Professor Wojciech Wrzesiński, was the first in-depth study of this subject based on rich archival resources. It was published by the University of Wrocław Press in 2000 (Szaynok 2000). In this book, which remains the most important study on the subject to this day, the author gave a systematic presentation of the most important information about the structures of Jewish life and the emergence and "shrinking" of the Jewish community in Lower Silesia. At the same time, she emphasised the importance of the decisions made by the communists, who contributed to the gradual restriction of Jewish life. Therefore, the dissertation can be considered a description of a peculiar phenomenon – the emergence of a Jewish community of many thousands of people after the Second World War. However, the study in question does not address all of the problems of that community – there is little information, for example, about anti-Semitism issues or matters with which we are much more familiar today. Separate articles by Szaynok on other issues, such as the case of the Jewish pavilion at the Wroclaw Exhibition of Recovered Territories in 1948 or the Haganah camp near Bolków, should be regarded as pioneering and extremely important texts contributing to the discovery of the post-war history of Jews in Poland, especially those in Lower Silesia (Szaynok 1996, 1999). The studies by this author which I would consider fundamental also include those discussing Jewish settlement in the region (including some written in English) and those describing the post-war daily life of Jews in Wrocław (Szaynok 1994, 1997a, 1997b).

With this in mind, it should be noted that the 1990s were an extremely important period for basic research on the history of Jews in Poland after the Second World War. Apart from Lower Silesia, other areas of Jewish settlement were also examined; for example, Western Pomerania, where a large group of Jews from the USSR had settled in Szczecin in 1946. This community, along with other national and ethnic minorities, is the subject of a book by Janusz Mieczkowski (Mieczkowski 1994). Julian Kwiek's work is of a similar nature, focusing on Jews, Lemkos and Slovaks in Lesser Poland in the immediate post-war period (Kwiek 1998). Around the same time, Grzegorz Berendt compiled and published a book about Jews in Gdańsk (Berendt 2000), and Wojciech Jaworski did the same for Upper Silesia (Jaworski 2001). Finally, mention should be made of a collective volume edited by Jerzy Tomaszewski on the most recent history of Jews in Poland (Tomaszewski 1993).

One of its chapters is devoted to the post-war history of the survivors until 1950 (Adelson 1993).

The above mentioned publication by Bożena Szaynok has been and still is the most important book on the topic. This does not mean that studies uncovering other lesser-known aspects of Jewish community life in Lower Silesia have not appeared. One such publication is undoubtedly Ewa Waszkiewicz's study on the structures of Jewish religious life in the region set against Polish state policy (Waszkiewicz 1999). The book, which is the author's postdoctoral dissertation, is based on quite limited but at the same time difficult to access sources (files of the Jewish religious community in Wrocław). Despite the passage of almost a quarter of a century, it is still the only publication of this kind which deals in detail with Jewish religious life after 1945. Although many other studies have been published, there are still no articles or monographs discussing this issue, not only regionally, but on a national scale (Grabski 1997; Grabski and Stankowski 2011).[9]

Further research and current trends

The studies discussed above have always been of great importance to advancing research. In the following decades, studies relating to the abovementioned publications, many of which delve deeply into selected issues of Jewish life in Lower Silesia just after the Second World War, have been and are being conducted. The division proposed below reflects the author's view both of the works published mostly in the twenty-first century, and of current research trends that influence the development of new perspectives.

As was noted in the introduction, there were more than 40 Jewish committees in Lower Silesia in 1946, representing tens of thousands of people. Not surprisingly, some of these centres captured the interest of researchers, who decided to analyse individual communities. Studies carried out in recent years have most often been devoted to Jewish communities in a particular locality or county. Already in the second half of the 1990s, articles on selected localities and Jewish life in them began to be published. Studies on Wrocław (Szaynok 1997b; Ziątkowski 2000[10]) and Pieszyce (Kęsik 1997), among others, are ex-

[9] Studies on the subject have been published by August Grabski, who is currently leading a National Science Centre project on the religious life of Jews in Poland; see https://projekty.ncn.gov.pl/opisy/543429-pl.pdf (accessed: 13 November 2023).

[10] Leszek Ziątkowski's study referred only marginally to the 1945–1950 period.

amples of this approach. Since then, the number of works and authors dealing with this topic has been gradually increasing. Researchers have been especially interested in those centres where the Jewish population was significant and their community life was richest and most developed. Let us take, for example, Dzierżoniów (known as Rychbach immediately after the war), which is a special case – the first community of Polish Jews in Lower Silesia and the first seat of the Voivodship Committee of Jews for Lower Silesia. At its peak, about 12,000 Jews lived in the town, more than half of its total population. Dzierżoniów has been the subject of many articles dealing with both the process of Jewish settlement itself, and particular aspects of the Jewish population and its institutional life. Among the most important sources of information are a chapter by Bożena Szaynok (Szaynok 2007b) and articles by Anna Grużlewska (Grużlewska 2020, 2022), who also successfully popularised this topic in the form of an album and popular science publications (Grużlewska 2019b), and Kamil Kijek's publications describing the community in a broader historical context – in terms of either Jewish history or Polish and European history (Kijek 2018, 2020).[11] In addition to the authors listed above, it seems worthwhile to draw attention to other articles describing Jewish communities viewed either from a regional perspective (Hebzda-Sołogub 2015) or from the standpoint of former community members who had left Poland (Lavi 2017). Dzierżoniów, due to its nature, has sometimes been studied in specific contexts, such as the productivisation of the Jewish population (Rykała 2016; Szajda 2020b, 2020c).

Jewish life has been of equally great interest to researchers in Wrocław, although in this particular case the context taken into consideration is broader, as it covers different periods, especially the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (Ziątkowski 1998; Rybińska 2017, 2020). The growth of scholarly interest in Jewish life was impacted by, among other things, the case of the Jewish cemetery on Ślężna Street and the efforts made to preserve it. Among others, Maciej Łagiewski's publications (Łagiewski 1991) and actions contributed to that. The topic of the Jewish community after the Second World War is therefore an element of a broader narrative about the centuries-long Jewish presence in the capital of Lower Silesia (Łagiewski 1994; Ziątkowski 2000). It is also visible in the contemporary activity of Jewish organisations, including, above all, the Jewish community at the White Stork Synagogue. In addition to the female researchers mentioned above (Waszkiewicz 1994; Szay-

[11] Kamil Kijek is also head of a National Science Centre project on Jewish life in Dzierżoniów in the years 1945–1950; see: https://projekty.ncn.gov.pl/opisy/428150-pl.pdf (accessed 12 November 2023).

nok 1997b), it is worth emphasising the importance of Katharina Friedla's work (Friedla 2014, 2016, 2017). She is the author of a monograph on the Jews of Wrocław in the time when the city was part of the Third Reich (including the Holocaust) and in the immediate post-war period (until 1949) (Friedla 2015).[12] This is an extremely important publication, as it depicts Jewish experiences from a transnational perspective. It is a story of German and Polish Jews for whom the point of reference is a specific city – in this case, Wrocław. Such an approach is quite unusual for research conducted in Poland to date, as scholars usually consider the end of the Second World War in 1945 as end date for describing Jewish life. A similar time frame was adopted by the editors of a volume devoted to the topography of the Holocaust in Wrocław (Buchen and Luft 2023). That book, published in 2023, is the most recent study on Jews in the city.

Among the histories of other Jewish communities in Lower Silesia, Wałbrzych occupies a special place. This can be attributed, for example, to both the size of the Jewish population after the Second World War and the durability of the structures of Jewish life in the following years, including after 1950. One of the prominent researchers of the post-war history of Wałbrzych's Jews is Pawel Wieczorek, whose research focuses on both the city and the county. Initially, his studies centred around various aspects of community life (Wieczorek 2003, 2008, 2008a, 2008b, 2015). The monograph covering the period 1945–1968 should be considered a culmination point of his research in this area (Wieczorek 2017). Apart from Wieczorek, this topic has also been taken up by other researchers, some of whom discussed it in a broader national and temporal context (Kobylarz-Buła 2003; Bisek-Grąz 2008; Retecki 2017).

Besides Wrocław and Wałbrzych, Jelenia Góra and its post-war Jewish community have also been a subject of historical analysis (Szajda 2014, 2018b, 2018c, 2019b, 2020a). This interest resulted in a monograph describing the experiences of Jelenia Góra's Jews after 1945 – a community less numerous than those in the cities mentioned above (Szajda 2021b), but at the same time unique, if only because of the presence of German Jews and their establishment of a committee in the summer of 1945 – the first post-war institution of Jewish life in the city. Another community that captured the interest of researchers was Kłodzko (Włodarczyk, Einhorn, Jamróg 2006). The post-war experiences of Jews living in that town were described by Tamara Włodarczyk in her master's thesis, which is publicly available (Włodarczyk 2010). Among other Jewish communities about which we know a little more thanks to the work done

[12] The book is in German.

so far, we may list those of Legnica (Szczepański 2007, 2013), Świdnica (Wolny 2003) and Jawor (Ziątkowski 2010).

Naturally, apart from publications directly referring to particular locations, there are other texts discussing certain aspects of Jewish life in Lower Silesia; for example, settlement (Sula 1992; Shlomi 2000; Szajda 2017, 2018a), education (Techmańska 2011, 2019; Grużlewska 2020), culture (Kałużna 2015), or sport (Einhorn 2014; Włodarczyk 2014), to mention just a few. Some studies go further and focus on Jewish experiences in the region after 1950 (Waszkiewicz 2007, 2011; Szydzisz 2019), including in the specific periods of 1956–57 and 1967–68 (Szydzisz 2006; Wieczorek 2010; Grużlewska 2019a; Szajda 2019a; Wieczorek 2021), which are deemed years of crises for the community. Brief synthetic accounts of Jewish life in Lower Silesia between 1945 and 1950 have also been published (Szaynok 2001, 2011; Ilwicka-Sheppard 2014; Ruchniewicz and Ruchniewicz 2014; Nash 2022).

In view of their broader research context, I have deliberately overlooked publications that do not directly refer to Lower Silesia. However, important books such as those by Natalia Aleksiun (Aleksiun 2002) and August Grabski (Grabski 2002, 2004) deserve our attention. Mention should also be made here of memoirs, including those of Jews or people of Jewish descent who lived in the area for some time after 1945 and only then left Poland.

The growing interest over recent decades in the history of Jews in Poland in 1945 can be seen not only in the amount of research conducted and the number of scholarly studies published, but also in the number of undergraduate and graduate theses on this topic. For the purposes of this article, the author reviewed M.A. theses written since 1990 at the University of Wrocław, which due to its location has always been considered an important centre for research on Lower Silesia. The end date adopted here was 2018 – the theses defended up to that point are comprehensive and properly archived. According to the author's calculations, there were as many as 30 theses that discussed, to varying degrees, the post-war history of Jews in Lower Silesia.[13] Most of them were written in the twenty-first century at the Faculty of History and Pedagogical Sciences and the Faculty of Letters, by students on courses such as history, ethnology, cultural studies, and Polish language. Only some of these papers deal with the immediate post-war period; others refer to such topics as the anti-Semitic campaign waged between 1967 and 1968, or Jewish identity or material heritage

[13] The actual number of such theses might be higher, since different types of papers, traditional and digital, were reviewed. Bearing in mind that this is quite a large database, it is likely that not all papers on this subject have been found.

