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- Ka бољој демографској будућности Србије
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- Legal Insights into Environmental Sustainability
- The Geo-Economic Landscape: A Market and Social Approach



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This thematic collection represents a great contribution to the scientific discipline of economics as it offers analyses, syntheses, new conclusions and an original approach to the study of current topics. It also represents a unique contribution to social sciences, because it deals with topics in a qualitative and quantitative way, including other social disciplines besides economics.

*Prof. Christian Hanus*

The publication is conceptually well organized and the goal is unambiguously shown, which is the impact of modern global trends on individual countries and their economic and business models. The linguistic precision of these works is the main feature, while scientifically based methods are applied.

*Prof. Vesna Zabijakin Chatleska*

While some authors are mainly focused on the changes in human resource management, others analyzed the effects of artificial intelligence, digitalization and innovations and their contribution to economic development.

*Prof. Sanja Filipović*

The collection of articles deals with current trends and challenges for economic development, such as the impact of new technologies and intensified geopolitical competition. The volume is divided in two parts. The first section focuses on the sectorial approach in the changing geo-economic context. The focus of the second part of the volume is on the "social approach" to the geo-economic context.

*Prof. Marko Lovec*

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THE GEO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: A MARKET AND SOCIAL APPROACH



EDITORS: MARIJANA MAKSIMOVIĆ, WOLFGANG ROHRBACH

## THE GEO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: A MARKET AND SOCIAL APPROACH

The collection of papers titled *Geo-economic Landscape: Market and Social Approach* analyzes the changes and paradigms in economic development that have occurred in recent years. It points to new trends viewed from the perspective of resource access to economic sectors. It analyzes these topics in 12 original research chapters, divided into two parts. The authors explore the challenges that arise in the international economy and their implications for current governance models. It is certainly worth mentioning of the conclusion drawn based on this collection, which indicates that digitalization, i.e. artificial intelligence, is changing the way of doing business in many areas. The collection of papers provides insight into new opportunities and alignment of business strategies with public policies. It can be used by scientists as a basis for further research, but also by creators of public and business policies in dealing with today's challenges.

*Marijana Maksimović  
Wolfgang Rohrbach*

THE GEO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE:  
A MARKET AND SOCIAL APPROACH

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# THE GEO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE: A MARKET AND SOCIAL APPROACH

## EDITORS

Marijana Maksimović  
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OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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## Preface

■ The authors who contributed their articles tried to provide answers to geoeconomic questions, making a significant contribution to science. The idea for creating this collection of papers was born out of the need to scientifically process the recent changes and topics in economic development. Analyzing international economic relations, it was observed that major turning points such as crises, armed conflicts and turns in the strategic actions of countries led to changes in the directions and positioning of individual countries. This has been the most pronounced in the BRICS founding countries. The collection of papers provides an opportunity to observe economic development from different perspectives of its main elements, i.e. sectoral policies. Therefore, the thematic framework includes a geo-economic and resource approach to economic sectors.

The collection of papers examines international economic relations in the light of the geoeconomic concept, research refers to market and social categories, analyzed and presented in 12 original research chapters, divided into two parts.

The first unit consists of the market (economic) aspect of geoeconomics. The central topic of this part is research related to



human resource management and artificial intelligence. It is important to emphasize that human resource management consists of two sides, namely the organizational side, which consists of employees in the company (employee behavior), and the one related to consumer behavior. Both influence the creation of business culture and product design. The responsibility and commitment of the former, as well as the loyalty of the latter, contribute together to the competitiveness of the organization, that is, to the business success of the company. Also, this business concept contains a marketing orientation, since the 4P (product, place, price and promotion) paradigm has been supplemented with the factor of human resources to become 5P (product, place, price, promotion and people). Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that many topics or sectoral policies intertwine, such as human resource management (employees and consumers) and artificial intelligence, or insurance and digitization, or protectionism and economic policy with the influence of the government (public sector) in its implementation. As the geoeconomic aspect includes a sectoral approach, governments will favor those sectors or industrial policies that are of strategic importance for the development of the country. The scientific paper entitled *International Human Resource Management in the New Geoeconomic Order and Artificial Intelligence* is carefully structured, and in the first part it elaborates on the models of international human resource management (IHRM) in large countries such as China, Russia and India. Those countries have different models of organizing the workforce, all of which apply the latest advances in artificial intelligence (AI). The second part provides arguments in favor of AI, in terms of developing skills and improving employment. Furthermore, the second chapter and the second scientific paper in the collection is titled *Culture-related Contingencies in International Human Resource Management Hofstede's Framework in IHRM Research 1982 – 2024*. In it, through the classical Hofstede's Framework, the development of IHRM is followed within the given time period, with the help of biometric analysis. The reason for this is that the IHRM field is comprehensive and can follow the development of new business elements, and unforeseen situations that improve over time. The main finding is that the use of IHRM is increasing in depth and breadth. The next chapter is *Human Resources Management through the Prism of the Emergence and Development of the Concept* in which

the authors argue that HRM is the most important organization resource in terms of competitiveness and survival of the company. For this purpose, the paper specifically deals with strategic human resources, indicating that this approach should dominate in the following research and practical framework. There is also a hint of new topics, such as artificial intelligence, that should contribute to this goal. What ensues are four chapters related to digitization viewed from the aspects of consumer behavior, insurance, business culture and public sector. Thus, the chapter *The Multifaceted Implications of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Consumer Behavior: A Conceptual Analysis* addresses another human side in the company's decision-making process. The role of AI in the context of consumers and their purchasing choices is presented methodologically and conceptually. Thanks to AI, opportunities are identified and communication with consumers is improved, but ethical challenges that companies face in practice also occur. Case studies are presented for this purpose. The next chapter *Die Neuvermessung Der Versicherungswelt* points out the importance of AI in the context of insurance. Insurance, as a financial field, must constantly adapt and find innovative solutions to protect the insured and their assets. Well methodologically structured, the paper points to the connection of the impact of new technologies and AI on the field of insurance, demanding changes in the most important areas of insurance. Furthermore, *Organizational Culture through Technological Infrastructure and Innovation* is a scientific paper that indicates the importance of organizational culture, especially in the context of digital and IT changes that affect the redesign of the organizational structure. Thus, with the help of AI, there are changes in the context of business processes, with human resources, as carriers of business culture, being the first to face these changes. The papers that conclude this section deal with AI and economic change on the example of Russia, protectionism as a geopolitical principle, and finally the energy approach, current both from the perspective of geoeconomics and sustainable development. Thus, the scientific paper titled *Threats to National Security in the Context of Digital Transformation of The Economy and Public Administration* indicates the importance of digital transformation in an economy, especially in the public sector, but also refers to national security, while citing the Russian Federation as an example. The paper also contains empirical data, and the results

are presented in such a way that they connect the set goal and the stated conclusions. Furthermore, the paper titled *From Neomercantilism to Free Trade and Back* points to protectionism as a geo-economic tool through which countries seek to protect their economies. A logically structured presentation of the development of protectionism as a part of economic policy is provided, with its current phase being called defensive protectionism. The following scientific paper titled *Research of the Possibility and Development of Biodiesel Production from Lipids and Waste Lipids of the Industry and Hospitality* focuses on the importance of the energy sector and the production of alternative energy sources. The energy sector is a very important sector of geoeconomics and economic policy, significant from the perspective of economic sustainability, environmental protection, but also in terms of the limited sources of fossil fuels. Clear recommendations were given to continue research in the area of alternative sources of secondary raw materials. From the foregoing, it can be seen that economic policy sectors are included and that they are intertwined, namely: labor market sector (HRM), information technology sector (artificial intelligence and digitization), trade sector (protectionism), financial sector (insurance), and energy sector.

The second section of the collection of papers provides a social perspective in the geo-economic context, which indicates an attempt to identify the issues that go deeper into geo-economic problems. Namely, it implies a review of those issues that are not primarily concerned with technological development, but affect human resources, are conditioned by AI, and encompass a social space. It is pointed out that people's lives are conditioned by economic development, quality of life, but also by religious beliefs, cultural characteristics and an attempt to connect with other social communities through ideas, similarities and territorial proximity. Thus, the scientific paper *Zur Bedeutung Von Religion Für Die Gesellschaft* sheds light on religion as a geo-economic issue. For this purpose, a lucid conclusion was presented that peace conferences do not contribute to completely conflict resolution. Furthermore, currently, when many armed hotspots have been opened, and with many latent conflicts, religion has become a geo-economic tool for the achievement of conquest goals. Without directly naming concrete actors, it can be stated that one or more countries have the pretension to annex a country to their territory, or

to divide it among themselves. That country is militarily and economically weaker (easy prey) for them, but it has certain natural, human, technological and financial resources. If they share the same religion, then this religion can be a means through which the predatory countries will achieve their aspirations. Do they give up on the question of “eternal peace” that religions strive for? In the struggle between religion as a means of achieving geo-economic and geo-political goals, and in contrast to the times of de-religionization, the great question of the survival of religion and the proper understanding of human existence is opened. The following paper *Harmonie Von Ökonomie Und Von Kulturerbe: Die Tradition Der Christkindlmärkte* shows how the tradition of a society can influence the economic results, as well as how, in the context of a wider observation, it can influence the behavior of human resources in a location, through intangible cultural heritage, but also connect it with related cultural and territorial spaces. The next paper is titled *Geopolitical and Social Significance of the Magna Graecia Development – From Yesterday to Today*. This scientific paper dealing with the subject of Magna Graecia is included in this thematic collection, with the aim of pointing out to the rise of new geo-economic and geo-political ideas and alliances in the international economy. In addition to the emergence of large blocs such as BRICS or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), smaller alliances or platforms are also emerging, namely those entities that are territorially close and can cooperate. It is consistent with nearshoring. This means that business processes, especially information technologies, are most often transferred this way, as a type of outsourcing, where a business partner is looking for another business partner in the country from the region, i.e. immediate vicinity. In this case, an old idea can serve as a reason for a stronger connection between today's countries. This chapter can also be placed in the context soft power in geoeconomics. Here is an account of the social response to topics based on the traditional-cultural values of a geographical area.

The original scientific papers/chapters represent valuable research endeavors endeavors with quantitative and qualitative data, new and original conclusions and recommendations for further research. Current topics were studied, contemporary literature was used, and the authors are eminent representatives of their fields. Two papers stand out in particular. The first paper, whose research is

completely new, was carried out for the purposes of this collection, and it refers to biometric analysis and the functional perspective of international human resource management, according to Hofstede's Framework in the period from 1984 to 2024. The second paper refers to the multifaceted implications of generative artificial intelligence on consumer behavior, which, with its structure and methodology, and the manner in which it opens new questions and provides recommendations for further research, can serve as a model in scientific research. A scientific article on mercantilism, which analyzes the problems related to protectionism and increasingly frequent protection measures in international trade, and the misconceptions concerning the nonexistence of state interventionism, made an exceptional contribution and was declared by the editors to be the best scientific paper in this thematic collection. It is certainly worth mentioning the most important finding of this collection, confirming the fact that digitization changes the way of doing business in many specific areas and relationships, such as human resources, consumers, insurance, or the public sector. Therefore, artificial intelligence is embedded in all business processes and makes changes in them. However, regardless of the need to accept novelties and challenges demonstrated by these scientific research projects, one gets the impression that in practice there is great apprehension about it. This can be illustrated by the following example: in practice, there is an open question of whether in the future humans and robots would be able to engage in teamwork, and how they will "communicate"? There is also an open question of delegating responsibility, because people cannot rely on the findings of "machines" when making decisions, or later calling them to account. Moreover, the big question is whether artificial intelligence will bring the expected benefits, although will certainly have impact on business processes. In addition to this, we can mention the challenges affecting decision-making and the way work is organized, for example "remote work", better known as "working from home" or flexible employment models. The increased role of digital platforms has connected organizations with consumers more tightly, while simultaneously, the way of purchasing and paying is almost completely digitalized.

The collection comprises twelve chapters, with seventeen authors, from ten countries, who in their texts attempt to address the

problems that exist in the geo-economic context, within the international framework. It should be the starting point for considering the solution for geo-economic issues, with the aim of contributing to the research of business practice and public policies, but also to opening a wider debate in future years. Problems arising in relation to strategic changes at the global level, changing practices related to human resource management, artificial intelligence, consumer behavior, changing business culture, as well as insurance and digitalization, and other related issues represent today's major challenges. Facing these issues, there was a need to change strategies and certain elements of public policies and to align with current events.<sup>1</sup> The authors used contemporary literature, primarily from databases such as WOS, Scopus and Research Gate. In addition to the clearly presented conditions, perspectives and expectations, the authors point to the acceptance of changes and new business concepts, as an element of competitiveness, in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This publication analyzes the challenges that arise in current governance models, offering more competitive perspectives related to countries and economic entities. It points to new trends in the geo-economic context, at the time of trade barriers, political sanctions, emergence of multipolarity as a new form of connecting countries, or dividing the world (BRICS); smaller wars, and finally major conflicts. The twelve chapters of this thematic collection represent a whole, which reflects the geoeconomic reality, although they do not reflect the opinion of the editor or publisher, but exclusively the opinion of the authors of each chapter. There is a belief that this collection of papers will open up many questions and initiate a dialogue related to the geo-economic issues that await the world in the coming decades. Therefore, this thematic collection of papers aimed at explaining in more detail certain geo-economic problems which are very rarely found in the scientific literature in our country.

This publication aims to move researchers and scholars to think in the light of broader perspectives than those mentioned. It can be useful to young researchers, but also to creators and holders of public policies in terms of guidelines for their work. Business practices,

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<sup>1</sup> The development of technology and science led to these changes, but they also led to crises, opening up many economic and social issues, which are analyzed here through resource, sectoral and intersectoral issues of the geoeconomic concept.

strategies and norms must be concrete and applicable, and must clearly explain the reconceptualization of the existing business behaviors, in this primarily digital and sustainable world. The research presented in this collection of papers is intended for all who are interested in the study of geoeconomics, for whom it can serve as a starting idea for further research, or a dialogue with other related sciences and topics. It can also be useful to students who study international economic topics, as well as strategy makers, chambers of commerce, business associations and the entire interested scientific and professional public who may see new perspectives and contributions in this.

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The collection of papers was subjected to originality control and passed the plagiarism test.

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make the texts look as good as possible. In order for the papers to look in the spirit of the language in which they were written, we would like to thank the proofreader for the German language, Dr. Wladimir Fried from Austria and proofreader for English language Milan Marković.

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Marijana Maksimović  
Wolfgang Rohrbach





# INTRODUCTION

**MARIJANA MAKSIMOVIĆ  
WOLFGANG ROHRBACH**

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## Old Economic Concepts in New Times

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■ The geoeconomic approach to the study of current economic problems represents a great challenge for researchers around the world. Geoeconomics is not a new concept, but placed in the time and environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems to be new, because it follows the changes in the field of exploration and the circumstances that occur in the economy.

When the post-Cold War period began, geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions appeared, along with terrorism, new conflicts, weapons created through new technologies, and fear of nuclear war. It seems that the desire for peace and social cohesion has been put on the back burner (Svetličič, 2022). In today's world full of changes, the uncertainty of business and the uncertainty of survival in the market seem to have become more pronounced than ever before, in the history of international economic relations. The real challenge is to identify geo-economic changes, but it is even more difficult to show the possibility and need for adaptation, as well as to implement those changes in national economies and companies. Social sciences have always had a role to follow any other kind of changes, to explain them and to enable their implementation in economics, law, sociology or political science. Therefore, there is not a single transformation, technological, informative, or biomedical, without social transformation.<sup>1</sup>

Namely, the last three major crises, namely the world economic crisis of 2007/8, the migrant crisis of 2015, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020; but also the crises caused by the wars that are being fought today have shaken the economies of the most developed countries (Nikolić & Maksimović, 2024). They represent a major threat to what the United Nations proclaims, which is decent work and secure peace in the world (United Nations, 2023). Today's multipolar

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<sup>1</sup> The transformation of social relations changes the way of communication, the way of conducting business transactions and the way of education.

world is characterized by globalized international geostrategic and geoeconomic relations, in addition to deeper and wider ties between states, while access to information is much easier (Eisenman & Heginbotham, 2019). At the same time, the process of regionalization is taking place, because many countries have found themselves facing uncertainty and challenges brought by the crises and the pandemic, a process that implies more intensive cooperation with neighboring countries. The new redistribution of power in the world is based on the former hegemony who want to maintain primacy on the international stage, on the one hand, with those big states, whose economies are on the rise and who also want to exert a certain influence in the world on the other (Brand & Wissen, 2024). In the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, major changes have led to major upheavals in business. For example, digitization and artificial intelligence have led to a new form of communication between employees and employers, but also companies and consumers. Observed globally, inequalities are decreasing, but at the level of countries, they increase precisely because of these changes, which intensify the issues of inclusion and exclusion from the labor market, as well as those of education, health care, or social life (Malei & Kramer, 2014).

When we talk about geoeconomics, it must be said that it has great importance in today's multipolar world, playing a significant role in the process of transformation of the geopolitical process that has engulfed the entire world. And while Europe is trying to increase economic growth and improve other macroeconomic indicators, Eastern Eurasia is emerging as a geo-economic center, over whose natural resources there is a great battle. From this territory, the four great powers of China, India, Russia and Japan originate, taking the roles of emerging world powers. Besides them, there are a number of middle powers, which also strive to increase their influence in the world economy (Walton, 2007). This struggle for supremacy and dominance has led to major changes that resulted in the accelerated development of technology, a new way of using resources, i.e. a green economy, increased importance of human resource management, but also an attempt to return the welfare state, which should represent a way to reduce inequality. The social approach appears as a subtype of the geoeconomic approach, that is, as a geo-social approach (Mitchell, & Kallio, 2017). Through these and other elements, such as religion,

or culture and heritage, including tradition and customs, which constitute soft power, geoeconomy becomes the most important for the states that spread their power and influence through economic means. Therefore, it relies on commercial or trade peace. From the aspect of geoeconomics, security is seen as economic security, with the aim of protecting dominant economic sectors as a source of strategic competitiveness.

This protection is necessary because great powers are fighting for economic supremacy and resources, using different methods. The most obvious example of this is China and its Belt and Road initiative (a complete package consisting of investments, trade and finance), with the purpose of imposing China's influence primarily on developing countries. China wants to develop a leadership position in the world, and it implements a foreign policy that only benefits it, not shying away from the use of military and political elements. For this purpose, Russia also uses the energy resources of its country (Scholvin & Wigell, 2018; Goldstone, 2007). China and Russia are trying to improve their bilateral relations, they have the same goal, which is the rise of their economies, but they strive to achieve it in different ways. On the other hand, the rivalry between the US and China threatens the world's geostrategic stability. The constant shifting of blame from one to the other harms both countries. This puts at risk supply chains that are extremely important to the industry. Until yesterday, these were countries with different political systems, dissimilar economic development and divergent social systems. Today, both of these aspire to increase their influence in the world through economic expansion and become the supreme leading geopolitical and geoeconomic power in the world. In this game of thrones, the countries of the European Union, as well as countries of the Western Balkans also strive to successfully join new international flows. By solving the issues of foreign direct investments, migrants, joint ventures, scientific-technical and technological cooperation, but also that of economic cooperation, which has intensified in recent years, the countries of the Western Balkans strive to improve their status in the international economy. The construction of roads and corridors contributes to faster transport and more intensive connection of people, who not only share space but also common values related to culture, tradition, religion and similar customs (Søndergaard,

Peterson & Kara, 2020). In the Western Balkans, Serbia, a small country with a long history, seeks to strengthen its economy and improve its international standing.

Digitization, in its latest iteration of artificial intelligence, appears to be a significant element of geoeconomy; this is also true for human resource management (formerly called personnel), then protectionism, insurance, or soft power tools such as propaganda, religion, or cultural heritage. These tools of soft power are part of the developed theory of critical geopolitics, which today has great importance in international economic relations. In truth, a country can achieve its economic influence depending on how successfully it positions itself in international economic relations, and whether its factors of influence coincide with international ones. Apart from these elements, there are also trends in geoeconomics, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century they include: the issue of human resource management under the influence of artificial intelligence; migration (human development); communications of people of different religions, ethnicities, but also their “communication” with robots; then the problems of sustainable development; the struggle for resources, natural and human; international supply chain issues; and a whole series of economic issues of importance for the geoeconomic positioning of a country (Ignatyeva & Isaev, 2018). The issue of human resources management is important as, in a time when migration is very pronounced, the aging of the population of planet Earth is evident, armed conflicts and classic wars claim many human lives, the question arises of how to secure a workforce, equally important on a macro and micro level. It is safe to say that today the strategic resources of a company are human resources, consumers and information with artificial intelligence (Temjanovski, 2013).

It can be concluded that geoeconomics has again become a current topic, because strategic turns have led to a more careful management of international economic policy, and to the rise of state capitalism as another measure that means “a return to the old and safe way” of organizing the economy and society. It has also become relevant due to the lack of resources, and the green transition, but also due to the resistance by the countries that were safe sources of energy until now, which have begun to change their place and role in the world market. The geoeconomic resilience of countries depends

on the degree of preservation of autonomy and protection of their own economy, the resilience of large companies (reindustrialization) and incentives for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (entrepreneurship), as well as the development of institutions. For the first time in economic history, it combines competition and cooperation, alternately choosing the side which results in more benefit at a given moment.

However, the armed conflicts that are taking place, as well as those that are not yet visible, but the clatter of weapons can be heard, open security topics, that is, questions of how to protect territories and people and make economies sustainable. Can geoeconomics in the age of armed conflicts be successful? For these reasons, BRICS was born, with the ambition to become a counterweight to the great powers that have opposing aspirations, although in itself it includes the largest countries in the world, such as China, India and Russia (Turner, 2009).

All the mentioned topics have an impact on international economic relations indicate the dependence of the state's foreign policy and the sectoral-resource geoeconomic approach.

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**Part A:**  
**MARKET APPROACH IN THE**  
**GEO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

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# International Human Resource Management In The New Geoeconomic Order And Artificial Intelligence\*

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

Human resources management is an important business function in a company, and the human resources department has the task of providing assistance to other departments that make up the organizational unit. It has specific tasks including the selection of candidates, their socialization, motivation, care for further advancement through the company, but also training and acceptance of innovations such as digitization and artificial intelligence (AI). The purpose of this paper is to contextualize the development and implementation of AI and identify the scope and dilemmas when using it in companies. The goal is to demonstrate how artificial intelligence is applied in the field of human resources (HR), and see the possibilities, but also the contradictions that AI causes in companies. Based on the previous research, it can be concluded that there are many practical questions regarding AI in human resource management (HRM), while the literature offers few answers. The chosen methodological approach involves elucidating the problem, rather than finding a solution. The value of this research paper is that it integrates a literature review, the theoretical basis of international human resource management (IHRM), and contains empirical data from the databases of the World Bank, Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund. *Keywords:* international human resources management, geoeconomics, human resource management, artificial intelligence, digitization

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## 1. Introduction

■ In the new multipolar context, the geoeconomic issue and the management of human resources are of great importance. Geostrategy today must also take into account the geoeconomic aspect, that is, it must include the aspect of preserving resources, taking care of their sustainability, while also including the aspect of creating food and energy reserves. "The states tend to turn more to geoeconomic instruments of influence, i.e., towards the politics of power through economic means in spreading their influence." (Cvetičanin & Maksimović, 2023: 601). Many countries base their foreign policy on the connection of geoeconomic and security parameters, that is, geopolitics and geoeconomics. "Geoeconomic policy must be conducted by both small and large states, i.e. they must be able to provide assistance to companies on the international stage." (Maksimović & Cvetičanin, 2021: 931). Human resource management, especially international human resource management (IHRM), has been in the focus of researchers and practitioners since the ninth decade (the eighties) of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, with the gearing up of globalization, it has been gaining more and more importance. It has been established that companies need reliable employees, but also well-trained human resources capable of dealing with competition on the international market. In particular, there was a great demand for employees capable of operationalizing international business, to successfully cope with the assigned tasks. For this purpose, adaptation programs for international managers, development programs for the tasks themselves, and adaptation programs to the entire business environment, as well as globalization requirements were developed (Maksimović, 2004). The term human resources itself, to which the words management and international were later added, thus creating the terms of human resource management, and finally international human resource management, proves to be the most resilient in practice, in contrast to terms such as employee satisfaction, interpersonal relations, organizational behavior, orientation towards people, or personnel. Thus, the initial period of birth of the name of international human resource management referred to people who perform some work, first in the factory, and then in its other international branches (Schuler, 2000). But what has existed since the initial creation of this term are records

on workers, determination of demands for their specific qualifications, and consideration of environmental factors; finally, towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more attention was being paid to issues related to the strategic and operational level of IHRM (Brewster, 1996; Warner, 1997). Furthermore, on the international level, the following types of employees were developed: employees of the nationality of the home country (ethnocentric), employees of the nationality of the host country (polycentric), employees of the nationality of a third country (geocentric), and employees of the nationality of certain regions (regiocentric) (Dowling, Welch, Schuler, 1999).

Apart from this microeconomic aspect that includes company-related and organizational context human resource management on the international level, there is also macroeconomic aspect of HR, implying a percentage record of human resources, that is, employment and unemployment, in the context of the total number of employees in one country, domestic or foreign. Human resources can also be viewed in the context of human development, when they include migrants, without taking into account the reason for migration, or whether this is immigration or emigration. Economic migrants or labor migrants are analyzed in particular, i.e. as expatriates in the period of internationalization and inpatriates in the period of globalization (Maksimović, 2018). "In the meantime, the problem has further escalated due to the fact that tens of thousands of "economic" refugees from the wider region have joined the Syrian refugees. Refugee pressure creates various challenges for Europe." (Nikolić, 2023a: 12–13). "Migrant workers going abroad found good jobs with good earnings and managed well thanks to the similarity of the social and value system." (Nikolić & Maksimović, 2024: 66–67).

It also implies inequalities both at the global level and at the level of countries. Inequalities at the global level are decreasing, and at the level of countries they are mostly increasing (Milanović, 2024; Aiyar, & Ebeke, 2020). "States leaves little doubt as to the presumption on generally rising within-national inequalities during the period, at least in the economically advancing part of the world." (Milanović, 2024:3). Inequality generally rises during periods of economic expansion, to later decrease when a certain income threshold is achieved (Milanović, 1994). "The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will further increase economic inequalities between European countries."

(Nikolić, 2023b: 23). Under these circumstances, capital owners become less willing to invest, resulting in weaker economic performance (Zvezdanović Lobanova, 2024). Therefore, countries should prioritize institutional reforms aimed at improving governance efficiency and strengthening the rule of law, as these changes can help reduce poverty and inequality, ultimately fostering long-term sustainable socio-economic development (Zvezdanović Lobanova et al. 2018). Global inequalities have impact on labor markets and human resource management (HRM) practices, influencing areas such as recruitment, training, compensation, and employee retention. In regions with elevated unemployment rates, for instance, HRM strategies may prioritize cost reduction over employee development initiatives. Uddin et al. (2023) highlight three institutional mechanisms of capturing, concealing and controlling which influence HRM practices in sustaining inequalities. The strong interdependence between HR practices and the quality of institutions means that HR departments rely on functional and fair institutions (in particular, educational institutions) to create and sustain an equitable workplace. The well-established institutions empower HR departments to promote equal opportunities for all employees – regardless of their gender, race, socio-economic background, or other factors that might otherwise lead to inequality. In this context, HR practices can be more effective in addressing inequality through measures such as implementing transparent hiring procedures, providing equal access to training and development, ensuring pay equity and offering workplace benefits and protections.

In the current context of growing globalization, rapid technological progress and the move towards a knowledge-based economy, companies need to be technologically empowered to operate in competitive environments<sup>1</sup>. Business intelligence makes intensive use of information, and thus helps organizations to survive in the market. It improves strategic decisions by combining human factors, business processes and technology (Jović & Nikolić, 2022). AI and applications

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<sup>1</sup> The economic and investment efficiency of an economy depends on the dynamics of investment, but the selection of the sector in which the investment is directed is very important. This is important because economic-investment efficiency changes over time. Today, investment in information and communication technologies is certainly profitable, because it contributes to the competitiveness not only of the country, but also of the business entities themselves (Nikolić & Kovačević, 2019).

are tool for data management and they are used in proper direct planning, to collect, structure and store data, with the help of which analytical assessments, reporting, classification and prediction of potential challenges in the market are carried out. With the help of AI, organizations manage organizational changes, and align human resource management strategies with company strategies (Sousa, 2020).

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that provisions on human resource management, i.e. provisions on work, are part of the constitutional provisions in almost all countries of the world, and have thus been raised to the highest level. Labor provisions are part of the constitutional provisions, but new labor provisions are also emerging that refer to new forms of work, created as a result of the emergence of non-standard, flexible business arrangements, which are accompanied by technological innovations, but also the possibility of better harmonizing business and private time (Stojković Zlatanović & Ostojić, 2021). Labor relations are subject to the provisions of the Labor Law (Official Gazette, 2018). For example, in Serbia, this Law regulates rights, obligations and responsibilities in the employment relationship, in accordance with ratified international conventions. The legal provisions of Article 2 of this Law, refer to all employees on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, whether domestic or foreign workers, or those sent abroad by the employer, either domestic or foreign.

The goal of this paper is to review the challenges faced with by international human resource management (IHRM), and encourage the leaders and managers of human resource management (HRM) departments to study the interaction between employees and artificial intelligence. The paper consists of three parts, the first including an introduction and a literature review. The second part consists of the geoeconomic context of the largest emerging economies' work model. The third part deals with artificial intelligence and IHRM, perceived scopes and limitations.

### *1.1. Literature review*

In this research paper, the authors did not use a special classification of the papers that were selected for the literature review. Given the very wide use of the term AI in this paper, the literature review was based on terms such as AI and IHRM, or AI in HRM, in several scientific



databases, for example, google scholar and RG. The result indicates that research intensified in the tenth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has continued to this day. Somehow at that time, the Japanese concept of humanware became known, implying the integration of human resources and technical devices in company. "If technology is defined only through the production results of hardware, the role of human resources is diminished" (Maksimović, 2014: 95–96). Since then, there has been an increase in the number of papers that deal with the importance of human resource management in national and international frameworks, as well as the importance of the HRM departments and functions (Islam et al., 2023). The idea of artificial intelligence (AI) is not a new one, it is just the way of its acceptance in the society and economy that is. By reviewing the literature, it has been observed that the progenitors of IHRM were Dowling, Welch, Schuler (1999) who defined and performed their classification, defined international strategy and goals, but also offered guidelines that reduced the differences between international and domestic human resource management activities. Furthermore, Schuler (2000, 1996) described the influence of the environment, and provided the strategic activities of IHRM. In many HRM textbooks, it is possible to find a separate section on IHRM, under the name global human resource management, referring to significant HRM changes in the global environment. These include: vetting suitable candidates, retaining employees, aligning with costs, aligning with local laws, controlling the policy of specific circumstances, building career management, mobility team resource, lack of mobile technology, expecting employees to change positions and relocate, and inability to use the experience when returning to the country of origin (Ivancevic & Konopaske, 2013: 97). Furthermore, there are papers written in the light of talent management and global changes (Kravariti, F., et al, 2023; Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011). The literature also shows that e-HRM must be aligned with the strategic orientation of the HR function, and that it helps in collecting useful and good information, on the basis of which correct decisions can be made (Nyathi, 2022). "All participants in the employment relationship must think about the ethical consequences of their work. Challenges such as globalization, which emphasizes an economy based on knowledge and technological progress, led many economies to look for new sources of competitive advantage, and the solution was sought in higher levels of individual

competence, people thus becoming “valuable assets”, i.e. human capital” (Maksimović, 2021: 34). In recent years, the use of artificial intelligence in HRM benefits employees, but also employers by allowing for the processing of a large amount of data, having access to certain platforms, while also being used in programs for the acquired skills and knowledge of employees (Deepa et al., 2024). It is assumed that using the application platform (hardware or software used to host applications or services) should lead to improved “performance” in decision-making, and the influence of expertise is reflected in satisfied user behavior. “Time savings accrue to users when they click on algorithmically ranked results based on position, trusting that the platform has done the work for them, rather than having to evaluate intrinsic and latent product qualities themselves. This behavioral heuristic saves users enormous amounts of time and cognition in decision making” (O’Reilly, 2023: 10). According to recent research studies, workers will have to upgrade their knowledge and learn new technological skills with proper training and development because the environment is changing, and they will have to adapt to those changes (Mukherjee, 2022: 150). On the one hand, the literature states that AI can lead to the reduction of bias in the stages of selection and recruitment of candidates, as well as the reduction of nepotism, while on the other, it is stated that the absence of “living speech” and “human presence” could lead to problems (Afzal et al., 2023). Algorithms save time in the process of obtaining knowledge and help in decision-making, because the algorithms themselves classify the data, while employees believe that the platform has done the work for them (O’Reilly, 2023).