(cemeteries). What seems to be quite surprising is the relatively large number of studies relating to Jewish culture in the region after 1945, primarily on the Jewish theatre. The author found as many as six theses discussing this topic.

The fact that there has been interest in the issues discussed here is also evident in popular science books. One of the most important publications is a guide describing Jewish relics found in Lower Silesia, the Opole region and the Lubusz region (Borkowski, Kirmiel, Włodarczyk 2008). Although the book describes towns and the history of Jews in particular locations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a large part of it consists of descriptions relating to the years 1945–1950. The author of the parts of the book concerning the region analysed here is Tamara Włodarczyk, whose contribution to popularising the history of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia is unquestionable. Moreover, she is the author or co-author of several guidebooks to towns or regions which used to be inhabited by Jews and where traces of their activities can be found; for example, Wrocław (two editions) – in collaboration with Jerzy Kichler (Włodarczyk and Kichler 2016, 2019), the former Wałbrzych voivodship– with Ignacy Einhorn (Włodarczyk and Einhorn 2018), and the former Jelenia Góra voivodship (Włodarczyk 2021). Earlier, Włodarczyk also published a book titled *Przewodnik po świecie kłodzkich Żydów* ("Guide to the world of the Kłodzko Jews") (Włodarczyk *et al.* 2007), and an album and guide on Jewish life in Legnica and the surrounding area (Włodarczyk 2016). Włodarczyk was also the curator of an exhibition and editor of a book about Jewish life in Lower Silesia in the years 1945–1970, displayed at the Wrocław Ethnographic Museum in 2017. As a result of this project, she compiled a special publication on Lower Silesia as remembered by its Jewish residents (Włodarczyk 2017). Needless to say, there are also other books on the market that could be classified as popular science; however, they most often focus on a longer period and on remains of the Jewish material heritage such as cemeteries or synagogues (Wiklik 2014).

Among the publications of recent decades, the significance of the Jewish Historical Institute's series entitled *Z dziejów Centralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce* should be emphasised once again. The intention of the authors of the series was to familiarise readers with the extremely interesting and rich life of the Jewish community in Poland immediately after the war. As the sources compiled by the Central Committee of Polish Jews were large, this task was not easy, especially since the books in the series were intended as monographs each dealing with a specific issue, accompanied by a selection of archival documents. Among publications referring to Jewish issues are those about political life (Grabski 2015), cultural life (Żołkiewska-Rejak 2017), the citizens' court at the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Żbikowski 2014), special (security)

commissions (Cała 2014), as well as productivisation (Kendziorek 2016), agriculture (Kaczyńska 2021), education (Datner-Śpiewak 2016) or statistics (Rosner 2018). None of these books can be considered "typically Lower Silesian", as the topics discussed in them refer to the whole country. However, what emerges from many of these studies is a remarkably clear picture of the uniqueness of the Jewish community in the Wrocław province at the time. Each of the publications is an extremely valuable source of knowledge about the history of this community in the region, and it would undoubtedly have been a daunting task to describe even small Jewish communities if it had not been for the studies conducted by Alina Cała and Helen Dartner. In this respect, the study by Katarzyna Kaczyńska appears to be of special value, as when describing Jewish agriculture she referred mainly to its centre in the neighbourhood of Dzierżoniów.

New perspectives

The state of research described above shows how much has been achieved in the last three decades in discovering, describing and popularising the postwar history of Jews in Lower Silesia. This does not mean, however, that all significant matters have already been examined. There are many important topics that have not been taken up so far or have been addressed only to a small extent. The following remarks offer a glimpse of what may be important for scholarly investigation in the future, or at least has the potential for more detailed analysis.

Basic research is still a valid requirement in relation to the subject matter discussed here. Studies based on a detailed and varied archive search will certainly contribute to establishing facts or data about Jews in Lower Silesia which are still unknown, ranging from quantitative data to structural and personal details. In this respect, the abovementioned monograph by Bożena Szaynok has made the greatest contribution. Nevertheless, it seems that we still know very little about, for example, particular aspects of community life, not to mention individual groups within the Jewish population (e.g. German Jews or Jewish former prisoners of concentration camps or death camps).

Current research trends in the humanities have provided an extremely valuable perspective. One of these is, undoubtedly, the discovery and appreciation of women's role and importance in broadly defined socio-political activity (and beyond it), and consequently perspectives relating to gender studies and feminist research. Such studies in relation to Jewish history are also being

conducted in Poland, and a recent book edited by Anna Landau-Czajka (Landau-Czajka 2023) can be cited as an example. With this in mind, questions about the activity of Jewish women in the structures of local or provincial Jewish committees seem more than justified. All the more so because, unlike the pre-war Jewish communities, the committees established in 1944 were secular institutions, which created new opportunities for action.

The question of sources may be a particular issue, especially for historians. Sources continue to enrich the archives, thereby contributing to the expansion of existing knowledge. By way of illustration, I would like to focus on a few specific cases. The first concerns the State Archives in Wrocław, and more specifically its branch in Legnica. In recent years, this institution has added to its collection materials relating to the operation of one of the cooperatives in Jawor. Quite unexpectedly, it turned out that many of the documents concerned not the institution itself, but the Jewish Committee in Jawor in the years 1945–1950. A slightly different situation was encountered at another branch of the same archive, in Kamieniec Ząbkowicki. There, the obtained materials included documents relating strictly to the economic activity of Jews, for example in cooperatives. Yet another case concerns Wrocław, where one of the extremely interesting collections is the files kept in the Taube Department of Jewish Studies Library at the University of Wrocław. The documents provided by the local branch of one of the Jewish institutions shed light on the activity of the Jewish faction of the Polish Workers' Party in Lower Silesia in the years 1946-1948. Essentially, they are a collection of materials from virtually all committees in the region. Among various materials, one can find there documentation produced by the branches of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland. Obviously, the abovementioned cases are only examples of previously unknown source materials. Besides these, the Archives of the Jewish Historical Institute are still the principal place to study archival sources. The most valuable information sources also include those which can be found in the Institute of National Remembrance. These documents, including those produced by the Public Security Offices and the Security Service, will certainly provide a foundation for many studies that will be conducted in the near future. Foreign archives, especially those in Israel or the places to which Jews migrated, are a separate matter. It is also worth mentioning the potential of induced accounts – stories told by Polish Jews who lived at least for a while in Lower Silesia after the Second World War (Szajda 2021c). Many of the recorded interviews are available in Polish cultural institutions such as the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the History Meeting House, or the "Remembrance and Future" Centre.

Not so much a new, but certainly a needed perspective is formed by a combination of two points of view: top-down and bottom-up, or rather those of local or regional researchers (sometimes enthusiasts) and professional academics. A synergy of these two approaches would certainly contribute to a new quality in Jewish history research. It is enough to mention a few titles: *Rocznik Wrocławski*, *Rocznik Jeleniogórski*, *Szkice Legnickie*, *Rocznik Dzierżoniowski*, *Nowa Kronika Wałbrzyska*, *Bibliotheca Bielaviana* – these are just some of the regional magazines in which texts about Jewish life in a specific town or county have been published. Texts of this type, sometimes just small contributions, do not always attract the attention of academic researchers, which is often to the detriment of research and the books published. This is also true in the case of efforts in the opposite direction, namely the use by local historians and regionalists of the results of research conducted in larger academic centres. In many cases, this is considered an opportunity both to gain a deeper understanding of the processes described locally, and to incorporate the history being analysed into a broader historical narrative.

Finally, it should be emphasised that for research on a specific region or a selected community, especially a minority one, it is important that the research problem be viewed in context. Putting research in a broader historical, and in consequence also narrative, context would be an extremely useful approach, which would undoubtedly increase the value of publications and the number of their recipients (including those abroad). A perfect example is the abovementioned research by Kamil Kijek on the immediate post-war history of Jews in Dzierżoniów, set against the Cold War and the international situation, but also focusing on the broadest possible Jewish context. Another study of this type is an edited volume on the topography of Jewish Wrocław with reference to the Holocaust (Buchen and Luft 2023). It represents a new approach to both "Jewish spaces" and various complex processes and chronologies – the analysis covers the years 1933–1949.

New challenges

Besides the perspectives discussed above, it is also worthwhile to consider some research challenges – topics that have not been described in detail so far and issues crucial for telling a story about the post-war history of Jews in Lower Silesia.

One of the most significant matters that still need to be investigated is post-war anti-Semitism. This particular problem has already been discussed in

quite a few articles and chapters of books of importance for Polish historiography (Zaremba 2012). Hostility towards Jews in Lower Silesia was not actually one of the key topics analysed in Bożena Szaynok's book (Szaynok 2000). The major reason for that is the limited number of sources available to the author at the time the book was written (the first half of the 1990s). Anti-Semitism seems to be an extremely important issue due to the distinctiveness of "Jewish Lower Silesia" in comparison to other minority population centres in the country. Since detailed studies have been made of the pogroms in Kraków and Kielce (Szaynok 1992; Cichopek 2000; Tokarska-Bakir 2018) and physical violence against Jews in other areas, such as Łódź (Rykała 2020), it is all the more worthwhile to analyse this phenomenon in such a large community and in such specific areas as those newly incorporated into Poland. Studies conducted so far have not revealed much about the specific nature of the community and areas mentioned above[14] (Wieczorek 2019). It also seems interesting to examine the studies on anti-Semitism and the role that Jews played in the security system (Bereszyński 2020, 2021). However, there is little doubt that this matter needs further in-depth research.

Another still unexplored aspect of Jewish life is religion. Jerzy Tomaszewski's statement made more than a decade ago that "one of the most glaring gaps in Polish historiography is the religious life of the Jewish community" (Tomaszewski 2010: 38) is still valid. As for Lower Silesia – irrespective of numerous studies on this topic – still little is known about what Jewish religious life looked like, who conducted it, or who the religious leaders were. And most importantly, there is a lack of detailed information on how important this sphere of everyday life was for Jewish communities in particular localities. Consequently, one may ask why there were so many centres in which the structures of Jewish religious life had not been established.

Another challenge would certainly be the adopting of a comparative approach to the issues discussed. What I have in mind is not only a comparison of individual communities or committees within a particular province, but also a broader look, for example, at such significant centres of Jewish life as Wrocław and Łódź. Such a study might provide answers to such lingering questions as the extent to which Jews in Lower Silesia represented the centre of Jewish life on a national scale – perhaps not so much in terms of decision-making, but in terms of the number of structures, influence, and the perception of the country by other Jews. A discussion of that kind might be

[14] A book by Alina Cała on Special Committees at the CKŻP (Central Committee of Jews in Poland) seems to be an exception.

expanded to other categories, such as politics. Another topic to consider is migration, which is well described in the subject literature (Szaynok 2016). Questions about the special significance of the region for the migration of Jews in the wake of the Kielce pogrom and later seem to remain unanswered. There is also a lack of biographical studies. Where the post-war history of Poland is concerned, there have been only a few publications describing lives of individual Jews, the most prominent of which is a book about Dawid Sfard (Nalewajko-Kulikov 2009). Perhaps Jakub Egit, known at the time as the "Jewish voivode", might eventually inspire more than just a brief article (Szajda 2021a), all the more so because his pre-war experiences of the Stalinist period place him against a broader Polish historical context. An interesting approach might be using computer data analysis or, more broadly, data science and digital research tools to analyse various materials from the Jewish committees, including their statistical data.

Finally, it would be worthwhile to look further than just studies focusing on the Jewish population. In such a perspective, creating an inclusive narrative that takes into account the role, scale of impact and importance of the Jewish community in Lower Silesia still remains an unfulfilled expectation and a challenge. Many Polish publications dealing with the post-war history of the region ignore the "Jewish question" in one way or another. This applies in the case of those areas and localities where the contribution of the Jewish community was certainly noticeable, if not significant. What I am referring to are not only monographs on particular cities or towns, but also books containing a synthesis of the history of regions (or sub-regions). Sometimes the description of a Jewish community in a particular location is reduced to just a few general sentences, which may be surprising given the current state of knowledge. In such studies, the Jewish population should be described in terms of not only their religion, but also their daily activities, all the more so when their work and contributions were important to the entire population of the country, as in the case of cultural life or cooperatives.

Summarising the literature review presented above, it should be emphasised that the last decades have been a period of "awakening" in research in this area, and have seen a systematic increase in the number of works on the Jewish population. It should be remarked that most of them consist of basic research, and bring readers closer to previously unknown facts about the life of this community in Lower Silesia. The articles that are being published nowadays more and more often refer to the local dimension of the Jewish presence in a given area, mostly to a particular locality or a specific issue – a selected aspect of that group's life. This does not mean that all issues have already been described and

analysed. One of the most important of them seems to be anti-Semitism and its specific variety in Lower Silesia just after the Second World War.

The problem of how to present a narrative on the Jewish population in Lower Silesia in the years 1945–1950 still remains a puzzle. Studies conducted so far have largely emphasised the uniqueness of this community, a specific revival of Jewish activity in this part of the so-called Recovered Territories, and at the same time a quite rapid regression and inhibition of most processes, resulting from various political decisions taken by the authorities. Is this the only narrative framework that can be used to describe this group in the discussed context? It certainly is not, although the very nature of the community discussed here will remain an important point of reference for the authors of subsequent studies. Perhaps a debate should be started about a new synthesis of Jewish life in the Wrocław province just after the war, taking into account existing research findings, new documents, and contemporary research trends or sensitivities. All the more so since the question of how to understand the Jewish experience of this period remains valid also in the case of Lower Silesia. It encompasses emotions, thoughts, decisions of thousands of Holocaust survivors who came to live in unknown territories, in an uncertain socio-political situation, sometimes living side by side with Germans, Poles and Red Army soldiers for many months. Undoubtedly, research focused on specific experiences of individuals and communities would be a valuable supplement to the current knowledge about the richness and diversity of institutional structures or the impact of politics and the communist authorities on Lower Silesian Jews.

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Key words: Jews, Lower Silesia, settlement, historiography, post-war, state of research

ABSTRACT

The settlement of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia is an important component of the postwar history of Jews in Poland. It is also a notable part of the narrative surrounding the so-called Recovered Territories.

The article presents the state of research on the history of the Jewish population in Lower Silesia immediately following the end of World War II. The author puts forward the thesis that scholars are

somewhat less interested in the history of the community of Jewish survivors living in Poland after 1945, despite the fact that the number of publications on this topic has increased significantly in recent years.

The research problem is an attempt to show new trends and viewpoints, as well as a recommendation to identify several research areas that may prove enormously useful in the development of further studies on the topic.

In addition to noting the most important publications relating to the immediate postwar period (1945–1950), current research trends as well as new perspectives and challenges facing scholars are discussed.

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Polish football in Hitler's shadow

Political implications of matches between the football teams of Poland and the Third Reich

Sport as a component of physical culture is part of the society's culture, alongside material culture, spiritual culture, symbolic culture, social culture, economic culture, political culture, historical culture, etc. As such, it is a component of culture and cannot be isolated from such concepts as society, politics or history. A sporting event is a cultural phenomenon, and with the rapid media development in the 20th and 21st centuries, as a result of which it resonates to an ever larger audience, it has become a spectacle bordering on mass culture, which also generates significant financial resources (the commercialisation of sport). The immense popularity of sport has thus become a matter of interest for states, which has consequently led to its politicisation. Sport has become political while a sporting event, under certain conditions, has also become a political event even though sporting competition itself is not political in nature.

The history of world sport shows many examples of how sport has been used for political purposes. The more than 100-year history of the most important organisation in world sport, the International Olympic Committee, which — according to Coubertin — was meant to be apolitical, testifies to an ongoing struggle with politics, with both negative and positive implications for sport (Jung 2010: 131 ff.).

The political nature of sport lies primarily in the legal definition of its function in the state and society. Sport also remains an important tool for accumulating social emotions. In contemporary international relations, sport has become a definable component of a state's soft power. Thus, international sporting competition can be a tool for the state to attain specific political goals in the international arena, which is also aided by sports diplomacy, an element

of public diplomacy. This kind of diplomatic activity often directly supports a state's foreign policy: as a means of shaping relations with other states, initiated and implemented by the state, and aimed at the authorities and public opinion of the country in question. This is the purpose of sporting exchanges, i.e. arranged international contacts between athletes, designed to create a positive image of countries in the societies involved in this type of relationship. In this context, this also applies to fans coming to sporting events, as well as to the issue of organising such events (Kobierecki 2018: 54-67).

These aspects will be the subject of an analysis, based on the historical and decision-making method, of five football matches between the national teams of the Second Polish Republic and Germany that took place during the Third German Reich period, between 1933 and 1938. Football was then (and still is) the most popular sport in both Poland and Germany. The article aims to show that already in the first half of the twentieth century, sport became a tool for articulating political intentions and subsequently fuel for states to achieve specific political goals in the international arena.

1933: Reconstruction of relations

The assumption of the Chancellorship on 30 January 1933 by NSDAP leader Adolf Hitler, which saw the beginning of Nazi rule in Germany, did not break the deadlock in Polish-German relations. This impasse perpetuated the poor state of relations from the 1920s, marked by almost constant crises and conflicts, the effects of the Treaty of Versailles and the imperative of German policy on the temporariness of the Polish state established as a result of the Great War. In the first months of 1933, the breakdown of mutual relations was caused, among other things, by the consequences of the Polish government's attempt to probe German intentions towards Poland by creating an atmosphere of so-called preventive war (Wojciechowski 1980: 15-32).

Under such conditions, social relations between the two countries had also become destabilised, including in the field of sport. Despite the generally poor relations, Polish-German sporting contacts continued to develop until the autumn of 1930. They were halted by Germany's introduction of an unofficial ban on its athletes competing against Polish athletes as a result of the tension in bilateral relations following Minister Gottfried Treviranus's speech in August 1930 on the 10th anniversary of the plebiscite in Warmia and Masuria. In this speech, he argued unequivocally for a revision of the German-Polish border, which triggered large anti-German demonstrations in Poland (Krasuski 1975:

353-354). The restrictions of the German sports authorities caused repercussions on the Polish side, which introduced an unofficial boycott of the German sports associations that enforced the ban (AAN, APRB, 2479: 167, 171-172).

After a temporary resumption of sporting contacts in 1932, the Nazi seizure of power brought a further setback. It was epitomised by the 1933 cancellation of the annual two-legged tie between the Polish and German Upper Silesian national teams due to the tense political relations between the two countries. The matches, which had been played since 1924, were referred to by the German press as *kleine Länderspiele* (small international matches) because of the great interest of fans in the divided Upper Silesian area (Czado, Lubina 2006a, 2006b). The initiated boycott of Polish sport was of a purely political nature (AAN, KGRPB, 114: 240-242).

After a few months in 1933, when both sides discovered the true intentions of the opponent (for Poland it was the axiom of basing its security on an equal balance of the friendliest possible relations with Germany and the Soviet Union, and for the Nazis it was the temporary postponement of plans to revise the border due to the weakness of the National Socialist system in the Reich), there was a 'thaw' in bilateral relations. This was initiated by a conversation between the Polish envoy to Germany Alfred Wysocki and A. Hitler in Berlin on 2 May 1933 (Wojciechowski 1980: 33 ff.).

Sporting contacts between the two countries began to improve towards the end of 1933 with a gradual recovery of political relations. That change was credited to the new Polish envoy to Germany, Józef Lipski, who arrived in Berlin in July 1933. He was the main executor of J. Piłsudski's political will to bring Poland and Germany closer together (AAN, ARPB, 2486: 23-27). A breakthrough came with the speech of the Third Reich's Minister of Sport (*Reichssportführer*) Hans von Tschammer und Osten in Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland) in late September 1933. The minister stated that: "after consultation with the government officials, I strongly recommend that we establish sporting relations with Poland as soon as possible" ("Przegląd Sportowy", 4 October1933: 6).

That decision was based on "the desire to tear down the border walls in physical education and thus to put sport in the service of bringing the two great nations together" (ibid., 16 December 1933: 3). This resulted in the organisation on 19 November 1933 of the first ever match between Poles and Germans on the politically sensitive territory of the Free City of Danzig. The Danzig-Warsaw game (2:0) took place four days after another meeting between A. Hitler and J. Lipski that was crucial for Polish-German relations as it introduced the idea of regulating bilateral relations through a political treaty. This progress also marked a rapprochement between the positions of the two

countries on the contentious Danzig issues (Wojciechowski 1980: 77 ff.). The match in Danzig, which took place in a friendly atmosphere, confirmed the relaxation of this aspect of Polish-German relations concerning the politically sensitive issue of the Free City ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 21 November 1933: 2; "Przegląd Sportowy", 22 November 1933: 2).

It soon became clear that the Danzig game was a prelude to a match between the Polish and German national teams. In the 1920s, it was impossible to organise such an event, primarily for sporting reasons – due to the low level of football in Poland in the first years of independence, but also because of the unstable political relations between the two countries ("Przegląd Sportowy", 31 March 1928: 4; ibid, 21 April 1928: 5; ibid, 21 September 1929: 6; ibid, 2 December 1933: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy…", 7 November 1933: 12; ibid, 21.11.1933: 6-7). The implementation of this initiative in 1933 was thought to be facilitated by the fact that a solid basis of football contacts had been established the previous year as a result of the efforts of officials from Polish diplomatic and consular missions in Germany as well as Polish journalists and sports activists from Berlin. The proposal was institutionalised in the form of the Polish Committee for Sporting Events in Berlin (PKISB, Ger.: *Polnischer Ausschuss für Sportveranstaltungen zu Berlin*), founded on 17 December 1931 at the Polish Consulate General in Berlin. This initiative, which stemmed from the need to use sport for propaganda purposes in order to spread and strengthen Polish identity and create a positive image of Poland in Germany, aimed to systematically develop Polish-German contacts in various sports.

An official proposal for the match between the Polish and German national teams came from the activists of the German Football Association (*Deutscher Fußball Bund – DFB*) and was officially communicated to the Polish Football Association on 2 November 1933, which accepted it at a board meeting four days later ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 7 November 1933: 12). The decision in this regard was announced in Berlin on 13 November 1933. According to many observers, given the bureaucratic hurdles at the time, this was a surprisingly short time frame to move from considering the match to deciding to organise it. It can therefore be assumed that it had the hallmarks of a high-level political decision on both the German and Polish sides, as the result of an ongoing thaw in bilateral relations.