## 2. The New Geo-Economic Context And International Human Resource Management

New geo-economic relations between countries, as well as relations in the world, crystallized after the end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, during the Cold War, the USA and its allies had sovereignly shaped geopolitical and geoeconomic relations in the world until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. From that moment on, other big

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<sup>2</sup> “By 1942–45, America had become a global hegemon, controlling half of the world’s industrial production and boasting the largest armed forces deployed across vast territories.” (Zvezdanović Lobanova & Nikolić, 2024: 262).

countries such as China, Russia, and India have gained visibility, as they began to implement economic reforms and change their status in the world geoeconomy. "In the beginning, the Washington administration itself helped China to get rich, and in return China did not normally react with peacefulness, democracy, responsibility, acceptance of liberal values" (Maksimović, 2022: 58–59). But with economic growth, China has become more ambitious, and has fueled rivalry primarily with the US. Thus, China has become the biggest geopolitical and geoeconomic challenge for the US foreign policy (Mearsheimer, 2021). Despite the slowdown caused by Covid-19, China's economic growth existed even during the pandemic. Moreover, it accelerated in 2021, and the reasons for this have been the high share of savings and investment in GDP, and in addition, China's very successful supply chains, which have not been interrupted even by American trade sanctions. "An almost certain scenario in which China is becoming the leading world economy already brings strong geopolitical implications, primarily in the form of shaking the existing world order, which is practically managed by Washington" (Nikolić & Zvezdanović Lobanova, 2022: 45). However, after the pandemic lockdown, China's economy has started to slow down, GDP is about 5% lower than expected, consumer confidence has fallen and there has been a real estate collapse. However, the conflict over the West has only grown. It is also justified to question whether the "decades-old economic strategy" of the advantages of industrial production over other economic sectors can survive today. This can be considered a consequence of the tradition of economic planning of industrial production, not the ignorance of Chinese economic scholars. It is a consequence of reflecting the "long-term economic vision of the Chinese Communist Party". At the same time, household consumption is ignored. Does this create a structural overcapacity that can lead to a drop in prices due to oversupply and thus to insolvency and job losses?<sup>3</sup> But it is employment at the national level and the loss or creation of jobs that are the key topic of all economies, and today

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<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the 21st century, excessive investment in steel led to China exceeding the steel production of Germany, Japan, and the United States combined. In the long decade of the 21st century, it did the same with aluminum, robotics, batteries for electric vehicles, cement, glass, oil, and the advice is to invest in the automotive industry, where a large number of manufacturers are recording losses, for digital products, electronics and smart devices (Zongyuan, 2024).

they represent one of the most sensitive economic issues. With all due respect to Xi's existing authoritarianism, the reduction in profits adversely affected the servicing and debt reduction of manufacturers, and only those with the best access to government subsidies survived (Mattingly, 2024).<sup>4</sup> However, the decision of West to isolate China may lead to jeopardizing China's economic development, as well as causing damage to the global economy (Zongyuan, 2024). China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was launched in 2013 in order for China to take a more active role in international geo-economic relations. With the help of this initiative, China has been strengthening ties with its trading partners, although it covers a wide range of countries. China has not considered the indebtedness of countries as a limiting factor, but acts as a multilateral lender. However, what it must take into account are the long-term interests of the countries that China enters into business arrangements with (Baltensperger & Dadush, 2019).

Furthermore, in addition to China, Russia also wants to act as a hegemon, although the conflict with Ukraine prevents it from doing so. Since the world economic crisis of 2008, Russia has been trying to assert itself as a major power in international economic relations. Russia can occupy such a place by building a balance of military and economic forces. Although it must be emphasized that the conflict in Ukraine led to a weakening of Russia's position in international economic relations (Zvezdanović Lobanova & Nikolić, 2024). After Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine, spending on the military began to burden the budget of the Russian Federation, and according to some estimates, it amounts to 1/3 of the budget for 2024. For these

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<sup>4</sup> For example, when the Berlin Wall fell, which marked the end of the Cold War, most of the countries that left the communist regimes followed the transition path, transforming their social arrangements and economic systems, with the desire to get closer to the EU countries. Since that time, countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Macedonia have organized their economies and societies on the path of economic development. Some of them managed to become members of the EU single market. But what is very significant, along the way, these countries have managed to reduce the share of unskilled labor-intensive products. They managed to improve their technological structure, create highly qualified industries and increase the export structure of qualified labor-intensive products. The Czech Republic and Slovakia took the lead in this, followed by Poland, Hungary and Slovenia. Thanks to the development of the economy and the education of workers, there is no structural excess capacity in these countries (Nikolić & Nikolić, 2021).

reasons, the dismissal of the Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu was considered justified, although the spending for the military industrial complex is at the expense of human resources, and social and health services. The dismissal of Minister Shoigu did not change anything in this sense. The new minister, Belousov, is seen in the light of a military Keynesian because he advocates for government incentives and a combination of state interventionism. There is even an assumption that a large number of companies will be nationalized, and taxes will be raised for the middle class. At the end of the seventh decade (in the sixties) there was a shortage of manpower, and today Putin has the same problem due to a long-term demographic decline, due to the emigration of skilled labor abroad, as well as the need to fill positions in the military industry. In any case, after the normalization of the economy, and the abandonment of the model of military interventionism, the Russian economy will have to use new development opportunities (Kolesnikov, 2024).<sup>5</sup> For example, in parallel with the

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<sup>5</sup> Nikita Khrushchev (1953–1964), and subsequently Brezhnev, spoke about economic development, and in 1962 an article appeared in the Pravda magazine about the need for enterprise autonomy and disposal of own income, as well as the expansion of the product range, which was the economic revolution in the USSR. Then, in order to modernize, the Central Economic and Mathematical Institute was created, which was supposed to search for universal optimization with the help of computers and mathematics. But the openness of the economy contributed the most to the survival of the Russian economy and production. In the seventh decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brezhnev spoke about the crisis of labor and economy, as well as about the failure of the application of new technologies and inefficient spending. The oil crisis of 1973 helped Russia use oil and gas to finance food imports and industry, but such a model could not survive for long. The 1990s were synonymous with the liberalization of Russia, although Mikhail Gorbachev did not have the courage to reform the Russian economy, and a political collapse occurred. Only Yeltsin saw the importance of economic reforms, and the leaders of those reforms were the “Chicago Boys”, Anatoly Chubais, Yegor Gaidar, and Andrey Belousov, as well as advanced Soviet economists from the old school, Alexander Anchyskin. Although they were criticized for high inflation, the liberalization of previously controlled prices, decline of agricultural consumption, closing of factories from the military industrial complex, as well as the lack of money for social assistance, these economists established a market economy. The establishment of the Higher School of Economics, which has been a nest of liberalism, was also important for the realization of this idea. In recent years, Belousov has been working on new technologies, the successful development of which cannot happen in an isolated economy. Today Putinomics survives, i.e. belief in the efficiency of state spending and the significant role of the military industry while respecting Orthodoxy. Small digression, tanks produced during the USSR are still used in Moscow military parades (Kolesnikov, 2024).

conflict in Ukraine, Russia is working on the implementation of climate policy, with the aim of reducing the negative effects of environmental pollution and climate change, but is also working on improving government acts related to sustainable development (Lobanov, Zvezdanović Lobanova & Zvezdanović, 2024). The restoration and elevation of Russia will also not be simple, even if in the geo-economic world it seems that Russia has consolidated economically.

In Table 1 shows the characteristics of the labor market in China, Russia and India.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the labor market in China, Russia and India

Earth	Characteristics of the labor market
China	Economies of scale and industrial production of low-skilled workers, which can lead to job losses
Russia	The economy of the development of the military industrial complex and the general lack of labor
India	An economy based on information technology and highly skilled workers

Source: Compiled by the authors according to Zongyuan, 2024; Kolesnikov, 2024 & Aiyar, 2024.

What is evident in the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the rise of India. The model of economic growth in India is such that it does not provide a large number of quality jobs, because there is not a sufficient number of job openings. For example, in the period from 2014 to 2022, over twenty-two million candidates applied for seven million vacant positions in the central government, which means that the competition is high. Nevertheless, it can be said that the Indian economy, with the help of liberalization, in the last three decades, has contributed to freeing the majority of the poor from the clutches of poverty (Table 2 see the Gini coefficient for India). The problem is that over 80% of India's workforce is employed in the informal economy, in jobs without contracts, without health and social security, or in jobs called self-employment. Nevertheless, with the help of education, young people manage to rise above low-productivity jobs, such as, for example, agriculture. However, unemployment among young people under the age of 25 has been around 42% in recent years, which is a high level. India bases its economic growth on a highly skilled service

sector, and it has not developed a broad base of low-skilled manufacturing labor like China. The Indian government has failed to gain the trust of citizens to implement reforms related to labor, land and agricultural products, although the service sector has remained dynamic. The connection between the state and capital has increased, and the main sector of development is construction, where the majority of jobs originate, and in this sector little investment is made in human resources, and jobs are mostly informal and casual. Little is invested in the sector of small and medium enterprises, which do not have a highly educated workforce. For these reasons, market reforms have become synonymous with the interests of big business. Big companies are shutting down small companies, and new entrepreneurs are emerging in the financial technology sector, digital startups, and e-commerce. Employment in manufacturing enterprises was 11.4% in 2023, which is lower than in 2018, and agriculture employs a higher percentage of workers than in 2018. In parallel with that, centralization is strengthening, which weakens the role of local governments. With the beginning of Modi's third term, there is an insistence on the creation of new jobs and only in the formal sector 41 million in five years (Aiyar, 2024). The big question remains as to how realistically this is achievable. Table 2 shows the Gini coefficient for China, Russia, India, but also the Euro area and BRICS, for the purpose of comparison, where it can be seen that India has the lowest Gini coefficient. In 2023, the Gini index for the Euro area was 29.8%, and it is lower by % compared to 2020 (Eurostat, 2024).

**Table 2.** Gini index data according to the last available year

Country	Gini index	Last year available
China	37,1	2020
India	32,8	2021
Russia	36	2020
Euro area	36,8	2020
BRICS	35 (34,99674885) *	2020

Source: World Bank, 2024; Eurostata, 2024.

\* Weighted average, author Nikolic I. calculation.

Table 3 shows data for GDP, unemployment rate and population for China, India, Russia and the Euro area – 2017–2023, with projections for 2024. It can be seen that Russia has the lowest unemployment rate in 2023 at 3.25%, while India has the highest at 8% in the same year. In between are China with the unemployment rate of 5.3% and the Euro area with 6.6% in the same year. In that year, India has the highest growth rate and it accounts for 6.3%.

**Table 3.** GDP, unemployment rate and population for China, India, Russia and Euro area – 2017–2023, with projections for 2024

Country	Subject Descriptor	Units	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
China	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	6,9	6,8	6,0	2,2	8,5	3,0	5,0	4,2
	Unemployment rate	Total labor force (%)	5	4,9	5,2	5,2	5,1	5,5	5,3	5,2
	Population	Persons (Millions)	1400,1	1405,4	1410,1	1412,1	1412,6	1411,8	1411,4	1410,8
India	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	6,8	6,5	3,9	-5,8	9,1	7,2	6,3	6,3
	Unemployment rate	Total labor force (%)	5,4	5,3	5,3	8	6	7,3	8	9,2
	Population	Persons (Millions)	1354,2	1369,0	1383,1	1396,4	1407,6	1417,2	1428,6	1441,7
Russia	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	1,8	2,8	2,2	-2,7	5,6	-2,1	2,2	1,1
	Unemployment rate	Total labor force (%)	5,2	4,8	4,6	5,783	4,825	3,942	3,251	3,144
	Population	Persons (Millions)	146,9	146,8	146,7	146,2	145,6	143,4	143,2	142,9
Euro area	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	2,6	1,8	1,6	-6,1	5,6	3,3	0,7	1,2
	Unemployment rate	Total labor force (%)	9,2	8,2	7,6	8,0	7,7	6,7	6,6	6,5
	Employment	Index, 2000=100	105,441	106,872	108,273	106,805	108,281	111,088	112,084	112,326

Source: IMF (2023).

In parallel with the strengthening of these large countries, a large bloc was also created, which is BRICS, to which these three countries belong. Namely, BRICS – an intergovernmental organization, whose international influence is constantly growing, and which consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, with four new members being admitted in 2023: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, to form BRICS+. For example, BRICS includes 41.13%



of the world's population, of which China and India have 87%. It comprises about 36% of the global gross national income, more than 40% of world oil production and more than 36% of world gas production. However, what is interesting is that over forty countries have applied for accession. The first BRIC summit (also the term of origin) was held in Yekaterinburg in 2009, and now the group meets once a year and decides by consensus. In 2016, this group launched the New Development Bank to finance sustainable development projects and infrastructure projects, particularly important for the markets of developing countries. It is considered a counterpart to the World Bank or the IMF. It is interesting that BRICS itself is not a member of any international organization, and that its members are members of several other international organizations. These are, for example, the UN Security Council, then the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Member countries sometimes show agreement on certain issues, and sometimes not, as was the case with the invasion of Ukraine, when Brazil agreed and the others opposed. Nevertheless, this alliance, in addition to its economic importance, should be viewed through its political and multilateral significance, the importance of currency formation and the effects it can have on the rest of the world, for example the European Union. For example, the EU has no signed agreements on investments or free trade, so it has no established trade relations with BRICS+. This alliance should represent a turn away from Western hegemony, but not from the West. Whether the BRICS can weaken or even replace the dollar as the global reserve currency in the future will be seen over time. If this happens, it would lead to changes in the global financial market. Whether it could contribute to the balancing of the new world order also remains to be seen? (Jütten & Falkenberg, 2024; Brics expansion, 2024). In any case, this alliance is part of the new multipolar world, and therefore the new global order. "International markets have become crowded and new and old economic powers compete fiercely to share them out with the support of nation-states" (Mariotti, 2024: 2).

The multipolar division of the world and the increase in geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions led to geographic fragmentation, as it has already been said. On the one hand there have been big countries, world hegemony such as Russia, China, India, while on

the other there have been big blocs like BRICS – but also regional economic integration. The latter are gaining more and more importance, because some countries want to strengthen their economies and increase their influence in their region. However, the question arises whether this fragmentation leads to the disintegration of the existing relations? Therefore, economic relations are increasingly beginning to be based within regional blocs, which are united by a common ideology, interests and the achievement of a common goal called security. Countries usually turn to regional integration if they have a problem with obtaining financial resources on the international level, due to the escalation of a conflict, uncertainty of investors, or financial sanctions. Another reasons for this include trade restrictions, commodity market disruptions, inflation, supply chains that often break, as well as credit disputes (Marafa, 2024).

From what has been said, it is clear that in addition to global economic changes, there are also changes within countries, which alter the position of human resources, placing them in a context of uncertainty and low incomes.

### **3. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and IHRM – Digitalization as a Driver of Innovation**

Technological development and the development of information technology today appear under new names such as digitization and artificial intelligence (AI). Presently, they play a significant role in many areas of organization and economic life, emphasizing immediacy, constant connectivity and many challenges at work. The new digital economy is changing the life and work of the individual, promoting flexibilization and highlighting big data, machine learning and AI (Arslan et al., 2022; Maksimović, 2017). “With the fourth industrial revolution, i.e. the development of the information technology sector, there has been a change in the concept of work, and new, atypical forms of employment appear – the aforementioned flexibilization of work engagement, as well as the often vaguely defined relations between the employer and the engaged persons, lead to these persons not being recognized as employees, that is, such contracts do not contain the necessary elements for establishing an employment relationship and, accordingly, do not provide the necessary level of labor law protection”

(Ostojić, Maksimović & Stojković Zlatanović, 2022: 252).<sup>6</sup> In a competitive and complex business environment, the business role of human resource management is constantly changing. In recent years, there has been an increase in the application of AI in HRM. As a result, a scattered network of literature related to that field of science and its various disciplines appeared. However, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research on this topic. It is quite clear that the practice of HRM in the future will contain digitization and virtualization as a key, with the demand for superior human capital with the help of Industry 4.0. In addition to contributing more effectively to the organization of HRM departments and tasks, it should lead to solving problems and accelerating decision-making related to organizational business and its specific tasks. In particular, the help of AI when performing the function of human resource management refers to the exploitation of unused potentials. However, apart from the use of AI in companies related to industry, the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises, there is a noticeable increase in the use of artificial intelligence in digital management, finance, retail, education, healthcare, but also in the creation of smart cities<sup>7</sup> (Islam et al., 2023). Rapid digital transformation, technological intensity, cycle time reduction, and circular economy are changing the working environment. In the literature itself, both the positive and negative sides of digitization and AI are mentioned, but everyone agrees that digital technologies are a big novelty in the economy and that they have become indispensable in companies, and a strategic imperative. All employees, regardless of function, are forced to use machine learning, social networks, analysis of large amounts of data, algorithms, and even simulations. Intensive application of new technologies makes many existing competencies obsolete, and affects the construction of virtual competencies. It is interesting that in parallel with the usefulness, the issues of abuse of

<sup>6</sup> A major quake in the economies, both at the macro- and micro-level, was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which caused a fall in employment in EU countries, though not a uniform one truth be told, though it simultaneously accelerated implementation of the 4.0 industrial revolution worldwide (Nikolić & Filipović, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> "Having in mind that artificial intelligence aims to imitate human cognitive functions, it is bringing a paradigm change to health care, powered by the increasing availability of healthcare data and immediate progress of analytics techniques. Artificial intelligence can be applied to different types of healthcare data" (Sovilj & Stojković Zlatanović, 2023: 224).

the IT sector and AI resources by managers, as well as those of poor protection against unwanted “leaks” of information and abuse of personal data, are being raised. Posting of personal data on websites to harm the reputation of employees was also recorded. The employees themselves are exposed to psychological pressures and challenges such as “impossible expectations”, “burnout”, i.e. unlimited working time, which implies constant engagement on web platforms. Consequently, stress and anxiety rise due to the inability to be constantly present, and to respond to requests in a short time. At the same time, workers are afraid of losing their jobs, because there is fatigue from the demanding training without which it is not possible to use AI. And the question arises of whether people will work in a team together with robots in the future. It is difficult to establish such cooperation, because it is difficult to communicate with the algorithm that robots are programmed with (Arslan et al., 2022).

Dynamic changes in the external environment activate and require the “mobilization” of the most important elements of organization, namely strategies (collection of data that must be classified and structured) that managers can implement; resources (employees, equipment, buildings, teamwork that is almost impossible to imitate due to the synergistic effect); and capabilities (alignment of existing technologies with the new business model). To what extent a company is capable of transforming and adapting its organizational strategy depends on these elements (Deepa et al., 2024). Some researchers assume that every company that uses e-HRM should realize gains and benefits from its use. Among others, it can be the transition to new markets, better organization and more effective activities and organization (Nyathi, 2022). However, the big question is whether this applies equally to large, small and medium-sized enterprises. The introduction of AI in HRM leads to positive effects when solving problems in the existing processes of the HR department, which relate to recruitment, learning, performance management, employee benefits, internal mobility and management (Deepa et al., 2024). Correctly understood AI messages are possible, if the level of decision-making and problem-solving in this way is at the level of human thinking. However, research is not expected to progress in the identified gaps in redesigning the sector and jobs related to training and education and improving the skills of employees, because organizations will not develop specifically sectoral

responses to solve specific problems with the application of AI (Islam et al., 2023). The reason why employers invest in artificial intelligence is of financial nature, because the investment in software can be paid off over a longer period of time, and the investment in employees through training must be paid off immediately when it is maintained. Not infrequently, employers use AI to keep employees under control.

Furthermore, we need to answer what AI is. In some places, AI is described as a cluster of technologies that are intended to use computers to perform tasks instead of humans, with the intention of demonstrating cognition and the ability and competence to make decisions. It is actually machine learning, because it's powered by technologies. The literature tells us that Arthur Samuel was a pioneer of machine learning. Examples of machine learning with the application of AI are well known to everyone and are sound as an accompaniment to text, spam filtering in online correspondence, natural voice processing and recognition, as well as visual quality control. Machine learning (ML), which is the basis of AI, seeks to help managers make decisions, with the ambition of doing it as the human brain would, in order to create better performance. Also, the goal is to help companies operate profitably with the help of organizational and machine learning, and even reorient the business model, by changing processes, or turning to other business sectors (Deepa et al., 2024). The electronic Human Resource Management (e-HRM) is actually "defined as a set of configurations of computer hardware, software and electronic network resources that enable planned or actual human resource management activities (eg policies, practices and services) through the coordination and control of individuals and group-level data collection and creation of information and communications within and across organizational boundaries" (Nyathi, 2022). When e-HRM is introduced, it affects organizational policy by being able to create a new redistribution of power between employees, in terms of increased performance, or less employee turnover, or their increased satisfaction; then, it promotes the targeted distribution of information in the sense that this information make it easier for the employee to deal with some uncertainty, and thus contribute to avoiding conflicts; and finally, it leads to an increase in access to information related to the organization's operations and business practices, as well as an increase in the percentage of feedback. This is necessary so that employees get the impression of being informed, respected, but also

perceive fairness and justice at work. It helps management to discover the variables that lead to the improvement of HRM work with the help of AI. Considering the above, there are positive effects of AI on HRM, the use of digitization on organizational results, in developed countries, but also in developing countries. AI is a useful tool that strengthens the functioning of human resources and is of great help during changes in organization, because it facilitates the implementation of the changes, the introduction of innovations and improves the competitiveness of companies (Nyathi, 2022). "It also helps HR personnel to automate their communications with candidates who are applying for jobs, screen candidates from the pool of application forms, conduct large number of interviews in a short span of time, efficiently recruit the right candidate for the right designation, provide performance feedback to all, providing on time training and development to employees and maximizing their work efficiency" (Mukherjee, 2022: 150).

The use of generative AI applications and their functions facilitate AI-aided decision-making in retail, hospitality and tourism, while their use in working with consumers mainly focus on improving the quality of services, but also of communication, which leads to product improvement. Also, AI helps managers to solve problems according to the ever-changing technological requirements, as well as in line with the employees, their health, education and training. On the one hand, this requires managers who have the capacity, knowledge and abilities to adopt and implement AI in HRM, while on the other, the ability of employees to use chatbots, as well as their knowledge and experience contribute to easier and faster access to information (Deepa et al., 2024). Major psychological problems among employees and difficult HR practices have been observed due to new technologies that, on the one hand, improve the work of companies, while on the other, can lead to barriers in human behavior (Arslan et al., 2022).

HR departments use entry-level AI, which cannot be said for marketing departments that use advanced AI technology. Successful implementation of AI requires the cooperation of government, academia, industry and the education system. "It is an emerging technological tool which helps to improve employee performances and work productivity" (Mukherjee, 2022: 150).

What we currently have are more frequent job changes, self-employment, an increase in precarious work, which weakens the role of

trade unions and workers' rights, which have already been shaken for the last thirty years. AI can disrupt wages and income distribution and fuel economic inequality. A paradox of abundance can also appear, i.e. that the society as a whole is richer, but with the layers of the population that are exposed to high inequality, and polarization of jobs. Employees performing low-skilled jobs are the most exposed to possibly being replaced by robots. Nevertheless, one gets the impression that there is a polarization of jobs, and that jobs with a medium level of education are disappearing, and that therefore the middle class with medium income is jeopardised. What remains are jobs that require higher levels of education and, to a lesser extent, low-education jobs (Mukherjee, 2022: 150).

The use of AI in HR areas in segments such as candidate sourcing, screening and interviewing, as well as selection, has been very successfully applied. AI analyzes the candidate's CV, and when recruiting candidates, introduces them to specific tasks and work history. In addition, AI is a significant support for HRM administration, as it can automatically select documents during reception. Thus, advanced digitization increases efficiency and effectiveness, while also leading to flexibility and reliability in data analysis, which is very much needed in the HR process (Fryc et al., 2024). Individuals expect artificial intelligence to help them identify the right person for the right position. However, there are not many research studies on the implementation of AI in the performance of corporate HRM. In this sense, four challenges were identified, namely: the phenomenon of human resources is very complex and it makes it difficult to create clear models; it is limited by a small set of data, mostly related to one company; they raise questions of responsibility for decisions made on the basis of algorithms; employee dissatisfaction caused by managerial decisions made on the basis of AI data (Cappelli & Rogovsky, 2023).

For example, AI helps with the socialization of new employees by making it easier for them to access information, helping employees to follow changes and align their work with new business rules. In the literature, it can also be found that AI helps employees in creating their career and advancement plans. It further helps in building a skilled operational management team in the workplace. Apart from the economy, AI is being used in the health and energy sectors. For example, in the energy sector, it is stated that the United Arab Emirates,

at the basis of its economic growth and production, has as its main sources oil and gas. In that area, the adoption of artificial intelligence in the UAE has the role of reducing the burden on the workforce, reducing costs, increasing revenue, and providing services that are well organized and efficient. Thus, AI improves performance in three key areas, namely finance, operational strategies and customer services (Afzal et al., 2023).

For example, in China, with the low-budget production, i.e. the production of goods of low class robotics, the artificial intelligence suffer from a lack of capacity for faster development. China made AI a priority in its last two five-year plans, 2016–2020 and 2021–2025, and on paper the program looked impressive. It should have taken advantage of China's two strengths: the ability to quickly build physical infrastructure and the government's unlimited ability to collect and share personal data. Although China is second only to the US in their investment in AI, the quality of research suffers from a lack of domestic intellectual property, as well as interference caused by censorship. For these reasons, the Chinese economy remains the economy of scale, and is not rooted in innovation (Zongyuan, 2024).

Furthermore, the Agenda of the International Labor Organization (ILO) sees work in the future to be focusing on the needs of man, and his rights in the light of sustainability, i.e. economic, social and environmental policy. The ILO emphasizes that the creation of jobs that involve healthy working conditions leads to this goal, while simultaneously promoting a favorable environment for entrepreneurship. However, the question arises whether AI could challenge this claim. Namely, companies introduce artificial digital technology, without taking into consideration whether it threatens certain rights of workers, for example the right to data protection (ILO, 2019; Cappelli & Rogovsky, 2023). In terms of the Green Agenda and work, the management of digital technologies should focus on dignified work, the right to green learning, which today is deemed necessary because the population is aging, and there are big changes in the field of labor relations. In addition, lifelong learning helps people to improve or be trained in a new way and thus become competitive in the labor market (Cappelli & Rogovsky, 2023). "In modern societies, respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice are often considered the most critical principles in human action toward oneself and others" (Mitrović & Mitrović, 2023: 2).



## CONCLUSION

In order for countries to survive in the international economy, they must use artificial intelligence and other innovations in the production and work process. Business entities that want to survive in the international market must apply AI in their operations in order to improve performance. The sophistication of AI has enabled the application of business intelligence to human resource management, automation of the data selection process, and data analysis. It also helps shorten the development time of a product or service, as it fills in the gaps created by the lack of internal skills. AI has contributed to the creation of a kind of HR information system (Sousa, 2020). The advantage of using AI is that it can be used by both employees and employers, as it potentially processes large amounts of data that are in turn classified and structured by the algorithm itself. It helps the recruitment process by reducing bias and nepotism. Great importance is placed on the dynamic capabilities, for example significant company resources, such as employees, facilities, company equipment and overall intangible assets, which AI needs to imitate (Deepa et al., 2024). The positive effects of the use and consequences of the application of e-HRM are not limited only to developed economies and their macro level. The question of whether AI is capable of fully imitating humans, their intelligence, knowledge and experience, will be answered very soon.

The negative side of AI is the lack of “human presence” and “live communication”. Furthermore, the downside is that during the dissemination of information, personal data may be misused. A negative feature is also the constant engagement on the Web, which causes anxiety and stress due to the feeling that one cannot respond to requests and complete the task. This can lead to barriers in human behavior, and cause communication problems. Research questions for the future are whether people will engage in teamwork with robots and how will the communication between them be operated. Will the boundary between human action and algorithm action be clearly defined in the decision-making process? Given that artificial intelligence absorbs both positive and negative characteristics of employees, the question remains of whether it is bound to repeat the mistakes that humans have been making.

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# Culture-related Contingencies in International Human Resource Management Hofstede's Framework in IHRM Research 1982–2024

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

This study identified patterns and trends in how Hofstede's work was referenced by researchers in International Human Resource Management by examining citations during more than four decades. The analyses showed a growing relevance and sophistication in applying Hofstede's dimensions as a paradigm. The framework's full potential was realized progressively. Initially, the application was simplistic. A more complete and integrated approach involving other fields of research emerged within IHRM research. From partial to complete application demonstrates how a theory can deeply influence a field. The study shows the importance of constructively adapting an understanding of cultural dimensions to improve global HR strategies. Societal culture emerges as a contingency with the puzzle of Japan in the 1980s, followed by increasing globalization. Employee, leadership and power distance are central concepts for the IHRM. Our biometric analysis based on titles and abstracts, is assumed to serve as a proxy for full content analysis of approximately 2,600 articles. *Keywords:* Societal Culture, IHRM, Hofstede, Bibliometrics, Paradigm, Employee, Leadership, Power distance

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edited volumes

## 1. Introduction

Climate issues, immigration, pandemic related interdependencies, high politics and trade are among the topics that management and international business researchers are encouraged to engage in. Regardless of motivation, research fields of international business



and management continue to relate research activities to the needs of the business community and what educational institutions require in preparing students to handle real life issues. The puzzles are often reflected in the researched topics of the day.

International Human Resource Management exemplifies a field that comprehensively follows the contingencies that develop over time. Country culture differences represent a challenge for international business at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Over time, societies learn to solve the problems they face. Different solutions are selected to solve the same problems. Country culture differences are often reflected in societal institutions and values. Institutional differences are visible and relatively easy to access and relate to. Differences in values are invisible and need interpretation to become noticeable.

Values are understood as preferences about how the problems that a society faces are best met, if you look at country differences from the functional point of view. The best known functionally based values construct used in cross cultural management are the four, later five dimensions of societal values linked to nations that Geert Hofstede developed (Peterson & Søndergaard, 2008:xxvi).

Geert Hofstede's dimensional framework addresses important culture related contingencies that vary across countries and in country regions (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1983). In studying the application of Hofstede's dimensions in management research, the IHRM field stands out as the one with the fullest application (Søndergaard, 2024). The study contains an analysis of how the fields studying international aspects of business have used the two most cited management-related articles that Hofstede published.

This study of the development of the field of international human relations in international business rests on two assumptions with their advantages and disadvantages:

1. First, important developments in the field can be analyzed by observing how contingent factors/variables emerge and become research topics.
2. Second, a functional perspective will be applied to explaining the trends.

A deeper understanding of each of the trends is not always interpreted in a positive way and is not always in favor of many trends. The contingency approach allows for a high level of abstraction which fits with the limitations of the biometric analyses needed to analyze the amount of research over so many years.

The contingency approach allows identifying the dynamics of the field by comparing selected periods of time. If periods of time are compared, then we single out different important contingencies at different times. Insight based interpretation will be used to evaluate the role of the contingencies in the selected periods. A comprehensive overview based on many publications will be provided, despite the shortcomings pointed out here.

Bibliomic research have been providing descriptive analyses of the influence of various theories, such as Bartlett and Ghoshal's or Hofstede's work (Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira et al., 2014). Here we will try to go deeper and interpret the trends. A comprehensive insight in the relevant fields is required for doing so. Research and PhD workshops over the past decades have enabled me to do so (Peterson & Søndergaard, 2008; Peterson & Søndergaard, 2011; Peterson et al., 2018; Søndergaard, 1994; Søndergaard, 2024; Søndergaard & Peterson, 2008).

The exploration is operated here as a biometric analysis based on titles and abstracts which will be analyzed as an assumed proxy of a full content analysis of about 2,600 articles. These articles have found is necessary to cite one of the top two most cited articles Hofstede published, wherein Hofstede's framework was introduced to the field of management (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1983). The two articles are treated here as one source because of the degree of the content overlapping. The map of the topics covered in these 2600 articles is shown in Figure 1.

First, important developments in the field can be analyzed by observing how contingent factors and variables emerge and become research topics. Second, a functional perspective will be applied to explain the trends.