As the "Przegląd Sportowy" sports daily noted at the time: "(…) in issues regarding 'apolitical' sport, foreign ministers increasingly have something to say" ("Przegląd Sportowy", 8 November 1933: 2). One of the main advocates for the organisation of the match on the German side was the ex-footballer, international referee, *NSDAP* member and then already prominent *DFB* ac-

tivist (he was to head it from 1950 to 1962) Peter Joseph (Peco) Bauwens. His long-standing efforts, supported by Wielkopolska activist and PZPN (Polish Football Association) board member Janusz Mallow, were finally to be realised. Significantly, on the eve of the match, P. J. Bouwens appealed to the Poles not to be prejudiced against the new political regime in Germany when they arrived in Berlin (Die DFB-Präsidenten 2016; Mielech 1963: 97; "Przegląd Sportowy", 2 December 1933: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy…", 21 November 1933: 6-7).

The Polish public was also aware of the political significance of the match, which is why the idea of playing it provoked many disputes. These ranged from positions emphasising the benefits for Polish football of playing a match against a top European team, despite the Nazi blatant political agenda of the event ("Przegląd Sportowy", 18 November 1933: 1) to strong criticism, also from ideological positions: socialist and Jewish ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 7 November 1933: 12).

Interestingly, the possibility of organising a game between Germany and Poland was much sought after by the Danzig Football Association authorities. They urged Berlin that the match be hosted in the 'Free City', which they saw as the symbolically neutral venue for such events. Finally, it was decided that the first game would take place at Berlin's *Post-Stadion* in the Moabit district at Lehterstraβe, the city's main football venue alongside the Grunewald Arena, which was being prepared for the 1936 Olympic Games. The date of the match was set for Sunday, 3 December 1933 at 2:00 pm ("Przegląd Sportowy", 18 November 1933: 1).

The decision to play the match against Germany on the Polish side was probably the result of arrangements between the PZPN's foreign affairs officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Kazimierz Glabisz, and an unspecified unit or person in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AAN, MSZ, 8466: 88). The key role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the decision-making process was emphasised by the publicist Marian Sttater, who admitted that political rather than sporting considerations prevailed: "The PZPN would not have accepted the match against Germany without the MFA's pressure" ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 14 November 1933: 12). It seems that the arrangements on this matter were made at a higher political level, without the need to consult the relevant departments of the MFA, at the interface between diplomacy and the army.

In football that was increasingly subordinated to the army, which was reflected in the appointment of high-ranking army officers to successive PZPN boards (in 1933 these included General Władysław Bończa-Uzdowski, from January 1928 president of the PZPN, its treasurer – Captain Konstanty Nikolski, or Lieutenant Colonel Zygmunt Żołędziowski, President of the Football

League) (Gowarzewski 1994: 40), it is no coincidence that Lieutenant Colonel K. Glabisz appeared as one of the main promoters of the Germany-Poland match. At that time he was not only a very prominent figure in Polish sport, but also one of J. Piłsudski's most trusted aides. The Wielkopolska sports official was highly regarded by his superiors in 1926-1928 as the head of the Department of German Studies in the General Staff's 2nd Department, which was crucial from the point of view of Poland's security. In the 1930s he combined his work in sports institutions with activity in the Chief Inspectorate of the Armed Forces (Wieczorek 2007: 18). Apart from holding a functional position in the PZPN (he had been a member of this organisation since 1923) from 1928, he presided over the Polish Olympic Committee, an institution integrated into the Union of Polish Sports Federations, where he held the position of vice-president. He therefore had the competence and capacity to be close to the decision to play the prestigious football match against Germany. This was also pointed out by the renowned sports organiser and journalist Stanislaw Mielech (Mielech 1963: 133).

The PKISB and personally its new protector, the Polish envoy J. Lipski, played an important role in the preparations for the match in Berlin. At the end of November, he met with Georg Xandri, the Secretary General of the *DFB*, who was also the *Reichssportführer*'s envoy, to discuss the organisation of the match. Years later, the *DFB* activist recalled that J. Lipski, as a great football enthusiast, was one of the initiators of this match as an important event for creating a friendly atmosphere between Poles and Germans ("Przegląd Sportowy", 12 September 1938: 3).

The PKISB's efforts in the field of organisation and propaganda, carried out in harmonious cooperation with the *DFB*, contributed to an atmosphere of extraordinary enterprise, beyond sport, both in Poland and in Berlin. The *DFB* urged Berliners to "give a warm welcome to the Polish visitors" (ibid., 25 November 1933: 1). However, too many Polish fans were unable to come to Berlin because the MSZ's press department had advised against sending organised groups of fans to Germany (AAN, MSZ, 8466: 94).

The considerable significance of this match for both nations was reflected in the fact that both teams were expected to field their strongest sides, something that was not always the case in friendly matches. In the case of the Germans, such a recommendation was made by *DFB* President Felix Linnemann to the national team managers. Interestingly, the selection of the German players for the match against Poland was entrusted to the referee Alfred Birlem ("Przegląd Sportowy", 25 November 1933: 1) and not to the official coach of the national team – the union captain Otto Nerz. The PZPN, and on its behalf

the team manager J. Kałuża, also put together the strongest eleven to avoid embarrassment in Berlin (ibid., 25 November 1933: 4).

The Polish delegation arrived in Berlin on Friday evening, 1 December, after a journey of more than eleven hours. The sixteen players were accompanied by an official delegation from the Polish Football Association headed by President General W. Bończa-Uzdowski, Foreign Affairs Officer Lieutenant Colonel K. Glabisz, Union Captain J. Kałuża and other members of the Board (AAN, ARPB, 2483: 19; "Przegląd Sportowy", 25 November 1933: 2). Ten Polish journalists also arrived in Berlin, including S. Mielech from the "Stadjon" weekly magazine, who was to provide a live commentary of a Polish national football match for the first time in the history of Polish Radio (Mielech 1963: 106-108). At Friedrichstrasse station, the Polish delegation was met on the German side by the head of the Berlin-Brandenburg Football Association, *Obersturmbannführer* Oskar Glöckler. Also present were the military attaché of the Polish Embassy in Berlin, Major Antoni Szymański, and representatives of the Polish Consulate, led by Consul General Wacław Gawroński. As Polish team captain Jerzy Bułanow, a Russian émigré from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, recalled, the Polish team was greeted with particular warmth at every turn in the capital of the Third Reich: "Starting with the German border we felt the hospitality of the Germans. They tried to show their joy at the arrival of the Polish players in various ways, they would indulge in politeness" (Bułanow 2011: 139).

On the eve of the game, the Polish guests, who were accommodated in the Central Hotel, were engaged in a number of activities organised by the German side. Accompanied by F. Linnemann, O. Glöckler, A. Birlem and Major A. Szymański, they visited the Olympic Stadium under construction, the Institute of Physical Education and the main sights of Potsdam to spend the evening at the Winter Garden Cabaret ("Przegląd Sportowy", 6 December 1933: 1). In the afternoon, they were invited to a festive banquet given by J. Lipski at the headquarters of the Polish diplomatic mission. They took part in an event with a clear political context, confirming the improving trend in Polish-German relations. The banquet was also attended by many representatives of the diplomatic mission, the Consulate General headed by W. Gawroński, the PKISB and the Polish Football Association as well as a large number of German guests. Among them were H. von Tschammer und Osten along with his associates, the entire board of the *DFB*, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the *Reichswehr*, the head of the *SS* in Berlin-Brandenburg, O. Glöckler, as well as many German and Polish journalists.

As one Polish journalist put it: "Those were wonderful, carefree hours (…) leading up to an atmosphere of trust (…)" (ibid., 9 December 1933: 6).

Similar impressions were conveyed by the host of the banquet, envoy J. Lipski, who confirmed in a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the positive atmosphere around the match was a result of the increasingly visible change in German politics, of a "change of front across the board". As he noted: "In Nazi circles there is talk of a new Polish-German friendship. (…)Yesterday, at the reception at the Legation, a bronze shirt was gifted to the Polish team and representatives of the *Reichswehr* made the mood very friendly. They spread rumours that the *Fuehrer* himself was interested in the *match* and might well attend it in person in the stands". Yet Lipski did not draw too many conclusions from this, trying to be cautious, lest "too strong an action in Berlin might cause damage in other territories". With the alliance with France in mind, he advised his subordinates in the Polish consulates in Germany to take advantage of this favourable 'mood' to settle unresolved issues that were important for Polish interests in this country (PDD 2015, 346: 780).

Adolf Hitler did not show up in the Post-Stadion, but as H. von Tschammer und Osten said after the match, the Chancellor was to receive a detailed report from him on the game itself and the atmosphere surrounding it ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 5 December 1933: 3). The government of the Third Reich was represented by the Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, Joseph Goebbels, who watched the match in the company of envoy J. Lipski, Consul W. Gawroński, and Major A. Szymański. This was an unusual event because, as journalists noted, the presence of Joseph Goebbels was the first time that a minister of the Nazi government had attended an important match of the national team. In fact, he visited the players of both teams in their dressing rooms at half-time ("Przegląd Sportowy", 6 December 1933: 6; ibid., 9 December 1933: 6).

The game, played on a frosty afternoon, was contested in a very friendly atmosphere, with the German crowd proving to be objective observers of the action on the pitch, applauding both the German and Polish players for their successful efforts. Among the more than 30,000 German fans were 2,000 Poles, predominantly from the Polish communities of Berlin, Leipzig and East Prussia, who cheered their players more vigorously than the static German supporters. However, after a very good performance by the Polish team, especially in the second half, the match ended in a 'lucky' 1-0 victory for the hosts: just before the end of the game, German striker Josef Rasselnberg fired an effective shot into Spirydion Albanski's goal (ibid., 6 December 1933: 2).

Despite the defeat, both the Polish press and the diplomatic service in Germany reported very good, or even excellent reviews of the Polish team's performance. They appeared in the German press and in speeches by personalities

from the German sports world, including P. Bouwens (AAN, ARPB, 2483: 20-28; "Przegląd Sportowy", 9 December 1933: 1, 4; "Raz, dwa, trzy…", 5 December 1933: 3, 6). As a result, in Poland a defeat was seen as a near-victory, and not just in terms of sport. According to "Raz, dwa, trzy…": "A short news story spread all over the world about an honourable result for us, 0:1, which will greatly increase the prestige of our sport and pave the way for us to develop further international relations" ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 12 December 1933: 8-9).

Polish sporting and political officials made no secret of their satisfaction with the trip to Berlin, both in sporting terms (General W. Bończa-Uzdowski spoke of a "tremendous success" in terms of the result [sic! – R. J.] and the style of play) and in propaganda terms, with Colonel K. Glabisz speaking of the "chivalry of the game and the propaganda value for our reputation abroad" ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 5 December 1933: 6). The very friendly atmosphere created by the Germans around the match was also noticed by envoy J. Lipski, who, in a conversation with German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath in December 1933, said "a few kind words in connection with the Polish-German football match". He emphasised the "very pleasant" role of H. von Tschammer und Osten, who, among other things, visited the Polish players in their dressing room before the match. In a conversation with K. Neurath, J. Lipski complied with the *Reichssportführer's* request to emphasise the importance of similar sporting events for Polish-German relations (PDD 2015, 367: 819).