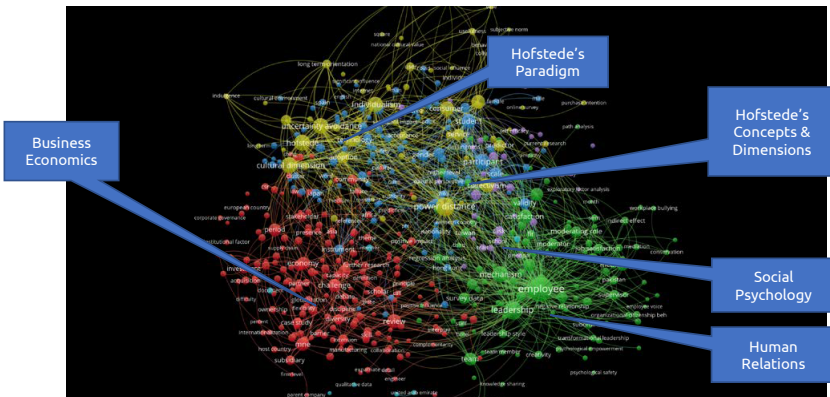
Given these assumptions, a deeper understanding of each trend is not pursued at the expense of an overview of many trends. The contingency approach allows for a high level of abstraction, which aligns with the limitations of the biometric analyses required to examine

the extensive body of research over many years. This approach helps identifying the field's dynamics, by comparing the selected periods. By comparing different periods, we can isolate important contingencies at various times. Insight-based interpretation will be used to evaluate the role of these contingencies in the selected periods, providing a comprehensive overview based on numerous publications, despite the noted shortcomings.

Bibliometric research has provided descriptive analyses of the influence of various theories, such as Bartlett and Ghoshal's or Hofstede's work (Ferreira, 2011; Ferreira et al., 2014). Here, we aim to delve deeper and interpret the trends, requiring comprehensive insight into the relevant fields. Research and PhD workshops over the past decades have facilitated this deeper understanding (Peterson & Søndergaard, 2008; Peterson & Søndergaard, 2011; Peterson et al., 2018; Søndergaard, 1994; Søndergaard, 2024; Søndergaard & Peterson, 2008).

The biometric analysis in this scientific work is based on the analysis of the titles and abstracts of 2,600 articles. Two important articles by Hofstede are cited in them, thanks to which Hofstede's framework was introduced to the field of management (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 1983). These two topmost cited in management are treated as one source due to a significant overlap in terms of content. Thus, a map of the topics covered in these 2,600 articles was formed and is shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Trends of topics 1980–2022 applying the two most-cited Hofstede's articles in management



Source: Søndergaard, 2024: 237, black and white version.

From the total number of publications, the terms contained in the mentioned two most important Hofstede publications were singled out. Terms of topics are generated from publications of which the argument needs to make a reference to these two Hofstede publications. The biometric analysis produced 30,850 terms, where standard selection assumed the minimum of ten occurrences of term. 872 terms met that threshold. A relevance score was calculated for each of the 872 terms. The most relevant terms involved 523 terms which comprised 60% of the most important terms. Five research themes or academic disciplines emerged from the analysis.

Figure 1 represents a version that was not possible to publish in format of the book chapter. The colors of the clusters serve to outline clearly distinct fields of research. In red color, we see business economics themes. Green color designates human resources management themes. Yellow is designated to Hofstede conceptualization and dimensions. Blue color has been allotted to the topics that relate to the Hofstede's paradigm. Pink represents social psychology, though less obviously. Authors of dealing with social psychology are vaguely interested in topics related to business and management.

Business and HR research use Hofstede framework rather widely, if we look closely at the yellow group of topics relating to Hofstede's concepts and dimensions (see figure 2). Power distance and individualism are popular culture dimensions. Power distance seems to be cited with topics of a more general nature in economics. In the HR research, however, power distance appears with relation to a more content-strong theme within the field of HR. Individualism seems to be associated with similar themes in HR, and not so much in business economics.

Business and HR research seems to use the framework very differently. The business research seems to connect Hofstede's framework with the challenging topics of international business. Positive and moderating effects seem to be connected to the culture framework via the green HR group.

The field of HR correctly applies Hofstede's framework for analyzing country differences with respect to culture of importance to work (in the workplace). In particular, it turned out that the importance of human resources is in focus in Hofstede's framework. Hofstede's notions conceptualize the business organization operating in



at different times have been transformed into research topics in that period. Over more than four decades, the IHRM has followed the trend of incorporating topics of interest for the practices of management, but also for the aim of educating students to better deal with the current challenges in international business.

### *2.1. Beyond Universal Nature of IHRM Research Topics*

HR as a field of study has changed, following the needs of increasing internationalization of business. Leadership theories and theories of job motivation were developed, when there was a need to spread knowledge on a systematic level during WWII and after. Many had to be trained to lead, and funding was made available to develop leadership behavior training material. Two classic examples are Ohio State Leadership Studies and University of Michigan Leadership Studies (DeCrow, 1964; Perruci & McManus, 2012; Shartle, 1979; VanQuaquebeke & Vogt, 2022; Yunker & Hunt, 1976).

A functionally motivated development took place from around 1980. At that time, there was a debate regarding the issue of regarding country culture as a distinct contingency variable (Child, 1981). Until then, leadership and human relation related theories explained country differences as mostly rooted in educational traditions and economic development. The universal nature of such theories was generally assumed.

Given the spread of internationalization of business, there was a need to better understand the different conditions under which HR was practiced. Culture differences were considered a black box often added when no other explanation could be found. Peterson and Søndergaard provides a fuller functional descriptive overview of how the topic of culture is introduced and developed (Peterson & Søndergaard, 2012; Peterson & Søndergaard, 2008).

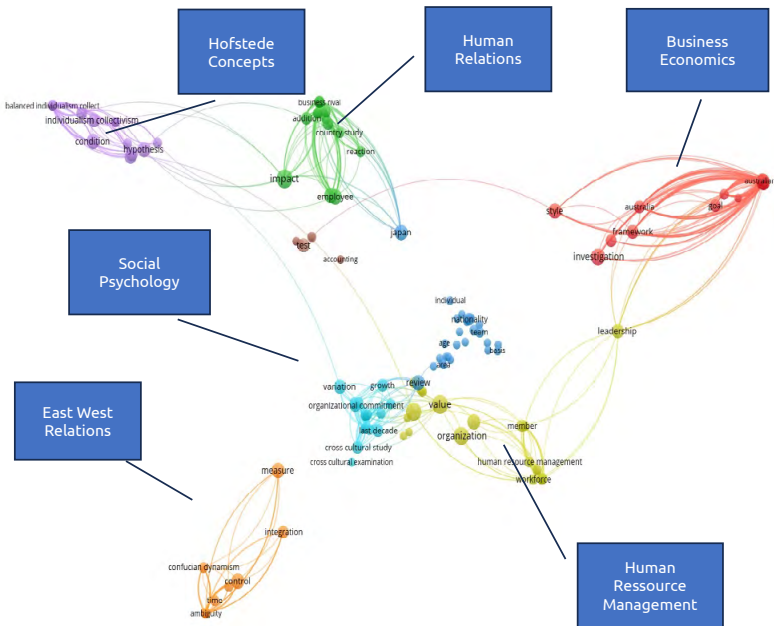
From the early 1980s, Hofstede has published articles where country culture was introduced as an independent systematic variable to account for a part of the differences between countries. The conceptualization took place based on an unprecedented large, but biased survey material. For example, the IBM cultural bias erased many other reasons for differences, such as education, gender, profession and hierarchical positions factors that then had been considered the

theory reasons for the differences. Country elites in different work categories are selected and developed due to a strong consistent recruitment practice and resourcefully backed training program of employees and managers in IBM.

Hofstede worked as the head of Human Relations in the European headquarters of IBM. Over the years, puzzling country-related differences surfaced. Hofstede worked on personal files in the 1970s and inductively found four dimensions of country differences regarding work-related values.

One important way to look at the development of international HR, is to see how Hofstede's dimension moved into the field and made sense to the researcher who wanted to make the field available to practitioners and students in the globalized business world that included an increasing number of people, societal levels and countries.

**Figure 3.** Research Topics with the Need to Cite Hofstede's Framework 1982–1995



Source: Author's calculation based on the sample 2024.

### 3. Development Over Time

A subdivision into periods will provide a fuller picture of the developments in peaking topics, and the relationships between them. The range of years is uniform in each period, i.e. each period includes a stage of ten years. The first period was longer because of lack of research to analyze.

#### 3.1. *Topics From the Early 1980s to Mid 1990s.*

The first period is characterized by few studies. The period needed to be extended until 1995 to include enough citations. There are only a few publications that are of interest to us that date from the 1980s. Most of the research publications that cite any of Hofstede's management related articles originated in the early 1990s, i.e. 1991–1995 had 1,169 terms or topics out of the total number of 1,236 terms for the entire period of 1982–1995.

Hofstede's argument about cultural relativity is shown in every field. Figure 3 indicates that research debates in the various fields are distinct within each field. The fields are far from each other. The fields of research do not share topics. The distance on the map between the fields indicates independence.

Topics within the field of business economics are marked in red in figure 3. Human resources topics are dealt with in two different fields marked green and yellow. With the topic of leadership the field of human resources is connected to the topics of business economics. Japan is connected to research topics within the field of research related to the topics regarding the individual. The brown group of topics relates to different Western – vs Asian perspectives, concerning Confucian dynamism.

In Figure 4 we focus on the research topics in HR during the period 1982 to 1995. HR research topics are marked in green. The topic of Japan relates to all HR research topics in this period. The topics reflect the puzzle of international business success of Japanese companies. Country and organizational culture became widely accepted topics in search of understanding the loss of competitiveness strength of the US companies at the time. Employee is a central research concept as it is linked to all the topics, including Canada. Japan as a research topic is not linked to

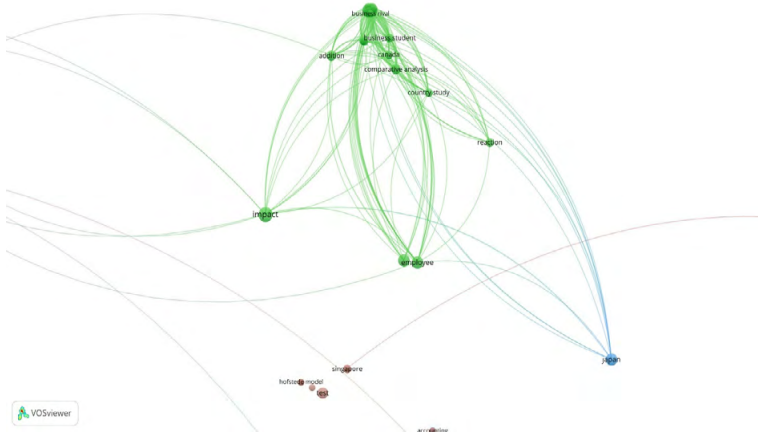


any other research fields in figure 4. Business rivalry is only connected to human resources management and linked to the human side of business.

In contrast, in the aftermath of WWII, the challenges of international processes of US companies facilitated research projects to further the understanding of the overseas market conditions. A main project in this tradition was the industrial man project (Kerr et al., 1971). One such example is a piece of research on the European patterns of management, which highlights the levels of economic and educational development to account for the differences (Haire, 1966).

From the functional perspective, the economic and educational situation in the 1980s introduced country differences at a different level, allowed, among other things, by the systematically and empirically based framework of country differences along the cultural dimensions offered by Hofstede. In short, the puzzle of international success of Japanese business brought about the interest in analyzing the role of country cultures on a systematic level.

**Figure 4.** Research Topics HRM with the Need to Cite Hofstede's Framework 1982–1995



Source: Author's calculation based on the sample 2024

### 3.2. Topics of the Late 1990s

During the second half of the 1990s (see figure 5) Japan was replaced by the US and Mexico as the country variable related to the

researched HR topics where Hofstede's framework was needed. Japan was no longer a big issue.

Global competition emerged as a topic. Leadership becomes a topic in this group as do teams, negotiation and global competition.

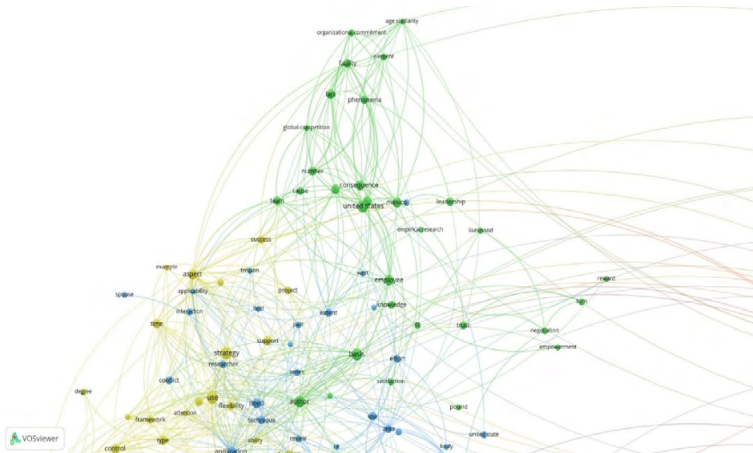
Employee and, to a minor degree leadership, continue to be topics in the second period of focus. Employee is the central topic connected with reward, empowerment, negotiation, but not leadership.

Moreover, during this period, we find an increased number of researched topics. The HR research topics seem to be interlinked. And in contrast to the previous period, they also connect with topics from other fields.

Research topics are getting connected across academic disciplines which seem closer connected in contrast to the clear separation of fields in the first period of our interest. The field of international business economics is distant and not connected to any other fields. (not shown in the figure).

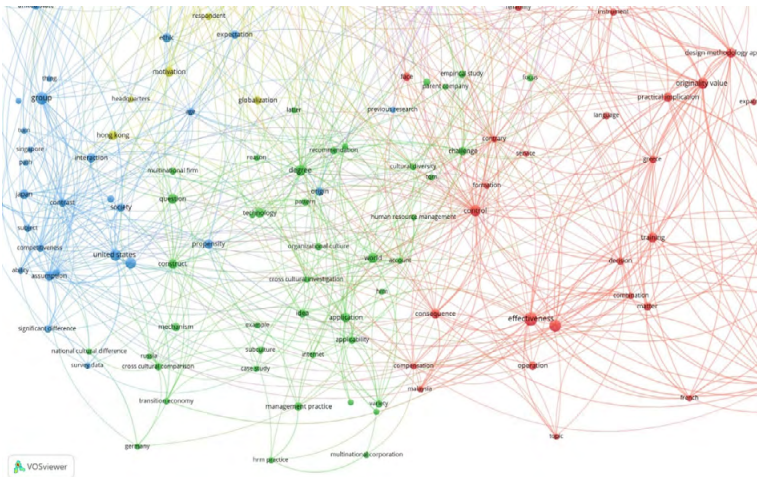
The last part of the 1990s found an expanded research agenda where Hofstede's framework needed to be referred to. The increased complexity of international management and business is indicated by the growing interconnections with other fields of research, which is a new feature specific for this period.

**Figure 5.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede's Framework 1996–2000



Source: Author's calculation based on the sample 2024.

**Figure 6.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede’s Framework 2001–2005.



Source: Author’s calculation based on the sample 2024.

### 3.3. Increased Complexity in Early 2000s

In the period from 2001 to 2005, the fields of research appear both closer and more interconnected than in the earlier periods (see figure 6).

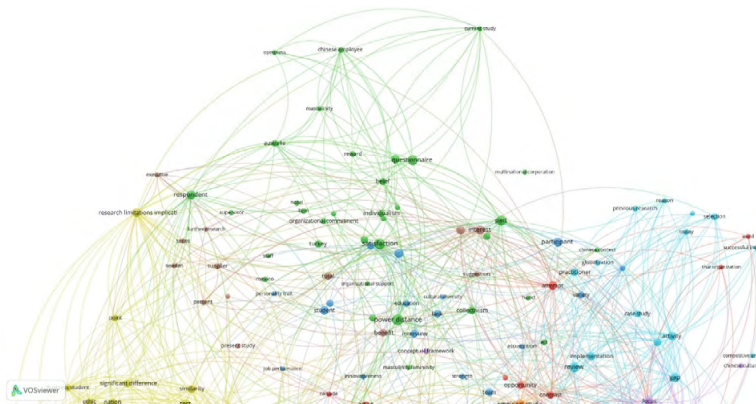
Classic business economics topics now connect with traditional HR topics. Germany emerges as a significant topic related to management practices. “World” also becomes a HR related research topic.

Globalization has become an important topic, linked with transition economies, technology, and multinational companies. Internet becomes a HR related topic.

During this period, “employee” and “leadership” are no longer central topics. Instead, the focus shifts towards structuring concepts at a higher level of abstraction, such as subculture, cross cultural investigation or comparison, application, mechanism, degree, and management practice (see figure 6).

Two trends emerge from the pattern of HR Topics Citing Hofstede’s Framework (2006–2010). First, in the period from 2006 to 2010, the topic of Chinese employees gains prominence, significantly shifting the focus within the employee category (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede’s Framework 2006–2010.



Source: Author’s calculation based on the sample 2024.

Second, Hofstede’s dimensions of power distance, individualism, and masculinity become important topics during this period. It appears that Hofstede’s concepts stand out as being highly used. It takes time for a trendy paradigm to become accepted and used as a research tool.

In contrast, leadership and employee, as general topics, are not among the most important topics of this period.

**Figure 8.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede’s Framework 2011–2015



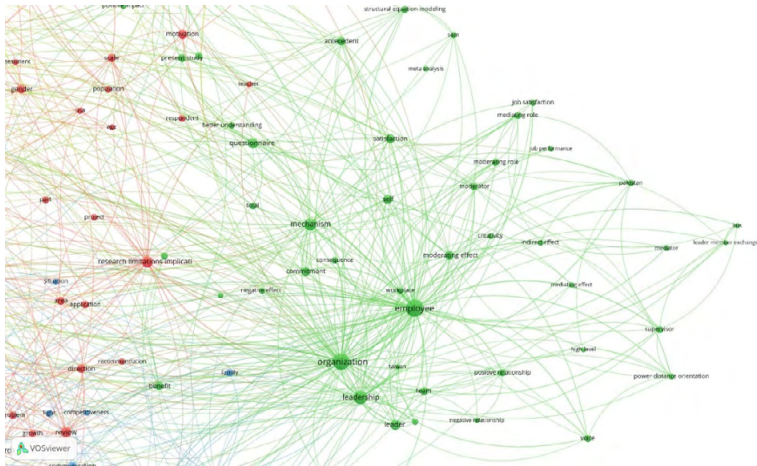
Source: Author’s calculation based on the sample 2024.

From 2011 to 2015, “employee” becomes a very central topic in HR pieces of research that cited Hofstede’s framework articles. The “employee” topic links with most HR-related topics, such as “leadership style”, “commitment” and “satisfaction”. “Leadership” also emerges as an important topic, particularly in relation to “leaders” and “leadership styles”, and is often associated with “collectivism”.

Positive aspect topics, such as “mediating roles”, “satisfaction”, and “job satisfaction”, reflect that these contingencies are generally associated with positive outcomes.

The IHRM field does not engage with other fields of research from 2011 to 2015, figure 8 reflects the standalone nature of the field research.

**Figure 9.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede’s Framework 2016–2020.



Source: Author’s calculation based on the sample 2024.

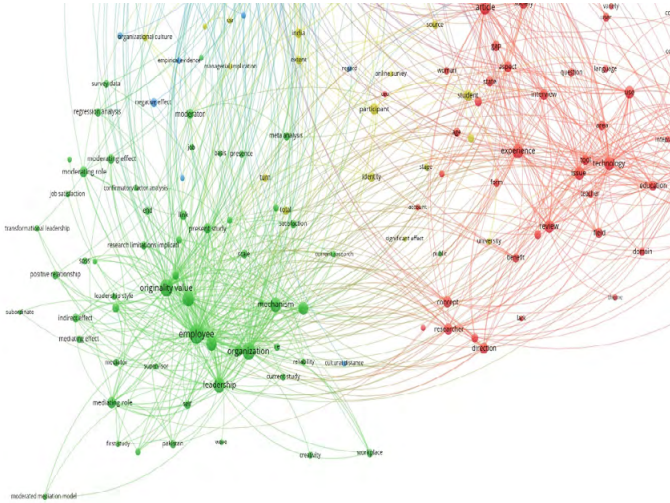
“Employee” continues to be an important and central concept (see figure 9). The term of “employee” is connected to “organization” and, to some degree, to “leadership” and “leadership styles.”

The importance of moderating effects also reflects the influence of globalization on organizations. This implies that in this field of research, the variables relating to country culture differences are considered one among other important variables to consider in the analysis of international human resource topics.

Using Hofstede’s framework to address these traditional HR concepts makes sense, and the moderators indicate that cultural differences are considered among other independent variables.

The examples shows that the field now reflects the intended use of Hofstede’s framework, as evidenced by the numerous topics with “employee” in the center, along with “leadership” and “organization”.

**Figure 10.** Research Topics in HR with the Need to Cite Hofstede’s Framework 2021–2024



Source: Author’s calculation based on the sample 2024.

### 3.4. Complexity of Research Topics’ Cross Field Interconnections in Early 2020s

During the most recent period (2021–2024), “employee,” “leadership,” and “organization” remain important topics. The “employee” topic has consistently been central, except during 2001 to 2005, connecting with various contemporary issues.

Business economics terms have moved closer to the HR field and are linked with several HR-related topics. Globalization processes are connecting economics with HR topics, indicating an integrated approach. Since 2016, the field of business has moved closer to the field of HR. VOS viewer locates these fields as very close.

In the last period, numerous links connect the two fields, showing their increasing integration and that the increasing complexity of research topics requires involvement of several academic research fields to analyze important topics.

## 4. Conclusion

This study utilizes bibliometrics to analyze citations of Hofstede's two most frequently referenced journal publications. The topics are derived from the titles and abstracts of these citations, focusing on the application of Hofstede's framework where its use has been deemed necessary for the authors' arguments.

The subdivided analysis shows that the unique complete application of the Hofstede frame in the field of international human resource management has emerged bit by bit over decades. The following summary of the key findings illustrates that the field of IHRM has gradually reached a complete implementation of the Hofstede framework, of which the understanding matured over time.

### *Key Findings*

First, the field is influenced by Japan and the characteristics of the early cultural studies in business and management. The puzzle of Japan's success in international business during the 1980s and early 1990s stimulated interest in the topics related to culture and country differences. Prior to Hofstede's framework, country cultures were often considered a "black box," with country differences primarily attributed to institutional and economic development factors. Hofstede's framework allowed for a systematic application of HR topics, albeit initially in a basic and introductory manner.

Second, International Human Relations saw an evolution of country-specific focus. In the late 1990s, certain countries, such as Germany, became focal points, but were eventually replaced by new contexts, like Chinese employees, in the early 2000s. Around 2010, the issues related to globalization began to emerge, and country-specific topics started to fade, giving way to themes such as working in multinational companies across cultures.

Third, the analyses indicated the centrality of employee and leadership topics in articles where Hofstede's framework needed to be referred to. The "employee" topic has consistently been central, except from 2001 to 2005, connected with various contemporary issues. The "employee" remained therefore a significant topic, often linked with leadership and organizational theses reflecting different aspects of authority. Power distance was frequently examined from a bottom-up perspective, highlighting the hierarchical distance between employees and superiors.

The central topic of "Employee" illustrates the vertical perspective of organizational authority using power distance to see the invisible sides of authority as it appears from below. HR researchers appear to have used Hofstede's framework correctly, integrating it into various HR-related studies.

## 5. Discussion of the Results

The study of the culture related contingencies applied in the IGM research over four decades has several limitations which relate to the selection of research topics and the Hofstede framework.

### 5.1. *Limitations Due to Analytic Tools*

First, in the selection of citations for the bibliometric analysis, titles and abstracts are here prioritized over keywords, as abstracts provide more reliable information about the publication's topics. It is however only a proxy for the content of the article and may therefore not give the full picture of the arguments pursued in the publication.

Moreover, a standard threshold of ten occurrences is used for topic selection, but it is adjusted for the first period to include a broader range of publications, ensuring a comprehensive map of topics. Selecting the topic standard of ten as a point of departure, we deviate from this standard to study an area with relatively fewer publications, which allowed us to gather enough publications and map the topics therein. A lower threshold of occurrences may have provided a finer account of the topics in certain periods, especially in the first decades included in the study.



The selection and patterns of connections are not random.

Second, the study focuses on citations where Hofstede's framework was introduced to the management field, limiting the analysis to HR contingencies related to country cultural differences. The likely bias in selecting articles inspired by Hofstede's work helps us pinpoint HR-related topics of the time. In this case, the shortcoming becomes an advantage for the purpose of the study. Non cultural contingencies may have provided a different pattern of research topics in the various periods. This comprises a limitation when it comes to the understanding of the topics of the day.

The specific reasons for citing Hofstede's framework are not always clear, as the bibliometric analysis uproots citations from their contexts.

The quality of the research behind the various positions was not assessed, and the study did not engage in the debate for or against the framework.

## 5.2. *Findings Beyond Limitations*

However, the analysis of the research topics where the authors found it necessary to refer to Hofstede's framework of country cultural differences, points to several observations of lasting importance, beyond the constraints of biometrics and the framework.

First, the study's focus on citations of Hofstede's work allowed for the identification of key HR topics over time. The introductory nature of Hofstede's articles likely inspired the authors of many citing articles to use the framework as a paradigm to understand otherwise unrelated phenomena.

For example, the role of the puzzle of Japan is not a coincidence. Before this, the striking economic and social progress of post WW II West Germany had indeed been perceived as remarkable. We explain *Wirtschaftswunder* (1948–1973) without any invisible country culture factors. The international business success of Japanese companies did include invisible country culture variables. Societal level learned problem-solving solutions needed to be taken into account when it comes to the Japanese industrial success.

Japanese country culture developed over time often in conscious isolation from other countries, most notably in the Edo period

from around 1600 to 1868. Japanese country culture continues to puzzle. Japanese societal culture has an independent position in contrast to other countries. Cluster analyses made by many different authors show that Japan continues to form a “cluster” only with Japan, whereas other countries group together in being different from others (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985, 2013). Japanese business culture is the result of social heritage, accepted religious values and deep traditional beliefs.” Understanding Japanese cultural values in business is very important for business cooperation to be successful” (Maksimovich & Blagojevich, 2024: 67).

Second, the study highlights the evolution of classic HR research topics, such as “employee” and “leadership” in different temporal contexts. The study also demonstrates the enduring relevance and adaptability of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions framework in the field of international human resource management as a paradigm.

As understanding of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory deepened, its application in the IHRM became more sophisticated and complete. The application of Hofstede’s framework in the IHRM did not occur all at once but has slowly evolved over time. As more research utilized Hofstede’s framework, the field’s comprehension of its principles improved, leading to more nuanced and effective applications in the IHRM. By examining citations, the study identified patterns and trends in how Hofstede’s work was referenced, highlighting the growing relevance and sophistication in its use. Initially, applications of Hofstede’s framework might have been simplistic or partial, but over the decades, a more complete and integrated approach emerged within the IHRM research.

The findings suggest that the full potential of Hofstede’s framework was realized progressively, indicating that seminal theories can take considerable time to be fully appreciated and applied in practice.

For practitioners in international human resource management, the study underscores the importance of adopting a well-rounded understanding of cultural dimensions to improve global HR strategies.

The bibliometric analysis of Hofstede’s citations provides a nuanced understanding of how his cultural dimensions theory has influenced IHRM over the past four decades. While the study faced limitations related to citation selection and the scope of analysis,

it effectively identified key HR topics and demonstrated the lasting importance of Hofstede's framework. The evolution of HR research topics and the consistent application of Hofstede's dimensions highlight the framework's enduring value in exploring and managing cultural differences in international business.

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# Human Resource Management Through the Prism of the Emergence and Development of the Concept\*

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

Human resource management is a modern concept or approach to business resource management that arose in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence of this concept was preceded by the concept of personnel management.

Starting from the initial assumption that human resources are intangible business resources whose role in achieving competitive advantages is crucial, human resource management becomes one of the most important activities for any modern business system. In this paper, human resource management is observed as a complex process that is perceived through the prism of the origin and development of the concept, applying adequate scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, historical as well as comparative methods.

*Keywords:* human resources, human resource management, changes, knowledge, managers, knowledge workers

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## Introduction

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, society as a whole faced numerous challenges that brought with it various social, economic, technical-technological and political changes in all areas and human activities. These changes had their repercussions on business systems and companies, imposing a new business philosophy of organizational behavior and action as an imperative for success. A strategic approach in change management and human resource management is taking the place of the dominant management paradigm (Премовић, 2022: 413). The main sources of gaining competitive advantages have changed over time. Contrary to earlier times in which the success of companies and national economies, in general, was measured by the amount of products produced and sold, today world society is turning to the service sector, in which the dominant place is occupied by human resources and the field of intellectual capital, which is at the disposal of one organizational system (company, institution, country).

The economy as we know it today is constantly changing and adapting to the needs of society. The founders of the new theory of growth, led by the influential American economist Paul Romer, which is established in economic theory but also confirmed in practice, claim that there are no longer any mechanisms, nor even such economic policy that can create growth based on a combination of classic resources – raw materials, labor, capital. The essence of the new theory of growth is the shift from an economy based on material resources to an economy based on knowledge. These relationships are also transferred to the company being transformed from a capital-intensive to a knowledge-intensive company (Арсич & Премовић, 2020: 37–38). In the modern business environment, surplus value arises primarily as a result of intellectual work and capital, that is, various innovative and knowledge-based research and development activities. Adequate and timely response in unpredictable business conditions is of essential importance, and the assumption for such management response is that employees have the need and desire to learn and develop their knowledge, abilities and skills. Investing funds in the development of human resources and encouraging innovative activities based on knowledge is one of the basic indicators of the success of modern companies, but also one of the global

indicators of the success of a national economy and technological progress of the country.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

Concentration and centralization of capital, globalization, increased competition, rapid changes in phenomena, processes and events, shortening of the life cycle of products and technology – all these are the phenomena and processes that have influenced the increase in the role of human resources and the importance of human resource management in modern business. While “in the age of machines, people were secondary, and things were at the center. In the age of information technology, things are secondary, and knowledge is at the center. The value of the company does not come from things, but from knowledge, skills, intellectual property, competence, and all of that is contained in people”, as pointed out by Hamel and Prahalad. That is why the focus of modern management is human resources, that is, their role, place and importance in every organizational system today (Премовић, 2021:11–12).

The term human resources were interpreted differently. Thus, that the term human resources was too crude to denote people as living beings, because it was assumed that the word resource itself was something that would rather denote equipment in the organization, but by no means human potential. However, under the term “resource”, people get a key place.

By the term human resources, we mean the entire human potential that exists in a business system, which consists of the individual characteristics of each employee, such as: knowledge, abilities, competences, skills, value system, experience, creativity, innovation and motivation that are needed to achieve defined goals organizational goals. “Although the recent tradition has been to organize human resources activities by function, such as staff registration, remuneration and labor relations, in recent studies there is a newer understanding, according to which human resource management is the starting point that provides support in the takeover, game the role of a service technician in the organization and harmonizes the numerous differences between people” (Maksimović, 2004: 16). Pointing out the importance of intellectual capital and knowledge, Drucker introduced into



economic theory the term “knowledge workers” who become the dominant group within the workforce. Knowledge workers use their knowledge every day in their work, thus creating new knowledge and becoming generators of constant improvement and intensive development. They became the foundation of modern society, which is called the knowledge society.

## 2. Materials And Methods

### 1.1. *The genesis of the origin and development of human resource management*

Investing funds in the increase of material and financial assets was one of the basic measures of business success of the company at the beginning of the last century. In that period, companies tried to ensure the most stable and predictable conditions and rules in business, which is why company strategies were most often defined and implemented reactively, in accordance with relationships and processes in the internal and external environment. “The focus was on the application of the know-how approach, and in the domain of human resource management and knowledge management, on the predominant role and importance of more experienced workers who were in the function of mentors to younger and more inexperienced individuals” (Премовић et al., 2012: 141).

However, modern understandings and approaches to managing business entities differ significantly, which is especially pronounced in the area of human resource management. Human resources represent a very important determinant of the success of business, technological development and planning of the future economic development of the country, which is why in the most developed countries today, the development of human resources through enhancing the improvement of existing knowledge and continuous learning (concept of lifelong learning) is given increasing importance each day. “The knowledge that is based on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics is the basis for the development of any country... Nowadays, more investments are done in educating staff who will apply this new knowledge based on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)” (Puška et al., 2023: 475). As authors point out “while many countries

have begun to include entrepreneurship in national education plans, it is important to appreciate the cultural, social, economic, and political organization and how they may impact entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and behavior” (Maric et al., 2021:2). The fact that more than 50% of the GDP in developed economies is based on knowledge, i.e. intellectual property and human capital, indicates the central role that human resources play in modern society and economy.