The Germany-Poland tie in Berlin created opportunities for a more favourable perception of Poles in Germany. It was an impulse to challenge many stereotypes about Poles. In a broader sense, the effective organisation of the game, the cooperation on the pitch, the bravery of the Polish players and the energetic, but (as emphasized by the German press) sportsmanlike cheering of the Polish supporters, in a way reduced the overtones of the popular myth in Germany of the Polish hothead, the bad organiser. Dominant since the late 18th century, it became part of the pejorative concept of the *polnische Wirtschaft* (Polish order) (Loew 2017: 34). It violated the argument consistently put forward by the Reich's elite after 1918 about that Poland was a provisional state (*Saisonstaat*).

The first ever football match between the two countries was a political and sporting initiative of the German elite, and could only take place with its approval. This was because the Nazi elites were determined to overcome the political isolation in which the Third Reich found itself after its withdrawal from the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference in October 1933, and to neutralise the possibility of joint military action by the Poles and the French against the Reich, also by intensifying sporting contacts (Faryś

2019: 244, 251). Football, like German sport as a whole, was increasingly subordinated and structurally transformed in the spirit of the ideology and for the needs of the National Socialist state, for which H. von Tschammer und Osten was responsible (Hesse 2014: 77; "Raz, dwa, trzy…", 19 December 1933: 12-13; Wyskok 2016: 13). In this case it was to serve as a propaganda tool to curry favour with the Polish government and society.

The Polish decision-makers, probably Foreign Minister Józef Beck, the Polish diplomatic and consular services in Germany, with its sports-institutional eminence in the PKISB led by envoy J. Lipski, and the majority of PZPN activists, who were also influential representatives of the Polish army, were aware of this German strategy.[1] However, despite the many objections from sections of the Polish public, the decision-makers claimed that such a spectacular sporting encounter had great political potential. The sporting event, which aroused great interest in both Poland and Germany and took place in an atmosphere full of friendly gestures, thus became a newsworthy symbol of a new opening in general relations between the hitherto feuding states and nations. Football, already the most popular sport in both countries at the time, became one of many instruments to achieve the common political goal of normalising bilateral relations.

The initiation of football contacts at the highest level was followed by cooperation in other sports, in which the PKISB played a major role in the following years. Finally, it could be argued that the December match was also a spectacular prelude to an important political act that the two countries soon decided to undertake. This was the signing of the Declaration of Non-Violence in Mutual Relations, also known as the Non-Aggression Pact, on 26 January 1934, which put an end to a period of poor bilateral relations. For Poland, it removed the threat of redrawing the common border, calmed relations with the Free City of Danzig, ended the economic war and reduced German anti-Polish propaganda. At the same time, it gave rise to Polish-German political interaction, also in the international arena (Faryś 2019: 251-252; Wojciechowski 1980: 104-115). Even at a later stage, in early 1935, the implications of this sporting event were similarly assessed in the Polish press: "(…) the Poland-Germany football

[1] The Polish press wrote explicitly about the political motives behind Germany's decision to play the match: "The Germans have prepared for the game extremely meticulously. And not just from a sporting point of view. They have realised that they are somewhat alone in Europe at the moment, and so they wanted the match with Poland to prove to the world that they are not alone, and that there are countries that are happy to maintain contact with them in the field of sport, which has recently become so popular" ("Raz, dwa, trzy…", 5 December 1933: 2).

match was like the first predictor of friendly relations between the two countries" ("Przegląd Sportowy", 2 January 1935: 4).

The perception in Poland that the Berlin match was a sporting and political propaganda success encouraged sports journalists to argue that sporting contacts with Germany should be continued and even intensified ("Przegląd Sportowy", 16 December 1933: 3; "Raz, dwa, trzy…", 12 December 1933: 8-9). After the Berlin match, a similar opinion was voiced by H. von Tschammer und Osten. He described the match as an "encouraging" beginning of "fruitful" sporting contacts within the framework of general relations between Germany and Poland. The political rapprochement between the two countries resulted in a formal agreement on the organisation of sporting events as part of a cultural exchange agreement, which was concluded during a visit to Poland in June 1934 by J. Goebbels, a game observer in Berlin, on the occasion of the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact. Among other things, it was agreed that friendly football matches between the Polish and German national teams would be organised once a year (Urban 2012: 72).

1934: Confirmation of the course of détente

The return match between Poland and Germany was scheduled for 9 September 1934. As in the previous year, it was preceded by a game between the Warsaw and Gdańsk teams (1:0) at Warsaw's Polish Army Stadium ("Przegląd Sportowy", 29 August 1934: 4), which was also to be the venue for the match between the national teams. It was once again heralded as a great event with political significance, underlining the strategic value of Polish-German rapprochement in the field of sport: "No event since the existence of sport in independent Poland has aroused such interest as the Poland-Germany football match in Warsaw" (ibid., 8 September 1934: 2). The importance of the match was demonstrated by the fact that, as early as July 1934, the PZPN appointed a special committee for the organisation of the match, chaired by its vice-president, Colonel Karol Rudolf, and – because of huge fan interest – began negotiations with the District Office of Physical Education and Military Training (Okręgowy Urząd Wychowania Fizycznego i Przysposobienia Wojskowego) on increasing the capacity of the Polish Army Stadium (ibid., 28 July 1934: 4).

The sporting event of the year was to be watched by around 30,000 football fans (instead of the usual 13,000), who were also located on the cycling track around the pitch and on the training ground behind one of the goals (ibid., 11 August 1934: 6). The cost of reconstructing the Warsaw stadium specifically for

the match against Germany totalled 7,000 zlotys, but ticket revenues of 30,000 zlotys more than recouped the investment (ibid., 17 November 1934: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 11 September 1934: 2). Twenty-six trains with over ten thousand fans from all over Poland arrived in Warsaw, but the demand for tickets was several times higher, as evidenced by the PZPN's refusal to accept numerous orders from all over the country ("Przegląd Sportowy", 8 September 1934: 3).

Given the huge interest in the match in Poland and the ambivalent attitude of Poles towards the Germans, the PZPN issued a special appeal to Polish football fans to welcome the German guests with dignity and to support both teams in a sportsmanlike and objective manner: "It depends on the public whether the match will take place in a truly sporting and civilised atmosphere and whether our guests will take home from Warsaw as pleasant and good memories as we did from Berlin [from the December match – R. J.]. (...) Sporting competitions are supposed to bring people together, not divide them. (...) Let us remember this, let us silence the shouters and troublemakers who want to disturb the harmonious course of the competition" (ibid., 8 September 1934: 4). The appeal was successful, for apart from a few instances of booing the German defenders, who often passed the ball to their goalkeeper, the Polish crowd were respectful towards both the German players and supporters, which was also confirmed by the German "Kicker" magazine: "During our two-day visit, the Poles were extremely hospitable, friendly and polite" (quoted in Urban 2012: 76).

The Warsaw match also aroused great interest in Germany ("Przegląd Sportowy", 1 September 1934: 2). Consequently, the organisers allocated up to 5,000 tickets for German fans. In the end, more than 6,000 fans arrived in Warsaw on special trains, mainly from East Prussia, German Silesia, Berlin and even Bavaria. It was probably the largest, as "Przegląd Sportowy" put it, "invasion of Germans in Warsaw" since the end of the First World War: "They were everywhere and behaved in a peculiar way: they toured the city in groups, using banners showing their dedication for order and a sense of community; they admired the monuments while eating the sandwiches they had brought with them; they took multiple photographs; they stood for hours in front of the Bristol hotel [where the German team were staying – R. J.] to catch a glimpse of a German international; and, above all, they drank beer, at any time of the day and in any part of the city". As a result, Warsaw's restaurants had a problem since they had run out of beer by the end of the day (Gawkowski 2013: 83).

The German team arrived in Warsaw on 8 September 1934 with the strongest squad selected by coach O. Nerz. They were accompanied by a group of a dozen or so German correspondents, not only from sports press but also

from political dailies, who had consulted with a representative of the PKISB before their trip to Poland, and two lower-ranking officials of the Foreign Ministry (AAN, MSZ, 8484: n.p.; ibid.: 185; ARPB, 2487: 39; "Przegląd Sportowy", 8 September 1934: 2). At the Warsaw railway station the guests were officially welcomed by General W. Bończa-Uzdowski, Colonel K. Rudolf and Colonel K. Glabisz, who was delegated by the PZPN to attend to the German team during their stay in Poland ("Przegląd Sportowy", 12 September 1934: 1). The German delegation was headed by *DFB* President, *Bundesführer* F. Linnemann. The arrival of this influential FIFA official in Warsaw was an event in itself. As "Przegląd Sportowy" noted: "As the long-serving president and leader of the *DFB*, Linnemann had never travelled abroad except for the World Cup. In Warsaw, he will be in charge of the German national team abroad for the first time. This shows, among other things, how much importance the German football authorities attach to the Poland game (ibid., 8 September 1934: 2). The German team spent the time before the match on a sightseeing tour of Warsaw on a special coach, including a visit to the Central Institute of Physical Education. The sports academy and the 1930 modern Polish Army Stadium made an "excellent impression" on the German guests (ibid., 15 September 1934: 4).

The match began at 4pm with the traditional rendition of the national anthems. That moment was vividly described by an eyewitness, the then teenager Mieczysław Szymkowiak, who went on to a career as a respected footballer, coach and football journalist:

> "At first we were shocked. When the German national anthem began to be played, the sight of thousands of flags with swastikas, thousands of hands raised in the Nazi salute and, of course, the efficient singing made a shocking impression. *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*... This was followed by a Polish rendition of the *Dąbrowski Mazurka*, the likes of which I have never heard again! The audience sang the anthem [for the first time in the stadium *a cappella* – R.J.] with extraordinary passion, beating the thousands of German fans not only by sheer numbers... This unusual musical prelude put the crowd in an extraordinary mood. Nervousness and the fighting spirit were visible on the faces of all participants" (quoted in Gowarzewski 1991: 10).

The tension associated with the solemnity of the event must also have been felt by the Polish senior government officials, who took their seats in the stand of honour at the Warsaw stadium. Their presence confirmed the political significance of the match. Besides its organisers – the prominent representatives of the PUWFiPW (the State Office of Physical Education and Military Training) and the PZPN, led by Colonel W. Kiliński and General W. Bończa-Uzdowski – the match was also attended by Speaker of the Sejm Kazimierz Świtalski as

well as by Deputy Ministers: of Foreign Affairs Jan Szembek; of Military Affairs General Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski and General Tadeusz Kasprzycki; and of Finance Colonel Adam Koc. They were accompanied by General Edward Rydz-Śmigły, who did not play a significant political role at the time, and Polish members of the International Olympic Committee: General Stanisław Rouppert, who was also Vice-President of the Scientific Council for Physical Education and Head of its Medical Committee, and the former Minister of Finance, Colonel Ignacy Matuszewski. The German side was represented by officials from the German Embassy in Warsaw: Counsellor Martin Schliep and the German Military Attaché in Warsaw, General Max Schindler ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 11 September 1934: 2).