“In today’s world market, human resources play a dominant role in the process of realizing the competitive advantages of companies. This is precisely why human resources and the process of their management are being given increasing attention. The growing interest in analyzing human resources and studying the basic laws of the human resource management process show that this area of business economics and management is increasingly important and current. Consequently, As a result, the number of experts dealing with the study of human resources and the process of human resource management in companies is also increasing. The ruling attitudes and understandings in the consulted foreign and domestic literature indicate that human resources and human resource management are given increasing importance. With its complexity and dynamism, this area of business economics and management represents an area of special interest in numerous researches of the last few decades (Премовић, 2015: 5). “Human resource management consists of the policies and practices necessary to implement the \*people\* or human resource aspects of a management position, including selection, systematic evaluation, training, and rewards” (Maksimović, 2004:19).

Human resource management represents a relatively new concept or approach to management that emerged in the 1980s. The emergence and development of this concept was preceded by the concept of personnel management, that is, the concept of personnel management. “Personal management involves a series of activities that: first of all, provide working people and the organization that uses their abilities with the opportunity to reach an agreement on the goals and nature of the employment relationship, and then implement that agreement” (Torrington et al., 2004: 21).

In the framework of personnel management, the manager’s goal was to inform about the basic needs and attitudes of employees in order to use that knowledge towards improving the business

abilities of employees. In the majority of companies, the personnel or personnel function was not integrated into the management system of the company, but was treated individually as a separate management activity. On the other hand, within the framework of human resource management, human resources managers are primarily directed towards the implementation of the adopted business strategy and the continuous improvement of the performance of all employees and the company as a whole.

In Legges opinion, there are differences between personnel and human resource management, which are, "actually very small, but still there." The three most important differences are as follows:

First, human resource management concentrates more on what has been done for managers than on what managers have done for other employees;

Second, there is a preventive role of line managers and

Third, there is management responsibility in terms of culture" (Премовић, 2021: 106–107).

From this perspective, human resource management can be seen as a contemporary mutation of a long line of development that marked the practice of personnel management during the past century. Human resource management is therefore the newest dimension of roles that has developed in different directions during different stages of its development history," Legge concludes.

Unlike him, David Guest believes that the differences between these two approaches to human resource management are significant. Guest presented these differences through the so-called "stereotypes of personnel management and human resource management" (Премовић, 2015: 216).

Other authors also point to the existence of significant differences between these two approaches. Namely, in contrast to personnel management, HRM is practically a matter of strategic discipline, as well as direct involvement in the management of the company itself. A practical novelty in the development of human resource management is that it is integrated into all levels of management (from top management to line managers). The model is oriented towards people, with a focus on maximizing individual talent, and signifies the total spiritual and physical potential of all employees in a company, but also the continuous potential of the organization, while in the case

of personnel management, it is primarily an administrative function (Премовић, 2021:108).

Analyzing the basic changes resulting from the application of human resource management, Macura (2012: 27) singled out a total of six most important ones:

1. The practice of employment planning has shifted from a technical focus and labor forecasting to establishing a link between human resource planning, broader organizational strategy and the organization's business planning.

2. The work of negotiating and administering collective agreements extends to "employee management", where the inclusion and participation of employees in decision-making related to work plays an important role.

3. The earlier interest in work morale and satisfaction of individuals is replaced by a broader interest that is denoted by the terms "organizational climate" and "organizational culture".

4. The idea of selection, training, performance evaluation and compensation, which are related exclusively to the individual, is replaced by the belief that successful teamwork is of great importance in achieving success.

5. The main interest of the personnel function, the reduction of costs, absenteeism and employee turnover, replaces the point of view that human resource management can make a significant contribution to overall organizational success.

6. Instead of narrowly focusing on training and practicing the skills of the individual, the interest is focused on developing the long-term potential of the employees to the full extent.

Cascio W. F. (1995) indicates the existence of four basic stages on the development path of modern human resource management. According to his opinion: First phase from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1960s, which focused on administration and the organization of special so-called personnel departments, with the application of selection and orientation of newly employed workers; Second phase from the beginning of the 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s and the adoption of the Civil Rights Act in the USA, in which the issues of labor relations were legally regulated with the increase in the importance of the personnel function as a result of increased court costs, the inclusion, as well as larger involvement of managers of all levels,

especially developing some functions of human resource management in the field of training and development, rewarding and earnings, career management; Third phase from the 1980s to the 1990s, which is more directed towards the costs and efficiency of human resource management functions, within which employees are starting to be seen as a valuable resource of the company that can provide a competitive advantage, while the diversification of the workforce and the appreciation of cultural differences are implemented; and Fourth phase from the beginning of the 1990s in which the strategic and developmental functions of HRM are developed with a focus on creating competitive advantages through employees.

In the context of its origin and development, human resource management represents “the last in a series of incarnations that personnel workers have reached since the appearance of the profession itself a hundred years ago” (Torrington et al., 2004: 15). As changes in the environment bring challenges for organizations, there are also numerous challenges in the field of human resource management, and a high level of efficiency and effectiveness is required in this area of management as well (Бербер, 2016: 943).

When analyzing human resource management as a business-management concept from the perspective of changes that are the result of its practical application in companies, it can be said that these organizational changes are significant and that they primarily relate to the change in employees’ awareness of the need for their active involvement in achieving better organizational performance. The research led to the conclusion that human resource management was developed in the last phase of the development of personnel management and it represents a response to global socio-economic changes and challenges. In contrast to the bureaucratic-administrative approach to human resources in companies, a strategic approach that is directed towards anticipation and prediction of changes in the external and internal environment and the future directions of the company’s development is increasingly being developed and increasingly applied (Премовић, 2021: 106–107). “International requirements in terms of human resources that are placed in front of companies are people with international experience and vision. From those reasons, the first item of the definition of international human identification and retention of high-quality people, people with talent, people who are successful

and ready to put their skills into international context, which increases the talent in the structure of employees, and they connect strategic goals and IHRM goals” (Maksimović, 2017a: 107; Maksimović, 2004: 17).

## ***2.2. Terminological definition of the term human resource management***

When trying to determine the terminological definition of the concept of human resource management, it should be kept in mind that there is no universally accepted definition of human resource management, or human resource management. The term itself “has four basic meanings. Human resource management can be seen as:

1. A new scientific discipline – in this context, human resource management is “an area of research and organization of knowledge aimed at understanding, predicting, guiding, changing and developing human behavior and potential in social institutions, i.e. organizations” with the aim of establishing legality and creating basic assumptions, methods and procedures of human resource management.

2. Managerial function – which combines regular management activities in the company in the field of employment, development, rewarding and motivating employees. Finding adequate people, hiring them, motivating them and enabling them to do their work in their own way is one of the most important managerial tasks.

3. Special business function and discipline in the organization – which encourages a more humane attitude towards employees in the work process. Employees in the company are no longer an object, but become an essential subject of the management process by participating in the creation of a vision, the development of a strategy and the formulation of organizational goals. In this way, the strengthening of teamwork and trust is positively influenced and the humanistic-altruistic values of employees are stimulated. Instead of the traditional, so-called rigid hierarchical structures, today horizontal, so-called soft structures prevail.

4. New business philosophy – human resource management, as a specific philosophy and approach to management, suggests that employees are the most important business resource that has a dominant effect on achieving competitive advantage. According to this approach, the focus is on the so-called “soft” elements of management, at the

center of which are employees. Satisfied and motivated workers are more innovative, productive and analytical in their work” (Премовић, 2015: 217–218).

Regardless of the chosen way of defining human resource management and the characteristics of each of them, what they have in common is that the human resource management process unites all policies, processes, procedures and business decisions that concern human resources and directly or indirectly affect the human resources of a company. It is considered that the function of human resource management represents a top management function that is performed within a business system, which, due to its complexity, needs to be carried out by so-called top managers. The ultimate goal of all business activities of top managers is to find and engage adequate personnel, i.e. “the right people for the right jobs”, which is achieved through various forms of encouraging employees to develop and constantly improve their existing knowledge, abilities, competences and skills.

### ***2.3. Key objectives of human resource management***

Human behavior is basically determined and directed towards achieving certain goals, which managers must take into account when managing. Human resource managers have the task, as said, to provide professional and motivated workers and develop human potentials in order to achieve defined organizational goals. In order to direct employees towards the achievement of the company’s defined goals, managers must align organizational goals with individual employees’ goals.

One of the basic goals of modern business entities, in addition to ensuring durability, that is, continuity in business, is contained in the efforts to achieve the best possible position in the competitive game on a certain market or market segment. In the modern knowledge-based economy, the goal of a successful company and its management becomes finding human resources that possess knowledge, skills and abilities that are an essential source of innovation and competitive business.

In the book “Management of human resources” Torrington, Hall and Taylor emphasize that the basis of all activities in the field of human resources are represented by four objectives. These are:

1. Goals related to employees. The first task of human resource managers is to ensure, as far as possible, that the organization is made up of the right people so that it can use the human resources it needs.

2. Objectives related to work. Once the desired workforce is secured, HR managers must take care of employees' motivation, commitment and job satisfaction in order to maximize their performance and role in achieving organizational goals. In this sense, training and development play an important role, just like reward systems that encourage the level of commitment and orientation of employees.

3. Goals related to change management. A third set of primary objectives in almost every organization relates to the role that the HR department plays in effective change management. Key activities are related to the engagement and development of people with the necessary ability to be leaders and initiate change processes, the employment of change agents who influence the acceptance of change and the establishment of a reward system, thereby encouraging change processes.

4. Administrative goals. The fourth type of goals is not primarily related to achieving competitive advantage, but is administrative in nature and focused on achieving other types of goals (Torrington et al., 2004: 6–7).

Providing a business environment in which the concept of lifelong learning, education and development will dominate while strengthening cooperation, team spirit, togetherness and trust among employees are imperative tasks of the management of modern companies that aspire to be successful. For example, since the education of human resources is possible in the tourism industry, so is the motivation and education of human resources for specific areas, such as for example AI (Kubicková et al., 2023).

"Analyses have shown that there are four key pillars of human resource management in the company (Мацуря, 2012: 27). They are:

1. The human resource management method stems from the organizational strategy, that is, it is better internally and externally integrated because all the philosophy and approach stem from the business plan.

2. The goal of the new approach is to develop the loyalty and commitment of employees, not to subjugate them.



3. The approach to selection, performance evaluation, education, rewarding and communication is systemic. The emphasis shifts from collective forms of coordination to individual ones.

4. Instead of personnel management and industrial relations, which assigns the function of human resources to personnel experts, human resource management is the responsibility of line managers, which strengthens business and organizational integration”.

Creating a favorable working climate, raising self-confidence and a sense of effectiveness, strengthening the perception of the instrumentality of learning and improvement, and developing an organizational culture of learning, represent the essential tasks of human resource management in modern organizations. “In short, the role of human resource management is to enable the organization to achieve success through people” (Ђорђевић Бољановић & Павић, 2011: 5).

It is concluded that “the main goal of human resource management is to improve coordination and increase the intensity of the synergy of the company’s forces in the direction of achieving the organization’s goals, and if it has achieved an improvement in the work performance of employees in a strategic, ethical and socially responsible way”, then human resource management has achieved the main goal and justified its existence as a special business function of modern management.

#### ***2.4. Strategic management of human resources in companies***

The basic assumption from which the human resource management process is implemented in modern companies is that the company’s human resources are the most important intangible business resources that have a crucial role for business and strategic importance in creating competitive advantages. Human resources managers have the task of continuously monitoring and analyzing changes and tendencies of changes in the internal and external environment, with the aim of a timely and adequate response by the company. A proactive, strategic approach to management, encouraging creative and innovative thinking and developing an entrepreneurial spirit among employees are very important (Премовић, 2022: 415). That is the reason why “human resource management has the responsibility to acquire, select, motivate, educate and develop, reward and retain its

employees. The value of the organization, in addition to all financial indicators and profit, is seen through a new dimension, which is the quality of the employees. [...]. Human resource management has the responsibility to acquire, select, motivate, educate and develop, reward and retain its employees. The value of the organization, in addition to all financial indicators and profit, is seen through a new dimension, which is the quality of the employees” (Черовић, 2012: 1).

“Knowledge workers represent a special challenge for employers, managers and experts of various profiles, since the behavior of knowledge workers as employees is very specific compared to other subgroups in the world of work. Since knowledge has become a key resource and the only one that is not enough, knowledge workers are in a seemingly paradoxical position because they are also employees, but at the same time they collectively own the means of production” (Drucker & Nakauchi, 2011: 39). The self-awareness of knowledge workers is one of their special characteristics – they identify with their own knowledge, do not consider themselves inferior to employers, while they see themselves as “professionals” and not as “employees”, and even less (at least) as “workers”. And although they need an organization in order to function, they do not feel that they are dependent on the organization, and their (potential and actual) mobility is significantly higher than that of other employed workers. Like human capital, the knowledge that characterizes knowledge workers is an individual’s possession, his/her property, and cannot simply be bought or hired. As carriers of valuable knowledge and human capital, knowledge workers are people capable of learning and development, of changes and innovations, of creativity from which the organization can benefit greatly in the long run (Bralić, 2016: 241). Among other things, and for this reason, employers, executives, leaders and managers in the knowledge society must take care of the way of attracting, engaging and retaining knowledge workers, because they expect and/or require different attitudes, conditions and communication than those required by other employees. When it comes to establishing the loyalty of knowledge workers to the organization that hires them, Drucker mentions that this leads nowhere, because knowledge workers are primarily dedicated to their own specialized area of knowledge (Drucker & Nakauchi, 2011: 41). Employers and managers (primarily knowledge managers) must take care that the services of knowledge workers are

secured (and secured continuously!) so that it is not a matter of one-way exploitation of the employee by the employer, but a two-way exchange of value, with mutual consent, cooperation and appreciation (Bralić, 2016: 241–242). In this way, it should be ensured that the expressed mobility of knowledge workers does not become harmful for the company and the organization, because it is generally more difficult to integrate knowledge workers than other employees into the organizational culture of a particular organization. In principle, they are more inclined to identify with their profession, than with the organization that hires them, and this is an additional challenge for managers in the organization (Drucker & Nakauchi, 2011: 44). The findings of other authors also implicitly agree with this, and, among other things, they indicate the reasons why some members of the organization, including the best ones, decide to change the work environment, organization or company. The most important reason for this is not fitting into the organizational culture, followed by obviously distinctly “human” factors to which knowledge workers are incomparably more sensitive than traditional “workforce”: “various and different attitudes, emotions, behaviors and values” (Vrančić, 2016: 102). This only emphasizes, even more convincingly, the importance of specific approaches to engagement and management of knowledge workers (often referred to in the field of human resource management as so-called talents)” (Арсич & Премовић, 2020: 41–43).

The analysis and understanding of the external and internal environment of the company is the initial step of all strategic management activities, and therefore of the strategic management of human resources. When the key environmental factors and their influence are identified, then it is possible to formulate the most adequate human resource management policy and practice. “Today, companies need global strategies to find a highly skilled ‘cost-effective’ workforce because companies use specific skills for specific areas. Artificial intelligence and robotics are becoming more and more widely used, thus influencing the labor market.” (Maksimović, 2017b: 454). Managers who are in charge of human resources in the company have the task of continuously monitoring and analyzing the changes and tendencies of changes in the environment with the aim of timely and adequate response of the company. Therefore, it is important that human resource managers possess and apply a proactive management approach

and develop an entrepreneurial spirit in employees. This is also one of the reasons for the increasingly frequent description of human resource management with the attribute strategic.

The use of the attribute “strategic” suggests a different philosophy of carrying out people-oriented activities as a resource. In this way, technophobia is eliminated as a well-known weakness of personnel management. From the point of view of the psychological relationship, the difference is that human resource management is based on commitment, instead of obedience. Finally, human resource management emphasizes self-control rather than control, individual rather than collective perspective, organic rather than bureaucratic structure, integration with line management rather than the roles of specialists and professionals, and maximization of benefits rather than cost minimization (Ђуричин et al., 2009: 685).

Numerous theorists in the field of business economics and management (Dessler, Torrington, Hall, Taylor, McCracken, Wallace, Robbins, Coulter, Джой-МеРРьюз, Megginson, СюрПе, Armstrong, Лукашевич, Voxall, Purgcell, Wright, Le Gall, Beh–Loo, Vrchota, Rchor, Ваhtijarević–Šiber, Ђорђевић Boļjanoviћ, Pavić, etc.) emphasize the strategic nature of human resource management. One of the world’s most famous authors in this field, Armstrong defines human resource management as “a strategic and coherent approach to managing the most valuable organizational asset – working people who individually or collectively contribute to the achievement of its goals” (Armstrong, 2009: 4). Human resource management assumes the closest connection with the strategies of companies and corporations. In such a development, all the factors that promote the efficiency of employees – the design of work tasks and relationships at workplaces, relationships with other people, the type of employment contract and the amount of salary, methods of personal and group communication, consultation and representation systems – are designed within the framework of “strategic need to maximize economic performance, with a softer or harder approach, in the workforce management process” (Кулић & Ђурић, 2016: 263).

For Beh and Loo, strategic HRM represents a path due to which the company’s human capital has the potential to become a significant factor of competitive advantage and contribute to the company’s performance by directing its focus on service quality, productivity,

product innovation and sales growth in order to achieve competitive advantage (Beh, Loo, 2013: 156). Human resource management strategy is most often defined as a strategic orientation that is explicitly or implicitly adopted in the company and the direction of the company towards the management of its human resources. According to the author (Vrchota, Rehor, 2019: 301), strategic HRM is the link between human resource management and the process of strategic management in the company. Whereby, strategic means that human resources activities should be systematically designed, synchronized and directly connected with business analyzes and business processes.

The concept of strategic human resource management connects business strategy with human resource management. It is noticeable that the strategic management of human resources is focused on the future and the provision and development of human resources in accordance with the anticipated needs of the organization. Because, "if human resource management is not a strategic partner in the organization, there can be no integration of the business strategy with the people who will implement that strategy" (Ђорђевић Бољановић & Павић, 2011: 54).

There is a two-way, cause-and-effect relationship between the defined company strategy and human resource management. Namely, after the company's business strategy is adopted, it is necessary to provide quality human resources "to maintain the given course, given their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, all human resource management practices should be aligned with the organization's business strategy, so that they maximally engage employees in achieving their full potential" (Ђорђевић Бољановић & Павић, 2011: 58).

Strategic human resource management means "the formulation and implementation of human resources policies and practices that affect the competencies and behavior of employees in order to achieve the organization's strategic goals." It is an approach that defines "the ways in which the organization will achieve its goals using people through HRD strategy and integrated HRD policies and practices" (Бербер, 2016: 934–936).

In recent years, scholars have devoted much attention to examining the relationship between human resource practices and organizational performance. Based on previous research, it is becoming increasingly clear that the human resource system is an important

component that helps the organization to be more efficient and achieve a competitive advantage... The practice of human resource management aims to play the best role of mediator between strategy and performance as the final product of the organization. It is focused on human resources in the organization, that is, on the development of human and social capital (Станојевић & Митић, 2016: 1237–1238).

Managers specialized in the field of human resource management are approached and organized differently in companies, depending on the specific characteristics of each company, its size and structure, the type of work it deals with, competition and conditions in the industry, decisions of capital owners and management, etc. In some companies, the field of human resource management is the responsibility of line managers, human resources specialists, while some companies employ experts in employee relations, or hire consultants, advisors and external collaborators. Research on the impact of human resources strategy on the practice of human resource management in small and medium-sized enterprises in the territory of the Czech Republic was the focus of the analysis by Vrchoť and Rehor. Based on the research they conducted in 2016, in which 290 companies participated, the authors obtained the results that demonstrated that only 2/5 of the surveyed companies had a defined strategy, as well as that there was a weak connection between the human resources strategy and management practices concerning human resources (Vrchota & Rehor, 2019: 299).

Based on the results of the empirical research conducted in Serbia, out of 160 surveyed organizations, about 73% had a human resources department as a function, while the manager responsible for human resources matters participated in the work of top management in more than 60% of the surveyed organizations. Over 75% of the organizations had a written mission and business strategy. In the case of MLHR strategy, about 58% of organizations had a written MLHR strategy. It can be concluded that organizations were starting to develop HRMS in a strategic way, especially those organizations whose top management (or some other management body) included a human resources manager. On the other hand, decision-making on key HRD issues was largely entrusted to line managers, while HRD departments were consulted during decision-making on remuneration, training, career development, staffing, etc. Likewise, the performance of HRD departments in organizations was evaluated at a very

low level. The above data indicate that for now, the level of development of HRM is still closer to administrative HRM, which includes daily, transactional activities (salary calculation, keeping records of work, processing requests for annual leave, etc.) (Бербер, 2016: 943).

Every modern organization that relies on talent must respect and, as much as possible, control the mobility of that specific group of employees in accordance with its own goals and interests (it works on attracting and retaining new ones, but at the same time, on preventing the turnover of talents and workers knowledge already in the organization). In other words, for a successful organization that manages human resources well, as Peterson (2005) points out, it is essential to achieve the following: “getting good people, keeping good people, growing good people” (Арсић & Премовић, 2020: 43). Artificial intelligence should help solve human resource management challenges more flexibly. The role of strategic human resource management is to indicate the careful monitoring of technological changes by HRM. With this, it becomes more competitive and attracts talents more easily. Understanding the effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on human resource management has become crucial for organizations. It is also important for organizations to see how they can increase their effectiveness with AI. For example, with AI, potential employees and consumers can be identified more quickly, which together contributes to the competitiveness of a company (Murugesan et al., 2023).

## Conclusion

Human resources are key actors in the creation of new value and business success, so it is necessary to find, retain, develop and preserve them. “That’s why it can be said that recruiting and retaining people are two sides of the same coin and, if they complement each other, they bring the expected success” (Батавељић et al., 2011: 48). Therefore, the jobs should be filled, first of all, with professional, competent, gifted and valuable people, so that the company and the entire country would have a significant advantage over competitors, for which it is necessary to continuously implement the human resource management process.

Analyzing the reasons for the emergence and development of human resource management based on previous knowledge, it can

be said that human resource management was developed in the last phase of the development of personnel (personnel) management and that it represents a response to global socio-economic changes. Modern human resource management is a complex activity. Human resource management helps in achieving defined organizational goals and has strategic importance for the company. In the context of its origin and development, human resource management represents, as vividly highlighted by Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2004: 15) “the last in a series of incarnations that personnel workers have reached since the appearance of the profession itself a hundred years ago.”

Encompassing and analyzing the selected literature regarding the origin and development of the concept of HRM, the authors conducted a kind of scientific discussion on the subject, trying to expand some of the existing arguments. As a result, it came to the conclusion that it is necessary to continue the research on the topic of the analysis of the impact of new tendencies in the development of HRM, first of all when it comes to researching the impact of the green economy and artificial intelligence.

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# The Multifaceted Implications of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Consumer Behaviour: A Conceptual Analysis

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract:

This conceptual paper investigates the dual facets of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in influencing consumer behavior, supplemented by illustrative case studies. The study delves into how GAI revolutionizes personalized shopping through advanced recommendation systems, virtual try-ons, and bespoke product designs, enhancing consumer satisfaction and business efficiency. Moreover, it presents and discusses the most noteworthy opportunities and challenges. In doing so, it relies on domain literature and three case studies from a World-renowned brand. Conversely, the paper addresses significant concerns, including data privacy risks, algorithmic bias, and the diminishing role of human decision-making. By juxtaposing theoretical insights with practical examples, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of GAI's transformative potential and the ethical and practical challenges it poses.

*Keywords:* Generative AI, Consumer Behaviour, Personalized Shopping, Recommendation systems, Virtual Try-Ons, Custom Product Design, Data Privacy

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across various industries, fundamentally altering traditional practices and introducing new paradigms in business operations (Kshetri et al., 2024). Among the numerous advancements in AI, Generative AI (GAI) stands out for its unique ability to create novel and original content,

ranging from text and images to music and 3D models (Hermann & Puntoni, 2024). This capability holds significant implications for various business functions, including marketing, product development, and consumer research (Balakrishnan et al., 2024; Ma & Huo, 2023; Sohail et al., 2023). However, the profound influence of GAI on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of purchase decisions, remains an area that is not yet fully understood. This paper seeks to address this gap by exploring the role of GAI in shaping consumer purchase decisions, highlighting both the opportunities it presents and the challenges it poses. GAI is revolutionizing the way businesses interact with consumers by offering unprecedented levels of personalization and engagement (Flavián et al., 2022). For instance, advanced recommendation systems powered by GAI can analyze vast amounts of consumer data to predict preferences and suggest products with remarkable accuracy (Kumar et al., 2023). Virtual technologies – virtual headsets – allow consumers to visualize products, such as clothing or makeup, in a highly personalized manner, bridging the gap between online and in-store shopping experiences (Mladenović et al., 2023). Additionally, bespoke product designs generated by AI enable brands to offer consumers unique, tailor-made products, enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering brand loyalty. These innovations have the potential to significantly influence consumer behavior, driving purchase decisions in ways that were previously unimaginable.

Despite the promising potential of GAI, its integration into the consumer decision-making process also raises significant ethical and practical challenges (Ray, 2023). One major concern is data privacy (Menon & Shilpa, 2023), as the use of AI to personalize shopping experiences often involves the collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data (Ivanov & Webster, 2024). Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of and concerned about how their data is used, which can influence their purchasing decisions and trust in a brand. Furthermore, algorithmic bias in AI systems can lead to unfair or discriminatory practices, potentially alienating certain consumer groups (Sadiq et al., 2024). Another critical issue is the diminishing role of human decision-making as AI systems become more autonomous (Klaus & Zaichkowsky, 2022). As AI-driven recommendations and personalized experiences become more prevalent, there is a growing concern that consumers may become overly reliant on AI (Wong et al., 2023),

leading to a reduction in their ability to make independent decisions. Given these complexities, there is a pressing need to better understand how GAI is influencing consumer behavior and decision-making. While existing research has explored the technical capabilities of GAI and its applications in various business functions (e.g., Hermann & Puntoni, 2024; Kshetri et al., 2024), there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the behavioral impact of GAI on consumers (Mladenović et al., 2024). Specifically, how does the integration of AI-driven personalization tools affect consumer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty? What are the long-term implications of AI's growing role in the decision-making process for both consumers and businesses? Addressing these (and other) questions is crucial for both academics and practitioners as they navigate the evolving landscape of AI in the consumer behaviour domain.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive conceptual analysis of the transformative potential and challenges posed by generative AI (GAI) in influencing consumer decision-making and trust in diverse contexts. This paper provides a scoping analysis of GAI's impact on consumer behavior. Through illustrative case studies from leading companies, it sheds light on how GAI enhances consumer experiences and drives business outcomes. At the same time, the paper will critically assess the ethical and practical challenges associated with the use of GAI, offering insights into how businesses can navigate these challenges while maximizing the benefits. In closing, this paper contributes to this understanding by exploring the dual facets of GAI's role in shaping consumer purchase decisions, providing both theoretical insights and some practical considerations. Through this exploration, the paper seeks to inform both academic discourse and business practice, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that leverages the opportunities of GAI while addressing its challenges.

## **The Influence of Generative AI on Consumer Behavior**

GAI, with its ability to create and curate content and simulate human-like interactions, is profoundly reshaping consumer behavior (Bastos & Moore, 2021). The ways it influences this behavior are multifaceted, ranging from the personalization of marketing efforts to

the enhancement of the product discovery process, as well as its role in automating consumer research. This section delves into these aspects in greater detail.

### *Personalized and Targeted Marketing Content*

One of the most significant impacts of GAI on consumer behavior is its ability to deliver highly personalized and targeted marketing content. Traditional marketing approaches often rely on broad demographic data to target consumers, which can result in generic campaigns that fail to resonate on a personal level. In contrast, GAI leverages large language models and sophisticated algorithms to analyze individual consumer data (Belanche et al., 2021; Sowmya et al., 2023) – such as browsing history, purchase behavior, and social media activity – enabling the creation of personalized product recommendations, advertisements, and even entire marketing campaigns. These AI-driven marketing strategies go beyond merely segmenting consumers into broad categories; they tailor content to the specific preferences, needs, and behaviors of each individual (Kshetri et al., 2024). For instance, an AI system might analyze a consumer’s past interactions with a brand to predict their future needs, subsequently generating an email campaign that addresses these needs with personalized offers or product suggestions. This level of personalization not only increases the relevance of marketing messages but also enhances consumer engagement and satisfaction (Dwivedi, Kshetri, et al., 2023). As a result, consumers are more likely to develop brand loyalty and make repeat purchases, influenced by the perception that the brand understands and caters to their unique preferences. GAI’s capability to create personalized content at scale allows businesses to maintain consistent engagement with consumers across various touchpoints (Carvalho & Ivanov, 2024). Whether through dynamic website content, personalized social media ads, or custom-tailored email newsletters, GAI ensures that each interaction feels relevant and timely. This continuous, personalized engagement is crucial in today’s digital economy, where consumers are cluttered with information and can easily switch to competitors if they feel undervalued or overlooked.

## *Enhancing the Product Discovery and Evaluation Process*

Notably, GAI significantly enhances the product discovery and evaluation process, providing consumers with more interactive and immersive experiences (Bandi et al., 2023). Traditionally, online shopping has been limited by the inability of consumers to physically interact with products before purchasing (Nel & Boshoff, 2020). GAI addresses this limitation by offering tools that allow consumers to visualize products in their environments, explore various product variations, and even customize their purchases in real time (Botunac et al., 2024). For example, AI-powered (virtual or augmented) try-on technologies enable consumers to see how clothing, accessories, or makeup products would look on them before making a purchase (Bruni et al., 2024). These tools use generative models to create realistic simulations based on consumer-provided data, such as photos or body measurements. Similarly, augmented reality (AR) applications powered by GAI allow consumers to visualize how furniture or home decor items would appear in their homes, thereby reducing uncertainty.

The ability to customize products is another powerful influence of GAI on consumer behavior. Consumers increasingly demand products that reflect their tastes and preferences (Koubaa et al., 2023). GAI facilitates this by allowing consumers to modify product features—such as color, size, or design elements—through user-friendly interfaces (Bulchand-Gidumal et al., 2024; Hermann & Puntoni, 2024). For instance, Nike's "*Nike by You*" platform enables customers to design their sneakers, choosing everything from the material to the color scheme. This level of customization not only satisfies the consumer's desire for uniqueness but also deepens their emotional connection to the product and brand. These enhanced discovery and evaluation tools make the shopping experience more engaging and tailored, leading to higher satisfaction (Filieri et al., 2021). By reducing the cognitive load associated with decision-making and increasing the perceived value of the shopping experience (Mladenović et al., 2023), GAI encourages more decisive purchasing behavior and can lead to an increase in conversion rates.



## *Automating Consumer Research and Insights*

Next, GAI also plays a pivotal role in automating the research process (Dillion et al., 2023), offering businesses deeper insights into consumer preferences, behaviors, and pain points. Traditionally, gathering consumer insights has been a labor-intensive process (Maier et al., 2023), often relying on manual surveys, focus groups, and the painstaking analysis of customer feedback. GAI streamlines this process by automating the collection and analysis of vast amounts of data from various sources, including social media, online reviews, and customer service interactions. Through natural language processing (NLP) and sentiment analysis, GAI can quickly process and interpret consumer feedback, identifying trends and common themes that might otherwise go unnoticed (Dwivedi et al., 2023). For example, an AI-driven system can analyze thousands of product reviews in a matter of minutes (Amos & Zhang, 2024), extracting key insights about what consumers like or dislike about a product. This allows businesses to make more informed decisions, such as tweaking product features, or improving customer service, based on real-time consumer sentiment. Furthermore, the predictive capabilities of GAI enable businesses to anticipate consumer needs and behaviors (Hermann & Puntoni, 2024). By analyzing historical data and current trends, AI systems can predict what products are likely to become popular, how consumers might respond to a new product launch, or even how external factors (such as economic changes) might influence purchasing behavior (Klaus & Zaichkowsky, 2022). This predictive insight allows businesses to be proactive in their strategy, tailoring their offerings to meet emerging consumer demands more effectively.

In addition to improving product development and marketing strategies, the insights generated by AI can also enhance customer relationship management (CRM) (Chatterjee et al., 2023). By understanding consumer preferences and behavior patterns, businesses can develop more personalized and effective CRM strategies, fostering stronger relationships with their customers. This can lead to increased customer retention, higher lifetime value, and a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

## *Shaping Consumer Expectations and Decision-Making*

Another critical influence of GAI on consumer behavior is its role in shaping consumer expectations and decision-making processes (Dwivedi et al., 2023). As consumers become accustomed to the high level of personalization and convenience offered by AI tools, their expectations for all shopping experiences, both online and offline, are rising. This shift in expectations can have a profound impact on how consumers evaluate brands and make purchasing decisions (Klaus & Zaichkowsky, 2022). For example, consumers who regularly use AI-powered recommendation systems may come to expect the same level of personalized service from all brands they interact with. When a brand fails to meet these expectations, it can lead to dissatisfaction and a loss of customer loyalty (Remountakis et al., 2023). This phenomenon underscores the importance for businesses to continuously innovate and adopt novel technologies to remain competitive in a market where consumer expectations are rapidly evolving.