The Germans were apprehensive about the Polish team after their performance in Berlin, but having finished third at the recent 1934 World Cup in Italy, they were clear favourites for the match in Warsaw. This was confirmed by the 33,000-strong crowd, the largest ever to attend a Polish sporting event, as the Poles went down 5-2 to the Germans despite being 2-1 up with twenty minutes remaining. After the referee's final whistle, "the German players were carried triumphantly across the pitch on the shoulders of their compatriots. There was even a Nazi banner, which, held high above their heads, made a rather strange impression. The Polish fans left the stands in silence (...)" (ibid. 2-3).

The clear victory of the Third Reich's footballers in no way disturbed the friendly atmosphere of the festive Polish-German sporting event in Warsaw, at least not at the post-match banquet, where Polish and German officials vied with each other in making friendly gestures. Colonel K. Glabisz was pleased that an excellent German team, playing beautiful and noble football, had come to Warsaw. At the same time he emphasised that the match in Warsaw was of great importance for the development of Polish-German relations. He was echoed by F. Linnemann, who began his speech by admiring the beauty of Warsaw, before declaring: "We have learned to appreciate in you such fine qualities as chivalry, fair play and fighting to the end. These qualities manifested themselves magnificently in today's match. (...) With such an opponent, with whom the match was played in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, and who knows how to lose, we want to continue our relationship". He went on to say that there would be further games between the two teams over the next two years. This announcement by the head of the DFB was confirmed by General Max Schindler, who thanked PUWFiPW Director Colonel W. Kilinski for his enthusiastic toast "Let's love each other". At the end of the friendly ceremony, both sides exchanged gifts: The Poles presented their guests with a miniature of the Sigismund column, the Germans returned the favour with a commem-

orative vase ("Przegląd Sportowy", 15 September 1934: 3; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 11 September 1934: 7).

The German victory did not come as a surprise to the Polish public, given the level of J. Kałuża's team at the time. Nonetheless, that damage to the image of Polish sport left its mark on the Polish press. In particular, the political and sporting authorities were criticised for not showing enough interest in sport compared to their counterparts in the Third Reich. It was even claimed that football in Poland was tolerated as a necessary evil, resulting in serious shortcomings in terms of infrastructure and training. Meanwhile, the Warsaw match, which, according to publicists, attracted a huge crowd of Polish fans, proved the importance of football in the lives of the 'broad masses'. Unlike in Poland, this truth was well known in Germany, as evidenced by the sight of several thousand Germans following their team to Warsaw ("Przegląd Sportowy", 12 September 1934: 2; ibid., 15 September 1934: 2 and 4; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 18 September 1934: 8-9).

However, the September match met its political objective as another expression of Polish-German rapprochement. As the press emphasised, despite Poland's painful defeat, the game was "of outstanding importance for Polish-German relations as thousands of Germans and numerous German journalists got to know our country" ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 11 September 1934: 7). In fact, the latter were not only much less critical of the Polish team's performance, but also did not spare words of admiration for what they saw in Poland, probably due to instructions from the Third Reich's Ministry of Propaganda. Correspondents of the German press, for example, glorified Polish system solutions and state support for physical education, which prompted sympathetic smiles from Polish journalists ("Przegląd Sportowy', 22 September 1934: 3; Ibid, 20 October 1934: 5; AAN, MSZ, 8484: n.p.).

1935: Towards Cooperation

The increasing contacts between Polish and German football, including the Free City of Danzig, and the announcement of more to come ("Przegląd Sportowy", 6 April 1935: 4) proved that sporting relations between the two countries were stabilising at a high level, also in terms of quality. This was confirmed by H. von Tschammer und Osten in an interview with "Przegląd Sportowy" in April, in which he pointed out that the intensification of these contacts had taken place not only in football, but also in other sports such as boxing, cycling, tennis, athletics, equestrianism, skiing and hockey. He reiterated the great im-

portance of sport "for the idea of international brotherhood", citing the example of the unexpected friendliness of the Germans during the France-Germany football match in Paris the day after the announcement of the German government's decision to introduce universal military service in the territory of the Third Reich (ibid., 6 April 1935: 4). The German decree of 16 March 1935, which represented an ostentatious violation by the Nazi authorities of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and the beginning of German armament, was received with cautious approval by Polish politicians. This attitude was based on the axiom of maintaining good, partner-like relations with Germany, even though the political elite of the Second Republic was aware that this step posed a great threat to Poland, which could not be compensated for by the 1934 non-aggression treaty (Wojciechowski 1980: 164 ff.).

The German military decree coincided with the appointment of the German Kurt Otto as head coach of the Polish national football team. The then 35-year-old coach was to help the then manager of the team, J. Kałuża, to prepare the players effectively for the Olympic Games, which were to be held in Berlin in just over a year's time. K. Otto, a graduate of the renowned Berlin *Hochschule für Leibesübungen* (University of Physical Education), who had previously played football for Arminia Bielefeld, Tennis Borussia Berlin and Schalke 04 Gelsenkirchen, among others, and was later a coach in the West German District and in Gelsenkirchen (German runners-up with Schalke in 1933), Essen and Dortmund, was recommended to the PZPN by the then head coach of the Third Reich national team, O. Nerz (Kowoll 2019: 278-279; "Przegląd Sportowy", 27 February 1935: 2; Ibid, 6 March 1935: 4; Ibid, 16 March 1935: 1). The selection of a German for this important post – with a salary of 800 zloty a month, high by the standards of the time – came as no surprise, not only because of the location of the Games and the strong position of German football. It also had a kind of political dimension, emphasising the Polish-German partnership, not only in the field of sport. In the German press, K. Otto regarded the Polish players as talented, technically gifted, and with an understanding of football (Urban 2012: 76). One of the first significant tests for the German coach was to be a game between the Polish national team… and his compatriots, scheduled for 15 September 1935 in Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland).

Despite the 'unprecedented' interest it generated in both countries, the Breslau match was not announced and covered in the same way as the previous games between the two teams, i.e. as a major, even spectacular, event, not just a sporting one. In 1935, in Poland, the match was regarded as a natural symptom of what seemed to be normal neighbourly relations, although it remained a prestigious event. This was evidenced by the fact that both football federations

fielded their best players even though both national teams were due to play other friendly matches scheduled for the same day(!) – the Germans played Estonia in Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland) while the Poles faced Latvia in Łódź ("Przegląd Sportowy", 12 September 1935: 1; ibid., 14 September 1935: 2). The general opinion in Poland and Germany again pointed to the German players as the favourites for the Breslau game, but the Breslau press, for example, described the Poles as surprisingly "formidable opposition", while in Poland a mood of tempered but cautious optimism prevailed ("Przegląd Sportowy", 14 September 1935: 1-2; Szymański 2011: 179).

On the eve of the match, the Polish team travelled by train from Katowice, where they had been training for several days under the direction of K. Otto. The importance attached to the match by the Polish side was reflected in the low rank of the managerial team. It consisted of Tadeusz Kuchar, the PZPN training officer, J. Mallow, a member of the PZPN board, and J. Kałuża, the team manager ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 16 September 1935: 19; "Przegląd Sportowy", 14 September 1935: 2). After a three-hour journey, the guests were formally welcomed at Breslau's railway station, which had been decorated for the occasion with a large banner welcoming the Poles, by the special envoy of the *Reichssportführer*, Count Schulenberg, and the Mayor of Breslau, Hans Friedrich. The footballers stayed at the nearby *Nordhoff Hotel*, which had been given a "completely Polish face". They were greeted by the *DFB* President, F. Linnemann, and visited by the Polish Consul in Breslau, Raczkowski. The Polish delegation toured the city while in the evening a performance was organised for both teams in the *Liebich-Theather* ("Przegląd Sportowy", 16 September 1935: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 24 September 1935: 8; Szymański: 182).

The Breslau match drew more than 20,000 fans from outside the city, including an estimated 10,000 supporters of the Polish team. Besides Poles living in Germany, organised groups of supporters arrived on special trains, mainly from the Polish part of Upper Silesia as well as from Warsaw, Krakow, Poznań and Lviv. In the end, the Hermann Göring Stadium was packed with between 45,000 and 50,000 fans, a new record attendance for a football match in the German city of Breslau. On the stand of honour were representatives of the German state, military and sporting authorities, as well as the Polish Consul General from Oppeln (now Opole, Poland) Samborski, and the Vice-Consul from Breslau, Kwiatkowski ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", sports supplement, 17 September 1935: IV; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 17 September 1935: 2; Szymański 2011: 179-182). They witnessed how the German crowd gave the Polish players a rousing welcome as they ran onto the pitch. They were also given a warm farewell after a competitive and evenly contested match, which the

Germans won again: through a goal by Edmund Conen ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 24 September 1935: 8).

The Polish media were rather critical of the result ("Przegląd Sportowy", 19.09.1935: 3), likewise the German press, which criticised the Third Reich team's modest scoring record. The Germans praised the quality of the Polish team, which lost in an honourable manner, a fact that the media attributed mainly to the German coach, K. Otto ("Przegląd Sportowy", 21 September 1935: 6; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 17 September 1935: 2-3; Szymański 2011: 182-183).

The Breslau match seems to have fulfilled the political and propaganda objectives of both sides. The gentle intimacy that marked Polish-German relations at the time was reflected in the behaviour of the officials, for example at the post-match gala dinner attended by both teams at the *Vier Jahrszeiten* hotel. The banquet, which lasted until the early hours of the following morning, was attended by the *DFB*'s most important activists, the city authorities and, on the Polish side, the Polish consul in Breslau. F. Linemann's toast in honour of "the Polish nation and President Mościcki" was answered by T. Kuchar with a speech in honour of "the German nation and Chancellor Hitler". The German officials "(...) spoke in the warmest terms about the friendly relations which bind them to the PZPN, calling them the closest". They confirmed that another match between the two teams would take place in a year's time, this time in Poland, depending on the final arrangements, in Warsaw, Kraków or Katowice ("Przegląd Sportowy", 16 September 1935: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 17 September 1935: 2; ibid., 24 September 1935: 8). The positive propaganda message was completed by a statement in the Breslau *Ostdeutsche Sportzeitung* daily, which emphasised the very good sporting relations between the two countries: "There are few [national] federations with which the Germans have found such close contact in such a short time" (quoted in Szymański 2011: 183).

1936: Attempts to subordinate Poland

However, the organisation of the fourth Poland-Germany match in 1936, a rematch of the Breslau game, ran into serious problems. Originally scheduled for the spring of that year, it was cancelled by the *DFB*, the reason being a lack of available dates due to preparations for the Berlin Olympics. As a result, despite earlier statements by the Germans, the match between the two teams would not take place the following year, and the likely new date would not be until the spring of 1937 ("Przegląd Sportowy", 20 February 1936: 5). Eventually, following negotiations with the PZPN, the *DFB* activists agreed to a date of 13

September 1936 (ibid., 9 April 1936: 1), but the venue of the match became an issue. The PZPN wanted the match to be played in Poznań, which was announced in April 1936 (ibid., 23 April1936: 3). As in the case of Breslau, this location, in the Polish-German borderland, was intended to boost interest in (and thus profit from) the event in both countries, including the German minority living in large numbers in the Wielkopolska region (ibid., 17 April 1936: 2). The match was to be played in a stadium with a capacity of around 30,000 in the Wilda district of Poznań, the home of the Warta Poznań football club. In the end, due to a structural defect in the stadium's stands, it was decided in June that Poland's second match on home soil against Germany would again be played in the Polish Army Stadium in Warsaw (ibid., 26 June 1936: 2).