Moreover, the decision-making process itself is being transformed by GAI (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Hermann & Puntoni, 2024; Sohail et al., 2023). Traditionally, consumers made purchasing decisions based on a combination of personal preferences, brand loyalty, and available information (Liu et al., 2023). However, with the advent of AI, the decision-making process is increasingly being influenced by AI-generated recommendations and suggestions (Ali et al., 2023). This can lead to more efficient decision-making, as consumers rely on AI to filter options and highlight the most relevant choices based on their preferences. On the other hand, there is a growing concern that over-reliance on AI-driven recommendations could reduce consumer autonomy (Roy et al., 2023), making individuals more passive in their decision-making and potentially leading to a homogenization of choices.

## *Implications for Future Consumer Behavior*

In perspective, the influence of GAI on consumer behavior is likely to grow even more as AI technologies continue to advance. As consumers become more familiar with AI-driven experiences, their expectations for personalized, seamless, and intuitive interactions will likely increase (Amos & Zhang, 2024). This trend will drive further

innovation in the development of AI tools designed to meet these expectations (Kim et al., 2023), leading to even more sophisticated and personalized consumer experiences (Kim et al., 2024). At the same time, the ethical challenges associated with GAI will become increasingly important as these technologies become more pervasive (Hu & Min, 2023). Businesses that succeed in navigating these challenges – by prioritizing data privacy, ensuring fairness, and fostering consumer trust – will be well-positioned to thrive in the evolving digital landscape. GAI is already having a profound impact on consumer behavior, influencing everything from how consumers discover and evaluate products to how they make purchasing decisions. While this technology offers significant opportunities for enhancing consumer experiences and driving business growth, it also presents complex challenges that must be carefully managed (Ivanov, 2023). As AI continues to evolve, understanding its influence on consumer behavior will be essential for businesses seeking to remain competitive in an increasingly AI-driven marketplace.

## Opportunities and Challenges of GAI

The integration of GAI into the consumer purchase decision-making process offers significant potential for enhancing the customer experience and driving business growth. However, alongside these opportunities, there are also substantial challenges that must be carefully navigated to ensure ethical and effective implementation.

### Opportunities

#### *Enhanced Customer Experience*

GAI has the potential to significantly enhance the customer experience by enabling businesses to deliver more personalized and engaging interactions (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Personalized marketing and product recommendations have become increasingly important in today's competitive market, where consumers expect brands to understand and cater to their individual needs (Lian et al., 2024). By analyzing vast amounts of consumer data, GAI can create tailored experiences that resonate on a personal level, thereby increasing

customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty (Huh et al., 2023). For instance, AI can personalize online shopping experiences by suggesting products based on a consumer's browsing history, preferences, and past purchases, which can lead to higher conversion rates and customer retention (Mladenović et al., 2023). Furthermore, GAI can enhance customer engagement by creating interactive and immersive shopping experiences. Technologies such as AI-powered virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) applications allow consumers to visualize products in their own environments before making a purchase. This not only makes the shopping experience more enjoyable, but also reduces the uncertainty associated with online purchases, thereby boosting consumer confidence and satisfaction.

### *Innovation in Product Development*

GAI also presents significant opportunities for innovation in product development. By enabling rapid prototyping and customization, AI can help businesses create more targeted and desirable products that better meet the needs of consumers (Ali et al., 2023). For example, AI-driven design tools can generate multiple product variations based on consumer feedback and market trends, allowing businesses to quickly iterate and refine their offerings (Pham et al., 2024). This ability to rapidly prototype and customize products not only shortens the product development cycle, but also ensures that the final product is closely aligned with consumer preferences. Moreover, the use of GAI in product development can lead to the creation of entirely new categories of products (Ma & Huo, 2023). For instance, AI-generated designs can inspire innovative product features or aesthetics that were previously unexplored, giving businesses a competitive edge in the market. This kind of innovation can help brands differentiate themselves and attract consumers who are looking for unique and personalized products.

### *Optimization of Marketing and Advertising Efforts*

Another significant opportunity offered by GAI is the optimization of marketing and advertising efforts (Pamucar et al., 2023). GAI can analyze consumer data to create highly personalized and targeted

marketing content that resonates with individual consumers. This level of personalization can improve the effectiveness of advertising campaigns by increasing consumer engagement and conversion rates (Mich & Garigliano, 2023). For instance, AI can generate personalized email campaigns at scale, that address the specific interests and needs of each recipient, making the communication more relevant and compelling. Similarly, AI-powered ad targeting can deliver personalized advertisements to consumers across various platforms, increasing the likelihood of engagement (Rajaguru, 2024). This precision targeting not only maximizes the return on investment for marketing campaigns, but also enhances consumers' experience by reducing exposure to irrelevant or intrusive ads (Mladenović et al., 2023). In addition, GAI can assist in optimizing the content creation process by automating tasks such as writing product descriptions, generating social media posts, or creating ad copy. This not only saves time and resources, but also ensures consistency in the messaging and branding across all marketing channels.

## Challenges

### *Bias in AI-Generated Content and Recommendations*

One of the key challenges associated with the use of GAI in consumer purchase decisions is the potential for AI-generated content and recommendations to perpetuate or exacerbate biases (Bulchand-Gidumal et al., 2024). AI models are trained on large datasets, and if these datasets contain biased information, the resulting AI-generated content can reflect and reinforce those biases (Ali et al., 2023). For example, if a recommendation algorithm is trained on data that predominantly reflects the preferences of a specific demographic, it may disproportionately favor products or content that aligns with that demographic, potentially alienating other consumer groups. This issue is particularly concerning in the context of personalized marketing and product recommendations, where biased algorithms can lead to unfair outcomes (Ivanov & Webster, 2024). For instance, a biased AI system might recommend certain products more frequently to one gender over another, or it might prioritize certain cultural or ethnic preferences over others. To mitigate this challenge, businesses must

ensure that the data used to train AI models is diverse and representative of the entire consumer base. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of AI systems are necessary to detect and correct any biases that may emerge over time.

### *Deceptive or Manipulative Content*

Another significant challenge posed by GAI is its potential of being used to create deceptive or manipulative content (Amos & Zhang, 2024). AI-generated content, such as fake product reviews, misleading advertisements, or deepfake videos, can be used to manipulate consumer perceptions and influence purchasing decisions in unethical ways (Hu & Min, 2023). This not only undermines consumer trust, but also poses a significant risk to businesses, as consumers who feel deceived are likely to lose trust in the brand and may choose to take their business elsewhere (Markowitz et al., 2024). The rise of deepfake technology has raised concerns about the potential for AI to be used in deceptive practices (Sivathanu & Pillai, 2023). For example, deepfake videos could be used to create false endorsements or testimonials that mislead consumers about the quality or effectiveness of a product. Similarly, AI-generated fake reviews can give a false impression of a product's popularity or reliability, leading consumers to make purchasing decisions based on inaccurate information (Mardumyan & Siret, 2023). To address this challenge, businesses must prioritize transparency and authenticity in their use of GAI. Clear guidelines and ethical standards should be established to ensure that AI-generated content is used responsibly and consumers are aware of when they are interacting with AI-generated material. Additionally, platforms and regulators should work together to develop tools and frameworks for detecting and mitigating the spread of deceptive AI-generated content.

### *Ethical Concerns: Privacy, Data Security, and Transparency*

The integration of GAI into consumer purchase decisions raises several ethical concerns, particularly around privacy, data security, and transparency. As GAI relies heavily on consumer data to function effectively, there is an inherent risk that this data could be misused or inadequately protected (Ivanov, 2023). Consumers are becoming

increasingly aware of the value of their data and are concerned about the ways it is collected, stored, and used by businesses (Kelly et al., 2023). Data privacy is a significant concern, especially considering stringent regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe. Businesses must ensure that they comply with these regulations and implement robust data protection measures to safeguard consumer information. Failure to do so can result not only in legal repercussions, but also in a loss of consumer trust, which can have long-term negative effects on a brand's reputation. Transparency is another critical ethical issue. Consumers have the right to know how their data is being used, especially when it comes to AI-generated recommendations and content (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Businesses must be transparent about the role of AI in their operations and provide consumers with clear and accessible information about how AI-generated content is created and tailored to them. This includes offering consumers the option to opt out of AI-driven personalization if they choose so. Lastly, there is the broader ethical question of the impact of AI on consumer autonomy (van Dis et al., 2023). As AI systems become more sophisticated and pervasive, there is a concern that consumers may become overly reliant on AI-driven recommendations, potentially reducing their ability to make independent decisions (Bulchand-Gidumal & Melián-González, 2024). Businesses should strive to use AI in a way that empowers consumers, providing them with the tools and information they need to make informed choices, rather than simply guiding them towards predetermined outcomes.

## **Case Studies: GAI's Interplay with Consumer Behaviour**

GAI has proven to be a powerful tool in transforming consumer experiences and driving business outcomes across various industries. The following case studies illustrate how companies have successfully leveraged GAI to enhance consumer purchase decisions, demonstrating its potential to increase engagement, boost conversions, and improve customer satisfaction. The selected case studies—e-commerce, retail, and consumer electronics – were chosen for their relevance and maturity in adopting generative AI, providing a robust basis for examining its impact on consumer behavior.

## *Case Study 1: Personalized Product Recommendations with Generative AI*

A leading e-commerce platform harnessed the power of GAI to deliver highly personalized product recommendations, significantly improving its customer engagement and conversion metrics (Dwivedi et al., 2023). The platform implemented an advanced AI model that analyzed vast amounts of data, including customer browsing history, past purchases, and even contextual factors such as time of day and seasonality. This AI-driven approach allowed the platform to generate unique and highly relevant product suggestions for each user. The personalized recommendations were delivered through various channels, including on-site suggestions, personalized emails, and targeted advertisements. By tailoring these recommendations to align closely with each user's preferences and behaviors, the platform saw a substantial uplift in key performance indicators (KPIs). Specifically, there was a 25% increase in click-through rates (CTR) on recommended products, indicating that customers were more likely to engage with content that felt personally relevant. Moreover, this personalized approach led to a 15% increase in conversion rates, demonstrating that customers were not only engaging with the recommendations, but were also more likely to make purchases as a result.

The success of this GAI implementation underscores the importance of personalization in e-commerce. By moving beyond generic product recommendations and embracing AI's ability to analyze and predict individual preferences, the platform was able to create a more engaging shopping experience that resonated with its customers on a deeper level. This case study illustrates how GAI can be a game-changer in enhancing customer satisfaction and driving business growth through personalized marketing strategies.

## *Case Study 2: Customized Product Visualization with GAI*

In the furniture retail industry, where visual appeal and spatial fit are critical factors in the purchase decision-making process, a leading retailer turned to GAI to solve a common consumer challenge: visualizing how furniture would look in their homes before making a purchase. The retailer implemented an AI-powered visualization tool



that enabled customers to upload photos of their living spaces and see how different furniture pieces would appear in their actual environment (Smink et al., 2020). The GAI used in this tool was capable of creating highly realistic 3D renderings of furniture within the context of the customer's home. This immersive experience allowed customers to experiment with different styles, colors, and layouts, giving them the confidence that their chosen products would fit well with their existing decor and space constraints. The impact of this tool on consumer behavior was profound: the retailer experienced a 20% increase in purchase conversions, as customers who used the visualization tool were more likely to proceed with a purchase. Additionally, there was a 30% reduction in product returns, as the accurate visualizations helped customers make more informed decisions, reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction after the product was delivered.

This case study highlights the potential of GAI to address one of the biggest pain points in online shopping—uncertainty about how a product will look or fit in a specific context. By providing customers with a realistic preview of their potential purchases, the retailer not only improved the customer experience but also minimized the costs and logistical challenges associated with product returns. This example demonstrates how GAI can enhance the decision-making process by bridging the gap between online and in-store shopping experiences, ultimately leading to higher customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

### *Case Study 3: Automated Customer Feedback Analysis with GAI*

For a consumer electronics company, understanding customer feedback was crucial to maintaining a competitive edge in a fast-paced market. However, the sheer volume of customer reviews and feedback posed a significant challenge, making it difficult to manually analyze and extract actionable insights. To overcome this challenge, the company implemented a GAI system that automated the analysis of customer reviews, social media comments, and other feedback sources (Martí-Testón et al., 2023). The system utilized NLP and sentiment analysis to sift through thousands of customer reviews, identifying recurring themes, pain points, and emerging trends. For instance, the AI could detect subtle shifts in customer sentiment regarding

specific product features, or identify common complaints that were previously overlooked. This automated analysis provided the company with a comprehensive understanding of customer preferences and concerns, enabling them to respond more swiftly and effectively to market demands. The insights gained from the AI-driven feedback analysis directly informed the company's product development and marketing strategies. By addressing the pain points, the company was able to make targeted improvements to its products, which in turn led to a 15% increase in customer satisfaction. Additionally, the company saw a 12% reduction in customer churn, as they were able to proactively address issues that might have otherwise led to customer dissatisfaction and attrition. This case study demonstrates how GAI can be a powerful tool for the businesses seeking to harness the vast amounts of unstructured data generated by customer interactions. By automating the analysis of customer feedback, businesses can gain deeper insights into consumer behaviour, preferences, and trends, enabling them to make more informed decisions and stay ahead of the competition. This approach not only enhances customer satisfaction, but also drives long-term loyalty and retention.

The success stories of the e-commerce platform, furniture retailer, and consumer electronics company demonstrate that when implemented thoughtfully, GAI can lead to significant improvements in customer engagement, conversion rates, and overall satisfaction. These findings are consistent with Mladenović et al. (2024), who emphasize the role of AI-driven personalization in enhancing consumer trust, and extend this understanding by illustrating how recency and contextual relevance affect decision-making. However, these case studies also underscore the importance of addressing potential challenges, such as ensuring data quality and avoiding biases in AI-generated recommendations. As GAI continues to evolve, its role in shaping consumer behavior and driving business outcomes will likely become even more significant. The companies that leverage this technology effectively will be better positioned to meet the demands of modern consumers, offering them the personalized and seamless experiences they increasingly expect. By understanding and applying the lessons from these case studies, businesses can harness the full potential of GAI to enhance their customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth.

## Conclusion

GAI is transforming consumer purchase decisions and reshaping business-consumer interactions. By combining conceptual analysis with illustrative case studies, this paper provides a replicable framework for examining GAI's implications in other contexts, offering valuable insights for subsequent chapters in this volume. As demonstrated throughout this conceptual paper, GAI offers substantial opportunities to enhance the customer experience, drive innovation in product development, and optimize marketing and advertising strategies. By leveraging GAI's ability to generate personalized content, businesses can create highly tailored experiences that resonate with individual consumers, leading to increased engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. GAI's impact on consumer behavior is multifaceted. It enables the creation of personalized product recommendations that go beyond traditional marketing approaches, offering content that is specifically tailored to individual preferences and behaviors. This level of personalization not only enhances the relevance of marketing efforts but also fosters deeper connections between consumers and brands, ultimately driving conversion rates and repeat purchases. In the realm of product development, GAI facilitates rapid prototyping and customization, allowing businesses to innovate more efficiently and create products that are closely aligned with consumer needs. The ability to visualize products in real-time, as seen in the case of AI-powered tools for customized product visualization, helps reduce uncertainty in online shopping, leading to higher purchase conversions and lower return rates. This intersection of AI and consumer behavior highlights the growing importance of AI-driven tools in shaping purchasing decisions and improving overall customer satisfaction.

However, these opportunities come with significant challenges. The potential for bias in AI-generated content and recommendations poses significant risks, such as reinforcing stereotypes or marginalizing minority groups. For instance, if a GAI model is trained on data that predominantly represents a particular demographic, it may fail to offer relevant recommendations to others. Addressing these biases requires diverse data sets and ongoing model evaluation to ensure fairness. If left unchecked, biases in AI models can lead to unfair outcomes, perpetuating inequalities and marginalizing certain consumer

groups. Moreover, the rise of AI-generated deceptive content, such as fake reviews and misleading advertisements, poses a threat to consumer trust. Businesses must prioritize transparency and establish ethical standards to ensure that AI is used responsibly and consumers are aware of when they are interacting with AI-generated material. Ethical considerations surrounding data privacy, security, and transparency are also paramount. As GAI relies heavily on consumer data, there is a pressing need for businesses to implement robust data protection measures and comply with regulations such as the GDPR. Ensuring transparency in AI operations, particularly in how data is used and how AI-generated recommendations are formed, is essential to maintaining consumer trust and autonomy.

### *Future Research Directions*

While this study provides a conceptual and helicopter analysis of GAI's implications on consumer behavior, several areas warrant further investigation. Future research could explore the long-term effects of AI-driven personalization on consumer autonomy and decision-making (Mladenović, Beheshti, et al., 2024). Specifically, studies could examine whether prolonged exposure to AI-generated recommendations diminishes consumers' ability to make independent choices and how this might affect their overall satisfaction and trust in AI systems. Another important area for future research is the role of GAI in diverse cultural contexts. The current study primarily focuses on markets in developed countries, where AI technology is more widely adopted. Future studies could investigate the way in which GAI influences consumer behavior in emerging markets, where cultural differences and varying levels of technological adoption may lead to different outcomes. Moreover, as AI technology continues to evolve, research should also consider the implications of new AI capabilities, such as more advanced deep learning models and the integration of AI with other emerging technologies like blockchain or the Internet of Things (IoT). Understanding how these advancements might further shape consumer behavior and the ethical implications they bring will be crucial for businesses and policymakers alike.

## *Limitations of the Present Study*

This study's primary limitation is its conceptual nature, relying heavily on case studies from specific industries like e-commerce and furniture retail. The findings may not be generalizable to other sectors, such as healthcare or finance, where GAI's impact on consumer behavior might differ significantly. While the analysis relies on secondary data, triangulating these insights with domain literature and industry reports ensured the validity and relevance of findings across varied consumer contexts. Therefore, more empirical research is needed to validate the conclusions drawn here. Additionally, the study primarily focuses on the opportunities and challenges of GAI from the business perspective, with less emphasis on the consumer's point of view. Future research could adopt a more consumer-centric approach, exploring the ways that individuals perceive and interact with AI-generated content and how this influences their trust, satisfaction, and overall experience. Lastly, the ethical concerns discussed in this study, such as data privacy and algorithmic bias, are complex and multifaceted. While this study highlights these issues, it does not provide exhaustive solutions or frameworks for addressing them. Further research is needed to develop practical guidelines and regulatory frameworks that can help businesses navigate these challenges while maximizing the benefits of GAI.

In closing, while GAI presents a powerful tool for enhancing consumer purchase decisions, its successful integration into business strategies requires a balanced approach that addresses both the opportunities and challenges it presents. Businesses that navigate these complexities thoughtfully – by embracing AI's potential for personalization and innovation while addressing its ethical and practical challenges – will be better positioned to meet the evolving expectations of modern consumers. As GAI continues to advance, understanding its influence on consumer behavior will be critical for businesses seeking to maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly AI-driven marketplace. By prioritizing ethical considerations and fostering trust, companies would be able to harness the full potential of GAI to drive sustainable growth and long-term success.

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# Die Neuvermessung der Versicherungswelt

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## Abstract

Versicherung wird als "unsichtbare" oder "imaginäre" Ware bezeichnet. Weder ihr Wert noch ihre Macht lassen sich mit Sinnesorganen allein erfassen, daher muss bei vielen Menschen der Versicherungsbedarf erst durch fachgerechte Beschreibung geweckt werden.

Vor dem Aufklärungszeitalter (dauerte je nach Region bis Ende des 17. Jhs.) wurde Versicherung als "unerlaubtes Eingreifen in die Pläne Gottes, welcher Sünder mit Katastrophen und Seuchen bestraft", bezeichnet.

Im Zeitraum von der Ersten bis zur Vierten Industriellen Revolution (18. bis 21. Jh) – wobei jede Revolution eine Neuvermessung der Welt brachte – entwickelte sich das Versicherungswesen stufenweise zu einem so wichtigen in das Leben der Menschen eingreifenden Wirtschaftsfaktor, dass heute kein Staat mehr ohne Versicherung auskommt.

Die Versicherungsbranche vermag das Denken und Handeln einzelner Menschen, Belegschaften und Regierungen in immer neuen Varianten in Richtung Vorsorge und Sicherheit zu lenken.

*Schlüsselwörter:* Industrielle Revolution, Künstliche Intelligenz (KI), Prävention, Risiko, Sozialstaat

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## 1. Einleitung

■ Von Versicherungsexperten mit großer Verantwortung wurde im 19./20. Jahrhundert der Sozialstaat stufenweise auf – und ausgebaut. Kranken – und Unfallversicherung wurden letztlich als so wichtige Sparten angesehen, dass man einen Basis Versicherungsschutz auch für jene verpflichtend sicherstellte, die weder ausreichende Geldmittel noch hinreichend Verständnis für Versicherungen besaßen, das waren damals die Arbeiter (Krainz, 2021).

Die staatlichen Zwangsversicherungen machten aber keineswegs die Institution der Privatversicherung überflüssig, sondern animierten einkommensstärkere Bürger, über den staatlichen Basisschutz hinaus Eigenvorsorge in der Lebens(renten)- Kranken- und Unfallversicherung sowie in relevanten Sach- und Vermögensbereichen zu betreiben (Unsere Leistungen zu Zusatzversicherungen in Österreich, 2024).

In keiner Phase der Versicherungsgeschichte kam es zu einer totalen Marktsättigung. Die Versicherungsbranche besitzt nämlich die Fähigkeit, das Denken und Handeln einzelner Menschen, Belegschaften und Regierungen mit immer neuen Varianten in Richtung Vorsorge und Sicherheit zu lenken.

Diese Fähigkeit nennt man soziale Macht. Die Übernahme fremder Risiken samt Sicherheitsgarantie in allen Situationen erfordert ein hohes Maß an Verantwortung und Wirtschaftsmacht (Fuchs-Brüninghoff, 2021).

Im Rahmen der Dritten und Vierten Industriellen Revolution entstanden bzw. entstehen im 20./21. Jh parallel zum Sozialstaat und den privaten Zusatzversicherungen neu strukturierte Vorsorgesysteme.

In den Funktionen von Risikoübernahme, Schadensanalyse und -liquidierung, Kapitalsammelbecken, Investment in neue Technologien, Gesundheitswesen, (Straßen)Verkehr, Rentenzahlungen, Darlehen und Kreditversicherung erstrecken sich Macht und Verantwortung der Versicherung auf immer weitere Bereiche und müssen daher ständig angepasst werden.

## **2. Die erste Neuvermessung der Versicherungswelt (17./18. Jh)**

Den Versicherungsphilosophischen Sprung vom finsternen Mittelalter in das Zeitalter der Aufklärung vollführte der Philosoph Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

Das 16., 17. und 18. Jahrhundert war in Zentraleuropa eine Epoche kühner Projekte, die sich im Ringen zwischen religiösen und abergläubischen Vorurteilen einerseits und in auf rationale Weise gewonnenen Erkenntnissen andererseits offenbarte. Anfänglich sahen selbst kaiserliche Berater in schadenbringenden Naturereignissen wie Epidemien, Ernteausfälle und Brandschäden einen Ausdruck göttlichen Zorns bzw. der Bestrafung für sündiges Verhalten der Menschheit.

In der "Infektions-Ordnung der Stadt Wien" vom 9. Jänner 1679 werden den Bürgern deshalb in erster Linie gemeinsame Bet- und Bußtage mit Empfang der Sakramente angeordnet, sowie Seelentrost der bereits Infizierten was vom sanitätspolizeilichen Standpunkt äußerst fahrlässig und unvernünftig war (Codex Austriacus, 1679).

Versicherung und Schadensminderung jeder Art wurde in diversen Publikationen sinngemäß als "unerlaubtes Eingreifen in die Pläne Gottes" bezeichnet (Jung, 1788: 362).

Seit Ende des 17. Jh. zeigt sich aber immer deutlicher eine dem Rationalismus verschriebene Geisteshaltung in der kameralistischen Literatur des deutschen Sprachraumes, die allmählich die "Nebel der Unwissenheit" zu durchdringen beginnt. Die philosophische Basis für das Versicherungswesen legte der Philosoph und letzte "Doktor universalis" Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

Im Streben nach göttlicher Vollkommenheit auch für die Menschen sei der Wille Gottes nicht auf müden tatenlosen Fatalismus der Menschheit gerichtet, sondern auf Überwindung des Bösen mit allen zu Verfügung stehenden Mitteln. Und Versicherung ist ein solches Mittel. In logischer Fortsetzung dieser Gedanken verfasste Leibniz im Jahre 1697 seine Denkschrift über die "Errichtung von Versicherungsanstalten gegen alle Zufälle des Lebens oder wenigstens gegen alle Wasser- und Feuerschäden" (Koch, 1968).

Mit dieser philosophischen Einstellung setzte Leibniz der mittelalterlichen Auffassung, dass jede Versicherung ein unerlaubtes Eingreifen in die Pläne Gottes sei, ein Ende. Seither wurden Macht und Verantwortung zur "Bekämpfung des Bösen" in diversen Formen an Versicherer übertragen.

### **3. Epochale Neuvermessungen der Welt: Die Industriellen Revolutionen von 1.0 bis 4.0**

Jeder Fortschritt verändert die bisherige Lebens- und Arbeitsweise, so verändert auch der technische Fortschritt die Produktionsweise. Die großen Veränderungen, die im Laufe der Geschichte stattfanden, wurden als "Industrielle Revolution" bezeichnet. Mit dem technologischen und technischen Wandel ändern sich auch die Arbeitsbedingungen, die Art der Kommunikation, die Art und Weise, Zeit zu verstehen, ja sogar der Lebensstil. Der Versicherungsschutz



muss dann entsprechend angepasst werden. In der europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte werden vier Industrielle Revolutionen unterschieden, die alle Auswirkungen auf das Versicherungswesen hatten und im Folgenden in ihren wesentlichen Punkten vorgestellt werden.

### 3.1. *Die erste Industrielle Revolution*

Die erste Industrielle Revolution begann 1750 in Großbritannien mit der Entdeckung der Dampfmaschine. Da der Beginn jedoch in verschiedenen Ländern unterschiedlich angegeben wird, entsteht der Eindruck, dass der Beginn nicht genau festgelegt ist. Im deutschsprachigen Raum begann die Industrialisierung später, sie war spät, und man geht davon aus, dass sie in diesen Ländern zwischen 1815 und 1835 begann.

Damals herrschten handwerkliche Produktion und eine überwiegend landwirtschaftlich geprägte Wirtschaft vor. Von da an begann die Industrie, Wasser- und Dampfenergie zu nutzen. Die größten Innovationen dieser Zeit erfolgten der Reihe nach: James Watts Dampfmaschine (1769); dann der erste mechanische Webstuhl (1785) und eine Dampflokomotive (1814) (Krieg, 2005).

Dampfkraft war schon vor der industriellen Revolution bekannt. Dass man sie verstärkt ab dem Beginn des 19. Jh für industrielle Zwecke nutzte, war damals der größte Durchbruch in der Produktivitätssteigerung der Menschheit. In dieser Entwicklungsphase gehörten zu den ersten Erfolgen der frühen Industrialisierung der Kohleabbau, die ersten Industrieunternehmen, die ersten Eisenbahnen, die Dampfschifffahrt, die Tuchherstellung und der Textildruck. Die Menschen erkannten bald, dass schon die erste industrielle Entwicklung neue Arbeitsplätze in den Fabrikhallen schuf.

Statt wie zuvor Webstühle per Muskelkraft anzutreiben, setzte man als Antrieb Dampfmaschinen ein. Die Maschinen wurden von Hilfskräften bedient, die nichts anderes als ihre Arbeitskraft zu verkaufen hatten und zu geringsten Löhnen arbeiteten. Die Arbeit an den ersten Maschinen war mit erheblichen Verletzungsgefahren verbunden, da Schutzbekleidung und Sicherheitseinrichtungen fehlten (Industrielle Revolution, 2023).

Versicherungsvorläufer wie die Zünfte der Handwerker gab es keine mehr, was bedeutete, dass bei den Industriearbeitern in den städtischen Ballungszentren Krankheit und Alter mit Arbeitsplatzverlust und bitterster Armut verbunden waren. In der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jhs entstanden Arbeitervereine als Selbsthilfegruppen zur Krankenunterstützung.

Am Land, und zwar in den alpinen Regionen Österreichs, gab es seit dem ausgehenden 18. Jh Bauernassekuranzen. Sie waren als eine Weiterentwicklung der auf freiwilliger Basis tätigen bäuerlichen Nachbarschaftshilfen entstanden, die bei Katastrophen Hilfe leisteten. Sie wurden zu vertraglich festgeschriebenen Gefahrengemeinschaften mit Versicherungscharakter ausgebaut und auch als Brandschadenvereine bezeichnet. Diese z.T. bis heute unter der Bezeichnung "kleine Versicherungsvereine auf Gegenseitigkeit" existierenden Institutionen waren und sind lokal meist auf Dorfgemeinschaften beschränkt. Ihre Leistungen erfolgten in Naturalien oder Geld. Wurde ein Bauernhof zerstört, so halfen/helfen die Mitglieder des Vereins mit Baumaterialien, Arbeitsleistungen oder Geld bei der Wiederherstellung. Diese Tradition wird in den höheren Bergregionen bis heute fortgesetzt (Leimdörfer, 1905: 23).

Da im 19. Jahrhundert an Gewässern der Städte und Dörfer liegende Bauten bzw. Bauernhöfe oft mit Zubauten wie kleinen Mühlen, Sägewerken, Hammerschmieden etc. aufgestockt wurden, erweiterte sich der Bedarf an Versicherungsschutz auf den Gewerbesektor. 1811 entstanden die ersten Landesversicherungen (alte Bezeichnung Landesbrandschadenversicherungen) in Salzburg und Oberösterreich; weitere folgten in den nächsten Dezennien. Es wurden größere Betriebe ebenso versichert wie Wohnhäuser. Mit den Bauernassekuranzen wurde kooperiert (Rohrbach, 2011: 54).

Nach den Napoleonischen Kriegen erlebten der altösterreichische Seehafen Triest – und etliche Großstädte Europas einen wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung und Bevölkerungszuwachs. Es entstanden zahlreiche Produktions- und Handelsniederlassungen mit riesigen Warenlagern. Dies machte eine Ausdehnung des Banken- und Versicherungsbereiches erforderlich. In Triest und Wien gründeten Großhändler, Bankiers und wirtschaftlich versierte Adelige neue kapitalkräftigere Komposit Versicherer (Rohrbach, 1988: 249).

Absolventen der Universitäten und der neuen Technischen Hochschulen entwickelten nicht nur unfallsichere produktions- und fahrtechnische Einrichtungen, sondern auch den neuen Anforderungen entsprechende Versicherungskonzepte (Rohrbach, 1988).

Diesen von Pioniergeist angetriebenen Ingenieuren ist auch die Entwicklung der Dampfschiffe oder dampfbetriebenen Eisenbahnen zu verdanken, welche nun im großen Rahmen die Pferdefuhrwerke ablösten. Ohne die neuen Versicherer hätten damals viele Unternehmer die Risiken von Fabriksgründungen und industrieller Produktion sowie Fernhandel nicht auf sich genommen. Die Unfall – und Brandgefahren in den Fabrikhallen waren groß und bedrohten die anliegenden Warenlager. Aber auch am Transportweg lauerten Gefahren. Durch den Funkenflug der Lokomotiven geriet in der warmen trockenen Jahreszeit so manches Haus oder Warenlager bzw. Getreidefeld in Brand. Im Gegenzug wurden schadenmindernde Bauordnungen bzw. Schutzeinrichtungen entwickelt, sodass erhebliche wirtschaftliche Verbesserungen im 2. Drittel des 19. Jh in der Österreichischen Monarchie entstanden, die sich damals zu einer Versicherungsweltmacht weiterentwickelte (Rohrbach, 1986).

Ausweitungen des Versicherungsschutzes erfolgten für Reisen und Transporte, weil Menschen und Waren binnen kurzer Zeit größere Strecken zurücklegen konnten. Über die Achse Prag, Wien und den Seehafen Triest wurden Handelsverträge mit Brasilien, Indien, der Levante usw. abgeschlossen (Cossi, 2021).

Politische Positionen wurden immer häufiger mit Versicherungsexperten besetzt., deren Macht aber auch Verantwortung wachsende Ausmaße annahm.

In der Seetransportversicherung musste nun eine Fülle von Risiken berücksichtigt werden, die von der geografischen und klimatischen Beschaffenheit der Fahrtroute bzw. der Gebiete auf anderen Kontinenten bis zur Beschaffenheit der Schiffe, Art der Ladung usw. reichte. In mehrfacher Hinsicht trug die österreichische Assekuranz zum Ausbau des Überseehandels und Verkehrs bei. Ein berühmtes Beispiel liefert der 1833 zunächst als Schiffskataster (nach englischem Vorbild) von einigen kapitalkräftigen österreichischen Kompositversicherern gegründete "Lloyd Austriaco", der einige Jahre später als Schiffsgesellschaft "Österreichischer Lloyd" eine überaus glückliche Entwicklung nahm (Lloyd, 1911:85).

Großkaufleute und Fernreisende konnten sich über die politischen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse in fremden Ländern und den Schiffsverkehr Triests mit den Partnerländern erkundigen. Die Evidenzhaltung umfasste Daten des Ex- und Importes mit jedem einzelnen Partnerland. Über die zur Verfügung stehenden Schiffe des Lloyd gab es Hinweise betreffend Ausstattung, Fassungsvermögen usw. Seit 1837 standen die schnellen Schiffe der neuen Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft "Lloyd" für Fahrten nach Bombay, Kalkutta und Hongkong zur Verfügung (Gabriel, 1974).

### 3.2. *Die zweite Industrielle Revolution*

Die Entdeckung der Elektrizität im 19. Jahrhundert war eine große Neuheit und leitete damit tatsächlich die zweite Industrielle Revolution ein. Damals wurde das Fließband entdeckt, das später in der Industrie Anwendung fand. Ein Förderband wurde nämlich erstmals in einer Fleischproduktionsanlage eingesetzt. Daran wurden Schweine befestigt, und jeder Metzger schnitt nur einen Teil des Tierkörpers ab. Dies wurde in der Automobilindustrie von Henry Ford angewendet, indem er das Fließband in der Automobilproduktion einführte. Damit führte er große Veränderungen ein und auch andere entwickelte Länder wie Österreich, Deutschland, England oder Frankreich trugen diese Produktionsweise mit. Nach diesem Prinzip werden Fahrzeuge am Fließband aus Einzelteilen zusammengesetzt und sind dadurch deutlich schneller und kostengünstiger zu produzieren. (Gerginov, 2013).

Man konnte das Versicherungsnetz nun in Richtung der neuen Risiken an den nunmehr immer häufiger mit Strom oder Kraftstoff betriebenen Maschinen und Fließbändern weiterentwickeln. Maschinenbruch, Kurzschluss, elektrische Überspannungen Störungen im Produktionsprozess, Betriebsausfall waren die zu versichernden neuen Risiken. Aber es galt auch eine Reihe von Folgeentwicklungen der Zweiten industriellen Revolution zu berücksichtigen.

Die einsetzende Zunahme des Straßenverkehrs erhöhte die Zahl der Schäden, die durch Automobile an Personen und Sachgut entstanden.

Das 20. Jshrhundert wurde zum "Siegeszug" der Kraftfahrzeugversicherung in Form der Kasko- und Kfz-Haftpflichtsparte.

Die Schadenanalysen der Versicherer zeigten schon bald, dass die Haftpflichtschäden in Anzahl und Höhe der Schadenzahlungen ein Vielfaches der Kaskoschäden ausmachten (Gelbe Seiten, 2022).

Um einen weiteren explosionsartigen Anstieg der Kfz – Haftpflichtschäden und die daraus resultierenden volkswirtschaftlichen Einbußen zu verhindern, forderten die Versicherer von der Politik eine verpflichtende verbesserte Ausbildung der Fahrzeuglenker sowie eine zeitgemäße Straßenverkehrsordnung. Die Umsetzung erforderte jahrelange Detailarbeiten und Gesetzesnovellen.

Ausstellung und Einzug von Fahrzeugpapieren oblag Jahrzehnte der Polizei und wurde z.B. in Österreich erst gegen Ende des 20. Jhs an die Versicherer übergeleitet.

Auch in Österreich gibt es eine große Anzahl zugelassener Fahrzeuge, rund 1,5 Millionen pro Jahr. Es wird von über 1200 Zulassungsbehörden umgesetzt und genehmigt. Allerdings gab es mit 6.12.1999 eine Änderung in der Art der Anmeldung, nun ist die Anmeldung vom Staat auf die österreichischen Versicherer übergegangen und damit für Autofahrer deutlich flexibler geworden. Aber auch hier expandierten Macht und Verantwortung der Branche (VV-OTS, 2019).

### 3.3. *Die dritte Industrielle Revolution*

Die Nutzung von speicherprogrammierbaren Steuerungen und Computern war eigentlich der Beginn der dritten Industriellen Revolution. Als Entstehungszeit gelten die 1970er Jahre. Zu dieser Zeit begann die Teilautomatisierung. Seit der Einführung dieser Technologien können Versicherungsvermittler ohne Beziehung der technischen Abteilungen mit ihren Laptops vor den Kunden die genauen (Kfz-) Prämien aufrufen. Auch in diversen anderen Branchen sind Fachkräfte in der Lage, einen kompletten Arbeitsvorgang automatisiert – also ohne menschliches Zutun – aufzurufen und durchführen zu lassen. Als plastisches Beispiel hierfür dienen Roboter, die so programmiert sind, dass sie viele Operationen ohne menschliche Anwesenheit und Befehl ausführen (Die Geschichte über: Die dritte Industrielle Revolution Abgefragt, 2023).

Computerversicherungen wurden rasch von den meisten Betrieben abgeschlossen, wobei über die Elementarschäden hinaus nun auch gegen die Folgen des Computermisbrauchs vorgesorgt wurde.

Die Versicherungswirtschaft hat es seither – wie aus den Spitalsrechnungen zu ersehen ist – in der Kranken- und Pflegeversicherung immer häufiger mit computergesteuerten Untersuchungen, Operationen, Therapien zu tun, die in die Kalkulation der Versicherungsprämien und Schadenreserven einfließen müssen.

In der Pflegeversicherung können Roboter wertvolle Dienste an bedürftigen – meist bettlägerigen – Versicherten erbringen, die noch dazu mit Produktivitätssteigerungen verbunden sind (Verfasst, 2021). Aber das Abwägen, wo mehr Anschaffungskosten als Einsparungen entstehen, oder wann und wo Prozeduren ohne nennenswerte Verbesserungen anfallen, ist ein heiß diskutiertes Thema zwischen Ärzten, Gesundheitsökonominnen und Versicherern (NÖN, 2021).

### *3.4. Die vierte Industrielle Revolution – Fabriken im Wandel*

Jetzt ist die vierte Industrielle Revolution im Gange, und nach Ansicht einiger befindet sie sich in der Mitte, nach Ansicht anderer am Ende. In dieser Phase stehen jedenfalls die Themen Vernetzung, Digitalisierung und KI, analoge Technologien und Cyber-Physical Systems im Fokus. Dieser Ansatz ist nicht neu, denn viele Unternehmen orientieren ihre Produktion an Kundenwünschen, ohne Lagerbestände anzulegen. Dies ist als Just-in-Time-Herstellungsverfahren bekannt und hat seinen Ursprung in Japan. Dank der permanenten Weiterentwicklung der Technologien und der Informationsverarbeitung kann diese Produktionsweise im Kontext der Industriellen Revolution 4.0 umgesetzt werden. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass sich die Welt im Zeitalter der Aufzeichnung und der digitalen Revolution befindet, hat sich dieser Trend auch auf andere Sektoren ausgewirkt, nicht nur auf die Industrie. Insgesamt hat sich in den letzten zwei Jahrhunderten durch die Entwicklung der Technik der Produktionsprozess sowie die gesamte Arbeitswelt verändert. Dies hat sich insbesondere in der globalen Welt beschleunigt und verändert (IHK, 2023).

In der Industrie 4.0 nimmt "Information" konkretere Formen an. So entstehen neue Formen der Kommunikation, deren Ergebnis mit bloßem Auge sichtbar ist – so werden beispielsweise Verpackungen und andere Alltagsgegenstände über Barcodes und QR-Codes mit dem Internet verbunden.

Es entstehen auch digitale Fabriken, die auf Wunsch der Verbraucher individuelle Produkte ohne Einbußen herstellen (CAD Schroer, 2023).

Obwohl Industrie 4.0 zunächst, wie ein Marketingbegriff schien, hat es sich auf der Visionsebene zu einer entwickelten Agenda entwickelt. Von der ersten Amtszeit bis zur entwickelten Agenda hat es viel Zeit und Umbrüche gedauert, bis es zum Synonym für positiven Einfluss auf die Wirtschaft wurde. Im Bereich der Kommunikations- und Informationstechnologien wurde der Mobilfunkstandard, der von der 5G-Technologie vorangetrieben wurde, am meisten bewertet und es wurde festgestellt, dass er einen positiven Beitrag zur Wirtschaftskommunikation leistet. Außerdem kommt ihm die Aufgabe zu, die digitale Sicherheit auf ein höheres Niveau zu heben. Neue Geschäftsmodelle sind auf dem Markt erschienen, entstanden im Bereich der Prädiktiven Instandhaltung (Predictive Wartung – der große Überblick, 2021).

Wie sieht in diesem Umfeld die künftige Rolle der Versicherung aus? Welche Risiken kann die Branche hier überhaupt noch übernehmen?

Der Präsident des Österreichischen Versicherungsverbandes, Mag. Robert Lasshofer, stellte 2022 dazu fest.

“Das sind alles Fragen, mit denen sich die Versicherungsbranche in den kommenden Jahren intensiv beschäftigen wird müssen. Fakt ist, dass der Absicherungsbedarf jedenfalls steigen wird. So nehmen die Schadenszahlungen durch Naturkatastrophen kontinuierlich zu, das Bewusstsein für neue Risiken wie Cybercrime ist durch die täglichen Hackerangriffe präsenter denn je und die private Altersvorsorge wird dank des demografischen Wandels zur ultimativen Notwendigkeit – vor allem, weil das Sozialsystem an seine finanziellen Grenzen stößt.

Die Unsicherheiten in Politik und Wirtschaft werden in den kommenden Jahren nicht weniger werden, umso wichtiger ist es daher, dass wir Versicherer unseren stabilen Kurs beibehalten“ (Lasshofer, 2022: 3).

## 4. Wie die Assekuranz ihre Macht und Verantwortung sichert

Aus einer Kombination von ganzheitlichem und nachhaltigem Denken und Handeln wird die Versicherungswirtschaft auch künftig eine Existenz rettende bzw. sichernde Partnerin sein können.

### 4.1. *Versicherung muss nachhaltig wirtschaften*

Ein Kapitalist – eine Person, die Kapital besitzt, das in Produktionsmitteln verkörpert ist, bei denen es sich bekanntlich um Fabriken, Geld, Maschinen oder Rohstoffe handelt – schenkt Versicherungsexperten besondere Aufmerksamkeit. Er versucht, seine Versicherungsexperten so auszubilden (um ihr Wissen durch Schulungen am Arbeitsplatz zu erweitern), dass sie sein Kapital versichern und sogar vermehren können. Deshalb kann man ihn als Wissenskapitalisten und nicht als Wissensarbeiter bezeichnen. Er muss immer wissen, in welche Aufgaben er sein Wissen investiert, damit die Organisation funktioniert und dadurch die gemeinsamen Erfahrungen bereichert werden. Auf diese Weise wird sein Kapital in Zukunft einen Wert haben und der Organisation zugutekommen: Stillstand heißt Inflation.

Die Verpflichtung jedes Einzelnen besteht darin, sein Wissen zu verbessern, sich persönlich weiterzuentwickeln, und dies wird erleichtert, wenn die Organisation ihn dabei unterstützt und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten bietet (Nachhaltigkeit in der Versicherungswirtschaft, 2021).

### 4.2. *Versicherer sollen ganzheitlich denken*

Die persönliche Weiterentwicklung des Einzelnen ist notwendig, da jeder Mitarbeiter die gesamte Funktionsweise des Unternehmens sowie seine Rolle darin und damit seinen Beitrag verstehen muss.

Der Mitarbeiter muss auf der Ebene der gesamten Organisation denken, nicht nur auf der Ebene seiner Organisationseinheit oder seines Fachgebiets. Heutzutage reicht es nicht aus, nur Anweisungen zu befolgen.

Jeder Experte sollte bereit sein, die folgenden Fragen zu beantworten, wie zum Beispiel: Welchen Nutzen hat ein bestimmtes Projekt



oder eine bestimmte Organisation? Was ist dann sein Forschungsbeitrag? Wer sind dann die aktuellen Verbraucher der Produkte oder Dienstleistungen des Unternehmens und wer sind die potenziellen Kunden? Ob jemand auf die direkten Ergebnisse des Forschers angewiesen ist, in welcher Weise und wie sich diese auf die Organisation auswirken; und schließlich: auf wessen Ergebnisse ist der Forscher angewiesen? (Ganzheitliches Denken und seine Auswirkungen, 2023).

Das oben Gesagte bedeutet, dass die Mitarbeiter danach streben sollten, "eine Kathedrale zu bauen" und nicht "Steine zu klopfen". Dies können Mitarbeiter nur erreichen, wenn sie über alle notwendigen Informationen verfügen und die Aufgabe der Führungskraft darin besteht, ihnen Informationen bereitzustellen und ihnen einen Sinn zu geben. Außerdem ist es wichtig, dass Mitarbeiter in der Lage sind, diese Essenz ganzheitlich zu verstehen und den gewünschten Beitrag zu leisten, der für die Organisation wichtig ist (Teaser, 2022).

### *4.3. Versicherer sollen verantwortungsbewusst wirtschaften*

Der Gedanke der Nachhaltigkeit ist heute aktueller denn je, sogar so bedeutsam, dass das Bewusstsein dafür in allen Altersgruppen vorhanden ist. Globale Herausforderungen sowie die Ziele einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung basieren auf drei Säulen: Ökonomie, Ökologie und Soziales.

Versicherungsunternehmen sehen als Teil der Finanzmärkte einen großen Nutzen aus einer nachhaltigen Transformation. Historisch gesehen stand Nachhaltigkeit immer im Mittelpunkt der Geschäftstätigkeit von Versicherungen. Diese Unternehmen müssen sich strategisch mit diesem Thema auseinandersetzen, da sich sowohl die rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen als auch die Bedürfnisse der Kunden geändert haben.

Die erheblichen Chancen, die sich aus der grünen Transformation ergeben, sind für den Versicherer von nachhaltiger Bedeutung, da sie die Quelle zukünftiger Geschäfte sind. In dieser Beziehung ist es wichtig, klar und ehrlich zu kommunizieren, um Ergebnisse umzusetzen und Ziele zu erreichen (Versicherung ist Verantwortung – Vorausdenken für zukünftige Generationen, 2023).

In Studien, Projekten und Veranstaltungen ist die Entwicklung zu (ver)folgen, damit wir uns diesem Wandel mit Motivation,

Branchen-Know-how und Kreativität widmen können (Private Krankenversicherungen: Häufige Fragen, 2023; Künstliche Intelligenz in der Versicherungswelt, 2024).

#### ***4.4. Ein markantes historisches Beispiel für Macht und Verantwortung***

Im letzten Quartal des 20. Jahrhunderts sicherte die PKV die Rechte ihrer Privatpatienten gegen eine starke Gegnerschaft ab.

In Österreich erreichten die Leistungen des Sozialstaates in den 1970-er Jahren ein im europäischen Vergleich beachtenswertes Niveau. In den öffentlichen Spitälern wurde die kasernenartige Innenarchitektur gemeinsam mit den medizintechnischen Einrichtungen modernisiert. So wurden z. B. Krankensäle mit 30 und mehr Betten durch Krankenzimmer mit etwa 6–8 Betten ersetzt (Pellar, 2022).

Weniger ansprechend war der im damaligen Sozialstaat an militärische Befehlsausgaben erinnernde Umgang mit Patienten. Vor allem das abfällige Duzen selbst älterer Patienten durch relativ junges medizinisches Personal sowie fehlende Informationen über therapeutische Maßnahmen wurden immer wieder beanstandet. Auch der Tagesablauf mit Fiebertemperaturen zwischen 5:30h und 6h sowie Abendessen um 16Uhr erregte wenig Wohlgefallen.

Ein Drittel der österreichischen Bevölkerung wollte und will im Fall ernster Erkrankungen eine stationäre Behandlung durch Ärzte des persönlichen Vertrauens und will ebenso in einer hotelähnlichen Atmosphäre untergebracht sein. Aus diesen Gründen schließen sie über die verpflichtende Sozialversicherung hinaus private Zusatzversicherungen ab (Privatspitäler arbeiten ohne öffentliche Subventionen, 2022; Patientenrechte Bundes-Krankenanstaltengesetz, 2023).

Sie sollen bei notwendigen Spitalsaufenthalten, die von den privaten Krankenversicherern aus Patientenumfragen postulierten Annehmlichkeiten der Sonderklasse garantieren. Dies waren und sind bis heute: freie Wahl des Spitals und der behandelnden Ärzte, die auch über weitere Maßnahmen informieren und den Patienten Einblick in die Krankengeschichte gewähren. Je nach Tarif Unterbringung in komfortablen Ein- bis Dreibettzimmern mit Dusche, WC, TV, Telefon, freie Menüwahl (soweit medizinisch vertretbar), freie Besuchszeit, gratis Zeilungsservice etc. (Sonderklasse – Private Krankenversicherung, 2023).

Über jene den Privatpatienten in Rechnung gestellten hohen Aufzahlungskosten wurden Honorare an Top-Ärzte in den Spitälern bezahlt. Letztere wären allein auf die "Beamtengehälter" gestellt, nicht in den öffentlichen Spitälern geblieben. Immer häufiger wurden mit den Privatversicherungsgeldern aber auch auftretende Finanzengpässe bzw. Defizite in der Verwaltung gedeckt.

Auf diese Weise halfen die Gelder der Privatversicherung entscheidend mit, den modernen Spitalsbetrieb zu sichern.

Trotz dieser offensichtlichen Vorteile für das gesamte Spitalwesen wurde in etlichen Häusern der Privatpatient viel zu selten als "kranker Gast" behandelt bzw. konnte von gehobenem Patientenservice keine Rede sein (Dezsy, 1985).

Dass man sich über Ansprüche und Rechte von Sonderklassenpatienten in allgemeinen öffentlichen Krankenhäusern so einfach hinwegsetzen konnte, hatte seine Ursache in den unzureichenden Bestimmungen des Krankenanstalten Gesetzes.

Deswegen brachten Verhandlungen mit den Spitalsverwaltern und Informationskampagnen der PKV auch lange Zeit keine Besserung. Als Alternative begann die Branche nun unter Einsatz ihrer Kapitalreserven ihre "Macht und Verantwortung" folgend einzusetzen:

- Es wurden eigene komfortable Privatspitäler errichtet oder vorhandene gekauft und "reformiert". Diese Annehmlichkeiten wurden den Patienten zu Sonderkonditionen angeboten (Humanomed, 2023).

Die öffentlichen Krankenhäuser mit schlechtem Service wurden aus der Direktverrechnung mit der PKV ausgeschlossen. Das bedeutete eine erhebliche bürokratische Hürde, die nur wenige Patienten goutierten. Diese hätten nämlich die gesamten Aufzahlungskosten zuerst selbst bezahlen müssen, um die Rechnungen danach zur Vergütung einzureichen.

- Wer sich trotzdem-z. B. wegen großer Entfernung des nächsten Spitals vom Domizil- im beanstandeten Krankenhaus behandeln ließ, dem wurde der Aufenthalt in der (von der Sozialversicherung finanzierten) allgemeinen Klasse empfohlen und dafür ein attraktives Ersatztagegeld an ihn ausbezahlt (Rohrbach, 1992: 190).

Es kam auch durch enttäuschte Privatpatienten zu gerichtlichen Klagen gegen Spitäler in jenen Bundesländern, in denen es in den Krankenanstalten Landesgesetzen rechtlich untragbare Sonderklasse – Bestimmungen gab.

Insbesondere galt das für jene Passagen, die eine gesonderte Unterbringung der Sonderklassepatienten nur “nach Möglichkeit” vorsahen. Das führte nämlich dazu, dass von Sonderklassepatienten zwar die Sonderklassegebühr eingehoben wurde, jedoch keinerlei Besserstellung geboten wurde.

Unter dem Druck der von der PKV gestützten Klagen wurde am 26. Mai 1988 vom Nationalrat eine zeitgemäße Neufassung des Bundes – Krankenanstalten Gesetzes beschlossen (Bundes KAG, 1988: 34).

Im Kampf der PKV um die Patientenrechte stellt die erstmalige Legaldefinition der Sonderklassen im Bundes KAG 1988 einen Meilenstein dar. Es heißt wörtlich im Gesetz: “Die Sonderklasse hat durch ihre besondere Ausstattung höheren Ansprüchen hinsichtlich Verpflegung und Unterbringung zu entsprechen” (Bundes KAG, 1988: 38).

Nicht weniger von Bedeutung war die parallel erfolgende legale Gleichsetzung von privaten Sanatorien und der Sonderklasse der öffentlichen Krankenanstalten sowie ein Verfassungsgerichtshof-Erkenntnis vom 23. Juni 1989, das ein für alle Mal Zustände abstellte, gegen welche die PKV im Interesse ihrer Versicherten schon seit langer Zeit Sturm lief – dass nämlich bisweilen der Vermerk “Sonderklasse” auf dem Patientenaufnahmebogen die einzige “Leistung” des Spitals blieb, die der Sonderklassepatient für die wahrlich nicht geringen Sondergebühren erhielt.

Das Urteil des Verfassungsgerichtshofes ließ an Deutlichkeit nichts zu wünschen übrig. Wörtlich wird betont: “Der Verpflichtung der Sonderklassepatienten zur Zahlung der Sondergebühren steht als Leistung ihre Unterbringung in eigens dafür nach Lage und Ausstattung vorgesehenen Räumen gegenüber” (Rohrbach, 1997: 587).

Als Folge der letztgenannten Regelungen entstand ein Wettbewerb zwischen den Krankenhäusern im Kampf um die privatversicherten Patienten.

Ähnlich wie in der Tourismusbranche die Dienstleistungen gut geführter Hotels vorgestellt werden, entstand auf Betreiben der Privatversicherer seit Ende 1988 ein Michelin für Krankenhäuser

“Spitalsführer” genannt. Darin wurden die medizinischen, pflegerischen und hotelmäßigen Einrichtungen der Häuser im Detail vorgestellt (Via Michelin, 2023).

In den Jahren 1990 bis 1996 entstand in den einzelnen Bundesländern Österreichs die Institution des Patientenanwalts, der nicht nur für Beschwerden von Spitalspatienten zuständig ist, sondern eine ständige Qualitätskontrolle in “seinem” Bundesland durchführt (Patienten- und Pflegeanwalt, 2023).

## 5. KI-Netzwerke: Fortschritt und Bedrohung

Neue Technologien, Künstliche Intelligenz (KI), eine flexiblere Arbeitswelt und veränderte Lebenskonzepte im Umfeld demografischer Alterung sind wichtige Indikatoren in der Neuvermessung der Versicherungsbranche.

Die größte Chance und gleichzeitig Herausforderung liegt im technologischen Wandel, der die tägliche Arbeit in den wichtigsten Versicherungsbereichen rasant verändert und ständig neue Anpassungen erfordert.

Große Umbrüche werden immer auch von Verunsicherung bei der Klientel und der Mitarbeiterschaft begleitet. Vor allen die älteren Bevölkerungsschichten mit höherer Bildung stellen die Vorteile den Nachteilen gegenüber und warnen vor den neuen Formen des Missbrauchs der KI bzw. der Kriminalität.

Skeptiker betonen, KI ermögliche zwar schnelle für Menschen hilfreiche Problemlösungen, da ein Großteil des zeitaufwändigen Programmierens entfalle, sei aber in anderen Bereichen ein Arbeitsplatzkiller (European Parlament, 2020).

Daher sei KI mit Vorsicht einzusetzen.

Die Corona-Pandemie bewirkte eine Reduktion der anfänglichen Skepsis und leitete danach ein Umdenken ein.

Zunehmend vertreten Fach- und Führungskräfte der Branche die Meinung, dass generative KI-Systeme wie Chat GPT geeignet sind, als großartiges Expertenwerkzeug zu fungieren. Allerdings ist in etlichen Bereichen noch Entwicklungsarbeit erforderlich.

Im Artikel “Die Zukunft der Schadenbearbeitung: Allianz setzt auf Digitalisierung und KI” betont der Chief Operating Officer der Allianz, Xaver Wölfl: “Früher erfolgte die Zuordnung von E-Mails und

Poststücken zu Schaden- oder Vertragsdokumenten manuell. Mittlerweile stellt die KI bereits 95% aller Dokumente automatisch zu. Dies unterstützt nicht nur das Team im Kundenservice, sondern beschleunigt auch den Schadenbearbeitungsprozess erheblich.

Meine These ist, dass es über kurz oder lang keine E-Mails mehr im Standard Schaden geben wird. Besonders wenn notwendige Unterlagen fehlen, geht es im Mailverkehr doch öfter hin und her – und das kostet Zeit“ (Wölfl, 2022: 18).

Aus dem obigen Zitat lässt sich folgern:

KI-Kompetenzen zu erlernen und zu verstehen ist für die Arbeit mit der “unsichtbaren Ware” Versicherung zunehmend relevant (Parysek, 2023).

In Vertriebs-, Ausbildungs- und Informationsveranstaltungen der Versicherer hat sich inzwischen der hybride Modus zu einem großartigen Expertenwerkzeug entwickelt, weil nicht mehr davon ausgegangen werden kann, dass alle erforderlichen Experten und/oder Kunden zu einem vereinbarten Meeting am gleichen Ort erscheinen müssen oder können. KI erlaubt zeitsparend Zusammenfassungen zu erstellen, die einerseits aus Aussagen der vor Ort Agierenden bestehen und andererseits aus online Meldungen der “entfernt” Mitwirkenden (Rennert, 2023: 11–12).

Der Einsatz neuer Technologien im weltumspannenden Rückversicherungsnetz oder Zahlungsverkehr, wird zunehmend mit Produktivitätssteigerung verbunden sein. Aber vieles davon muss erst erlernt und erprobt werden (Künstliche Intelligenz in der Versicherungswelt, 2024).

## **6. Neuvermessung durch Uni-Studien mit Forschung, Lehre und Praxis**

Die wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung wird in Zukunft enorm an Bedeutung gewinnen. Der Nutzen oder die Lösungen daraus ergeben sich zunehmend aus der Verbindung von Expertisen unterschiedlicher wissenschaftlicher Disziplinen mit dem Wissen aus der Praxis (Transdisziplinarität).

Das heißt, dass die bisher auf Forschung und Lehre abgestimmte Tätigkeit der Universitäten nun immer mehr auf “Forschen – Lehren – praktisches Anwenden” erweitert wird.

Zu den Chancen, die Digitalisierung und KI bieten können zählt, dass berufsbegleitende Weiterbildung unabhängig vom Aufenthaltsort des/der Studierenden und flexibel hinsichtlich des Zeitpunktes gewählt werden kann. Wie und wo dann schließlich die Schnittstellen zwischen Arbeit und Studium verlaufen, ist eine Frage der Didaktik und des Durchdenkens der neuen technologischen Möglichkeiten (Wisotzky & Oldenburg, 2023).

Und hier sind einige europäische Versicherer heute bereits in einer Phase beachtenswerter Dynamik.

Eine insbesondere für Krankenversicherer relevante Feststellung traf Prof. Dr. Stefanie Auer, Dekanin der Fakultät für Gesundheit und Medizin an der Universität für Weiterbildung Krems:

“Evidenzbasierte Gesundheitsförderung und Prävention rücken immer stärker in den Fokus europäischer Gesundheitssysteme. Das rechtzeitige Erkennen von Risikofaktoren, Bewusstseinsbildung, die Anleitung und Begleitung einer nachhaltigen Verhaltensänderung sowie effektive multiprofessionelle Zusammenarbeit erfordern innovative Lehransätze.”<sup>1</sup>

Für die Versicherungswirtschaft ist in diesen fordernden Zeiten der allumfassende Überblick wichtiger denn je. Um diesen zu erreichen und beizubehalten, ist lebenslängliche Weiterbildung unumgänglich.

### 6.1. *Novelle 2021 des Universitätsgesetzes 2002*

Der Gesetzgeber hat hier zielgerecht und rasch Rahmenbedingungen geschaffen. In Österreich wurden durch die Novelle 2021 des Universitätsgesetzes 2002 (UG) die Weiterbildungsstudien neu organisiert.

Wenn man sich die verschiedenen Weiterbildungsprogramme ansieht, dann findet man jetzt überall eine “tragfähige Brücke” zwischen Theorie und Praxis. Die moderne Weiterbildung orientiert sich somit wesentlich stärker an den grundsätzlichen Problemstellungen der Praxis (in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft). Dies zeigt sich daran, dass auch Personen ohne formale Qualifikation den Zugang zur Universität und Zugang zu Universitätsdiplomen haben.

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<sup>1</sup> Rene, 2023: Dekanin der Fakultät für Gesundheit und Medizin Stefania Auer, seite 13.

Die Anerkennung eines Studiums ab dem 1. Oktober 2022 können manche Menschen erhalten, wenn sie nachweisen, dass sie mehrjährige Berufserfahrung gesammelt haben und sich dem Ende ihres Praktikums nähern, dann, wenn sie Auswanderer sind, dann, wenn sie keine formelle Berufserfahrung haben über eine gültige Lehrbefähigung verfügen, dafür aber eine akademische Ausbildung erhalten haben (UG-Novelle, 2021, 2024).

Mag. Friedrich Faulhammer, Rektor der Universität für Weiterbildung Krems, hat hier wertvolle Vorarbeit erbracht. Er war Sektionschef und Generalsekretär im Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung und hat dort in seiner über 20-jährigen Tätigkeit maßgeblich die österreichische und europäische Hochschulpolitik mitgestaltet.

Dadurch konnte die Universität für Weiterbildung Krems die Themenführerschaft zu wissenschaftlicher Weiterbildung in Europa übernehmen.

Zu der gegenwärtigen Situation stellt Faulhammer fest:

“Universitäten halten neueste Forschungsergebnisse auf höchstem und evidenzbasiertem Niveau bereit. Und sie unterziehen sich als Organisation Mechanismen der laufenden Qualitätssicherung. Daher ist es naheliegend, dass Universitäten neues, aus der Forschung entstandenes Wissen auch für die Qualifizierung der gesamten Gesellschaft verstärkt zur Verfügung stellen. Im Bildungsbereich steigt die Vielfalt des Angebots, weil es eben auch die Möglichkeit gibt, flexibler zu sein und einzelne Module auszuprobieren, ohne gleich ein ganzes Weiterbildungsstudium zu wählen” (Faulhammer, 2023: 19).

## **7. Katastrophenkonvolut und Unsicherheitsfaktoren der neuen Ära**

Die Erfolge moderner Demokratien mit internationalen wirtschaftlichen und wissenschaftlichen Verbindungen sind von immer mehr Teilbereichen der globalen Wirtschaftsordnung abhängig (Schnitker, 2017).

Diese wurde aber in den letzten Jahren schwer beeinträchtigt durch das Katastrophenkonvolut von Corona Pandemie, Umweltzerstörung, Klimakrise, geopolitischer Unsicherheit in Verbindung mit Kriegen, Terrorismus Inflation und Firmenpleiten (Schrader, 2022).



Versicherer dürfen und wollen derartige Fragen keineswegs bagatellisieren. Sie können dabei auf ihre Erfahrungen vertrauen, die ja nichts anderes als das von ihnen gesammelte Branchenwissen der Vergangenheit sind (Rohrbach, 2010).

In Anlehnung an die Worte des altchinesischen Philosophen Konfuzius "Erzähle mir deine Vergangenheit und ich werde deine Zukunft deuten".

In der Versicherungsgeschichte Österreichs gibt es markante Beispiele, die beweisen, dass die Branche das "Führen durch Krisen" zwar im Laufe der Zeit immer wieder anpassen muss, aber in Summe zeitlos beherrscht. Dadurch wurden schon etliche Male für Zehntausende Menschen und Tausende Betriebe ruinöse Gefahrenfolgen verhindert oder abgeschwächt.

Wenn – wie etwa nach dem Zerfall der Donaumonarchie – in den Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrisen des 20. und 21. Jhs auch nur Teil- oder Notlösungen möglich waren, so erwies sich die Versicherungsbranche dennoch immer ihres Rufs als "Rettungsanker" würdig (Rohrbach, 2014).

Fatalistische Hinweise, dass gegen härtere Schicksalsschläge auch Versicherungen machtlos seien, erwiesen sich im überwiegenden Teil der Fälle als nicht stichhaltig. Insbesondere das von den periodisch auftretenden "selbsternannten apokalyptischen Reitern" prognostizierte absolute Ende trat bisher nicht ein (Haufe, 2024).

Das ist jedoch kein Garantieschein für eine sorglose Zukunft.