The Poland-Germany match in Warsaw was traditionally regarded as a major event in both countries: "The match went far beyond the dimensions of an ordinary international football competition and was the real sensation of the day. For several days, the streets, cafés and trams were filled with talk of nothing else (...)" ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", sports supplement, 15 September 1936: III). The most tangible measure of interest in the match was the number of tickets sold: the press announced a record attendance of 35,000 at the stadium, which forced the organisers to temporarily extend the facility once again. "Przegląd Sportowy" announced the arrival of more than 5,000 fans from Germany, mainly from East Prussia, German Silesia and Berlin ("Przegląd Sportowy", 10 September 1936: 2; ibid., 17 September 1936: 5). The arrival of German supporters in Warsaw for the match was facilitated by representatives of the PKISB through Polish consulates in Germany, including the issue of free visas and coordination with the Polish travel agency 'Orbis'. They emphasised the desirability of German 'sports' tourism to Poland as a useful tool for creating a favourable image of Poland in Germany, as in the case of the 1934 match, when "(...) Germans from East Prussia who took part in the tours came back enthusiastic about Warsaw and looked at Polish-German affairs quite differently afterwards" (AAN, ARPB, 2491: 148-149 and 151-152).

The match against Poland marked the debut of coach Josef Herberger. He replaced O. Nerz, who had led the Third Reich's players in all their previous matches against Poland. Herberger was to work with the German national team until 1963 (Gowarzewski 1991: 130). He prepared the strongest possible team for the game with the Poles, despite the rather disorganised nature of the preparations caused by a demonstration match scheduled for the day before the Warsaw match, featuring German representatives of the leading German teams, 1. FC Nürnberg and Schalke 04 Gelsenkirchen, who played for Adolf Hitler and other participants at the *NSDAP* party conference in Nuremberg. However, the

German sports authorities considered the match against Poland to be of equal prestige, especially in the context of the German footballers' heavy defeat at the Berlin Olympics ("Przegląd Sportowy", 10 September 1936: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 8 September 1936: 3). On the other hand, the Polish team, led by J. Kałuża and still coached by K. Otto, after a successful performance at the Berlin Olympics, where they finished fourth, had to prove that the 9-2 defeat they had suffered a week earlier in Belgrade was just an accident ("Przegląd Sportowy", 10 September 1936: 1-2).

The German team arrived in Warsaw on Saturday 12 September. At the Warsaw railway station they were greeted "very warmly" by PZPN officials: Vice-President for Organisation J. Michałowski, Colonel K. Glabisz, Captain. K. Nikolski, and officials from the German Embassy in Poland, including the second secretary in the rank of chargé d'affaires, Gebhard Seelos. The delegation accompanying the footballers was small this time, consisting solely of lower-ranking members of the *DFB*. In addition to the coaching staff, it included the delegation leader, *DFB* Vice-President Schmidt from Hanover, his deputy and team manager Kneche from Düsseldorf, and federation secretary G. Xandri. The Germans stayed at the *Bristol Hotel* ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 14. September 1936: 19). Interestingly, the Polish dailies gave rather reserved accounts of the events surrounding the match involving the German guests even though they made important political gestures. There was only a brief mention of the reception of footballers, officials and journalists from both countries by the German ambassador to Poland, Hans-Adolf von Moltke, at the Third Reich's embassy in Warsaw on Saturday evening ("Przegląd Sportowy", 14 September 1936: 1). However, the Polish public was not informed about the ceremony of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Marshal Józef Piłsudski Square by the footballers and the German delegation before the match (NAC 2017).

The Poland-Germany football match, which was broadcast live on Polish and German radio ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 14 September 1936: 19), was preceded by another important sporting event involving representatives of both countries, which in propaganda terms was a manifestation of friendly Polish-German relations. Just before the kick-off, the Polish Army Stadium hosted the finish of a cycling competition featuring Polish and German riders, who participated in the third edition of the six-stage Berlin-Warsaw race, an event organised cyclically in the years 1934-1936 (AAN, KGRPB, 114: 324; Ferenc 2008: 43; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 22 September 1936: 8-9).

The events in the Warsaw stadium were eventually attended by a record number of more than 40,000 spectators (including around 7,000 Germans),

which caused a great deal of chaos in the city and in the stands, among fans and journalists, and became the subject of harsh criticism in the Polish press. It was claimed that the PZPN officials, guided by purely commercial considerations (the Federation's income from ticket sales amounted to 53,000 zlotys, almost the PZPN's annual budget ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 17 September 1936: 20)), committed fundamental organisational errors ("Przegląd Sportowy", 17 September 1936: 5; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 15 September 1936: 2). It should be noted, however, that this audience, huge for Polish conditions, was also the result of the unrestricted activity of 'touts', who sold a few thousand very well forged tickets, mainly at Warsaw's Kercelego Square (Gawkowski 2018; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 15 September 1936: 6). On a positive note, however, there was no hostility between Polish and German football fans, who behaved respectfully towards each other both before the match and in the stands ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", sports supplement., 15 September 1936: III).

Those organisational flaws could not have escaped the attention of the political dignitaries seated in the stand of honour of the Warsaw stadium. However, if one were to measure the political significance of this sporting event by the number of public figures attending the match, one could not make the same claim as in 1934. First and foremost, "the event was not honoured by the presence of the Commander-in-Chief [General Edward Rydz-Śmigły – R. J.], for whom the public had been waiting", while the politicians and officials who attended the match were a political "second class". Among them were members of General Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski's government: Minister of Communications and President of the ZPZS (the Association of Polish Sports Associations), Colonel J. Ulrych, Deputy Ministers for Military Affairs, General Aleksander Litwinowicz, and for Communications, Colonel Aleksander Bobkowski, as well as Army Inspector General Stanisław Burhardt-Bukacki, Commander of Corps District No. 1 in Warsaw, General Mieczysław Ryś-Trojanowski, another Polish member of the IOC, former Minister Colonel I. Matuszewski, and the Field Bishop of the Polish Army, General Józef Gawlina. The Bishop's presence at the match caused great surprise among German journalists. The ambassador of the Third Reich was represented by chargé d'affaires G. Seelos. Besides the *DFB* officials who had come to Poland, the match was also attended by members of the PZPN board led by General W. Bończa-Uzdowski and Colonel K. Glabisz ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 15 September 1936: 2; Urban 2012: 77).

The match was preceded by the traditional rendition of the national anthems. In addition to the *Deutschlandlied*, the *Horst Wessel Lied* was played for the Germans, and the *Dąbrowski Mazurka* was not sung too loudly by the Polish fans, as "many people were overcome with emotion". The game ended

in a 1-1 draw after goals by Karl Hohmann and Gerarad Wodarz ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 15 September 1936: 2). The result, Poland's best against Germany in their short history, was received enthusiastically in Poland as the Polish players were carried off the pitch in the arms of their fans immediately after the match. There were, however, a few voices in the press who argued that the weaker-than-expected performance of the German team meant that Poland had missed out on the chance for a first prestigious victory that would boost the nation's spirit ("Przegląd Sportowy", 14 September 1936: 1-2). The Germans, on the other hand, were pleased with the draw, as evidenced by their post-match opinions and behaviour at an evening banquet hosted by the PZPN in the lounges of the Europejski Hotel. The event, which lasted several hours for both teams and was attended by a very large group of German journalists, was once again held in an aura of cordiality. General W. Bończa-Uzdowski, Colonel K. Glabisz and manager Schmidt toasted each other and exchanged gifts: the Poles gave the Germans a painting of the Old Town of Warsaw and the Germans – a sculpture of a lioness ("Przegląd Sportowy", 14 September 1936: 2; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 15 September 1936: 6).

From a Polish perspective, the Warsaw match, despite the draw, was a sporting success, but an organisational disaster. The latter aspect perpetuated Germany's unfavourable stereotype of the Poles as a disorganised nation. Especially as the chaos in the Polish Army Stadium was seen by a dozen prominent German journalists who worked under abnormal conditions to cover both the football match and the finish of the cycling race ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 22 September 1936: 8-9). Nevertheless, the German press, while noting 'shortcomings', praised above all the Polish public for creating a friendly atmosphere towards the German players and fans, confirming the 'sincere sporting friendship' that united the two nations ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 17 September 1936: 20).

In 1936, Polish-German sporting cooperation, including football contacts, continued to develop smoothly. Its enhancement should not only be interpreted in terms of the political situation, but it should also be attributed to a significant increase in the sporting level of Polish football teams, making them attractive competitors for German clubs. The atmosphere around the key match between the national teams confirmed the friendly bilateral relations. A similarly favourable climate prevailed during the performance of Polish athletes at the Berlin Olympic Games (Jung 2017: 37-38).

However, there were an increasing number of critical comments in the press about the competition between Polish and German athletes on both sides. These comments were usually made at club and city level. This was exacerbated by unfavourable decisions taken by political and sporting bodies in

both countries, such as the dissolution of the PKISB, an institution that had done a great deal to increase sporting contacts between Poles and Germans.[2] Perhaps it should be linked to a noticeable change in the nature of Polish-German political relations from the end of 1936. At that time, the Nazi regime in Germany was consolidating itself internally and beginning to succeed internationally. An example of this trend is the politically 'cost-free' militarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936. It was then that A. Hitler's policy towards Poland started to evolve, moving from a kind of partnership to attempts to 'subordinate' its eastern neighbour. This was demonstrated by attempts to gauge Poland's reaction to the first announcements of the annexation of Danzig to the Reich, which led to a growing lack of trust in the Germans in the Polish decision-making groups, especially those around E. Rydz-Śmigły, who were not in favour of close cooperation with the western neighbour at the expense of France (Wojciechowski 1980: 263 ff.).

Another unfavourable circumstance for sporting relations between the two countries was the question of another match between the national teams in 1937. Despite the *DFB*'s earlier assurances to include annual matches against the Polish national team in its schedule, the Germans decided to withdraw from this promise in late 1936. The *DFB* officials offered bizarre explanations to the PZPN. According to the German association's press officer Koch, the main reason for not organising Poland-Germany matches every year was that "Poland is too strong an opponent". This was greeted with a mocking comment by "Przegląd Sportowy": "Apparently the Italians [1934 and 1938 world champions – R.J.] are 'less threatening', because it turns out that the German Football Association has already secured two more matches against Italy." The journalist concluded: "We don't hold any particular grudge against the Germans for deciding to play Poland every two years in view of their busy international schedule. After all, we have gone so many years without playing Germany that we will survive next year, especially as our programme needs to be re-focused. But what is the point of making a fool of ourselves 'about an opponent who is too strong', which is obviously aimed at naive foreign sporting public?" ("Przegląd Sportowy", 23 November 1936: 2). In January 1937, the *DFB* officially informed the PZPN that the next international match would not be played until 1938 (ibid., 14 January 1936: 4).

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[2] The PKISB was dissolved on 1 November 1936, the official reason being that it had achieved its stated aims of strengthening Polish-German sporting relations and propaganda activities to bring Poland, including the Polish sporting movement, closer to the Germans (AAN, ARPB, 2491: 177-178).