Es gilt achtsam zu sein und sich nicht – dank der Erfolge in der Vergangenheit – in trügerischer Sicherheit für alle Zukunft zu fühlen.

### *7.1. Schach den Desinformationen und Halbwahrheiten*

Viele Menschen sind heute zutiefst verunsichert darüber, welche für das Kollektiv verbindlichen Normen und Werte noch Geltung haben und inwieweit ihre Interessen und Anliegen bei den Entscheidungsträgern in Politik, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft noch gut aufgehoben sind.

Unwahrheiten gab es schon immer, doch handelte es sich früher um übersehbare Größenordnungen.

Das heutige Konvolut von Werbe- und Belangsendungen, Fluten von Zeitungsartikeln und Interviews beinhaltet immer mehr Desinformationen (Möller et al., 2020).

Bei Desinformationen handelt es sich um teilrichtige oder falsche Informationen, die mit der Absicht verbreitet werden, einen Schaden gegen eine Person oder eine Institution anzurichten oder für Verunsicherung zu sorgen (Schadenssymposium, 2023).

Mittels künstlicher Intelligenz können immer schneller, immer neue und zielgerichtete Informationen erzeugt und verbreitet werden.

In der Studie "Upgrade Democracy" wurde 2023 untersucht, wie die Menschen in der Europäischen Union auf das Thema Desinformation blicken und wie sie darauf reagieren. Die Studie zeigt, dass eine Mehrheit der Menschen verunsichert ist, wenn es um die Bewertung des Wahrheitsgehalts von Informationen im Internet geht. Vielen sind auch schon selbst Desinformationen begegnet. Über 80 Prozent der Befragten in dieser Untersuchung erwarten sowohl von der Politik als auch von den Betreibern von Social Media Plattformen mehr

Einsatz gegen die Verbreitung von Desinformationen (Rbb, 2023).

Der Wiener Psychotherapeut und Psychologe Tobias Glück bezeichnet in seinem am 4.1.2024 in der Tageszeitung Der Standard erschienenen Gastkommentar "Willkommen im Phobozän" die mediale Berichterstattung mit ihren chronisch kopflastigen Unglücks-Reportagen ohne optimistischen Ausblick als eine der Ursachen für die Verdrossenheit in der Bevölkerung, indem er feststellt: "Trotz aller technologischen und gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen scheitern wir noch immer an unserem unveränderten Unvermögen, emotional und sozial adäquat auf die Herausforderungen zu reagieren. Es liegt nicht nur an den realen Bedrohungen, sondern in unserer heutigen vernetzten, chaotischen Welt auch daran, wie diese Bedrohungen dargestellt werden" (Tobias, 2024: 7).

Das Gefühl, all dem nichts entgegensetzen zu können, bewirkt, dass zunehmend Unsicherheit, Vertrauensverlust und ohnmächtige Aggression, insbesondere gegenüber der Politik, die Emotionen der Leser beherrschen (Dem Vertrauensverlust in der Gesellschaft auf der Spur, 2023).

Eine Gruppe von Fach- und Führungskräften, unter denen sich auch Versicherungsexperten befinden, hat begonnen, ein Umdenken einzuleiten.

## 8. Wiederaufbau des Vertrauens

Alle Versicherungsverträge beruhen auf dem Vertrauen der Kundschaft, in allen jenen Schadensfällen, für welche der Vertragsabschluss erfolgte, die vereinbarte Leistung zu erhalten.

Vom 15. bis zum 19. Januar 2024 fand in Davos in der Schweiz das Weltwirtschaftsforum (World Economic Forum) mit dem Titel "Wiederaufbau des Vertrauens" statt (Dung, 2024).

Die Institution ist eine gemeinnützige Stiftung, die alljährlich ein Treffen ausrichtet, bei dem internationale Fach- und Führungskräfte aus Politik, Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft über aktuelle globale Fragen diskutieren.

Es gilt im ersten Schritt durch gemeinsame Arbeit öffentlicher und privater Einrichtungen die internationale Sicherheit zu sanieren. Sie wurde in weiten Regionen Europas durch schwerwiegende politische und wirtschaftliche Krisen, sowie Kriminalität, Vertrauensverluste, die bis in die politischen Parteien, Firmen- und Hausgemeinschaften reichten, destabilisiert (Erbschleicher, 2023).

Einige Versicherungsexperten (unter denen sich auch der Autor dieses Aufsatzes befindet) haben ein Pilotprojekt mit der Wiedergeburt der Bezeichnung "Führen durch Krisen" angeregt.

Dabei sollen Kunden und Kooperationspartner über die motivierende Wirkung gezielter Kommunikation in den Bereichen Risikomanagement, Schadenverhinderung, Schadenminderung und Mithilfe bei der Schadenbearbeitung Eindrücke vermittelt bekommen. Dabei wird den Informationsempfängern auch der Nutzen der Künstlichen Intelligenz vor Augen geführt.

Mit anderen Worten soll die Neuvermessung der Versicherungswelt der Öffentlichkeit als eine neue Möglichkeit, die Lebensgestaltung risikobewusster durchzuführen, präsentiert werden.

## 9. Schutz der Alten vor ERBSCHLEICHEREI

Als Verwandte, Finanz- oder Versicherungsberater(innen) zusehen zu müssen, wie sich manche Individuen mit gespielter Hilfsbereitschaft das Vertrauen alter oder kranker Menschen erschleichen, ist zu einem leider immer häufiger auftretenden Phänomen unserer Zeit geworden.

Ob jemand als "Erbschleicher" gilt, liegt naturgemäß an der Perspektive des Betrachters. Soweit aber strafrechtlich relevantes Handeln vorliegt oder eine Verfügung im Zusammenhang mit Erbschaften und Schenkungen zivilrechtlich auf einer Täuschung beruht, spricht man allgemein von Erbschleicherei (Kirschner, 2022).

Versicherer versuchen auch hier durch Präventionsmaßnahmen den Kundenkreis vor späteren Enttäuschungen zu bewahren.

Hilfs- und pflegebedürftige Senioren sind in Österreich aufgrund der demografischen Alterung eine wachsende Gruppe. Viele von ihnen kamen in den Jahren starken Wirtschaftswachstums zu beachtlichen Einkünften und leben heute als Pensionisten Singles in ziemlich attraktiven Wohnungen oder Eigenheimen. Etliche dieser Senioren leiden aber an einer Form der modernen Armut, die wenig mit Geldmangel zu tun hat: Einsamkeit, Isolation, Altersdepression und eine fortschreitende Altersverwahrlosung sind ihre "Begleiter".

Die wenigen Menschen aus der näheren Umgebung, die diesen (Hoch)Betagten helfen, besitzen meist eine hochwertige soziale Einstellung.

Aber leider haben sich auch hier in jüngerer Vergangenheit vermehrt "Schwarze Schafe" unter die Hilfsbereiten gemischt, die vor allem persönlichen finanziellen Nutzen aus ihren "Taten der Nächstenliebe" schöpfen wollen.

## **Empfehlenswerte Maßnahmen gegen Erbschleicherei**

Eine Meldung: Die Pflegerin erbt alles, die Angehörigen nichts lässt aufhorchen und an einen typischen Fall von erschlichenem Erbe denken.

Wenn eine Person das Vertrauen einer alten Person oder einer Person die Hilfe braucht erreicht und eine einzige Person gewinnen möchte, ist dies keine strafbare Handlung. Wenn ein "Erbjäger" eine enge Beziehung zu einer älteren Person hat, kann er noch zu deren Lebzeiten an Geld kommen oder durch Einfluss teure Geschenke erhalten. Darüber hinaus kann ein Vermögender Mensch ihn zum Erben seines Vermögens benennen.

Jeder Mensch, der solche Probleme hat, kann seine Ängste und Sorgen gegenüber nahen Verwandten äußern, denen er vertraut. Er

kann von ihnen Hilfe und Unterstützung erhalten, um eine gefährliche Situation zu lösen. Eine Person mit einer Erbschaft kann Opfer von Betrügern werden und sollte sich daher Hilfe suchen.

Wer räumlich oder aus anderen Gründen nicht in der Lage ist, sich selbst um einen gebrechlichen Angehörigen zu kümmern, sollte sich zumindest um einen seriösen Pflegedienst bemühen und – so weit geboten – beim Amtsgericht eine Betreuung veranlassen.

Wachsamen Angehörigen erkennen mögliche Schwächen des Seniors/Erblässers und sollten die Absichten neu auftauchender Personen in seinem Umfeld hinterfragen. Gemeinschaftliche Testamente und Erbverträge haben Bindungswirkung. Sie schützen daher vor überraschenden Änderungen des letzten Willens. Diese sollten vor einem Notar errichtet oder zumindest in amtliche Verwahrung gegeben werden. Bei der Diagnose Demenz oder einer anderen psychischen Erkrankung helfen ärztliche Gutachten zu Lebzeiten, bei einem Erbstreit die Schwelle zur Testierunfähigkeit zeitlich besser zu bestimmen.

In diesem Zusammenhang sei auch auf den Aufsatz des Salzburger Rechtsanwalts Dr. Stephan Kliemstein zum Thema WIE MAN SICH VOR ERBSCHLEICHERN SCHÜTZT verwiesen.

Die folgenden Zitate enthalten markante Darstellungen über das Verhalten von Erbschleichern (Kliemstein, 2017).

In Österreich gibt es den Straftatbestand der Erbschleichelei nicht. Als schuldig gilt, wer sich auf undurchsichtige Weise, durch Zwang, Betrug oder Unterschlagung, eine Erbschaft aneignet. Eine Person kann sich strafbar machen, wenn sie das Erbe durch Druck auf das "Opfer" erlangt oder es betrogen hat. Das ist eine Art von Problem. Ein weiteres Problem besteht darin, dass viele "Opfer" von Betrug es nicht wagen, sich bei der Polizei zu melden oder einen Anwalt zu rufen.

Wie gehen Erbschleicher vor?

In der Regel nutzen Erbstückjäger die gleiche Methode. Das Wichtigste und Erste ist, das Vertrauen des Opfers zu gewinnen. Bei den Opfern handelt es sich um ältere Menschen, Kranke oder gefährdete Alleinstehende. Dann üben sie Druck auf das Opfer aus (das machtlos ist, weil es auf die Hilfe anderer angewiesen ist) und täuschen finanzielle Schwierigkeiten vor. Das Opfer zeigt seine Bereitschaft, dem Erbenjäger finanziell zu helfen, leistet ihm finanzielle Unterstützung oder überträgt ihm sogar das Erbe – sein Eigentum.

## Wie kann sich ein Mensch schützen?

Um eine Person vor Betrug und Erbschaftsschmuggel zu schützen, ist es notwendig, einen Vorgesetzten zu haben, der sich um seine finanziellen Angelegenheiten kümmert. Existiert eine solche Person nicht, ist die Einholung einer Vorsorgevollmacht erforderlich. Auf Grundlage einer solchen Vollmacht können Angehörige oder andere nahestehende Personen die Finanzen kontrollieren. Somit ist genau definiert, mit welchen Mitteln eine vertrauliche Person unter welchen Bedingungen und auf welche Weise darauf zugreifen kann.

## Schluss

Es gibt keinen Grund von Aussichtslosigkeit zu sprechen da sie wie immer das Produkt von Unwissenheit ist. Viel eher scheint ein neues Zeitalter der Aufklärung einzusetzen. Und Versicherung ist ein Kind der Aufklärung.

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# Organizational Culture Through Technological Infrastructure And Innovation

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

Organizational culture is considered one of the fundamental prerequisites for realizing the strategy of any company. The structural and contemporary model of corporate culture significantly affects the success, competitiveness, and challenges of the global business world. At the same time, the chosen business strategy plays a key role in modeling and developing company's cultural and contemporary image. Defined as long-term goals, activities and means to achieve them, the strategy shows the steps through which the enterprise aims to improve its position in the market with respect to its competitors. Gaining advantages over competitors can be pursued through a variety of strategies that include cost reduction, increased productivity, and other methods, each of which requires a distinct organizational culture.

The wide implementation and complementarity of information technologies in various functions and processes encourage significant organizational changes. Information technologies, unlike traditional methods, not only change technical aspects, but also affect communication channels, decision-making processes, and control mechanisms. This transformation is evident in organizational structures shifting to more flat and horizontal formations, with information technologies taking over the roles traditionally held by middle management.

While information technologies empower managers with faster and more accurate information, they also provide lower-level managers with insight into the organization's overall situation, current challenges, and vital organizational matters. Information technologies also play a key role in determining whether organizations adopt mechanistic or organic structures. Mechanistic structures emphasize obedience to authority and adherence to

traditions, favoring predictability, consistency, and stability. In contrast, organic structures allow for greater autonomy, encouraging enthusiasm, creativity and risk-taking.

Over time, information technologies influence organizational cultural values through these structural transformations, shaping different cultural characteristics. The desired cultural values in mechanistic organizations differ significantly from those in organic structures. In this research, we will present the impact of information technologies on organizational culture, examining how their use shapes structures and operational concurrent values within companies.

*Keywords:* organizational culture, management digital technology, digital skills, enterprise transformations, digital ecosystem

## 1. Introduction

Organizational culture is a multidimensional phenomenon, observed in various ways. In the theory and practice of organization, a large number of authors agree that organizational culture has two types of elements: cognitive and symbolic. Cognitive elements include values, beliefs, expectations, ethics, feelings, informal rules, ways of thinking, worldview, etc. Symbolic elements encompass language and jargon, stories, myths, legends, heroes, rituals, logos, physical appearance, and so on. The basic cognitive elements of organizational culture are values, beliefs, and norms of behavior.

Organizational culture is inevitably linked to the creativity of a work environment. According to Bezhovski, Janevski, Jovanov Apasieva & Temjanovski (2021) creativity is a quality, talent, ability, and skill that enables individuals and groups to generate ideas. Creativity can also be useful for spotting business opportunities or implementing ideas and making them available to markets and society.

One characteristic of organizational culture is its effort to form its own language. Language serves as a pass for organization members and as a barrier for those who are not its members. A specific organizational vocabulary is formed, used by organization members in daily communication and contacts. Nike, for example, developed the Ekin jargon, which, read backward, denotes loyal employees who inform customers and retailers about Nike's latest innovations.

The culture of the enterprise and its organizational structure, as two organizational dimensions, are highly interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, the same factors that influence organizational

structure also define organizational culture. Some of these factors have a greater impact, while others have a lesser impact depending on the specific organizational conditions. Nevertheless, the most important factors in organizational culture are people, ownership, goals, size, age, technology, activity, and the environment in which the enterprise operates.

The size of the organization also influences the choice of culture. Large enterprises are more formalized, tend toward greater specialization and decentralization, and require more intensive coordination. It is considered that with the growth of the organization, there is a tendency to create and develop a bureaucratic type of culture. An effective mechanism for changing the culture of the enterprise in such conditions represents radical decentralization and the creation of small, autonomous organizational units based on a project principle.

The state of the organization's information technology in Macedonia is at such a level that banks, practically having no competition, are hardly interested in offering new products to their users, for which new computer software would be needed. Currently, the demand for money from the population and economy is far above the supply, so banks feel comfortable and have no incentive to create new ways of cooperation, such as offering merchant accounts to companies that want to receive payments online.

Although it is good that electronic commerce has emerged at all, I felt a certain amount of distrust and unpreparedness to move forward. They are not given money, so that's it. I also think that banks believe that even if they invest, it will not pay off in the near future.

From our perspective, this is incorrect because a portion of payment transactions will inevitably transition to this type of work, ensuring that, even in the worst-case scenario, the transaction volume will not be lost. And with the possibilities that electronic commerce offers for easy selling outside the country, this volume can only increase. It must be acknowledged that most transactions will be of low value, from a few to at most a few hundred euros, but this would be compensated for by the increased number of transactions. In our country, electronic commerce with the application of information technology is at a very low level of development and use. There have been many attempts to use some electronic forms, but they are still very rare, or somehow unsuccessful.



This occurs as a result of the uncertain conditions offered by this form of e-commerce and information technology, and the biggest culprits for this are the banks. They still do not have established standard conditions that would be offered for the use of electronic commerce, and that is why there is a significant level of distrust among potential users. Unlike world's economically developed countries, the situation here is completely different. In other countries, banks are the ones trying to raise the internet economy to a higher level and provide better conditions for its operation, while here the situation is completely opposite. For example, "Developed market economies are already working hard on their own industrialization models that include digitization" (Maksimović, 2022: 63). Integrated digital transformation and communication leads to profitability in entrepreneurial companies. Those companies that took advantage of advanced technical communication were more successful (Jovanov Marjanova et al., 2017). "Information and communication technologies (ICT) are considered one of the main driving forces of world economic transformation" (Temjanovski, 2013: 247). At the current level of development of information and communication technologies, a digital economy, i.e. artificial intelligence, has been created. This leads to the transformation of the business world. The development of technology and science led to changes in society, it influenced the increase and intensity of information; knowledge transfer and change in the organizational structure. Thus, it contributed to the creation of the economy and knowledge society. "Intellectual capital of companies is the sum of their experiences, understanding, relationships, information, processes, innovations, discoveries...The economic basis of companies changes from the nature of resources in intellectual capital" (Esmerova, 2013: 66). With this knowledge, managers will create an organizational culture in companies. Human resources are the carriers of the organizational culture of a company. However, there are proposals to support women entrepreneurs through training in digital skills and data processing, in order to bring about a transformation in the field of artificial intelligence (Zlatkovski et al., 2023).

There is no significant interest from the banks to improve the conditions of electronic commerce. On the contrary, very few banks offer electronic buying and selling, either because the situation in our country does not allow it, or because the reason should be sought in

the way the banks operate. More types of innovation in companies can be innovative. "Innovation may consist of implementing a significant change or series of smaller individual changes that together represent a significant change for an improved product or service" (Esmerova, 2015: 96). However, it is necessary to monitor innovations on the market, or in this case, to encourage the application of digitalization, because it necessarily encourages the development of international competitiveness and international entrepreneurship. "International entrepreneurship is crucial for the involvement of the business world and the wider social community in all entrepreneurial activities and processes, while establishing the necessary links between the international education systems, businesses and the local community" (Esmerova & Atanasoski, 2023: 33).<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously, managers must be innovative. Managers have been using software in their work for a long time, but now with digital information technology, they must be able to create specific programs needed for the company's operation, while also using quantitative data that will help them when making decisions (Esmerova, 2015).

This paper aims to explore the multidimensional nature of organizational culture and its interconnectedness with organizational structure in the digital business landscape. It further examines the influence of information technologies and digitalization on business operations, with a specific focus on the Macedonian context. The study highlights the pivotal roles of innovation, digital transformation, and creativity in shaping organizational culture and enhancing economic competitiveness.

## 2. Literature Review

Organizational culture in companies is not a new phenomenon for the academic, public and business community. In certain sources of literature, this issue is mainly mentioned and arises through the needs for optimization of certain sectors, activities or human resources, mainly to minimize financial costs, substitution of certain raw materials, advantages or limitations due to religious or cultural diversity.

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<sup>1</sup> Leadership can also contribute to this in a positive sense, by creating an atmosphere suitable for transformation and innovation, while at the same time motivating employees to cope with new tasks and expectations (Esmerova, 2013).

But in the context of global digital challenges, when the primary focus of every company is to explore the relationship between organizational culture and corporate strategy, especially focusing on how the integration of information technologies affects organizational structures, cultural values and competitiveness in the global business environment, the selection of scientific literature is quite limited, or restricted to certain geographical regions or countries.

A review of relevant literature from various multidisciplinary sciences can help in defining the basic components of organizational culture in the information sector. In this paper, the literature review in the text is composed of references to various studies, publications and theories that highlight the concepts of organizational culture, creativity, digital transformation and innovation. These references provide a good foundation and serve as a basis for discussion of the broader context of organizational culture and its relationship with information technology.

Organizational culture, a dynamic construct shaped by historical, social and technological factors, is key to business success in the globalized era. Certain theoretical roots come from Edward Taylor's 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropological definition of culture as a "complex whole," which has evolved through modern interpretations such as Geert Hofstede's "collective programming of the mind" and Neumenwirth and Weber's notion of a "system of ideas" (Hill, 2007).

These perspectives emphasize the role of culture in shaping human behavior and interactions, especially in diverse business contexts. Globalization has intensified the demand for multicultural literacy – the ability to navigate cultural differences in business practices. As Temjanovski and Svrčinov (2013) have pointed out, this competency is critical for organizations operating in multicultural environments. Furthermore, the literature links organizational culture to creativity, innovation, and adaptability. Drucker (1999) emphasizes the role of management in driving innovation to meet market demands, while Esmerova (2021) criticizes enterprises in the Western Balkans for their failure to transform organizational culture, attributing their collapse to inappropriate innovation and mismatched human resource practices.

Entrepreneurship also thrives in culturally diverse settings, where innovation and teamwork are supported by structured organizational cultures (Esmerova, 2014). The integration of information

and communication technologies (ICT) adds another layer, mediating conflicts arising from cultural diversity and improving decision-making and communication (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019). ICT-driven innovation further contributes to organizational performance by reducing costs and improving job satisfaction (Esmerova, 2015).

Such a broad methodological interdisciplinary approach in the context of digitalization, where we are slowly replacing Industry 4.0 with advanced digital tools in 5.0., is not a simple matter. Therefore the literature presented in the paper offers opportunities for further debates and research, which will undoubtedly only enrich and further clarify the phenomenon of organizational culture the cultural phenomenon in companies.

### 3. Defining Organizational Culture

In order to discuss and elaborate the concept of organizational culture, it is first necessary to mention the accessibility of culture as a kind of phenomenon in an organizational environment.

In the seventies of the nineteenth century, the anthropologist Edward Taylor defined culture as “the complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other abilities acquired by man as a member of society”. Hundreds of other definitions have been offered since. Geert Hofstede, an expert on cultural differences and management, defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another.” While the sociologists Neimenwirth and Weber see culture as a “system of ideas and claim that these ideas constitute a blueprint for living” (Hill, 2007: 90–91).

The fundamental characteristic of the current era in which businesses operate is the existence of globalization. It creates numerous different conditions in the functioning of enterprises that were not characteristic of a bygone era.

Success in business in different countries in era of globalization, with different cultural “colors” undoubtedly requires “literacy” and understanding of different cultures. By multicultural literacy we mean understanding how differences in culture in different countries or within the same country can affect the way business is done. In this age of global communications, fast transportation and world

markets, when the era of the global village seems to have just arrived, it is easy to forget how different different cultures really are. Beneath the thin surface layer of modernity, deep cultural differences often remain (Temjanovski & Svrčinov, 2013).

The organizational culture is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, find hidden patterns, make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Generating fresh solutions to problems, and the ability to create new products, processes or services for a changing market, are part of the intellectual capital that give a company its competitive edge. Creativity is a key part of the innovation equation in organizational culture. According to Peter Drucker (1999: 39) “the center of a modern society, economy and community is not technology. It is not productivity. It is the managed institution as the organ of society to produce results. Management is the specific function, the specific instrument to make institutions capable of producing results”. The collapse of large concerns that occurred in the countries of the Western Balkans was caused not only by the loss of the market, but also by poor transformation. A new management approach was required, with training, education, innovation, acceptance of market demands, and this did not happen in these companies. There was no transformation of the organizational culture (Esmerova, 2021). Furthermore, thanks to the appreciation of the values and attitudes of employees, respecting generational differences, it becomes clear to human resource managers why the attitude towards the work of each individual differs. Behavior at work and teamwork contribute to the success of the company and building a business culture (Esmerova, & Stojcevska, 2022). It is not conducive to the career development of employees. Career development is a long-term process, it includes many factors (work experience, on-the-job training, formal and informal education), but also teamwork of the company’s human resources and management departments (Esmerova, 2014).

To what extent does the entrepreneur’s profile contain certain “traces” or threads of cultural identity? The dynamic essence of entrepreneurship lies in its capacity for growth, transcendence, and the pursuit of success that fosters new ventures. This transformative potential, shaped by diverse cultural contexts and tailored to various national cultures, epitomizes the creative spirit of entrepreneurship – a driving force that ignites human imagination, fosters assertiveness,

and inspires a relentless quest for achievement. The stimulating of entrepreneurship is reflected in the ability to grow and transcend, reflected in the success that leads to new ventures of an organization. This primary gift of the creative nature of the enterprise, stimulates the human imagination and constantly encourages assertiveness and the pursuit of success, and can be triggered in different cultural settings.

In today's digital world, when the matrix of corporate governance has completely changed, globalization affects the relationship between organizational culture and the emergence of conflicts within the enterprise. It is understandable that the interaction between organizational culture and conflicts existed even before globalization, because it is inherent in all systems, using information technologies with their specificities in each period.

Thus, the need arises to address their mutual relationship to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the enterprise's functioning. According to Adeinat & Abdulfatah (2019), the subject of our research in this section is to examine the dependency of conflicts on the established organizational culture and the way of resolving them with the help of information technology:

- General constellation of beliefs, customs, value systems, behavioral norms, and ways of conducting business that are unique or distinctive for each corporation.

- A set of important understandings shared by the members of the community.

- A world of experience, meanings, values, and understandings that inform people and are expressed, reproduced, and communicated in a certain symbolic form.

Most definitions of organizational culture emphasize that it is shared, common to all members of the organization to a greater or lesser extent. This refers primarily to the idea that all members of the organization have the same ideology, understanding, perceptions, norms, etc., related to the organization itself, interpersonal relationships, as well as external actions.

The way of communication in the organization, decision-making, conflict resolution, certain processes, employment and reward policies, the organization's workspace order, communication with stakeholders, the logo (symbol), mission, clothing rules, and procedures—all of these are parts of or derive from organizational culture.

Defining conflicts is as complex as defining culture. This is precisely why literature provides numerous definitions of organizational conflicts. According to Agrawal, Kumar & Mukti, (2021) organizational conflict occurs when the goals, interests, or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible, leading them to obstruct or interfere with each other's efforts to achieve their objectives.

A similar definition for organizational conflicts is one that states they represent a "situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, and behavior lead to disagreement between two or more parties. According to Azad & Mohiuddin (2022: 5) "Organizational conflict can also be defined as a "process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected its interests"".

Based on the content of these definitions, we can conclude that communication problems, stereotypes, differences in goals and values, stress, and limited resources are just some of the sources of conflicts in the organization, and they directly or indirectly stem from the cultural background. Similarly, conflicts affect the creation of organizational culture. The characteristics of employees, the occurrence of conflict in establishing interpersonal relationships, impact organizational culture. Organizational innovation is the implementation of a new organizational method in the business practice of companies, According to Esmerova (2015) organizational innovation may aim to increase companies' performance by reducing administrative costs, improving workplace satisfaction (and thus labor productivity), gaining access to non-commercial funds (such as undiluted external knowledge) or reducing the cost of procurement in the organization culture and industry (Esmerova, 2021).

#### **4. Influence of Organizational Culture on the Use of ICT and the Emergence of Conflicts**

A significant portion of conflicts in the organization is initiated by the culture existing within the organization, as well as the individual cultures of the subjects involved in the conflict. For instance, problems and misunderstandings in the communication process, incorrect perceptions, and stereotypes are just some of the sources of conflicts with a cultural character, and these can be addressed with the help of ICT technologies.

Organizational culture according to Alvarez & Torrecillas (2020), as a cause for conflicts, is expressed and observed in:

- Religious and ethnic diversity within the organization,
- The process of socialization or adaptation of new members to the organizational culture,
- Changes in organizational culture.

Major reasons for conflicts arising from diversity in religions and ethnicities within the organization often relate to insufficient familiarity of other members with their values and rituals, lack of willingness for cultural understanding, intolerance to differences, and ethnocentrism. The main source of conflict in such cases lies in language barriers and ignorance of the language of other groups within the organization, which can be resolved through information technology tools. An interesting example is communication in American conditions and the use of the Internet and information technology. In this view Bouma & Ling (2006) include some semantic nuances:

- When saying “YES” at work or anywhere else, say “YES.” Head gestures can be confusing.
- When going to smoke a cigarette, never say, “I’m going to light one.”
- Never say you need a “RUBBER” when asking for an eraser; it means a condom.
- Avoid saying “The phone is engaged” as engaged means “engagement” in this context.
- Don’t say, “I’ll call you,” say, “I’ll get back to you” or “I’ll ring you.”
- Don’t offer chewing gum or mouth fresheners to others; it sends a message that they have bad breath.

Eisenhardt (1989) points out that regarding the functioning of the organization, socialization is a process through which new members learn the culture of the organization. It involves teaching people the values, norms, and expected behaviors within the organization. The organization incorporates certain norms, values, rules, regulations, etc., created and stemming from its culture. Everyone entering the organization must accept the existing organizational culture to adapt to it and the technologies that will be used.

Effective organizational socialization implies that employees, especially newcomers, accept the rules, procedures, and policies of the organization and the use of ICT technologies. When new



employees do not fully accept the rules, procedures, and policies of the organization, i.e., when they do not fully socialize, adapt, and when certain values are in conflict with the organization's values, conflicts arise (Ehrhart, Schneider & Macey, 2004). This conflict can be intrapersonal or interpersonal, depending on whether we have introduced a model of ICT technologies. Therefore, the organization must facilitate easier socialization through appropriate training, such as team-building, calling new members to meetings, shared rituals, informal gatherings, and informal and formal electronic communication, thus reducing conflicts.

When organizational culture changes, there is a process of adapting members of the organization to the new culture. Hence, adaptation is not only characteristic of new members but also creates a so-called cultural shock—a result of the process of changing organizational culture. This confusion often leads to the creation of a wrong perception and disruption of certain communication processes, both with and without information technologies. Conflicts with the use of ICT technologies and the Internet, involving bloggers and optical information technologies, are minor and inconspicuous (Senior & Fleming, 2006).

In the last decade, the development of the information society in the Republic of North Macedonia, compared to other countries in the region and especially to EU member states, has stagnated significantly. This assessment is noted in the United Nations' research ("E-Government Survey 2014: E-government for the Future We Want"), published in June 2014, where North Macedonia ranks last in all segments of the analysis: the lowest e-government development index of all countries in the region, the lowest percentage of offering electronic services to citizens, the lowest percentage of citizen participation in decision-making in local and central government.

The same result can be seen in research by the EU, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank. The government's goal will be the development of the IT sector (which will mean increased exports, reduced unemployment, and the building of Macedonian brands) as well as simplifying and speeding up communication between citizens and state administration using ICT. For this purpose, the government will focus on creating electronic registers as the basis for all electronic government services

provided to citizens and businesses. To support the development of this sector, the government will ensure complete protection of intellectual and industrial property rights in the field of information technology and will develop a long-term national strategy for the development of the information society (which will include the development of e-commerce).

The government will support the formation of research units in the business sector, with the aim of an efficient transfer of modern technologies. The government will pursue a policy of reducing the profit tax for IT companies to 5% (Farooq, 2020). The government will financially support the placement of services and solutions from Macedonian ICT companies on global markets, as well as the requalification/upskilling of highly educated technical engineers (technologists, architects, mechanical and civil engineers) into IT engineers, with the aim of utilizing their ICT knowledge and reducing unemployment among technical personnel. The government will provide tax incentives for IT companies exporting software and services. This will enable increased foreign exchange inflow, the establishment of new outsourcing IT companies, and opportunities for new employment (Gephart, 2004).

Additionally, the government will take the necessary steps to introduce a third mobile operator, aiming to reduce service prices and ensure that citizens have quality services. The government will fully implement three essential electronic registers: the citizens' register, the address register, and the spatial data register. These registers form the basis for all electronic government services provided to citizens and businesses through the systems used in state administration, as well as population registers, unique voter registers, etc. They also serve as the foundation for all activities related to the realization of the population census in Macedonia.

## **5. Strategies for Organizational Conflicts Induced by ICT**

Muhammad et al. (2022) encountered various strategies for managing conflicts within organizations in the literature. According to some authors, indirect strategies are applied, such as:

- Establishing a standardized system of rewards and promotions.

- Creating a conformity system.
- Encouraging understanding.
- Fostering a sense of mutual respect and trust.

These measures are referred to as indirect conflict resolution methods because they do not directly involve the conflicting parties, but rather address the root causes of the conflict. Another approach to conflict resolution involves strategies like avoidance, accommodation, compromise, and confrontation (Razmerita et al., 2016):

- Avoidance: Ignoring the problem in hopes that it will disappear.
- Accommodation: Minimizing the conflict, anticipating that things will improve.
- Compromise: Reaching an agreement where neither side fully achieves its goals.
- Confrontation: Achieving a resolution through negotiation, avoiding conflicts, and attempting to establish compromise.

Furthermore, strategies in conflict management include collaborative management, competitive negotiation, mediation, and arbitration (Gephart, 2004).