1938: Towards the war

In 1938, benevolent neutrality or even subtle cooperation in the almost parallel diplomatic and military actions of the Third Reich against Austria and Poland against Lithuania, and both countries against Czechoslovakia, did not prevent an increasingly visible regression in Polish-German political relations. They finally turned into a crisis, when, on 24 October 1938, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop made Ambassador J. Lipski a proposal for a "global solution" (*Globallösung*) to their mutual relations, i.e. a demand for the incorporation of Danzig into the Third Reich and the creation of an extraterritorial corridor connecting East Prussia with the territory of Germany proper. From then on, German policy increasingly took the form of blackmailing the Polish authorities (Żerko 1998: 67 ff.).

On 18 September 1938, more than a month before the *Globallösung*, and amid an increasingly tense political situation between Berlin and Warsaw, the long-awaited fifth match between the Polish and German national teams took place. The Germans had decided to play the match in Chemnitz, Saxony's industrial centre with a population of 350,000, to celebrate the opening of the city's modern *Grosskampfbahn* stadium for local club Polizei SV 1920 ("Przegląd Sportowy", 14 February1938: 4; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 18 September 1938: 3). The *DFB*'s decision was greeted with enthusiasm in Saxony as it was the first time that an international match had been organised in this part of Germany. As a result, tickets were sold out more than two weeks before the match. Consequently, several groups of Polish fans cancelled their trip to Chemnitz, and the largest group of Polish national team supporters at the stadium were representatives of the large Polish colony in Saxony and, in smaller numbers, Poles from Westphalia ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 16 September 1938: 1; "Przegląd Sportowy", 1 September 1938: 2).

The Germans wanted to avoid the impression that the game was political. This was stated by *DFB* Secretary General G. Xandri, who voiced the hope that the meeting would take place "in a truly friendly atmosphere". He referred to the attitude of the Polish ambassador in Berlin, J. Lipski, "a great football enthusiast", who was guided by the idea of a friendly rapprochement between the two nations when organising football matches. The hosts tried to create such an atmosphere by, among other things, inviting the Polish team to the operetta *Gräfin Dubarry* , staging Stanislaw Moniuszko's *Halka* in the same local opera house and accommodating the Polish team in the 'excellent' hotel *Chemnitzer Hof*. Finally, G. Xandri expressed his regret that the Polish delegation to Chemnitz would not be led by the President of the Polish Football Association, Colo-

nel K. Glabisz, who was detained in Poland by other official duties, especially since the Reich Sports Leader, H. von Tschammer und Osten, was to attend the match ("Przegląd Sportowy", 12 September 1938: 3). In the context of escalating bilateral relations, the absence of the President of the Polish Football Association, one of the best specialists in German affairs in the Polish army, may not have been a coincidence.

A friendly tone was also maintained in an open letter to the Polish football community from *DFB* president F. Linnemann on the occasion of the Germany-Poland match. Interestingly, it was an initiative of "Przegląd Sportowy" journalists and appeared on the front page of the newspaper a few days before the match. The head of German football wrote in it:

> "On the occasion of the fifth match between the national teams of Poland and Germany, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our Polish sporting colleagues. Since 1933, a true sporting friendship has developed with our Polish neighbours, based on good, collegial contacts. A manifestation of this friendship is the upcoming game, which we are looking forward to. We have invited our Polish sporting friends to Chemnitz to celebrate with them the opening of the city's magnificent new sports arena. We were all the more pleased to do so because Saxony in particular has many historical and cultural links with Poland. I therefore hope that this meeting will further strengthen bilateral sporting relations and that its representative nature will make it a powerful propaganda tool for football. F. Linnemann" (ibid, 15 September 1938: 2)

In the opinion of both the Polish and German press, the Germans were once again favourites to win the game, despite the humiliation suffered by their team, with prominent Austrian players co-opted after the *Anschluss*, at the World Cup in France three months earlier, where they were eliminated by the Swiss in the first round. The Poles were knocked out of the tournament at the same stage after a superb performance against Brazil (5-6), which is why the German press was 'very favourable' to the Polish team ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 16 September 1938: 1; "Przegląd Sportowy", 29 August 1938: 5; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 18 September 1938: 2).

The Polish football delegation, led by PZPN Vice-President for Organisation Colonel Władysław Picheta and accompanied by PZPN Secretary General Roman Giełda and team manager J. Kałuża, arrived in Chemnitz on the night of 17 September, after a nearly 17-hour journey from Warsaw, with an unscheduled stopover in Bytom, where the footballers were spontaneously welcomed by youngsters from the local Polish grammar school. They were officially greeted at the Chemnitz train station by G. Xandri and *DFB* deputy head Erbach, on behalf of President F. Linemann, as well as representatives

of the local Polish community and the city's residents, who greeted the Poles with a round of applause. The Polish team received the same warm welcome in Saxony as they did in Berlin and Breslau. They spent the day before the match exploring the city, including the new stadium and what was then Europe's largest indoor swimming pool, as well as Augustusburg Hunting Lodge, with K. Otto as their guide. In front of the *Chemnitzer Hof* hotel, where the Polish guests were staying, stood a guard of honour of uniformed members of the Nazi sports organisation *Kraft durch Freude*. On the post bus outside the stadium, postal workers stamped postcards issued for the match, and the promised premiere of S. Moniuszko's opera took place at the local opera house. However, the Polish team did not attend this event, as they spent the day after the match seeing the sights of nearby Dresden ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", 18 September 1938: 13; "Przegląd Sportowy", 19 September 1938: 2 and 5; ibid., 22 September 1938: 3; "Raz, dwa, trzy...", 25 September 1938: 2).

The match was preceded by a ceremony to inaugurate the new stadium, presided over by H. von Tschammer und Osten and the city's mayor Walter Schmidt. The Polish side was represented by officials of the Polish Consulate in Leipzig, headed by F. Chiczewski. The crowd of nearly 70,000 gave the Poles a friendly welcome. The game, which was played hard but fair, ended with a clear 4-1 victory for the Germans after three goals by Josef Gauchel and one by H. Schön, later, in 1964-1978, the legendary national coach with Teodor Peterek scoring the only goal for the Poles ("Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny", sports supplement, 20 September 1938: II). However, there was no sign of triumphalism in the German camp after a match that was also victorious from a propaganda point of view. Their victory was well deserved and the most convincing in the history of matches between the two national teams, as was unanimously acknowledged by the press in both countries ("Przegląd Sportowy", 19 September 1938: 2; ibid., 22 September 1938: 3).

After the match, the *Reichssportführer* commented on the "beautiful and chivalrous competition between the players of both teams in a truly friendly atmosphere" (ibid., 19 September 1938: 1). A similar atmosphere prevailed at the post-match banquet:

> "The finale of the meeting in the banquet hall, decorated with the flags of both countries, was even more cordial. What the leaders of the opposing teams said to each other could be called compliments. But there is no doubt that the atmosphere of relations between the two football associations is of a kind that one would wish for in every other area of common contact. This was expressed by all the speakers, including the German sports leader Von Tschammer Osten, who clearly emphasised the role of the Polish players as their first opponents after the coup. This was emphasised even more strongly by Mr Erbach (...),

who described our relations as a model to be followed for the benefit of both countries. He sees youth contacts as ideal work for the state in the spirit of love for one's homeland, which is everyone's duty" (ibid).

The Mayor of Chemnitz, W. Schmidt, also spoke warmly of Poland. The *Oberführer* of the local SA, who, in addition to building the stadium, also initiated the construction of the so-called Jewish Pillory in the city, a plaque with the names of the Jewish inhabitants of Chemnitz, also expressed his wish to get to know Poland personally. He planned to visit it the following year.... ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 25 September 1938: 3; Urban 2012: 80).

At the post-match celebration, as if to sweeten the blow, the Germans generously presented the Polish players with multiple gifts, which were products of local industry: fine porcelain, silver cigarette cases, lighters and wallets ("Raz, dwa, trzy...", 25 September 1938: 3). Eight of them from Upper Silesia, Ewald Dytko, Wilhelm Gora, Erwin Nyc, Teodor Peterek, Leonard Piątek, Ryszard Piec, Gerard Wodarz and Ernest Wilimowski, would be playing for German clubs within a dozen months (E. Wilimowski would even make his debut for the Third Reich's national team) in the wake of the German aggression against Poland in September 1939 (Kowoll 2019: 405-406, 412, 417-418). They were therefore unable to take part in the next match between the Polish and German national teams, which was announced by *DFB* representatives after the game in Saxony and scheduled for September 1940.... ("Przegląd Sportowy", 19 September 1938: 1).

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The analysis of the football matches between Poland and the Third German Reich in the 1930s shows that international sporting competition, which usually arouses great public interest, becomes a useful tool for political decision-makers pursuing specific political goals in the domestic and international space. Those five confrontations between Polish and German footballers took place in the unique and changing realities of bilateral relations, but, which is worth emphasizing, the sporting events described also created a 'political atmosphere' in Polish-German relations, becoming a test of their state. It has to be said that the political nature of these confrontations was the result of the gradual subordination of sport to state institutions in both countries: sport was thus institutionalised by political actors. This finding is in line with one of the definitions of sports politics (Matras 2017: 56). It can therefore be concluded that the events described were the implementation, using the instruments of diplomacy (including public, cultural and sports diplomacy), of the sports policies of both countries in order to achieve the political objectives set.

In the case of Poland, these objectives were somehow embedded in the imperative to create a favourable image of Poland in Germany as a reliable partner of the Third Reich in the changing geopolitical configuration of Europe in the early 1930s. However, implementing the postulate of cooperation with Germany as a key element of J. Piłsudski's policy of balance through sporting contacts ran the risk of being counterproductive. There were fears about the legitimacy of organising matches between Poland and a leading European team, not only because of the nature of the Nazi regime, but above all because of the disparity between the sporting levels of the two national teams. This explains the grotesque expressions of joy on the faces of the Polish sporting and political dignitaries, even after minor defeats suffered by Polish footballers.

For the Germans, the initiation of high-level football contacts with Poland was intended to create a positive image of the new German regime in its eastern neighbour as an instrument for normalising Polish-German relations at a time when the authorities in Berlin were isolated on the international stage. The continuation of these contacts was, however, to serve as a tool for strengthening political influence in Poland in order to subordinate it to German geopolitical interests. To this aim, the Nazis used their propaganda apparatus, including the sports press. In the end, Poland's political elite opposed this intention, despite the Germans' apparent efforts at 'cordiality', for example during the last match in 1938. The peaceful sporting competition on the football pitch was soon replaced by Germans with a bloody confrontation on the battlefield.

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ABSTRACT

This article is a historical-political analysis of inter-war Polish sporting events. It focuses on five football matches played between the Polish and German national teams during the Third Reich period, between 1933 and 1938. Apart from their obvious sporting value, these matches had significant political implications. These stemmed from the volatile political relations between Warsaw and Berlin after the Nazis came to power in 1933. Generating enormous public interest in both countries, they became a useful tool for the political and sporting elites of Poland and the Third Reich to achieve political goals in their mutual relations. This was facilitated by the progressive subordination of sport to state institutions in both countries.

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