- Collaborative Management and Competitive Negotiation: Resolving conflicts with the direct involvement of the conflicting parties. Collaborative negotiation aims to achieve a result acceptable to both parties, while competitive negotiation often results in dissatisfaction for one party.

- Mediation: Involves a third party that helps conflicting parties reach a mutually acceptable solution.

- Arbitration: Involves a third party imposing a specific outcome on the conflicting parties, striving for a fair solution.

For the purposes of this discussion, conflict resolution strategies employing indirect methods are adopted. Macedonia leads the region in producing cutting-edge products using nanotechnology, particularly in construction and energy efficiency. Over the past three years, the Innovation Fund has supported two projects in nanotechnology

- International Recognition: Macedonia's expertise in nanotechnology competes with global leaders, and the products are expected to be introduced throughout Europe and the world.

- Domestic Support: the importance of domestic support for the development of these technologies in Macedonia is needed to strengthen competencies' level.

In conclusion, applying advanced technologies, such as nano-technology, can position Macedonia as a leader in the global market. To achieve this, strong domestic support and investment are essential.

Today, information has become the main component of what we produce, do, buy, and consume. Having an economic value in almost all products and services that meet the needs of today's societies, it has been now obligatory for individuals and organizations to obtain information technologies and to actively use them in both work and social life domains. Hence, in the current information age, where information is seen as power, this situation has made it imperative for organizations to become increasingly information-based and to benefit from information technologies in many processes and activities.

The intensive use of information technologies in many functions and processes has also required some changes in organizations (Rodríguez-Soler & Icart, 2017). This is due to the fact that information technologies, unlike traditional technologies, do not only change the technical fields, but also affect the communication channels, decision-making functions and mechanisms, control, etc. Consequently, one of the most striking developments is in organizational structures that are becoming increasingly flattened and horizontal. Relatedly, information technologies have begun to take over the role of middle management, which supports decision-making processes of senior management and have reduced the importance of this level. Similarly, while information technologies enable managers to obtain faster, more accurate, and comprehensive information it also provides lower-level managers with more information about the general situation of the organization, the nature of current problems, and important organizational matters (Tahleho & Ngulube, 2022).

Moreover, information technologies also have an important potential in determining whether organizations have a mechanistic or organic structure. Within the mechanistic organizational structures, people do not have much autonomy, and behaviors expected from employees are being careful and obedience to upper authority and respect for traditions. In such organizations, predictability, consistency, and stability are desirable phenomena. In contrast, people in organic structures have more freedom in shaping and controlling their activities, and being enthusiastic, creative, and taking risks have important places among the desired behaviors (Muhammad et al., 2022).

According to Marocco et al. (2023), information technologies begin to influence the cultural values of the organization over time, through these transformations they create organizational structures, processes, and operations. In other words, the fact that organizational structures are either mechanistic or organic, causes the formation of diverse cultural values in organizations. Therefore, the desired cultural values in mechanistic organizations are quite different from those in organic structures. In this context, this chapter deals with the influences of information technologies on cultural characteristics of organizations along with the reflections of the use of these technologies on organizational structures and their functioning.

When we look at studies on the relations between organizational culture and information technologies, we generally see the studies on the effects of culture on technology adaptation or use, as well as on the effects of certain specific information technologies and applications (e.g., e-mail use, group support practices, etc.) on some aspects of any organizational culture. However, the number of studies that consider the use of information technologies as a “whole” and address “why” and “how” its effects on organizational culture occurred is still limited. And so, this chapter aims to examine and discuss the overall effects of the usage and intensity of information technologies established in organizations on the cultural life within them.

In this context, the chapter plan is as follows: Firstly, the basic concepts related to information and information technologies are included (Titi, 2013).

Emphasis is placed on the differences in meaning between knowledge and information, and their connections to information technologies are briefly explained. Secondly, the effects of information technologies on organizational structure are dedicated particular attention.

According to Tahleho & Ngulube (2022), the reason for this is that as a system of values, beliefs, assumptions, and practices, organizational culture encompasses many features closely related to structures of organizations. Thirdly, possible links between organizational structure and organizational culture are included. Fourthly, important theoretical approaches and studies on the relationships between information technologies and organizational culture are provided. Finally, by deepening the discussion a bit more and by emphasizing key points, some important arguments are discussed.

## Conclusion

The globalization of markets and economic regionalization has increased, making successful operations impossible without the use of modern information technologies. The networking of companies, public administrations, and the development of the internet have brought about significant changes in the way work systems operate. This has facilitated easy and fast communication, rapid data transfer over long distances, simple publishing and updating of multimedia documents with continuous global accessibility, digital delivery of goods and services, direct online payments, formation of virtual organizations, and more. All these aspects represent the new form of work known as electronic business.

Electronic business (e-business) is a broad concept encompassing all transactions or information exchanges conducted through using information and communication technologies, including:

- Between companies
- Between companies and their consumers
- Between companies and public administrations

Maximizing the value of the company, leading to an increase in the wealth of its owners, is globally accepted today as the ultimate goal of company's operations. This applies to both shareholder companies and private enterprises, even though their value is not directly measurable through the capital market. The most significant principles of financial and portfolio management are aligned with this goal.

Overall, embracing electronic business practices is crucial in the contemporary landscape to stay competitive, foster efficient communication, and achieve organizational objectives in a globalized and technologically-driven environment.

Becoming the basic elements of today's economic, social, and cultural systems, information is obtained in a certain hierarchy. The images are at the beginning of the process, and the process is completed with a hierarchical staging in the form of data, information, and knowledge, respectively. Image is located at the first step of the process. Humans copy the picture of any object and event that they have previously perceived by sensory organs.

When faced with a similar phenomenon in the later stages of life, these pictures are redesigned in the mind. We call these pictures

of realities occurring in human minds images The next stage, the data, contains symbols that represent events and their properties. For this reason, data are expressed as figures and/or facts without content and interpretation Information that constitutes the next stage of the process and is mixed with knowledge and used interchangeably, is expressed as reporting of one system's own status to another system In information, associated data are combined for a specific purpose.

Therefore, we can explain information as meaningful data. Knowledge, on the other hand, is defined as personalized information that allows people to fully and accurately grasp what is happening around them and manifests itself in the form of thoughts, insights, intuition, ideas, lessons learned, practices, and experiences. According to Kautz and Thaysen who stated that knowledge is found only in people's minds, knowledge is, therefore, a subjective formation. In other words, knowledge is the form of information enriched with interpretation, analysis, and context. However, here, it should be emphasized once again that knowledge is also accepted as information when this knowledge begins to be processed, stored, shared, and used over information technologies.

Therefore, after this, when talking about information, one should consider not only the information created by the data brought together in a meaningful way, but also the knowledge shared and used over information technologies.

Considering the fundamental strategic objectives for any company, especially maximizing the company's values in the context of the "colorful cultural mosaic" driven by the globalization process and digitalization, it can be concluded that the integration of modern information technologies has become an indispensable aspect of successfully conducting business operations in today's global business landscape. The emergence of electronic business practices emphasizes the critical role of digital transformation in driving competitiveness, enabling seamless communication, and achieving strategic organizational goals. By leveraging digitalization, organizations that apply diverse cultural work practices can adapt to the complexities of globalization, engaging in an efficient exchange between companies, consumers, and public administration. Furthermore, the conceptual hierarchy of information—from raw data to meaningful insights and actionable knowledge – emphasizes the transformative power

of information processing. In the digital age, knowledge is no longer limited to individual cognition, but becomes a dynamic asset when processed, shared, and used through advanced information technologies. This highlights the need for organizations to not only harness the flow of meaningful data, but also enrich and operationalize it as knowledge to cope with the demands of a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

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# Threats To National Security In The Context Of Digital Transformation Of The Economy And Public Administration

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

This paper sets a goal of justifying the threats to national security on the part of the institutional support of large-scale processes of digital transformation of the economy and public administration. The analysis of the regulatory framework for ensuring the implementation of the digital transformation of economy and public administration processes revealed the need to ensure conceptual consistency between strategic planning documents in this area. Digital transformation process should result in, firstly, an improvement in the quality of living due to an increase in the quantity and operational speed of electronic public services, and secondly, an improvement in business performance due to fast and comprehensive information services, support for entrepreneurship, and transparent interaction with government bodies. It has been shown that threats to national security, when taking into account the processes of digital transformation, should be reflected in the National Security Strategy of the country, and then decomposed along the entire vertical of strategic planning documents. Namely, they should be consistently reflected in the scope of documents from high-level goal-setting *documents to program-planning ones*. *Keywords:* national security, threats to national security, digital transformation, national development goals, strategic directions of digital transformation

## Introduction

International research has shown that approximately 330 million terabytes of data is created, copied and consumed daily by the

mankind all over the world.<sup>1</sup> Expressed in terms of real life, that would comprise around 40 billion of 8-episode series which would require 270,000 centuries to watch. Book equivalent of the aforementioned amount of data compiles 55 trillion volumes of “War and Peace” that would require 55 trillion years to read.

Not only do increasing dataflow and its real-time transformation, digitalization of the major part of the sectors of national economy, creation of new digital platforms and other trends of information-oriented society require automated processing of large data volumes in order to make relevant managerial decisions, but they also precondition the necessity to deeply investigate and meet threats to national security regarding digital transformation of economic sectors and spheres of public administration.

The domain of public administration in Russian Federation possesses a considerable amount of accumulated data (mostly metrics) that describe the object of management in a precise or approximative manner, which exactly conforms to the universal trend of large-scale digitalization. However, with the extensive amount of data that the authorities are able to collect, aggregate, and keep by means of relevant platforms, there’s still a weak component of processing and interpretation of the obtained data. Not only does the aforementioned weaken the set of instruments for decision-making support within the domain of public administration, but it also predetermines emerging risks of misinterpreting data due to complete elimination of subjectivity from the decision-making process, leaving this process to artificial intelligence and other methods of automatic data processing.<sup>2</sup>

## Literature Overview

The scientific community pays special attention to the process of digitalization of public administration, which is confirmed by the large volume of publications dealing with this topic.

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<sup>1</sup> Future of the Data Market: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6561789>

<sup>2</sup> “Digitization is a highly relevant and impactful topic in contemporary society that essentially refers to the transformation of traditional processes, activities and services into digital formats, i.e., binary data (0 and 1) that can be processed and stored electronically, or the adoption of technologies digital to improve performance and efficiency” (Mureşan, 2023: 41).

E. B. Lenchuk and G. A. Vlaskin (2018) argue that digital technologies invariably lead to large-scale changes in the entire public administration system, radically increasing its quality and efficiency, ensuring the clarity and openness of decision-making, etc. M. Yu. Lev, Yu. G. Leshchenko (2020), M. A. Nikolaev, M. O. Peryshkin (2023), M. N. Dudin, S.V. Shkodinsky, I. A. Prodchenko (2023) indicate that modern information technology solutions have a significant impact on economic security, as well as on the final target values of a relevant sphere of public administration. E. I. Dobrolyubova and co-authors (2019) studied the impact of information technologies on the optimization of the cost of public services, as well as on increasing the reliability of predicted target indicators.

According to I.I. Smotritskaya (2018, 2021), the intensification of digital changes in the public sector, including the creation of platform solutions at the federal and regional levels, is a consequence of the transformation of public administration institutions as a whole. To ensure long-term and sustainable stability of the Russian economy, it is necessary to create such fundamentally new approaches in public administration that will form the technological, regulatory and cultural basis for the country's growth in the future (Smotritskaya, 2011). M. Petrov and other authors (2018) (The State as a Platform, 2019) emphasize that the key role in the digital transformation of the state should consist primarily of the formation and development of government employees' digital competencies to ensure understanding the target state and management of the ongoing changes.

It is also important to highlight the work of a number of scientists in the field of application of modeling tools in digital transformation processes, both at national level (Dyatlov et al., 2018; Belyaevskaya-Plotnik, 2023) and at the level of individual industries (Afanasyev, 2024; Abdulov & Resnov, 2022) and companies (Bauer et al., 2019). In the context of crisis, "slowdown of production volumes, and reduction of output, the independent existence of this industry is threatened. What is more, these factors jeopardize the level of economic security of the territories, where this type of activity primarily creates the territory's value added and serves as the only source of income for its population. The AI aims to discover such instruments of impact on the development of territories, taking into account their industry specificity, as the point pressure on them will



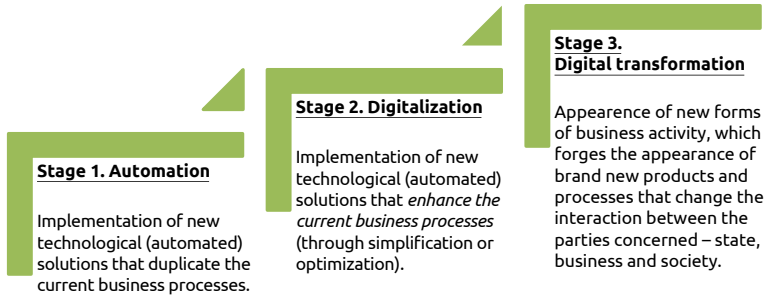
lead to economic growth. In this regard, digital transformation objectives include identification of factors that most affect the industry's development; calculation of a composite integral indicator for assessing the level of the industry's development in a particular region; quantitative assessment of the identified factors' impact on the industry's development in the pilot regions" (Chichkanov et al., 2020). Digital tools for monitoring economic security are also known (Ivashchenko, 2016; Senchagov & Ivanov, 2015).

The development of digital tools in the industry, even in industrial areas, that is, the development of certain territories, depends on the business structure, but also on the specifics of the economic structure. The selection of the right types of business that bring the greatest added value is a big challenge for national and regional managers. The success of managerial decisions also depends on it. The instruments of the regional administration must be chosen in such a way that they lead to the maximum profitability of the business. Adequate methods and modeling techniques, based on the analysis of the quantitative dependence, are used to study economic activity by type. As a result, indicators are obtained that actually constitute factors that influence economic activity. With the use of the correlation-regression model, which is used by economic statistics, it is possible to implement the presented indicators in economic practice. For this, first of all, it is necessary to display the gross domestic product (GDP), then the regional product, and on that basis to choose adequate tools. For example, according to the latest official statistics, construction business plays a significant role in the development of the Russian economy, accounting for 6% of GDP. Thus, in the scientific literature, an approach that uses digital tools to evaluate the multiplicative effects of the activities of a business is quite widespread (Kievsky, 2014; Tatarkin et al., 2015). It was established that in the development of the regional and national economy, the construction business provides a multiplier effect that is not negligible, but actually quite significant for the economy. Therefore, the quantitative assessment of the construction business is of great influence when the gross domestic product is created, and its development is of interest to the economy of a country.

## Research

The notion of digital transformation has undergone certain changes during its development (figure 1):

**Figure 1.** The evolution of digital transformation



Source: Author based on materials by M. S. Shklyaruk (The State as a Platform, 2019)

*Stage 1. Automation* implicates the implementation of new technological (automated) solutions that duplicate the current business processes. An example is the creation of automated resources for simplification of manual records prosecution.

*Stage 2. Digitalization* implicates the implementation of new technological (automated) solutions that enhance the current business processes (through simplification or optimization). An example is the creation of various programs for accounting procedures enhancement.

*Stage 3. Digital transformation* implies creation of innovative forms of business activity, which forge the appearance of brand new products and processes. An example is the creation of online platforms for e-commerce and e-services.

It is actually at the stage of digital transformation that new business activities emerge which forge the appearance of brand new products and processes (online platforms are created and developed). Public administration faces changes of the interaction between state, population and business.

Alongside with the advantages and possibilities of the creation of information systems and platform solutions in the field of public administration, the research made by S. M. Zubarev (2020) and V. A. Yakovlev-Chernyshev (2021) singled out risks associated with the

aforementioned phenomenon, among others those connected to legal conflicts and regulatory gaps, including the sphere of personal data protection and insufficient development of the basic terminology of the digital economy.

Consequently, a document such as National Security Strategy should specify the risks, threats and tasks associated with large-scale processes of digital transformation of industries and spheres of public administration.

Digital transformation was first defined as a national development goal in the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated June 21, 2020, No. 474 "On national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030"<sup>3</sup> (hereinafter Decree 474). The recent Decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated May 7, 2024, No. 309 "On national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and beyond until 2036" (hereinafter Decree 309) enunciates the aforementioned goal in a broader way as "digital transformation of state and municipal administration, economy and social sphere".<sup>4</sup> In the relevant regulatory and scientific sources (Dyachenko, 2019; Bondarenko, 2017) different renditions of digital transformation are provided, which requires a certain definition of this term to be formalized in legislation. Such situation provides on the one hand grounds for scientific research to be carried out, while at the same time marking the long-standing need to eliminate ambiguity and lack of definition.

An attempt to describe the large-scale changes in industries and spheres of the economy caused by digital technologies, by using one "umbrella" term of digital transformation, without studying and fixing its characteristics, criteria, conditions, risks, etc., creates preconditions for vulnerability of the public administration system in the context of the new digital paradigm, and predetermines the emergence of threats to national security associated with a shift in focus from the responsibility of participants in digital relations towards improving the regulatory policy.

<sup>3</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 21.07.2020 N 474 "On the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030": [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_357927/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_357927/)

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 07.05.2024 N 309 "On the national development goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and for the future up to 2036": [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_475991/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_475991/)

The required systemically important technological core of public administration's digital transformation is digital platforms (State digital platforms, 2021). When creating online media, digital platforms allow for a qualitatively new level of communication between the state and citizens, and the formation of an environment of direct collaboration between the public and private sectors.

While the funding allocated to and the volume of the data processed and accumulated by digital platforms are reaching ever-growing values, the term "digital platform" does not have a uniform interpretation in either the expert or legislative field.

Hereinafter are different approaches to defining a digital platform:

"A system of tools that supports the use of digital processes, resources and services by a significant number of entities in the digital ecosystem and ensures their seamless interaction".<sup>5</sup>

"The business of organizing interaction between external manufacturers and consumers, which creates new value for them. The platform offers an open, shared infrastructure for such interaction and establishes operating conditions for participants" (Parker & Chaudary, 2017).

"A software system consisting of software application and infrastructure components that can be rapidly reconfigured using DevOps and cloud computing".<sup>6</sup>

"An automated information system of a special class. It allows an unlimited or conventionally unlimited circle of people to use its capabilities via the Internet and solve their technological or functional problems in automated mode" (Digital Transformation Strategy, 2021).

"A system of algorithmic relationships between a significant number of market participants, united by a single information environment, that leads to transaction costs being reduced by using a package of digital technologies and changing in the division of labor system".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Decision of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council of 11.10.2017, No. 12 "On the main directions of implementation of the digital agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union until 2025". <http://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71708158/>

<sup>6</sup> Open Agile Architecture. The Open Group: [https://pubs.opengroup.org/architecture/oa-standard/#\\_open\\_agile\\_architecture](https://pubs.opengroup.org/architecture/oa-standard/#_open_agile_architecture)

<sup>7</sup> Point: Digital platforms. When approaching the typification and definition of this topic, the attachment is the minutes from the session of the Government Commission and the subcommittee for the digital economy, with the statement that information tech-

“A digital platform based on an ecosystem of IT market participants, which functions with the purpose of provisioning and accelerating the market launch of automation solutions for consumers’ activities (IT services) in economic sectors using end-to-end digital technologies for data management and access to data sources implemented in the infrastructure of the ecosystem involved”.<sup>8</sup>

“A disruptive innovation, which is an integrated information system that provides multilateral interactions between users to exchange information and values, which leads to a reduction in overall transaction costs, optimization of business processes, and increased efficiency of the supply chain of goods and services”.<sup>9</sup>

The presented variety of views on the essence and contents of a digital platform, from a broad understanding of it as a separate business or algorithmic relationships, to a narrower description as a set of software and application components, determines the need for legislative consolidation of this term, notably for the purpose of using it as a key infrastructure element of the digital transformation of state.

The conducted analysis of the existing projects of digital transformation of economic and social sectors in the world helped to identify the following key unifying risks of national security associated with creating and operating digital platforms:

1. Lack of interdepartmental integration. In most cases, the information collected and stored by each individual platform (system) is used within the same system (with the exception of unified integrated information systems). In addition, there is currently no single digital platform that would aggregate information on the services provided, functions and powers of governmental bodies in electronic form, which does not allow us to reliably assert the absence of data repetition within several platforms. Therefore, the localization of data leads to the risk of duplicating the functionality of platforms, and consequently, to overspending of budget funds (in case of creation, development and operation of platforms).

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nologies should be used to improve business conditions and quality of life in general. 25.04.2018. 6: [https://d-russia.ru/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/digital\\_platforms.pdf](https://d-russia.ru/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/digital_platforms.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Approaches to the definition and typification of digital platforms. ANO “Digital Economy”. [https://files.data-economy.ru/digital\\_platforms\\_project.pdf](https://files.data-economy.ru/digital_platforms_project.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Mesropyan V. Digital platforms – new market power. <https://www.econ.msu.ru/sys/raw.php?o=46781&p=attachment>

2. Lack of data verification and validation in systems. The current practice of digital public administration leaves each government agency to work with its own set of data (departmental indicators), which are often inconsistent with the data of other government agencies. The reasons for the problem of incomparability of indicators with the same name or duplication of indicators with different names but the same meaning are, first, the lack of universal methodology and methods for calculating indicators, second, different approaches to data contents and suppliers, and third, a large number of errors in manual data entry into the system. In the context of real initial data distortion, the risk of its incorrect interpretation to be used in making management decisions increases.

3. Technological and architectural disunity does not presently allow for the seamless integration of existing platforms. This brings about a risk of reducing the quality of digital transformation projects due to the failure to synchronize plans for the development of digital platforms within these projects.

4. High non-transparent costs of platforms creation, development and operation. Due to technological and architectural disunity, as well as lack of unified regulatory labor costs in this area, difficulties arise in developing unified approaches to assessing the cost of creating, developing and operating the existing and new platforms. Thereupon, there is a considerable risk of incorrectly assessing the cost of platforms' creation and the following complexity of planning expenses for their development.

5. Digital monopolization of markets. The new model of public administration based on using digital platforms carries the risk of violating non-discriminatory access to the information contained therein, since a significant number of the platforms are operated by private companies.

Presently, software and analytical support mechanisms for decision making in the spheres of public and local administration based on monitoring and analysis of processes within the real sector, financial, banking and social spheres of the economy have weak capabilities and low informational value.

Thus, one of the directions for enhancing national security today is transition from the existing framework of the document register to a set of documents in the form of an interconnected system of

elements “goal-task-event-indicator”, which can be implemented by creating a single digital platform for strategic management.

Creation of the above-noted digital platform solution will lead to increased efficiency of public administration in terms of making operational decisions based on access to relevant data, which will allow (Belyaevskaya-Plotnik, 2023):

- conducting an analysis of the sufficiency of measures to ensure national security and socio-economic development;
- ensuring consistency between goals and objectives in strategic planning documents;
- detecting redundant elements in strategic planning documents;
- monitoring the achievement of target indicators;
- assessing the availability of documents for strategic planning of state policy in the field of national security and socio-economic development.

The expected results of creating a digital platform in the field of public strategic management include (Belyaevskaya-Plotnik, 2023):

- ensuring continuity, balance and consistency of goals, objectives and activities in strategic planning documents, which can be achieved through the use of intelligent built-in tools (linguistic, semantic, logical analysis) for checking the coherence and continuity of the required attributes of strategic planning documents (goals, objectives and indicators) in strict accordance with the approved architecture of strategic planning documents;
- implementation of monitoring and control over the achievement of goals and objectives in strategic planning documents, which can be achieved by developing information analytical panels that provide government bodies with information on the level of achieving the documents’ target indicators on a selected date;
- identification of risks and threats of failing to achieve target indicators, which can be fulfilled through graphical visualization of the indicators dynamics tracking within the range of target and threshold values in real time.

The proposed procedure of the digital platform solutions formation in the strategic management system involving a single digital platform creation can be used to approve the solutions for achieving strategic national development goals and implementing strategic

national priorities. Creation and implementation of digital platforms is not just a priority vector of digital transformation of public administration. In their essence, digital platforms form an online infrastructure for continuous, stable and secure provision of digital services to the parties in interaction, in accordance with the formulated request. The undeniable advantages of digital platforms include equal access to services, scaling-up of services, interaction and cooperation, reduction in the time of providing a service or receiving a response to a request, crossing territorial boundaries, reducing expenses of the interacting parties, round-the-clock access to information, etc. Thereafter, digital platforms are forming new models of activity while changing the management system as a whole.

Significantly, with qualified specialists being scarce, it is important for the effective implementation of digital transformation that steps of training professional personnel when it comes to digital competencies in relevant sectors of the economy or social spheres, should be reflected in current legislation.

An example of correct progressive detailing (decomposition) of a problem into a task within one document can be traced in the Strategic Direction in the Field of Digital Transformation of the Fuel and Energy Complex until 2030 (approved by the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation, March 12, 2024 N 581-r).<sup>10</sup> The document states that “the development of the Russian fuel and energy sector in the field of digital transformation is currently negatively affected by the insufficient provision of personnel highly qualified in the field of information and communication technologies, as well as by the insufficient tempo of the professional education system’s response to changes in the needs of the fuel and energy complex enterprises”.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the legislator names “ensuring the development of industry-specific educational programs in the field of information and communication technologies that are used in the fuel and energy sector, in particular, testing new mechanisms for practical training”<sup>12</sup> as an essential measure to solve the above-mentioned problem.

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<sup>10</sup> Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of March 12, 2024, No. 581-r. On approval of the strategic direction in the field of digital transformation of the fuel and energy complex until 2030. <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/408610169/>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



This example of decomposition shows that, in the case where the problem of implementing digital transformation into a certain sector of industry is specified and then transformed into a task, the probability of its solution will be high, since this will cause the development of certain measures for its solution.

It is obvious that in the long term, the scale of digital transformation of economic sectors and public administration spheres will increase while remaining in the focus of state regulation. State policy measures aimed at regulating the digital transformation process are implemented through their consolidation in the relevant regulatory and legal documents, whose number is going to grow as well. Therefore, a priority task that needs to be solved today is to bring the basic goal-setting documents to a homogeneous state with well-formulated, interconnected and comparable goals, objectives and activities based on an assessment of the corresponding resource provision sufficiency, especially in terms of digital transformation. For example, investment projects in many areas of Russia, including in the Far Eastern Federal District, have led to the creation of more than 40,000 jobs and to the operation of about 270 companies. It is expected that these investments will lead to positive socio-economic effects, as well as digital transformation. This will certainly be facilitated with the application of AI. The AI has concluded

“[T]hat from the perspective of ensuring the economic security of the macro-region, the creation of priority development areas in the Arctic will be effective only when all shortcomings of its functioning are eliminated. It is defined on the basis of the analysis of the corresponding experience of the Far East. High-quality forecasts will contribute to a positive impact from the creation of priority development area not only on the socio-economic sphere of the Arctic, but also on the strengthening the economic security of the macro-region in general. The results of the research with the application of AI can be used for the regional governance, monitoring of regional economic security, as well as for the increase in the scientific validity of state decisions” (Chichkanov & Belyaevskaya-Plotnik, 2022).

AI together with the green economy encourages entrepreneurship and sustainable development and thereby affects the economic security of territories (Belyaevskaya-Plotnik et al., 2022). There is a positive relationship between the inculcation of digital technology and

the development of capabilities, thanks to which the ability to survive and resistance to competitive pressures is developed (Oikawa, 2022). “Using digital technologies, countries can quickly become leaders in economic development” (Мин, 2021: 16). As Baldwin says, the “new globalization” is driven by artificial intelligence, and its impact is hard to predict (Baldwin, 2016). Therefore, many governments, including the Russian one, are trying to reduce the sudden effects of digitization and preserve the security of the country.

## Conclusion

The conducted analysis of institutional conditions in the digital transformation of economic sectors and public administration spheres helped to identify key consolidation areas for development in this area.

In order to increase the efficiency of the digital transformation process in terms of eliminating the threat of a shortage of specialists with digital competencies, the task of training relevant personnel should first be incorporated into the National Security Strategy, and then decomposed along the entire vertical of strategic planning documents, namely, it should be consistently reflected in the scope of documents from high-level goal-setting documents to program-planning ones (Belyaevskaya-Plotnik, 2024).

The focus of the attention of state bodies in terms of ensuring national security should be shifted from the sphere of digital platforms regulation towards the creation of a new paradigm of public administration practices based on big data and broad possibilities of digital platforms, which forms the core basis of the digital transformation of the state.

In addition to authorities at all levels of management actively creating and implementing new digital solutions into their operational activities, there is an acute shortage of the personnel with the competencies required in the existing digital reality. The scarcity of personnel in this area reflects the low level of digital readiness for qualitative changes, which is a direct threat to the efficient implementation of the strategic national goal for digital transformation in Decree 309. At the same time, the key role in the digital transformation of industries and areas of public administration should be primarily confined to the formation and development of digital competencies

of government employees in order to understand the target state of affairs, prevent associated risks and threats to national security and manage ongoing changes.

Thus, in order to achieve the national goal of digital transformation of state and municipal administration, as well as economy and social sphere, when taking into account national security protection, the corresponding normative legal documents should clearly formulate the industry's problems in the field of digital transformation, describe the target state with specific measurable indicators, set tasks and provide measures aimed at their solution, and also indicate methods for implementing the measures, specifically the ones using digital platforms. Only if this set of conditions is fulfilled, the direction of digital transformation can go beyond the declarative intention on paper and become an effective tool in implementing the specified strategic goals of the state.

With a growing number of strategic areas of digital transformation and digital platforms that form their technological basis, the state actively demonstrates its desire to improve the quality of public administration based on technological transformations. However, the transition of public administration to large-scale and continuous use of digital platforms should not be considered the ultimate goal of digital transformation. The result of this process should be firstly, an improvement in the quality of living due to an increase in the quantity and operational speed of electronic public services, and secondly, an increase in business performance due to fast and clear information services, support for entrepreneurship and transparent interaction with government bodies. "In today's rapidly changing external environment, achieving and maintaining the economic security of territories is a priority task for regional management, since not only the level of long-term development and competitiveness of regions, but also the quality of life of their population depends on it." (Chichkanov et al., 2020).

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# From Neomercantilism to Free Trade And Back\*

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

The article evaluates the evolution of protectionism from neomercantilistic time to today's resurgence of defensive protectionism. It starts with the theoretical framework, and proceeds by evaluating the changing global context which influenced the evolution of attitudes regarding protectionism. As soon as the catching up country achieve high level of development, they throw away protectionist *ladder* and start "preaching" free trade to less developed countries. The *visible hand* of governments' protectionism and its strong role started to be substituted with the *invisible hand* logic with low governments' input. Now, they have returned to intensive use of protectionism combined with offensive industrial policy regarding not only trade but also FDI and services/intellectual property rights as the defence instrument against rising China. Such hypocritical turnaround will be critically evaluated in the concluding remarks.

*Key words:* free trade, protectionism, neomercantilism, industrial policy, hypocrisy

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## 1. Introduction

■ The world system seems to be at the critical junction. The existing system has created so many crises that it cannot survive as it is any more. We are in the situation of chaos, with the world fractured by global disorder not really knowing how to move on either in theory or practically. The whole global system, with the concept of capitalism

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on which it has been based, is at stake, because it has turned out to be the ideal concept for “nice weather”, but when the storm comes, we still call on our national governments to help.

From the 2010s onwards, doubts have begun to surface about the resilience of the market capitalist model (Hillebrand et al., 2023: 191). The governments started to step in not only to correct the market failures, but also to create conditions in which economy and population can prosper. The danger is that such interventions can also create government failures as was nicely demonstrated with the austerity policy of the EU during the Great Recession. The context also played an important role. “Amid growing geopolitical tensions, rising competition between economic blocs and a proliferation of ambitious national climate-neutrality targets, the state is playing a growing role not only in setting industrial priorities, but also in contributing to the development of strategic sectors through subsidies or other policy tools that affect the autonomous functioning of the market. Indeed, governments are increasingly intervening through industrial policies aimed at helping domestic sectors reach goals that markets alone are unlikely to achieve” (Gili & Tentori, 2023: 39).

Such interventionism is against the mainstream logic of capitalist liberal international order based on the maxims of free trade (FT) and invisible hand. No surprise therefore that “the sudden popularity of neomercantilist policies<sup>1</sup> – typically characterized by forms of trade protectionism and activist economic policy – has been deeply disorienting to economic liberals whose preferences for FT and free markets have dominated global politics in recent decades. Not least because, it can be interpreted as moving away from market capitalism to *strategic capitalism*”<sup>2</sup> (Hillebrand et al., 2023) applying resolute state intervention in economic sectors considered strategic and security sensitive. Industrial policy (IP) constitutes a central means in such strategic capitalism.

Transition from small to big role of the state appears less unusual when placed in the historical context. The states addressed market inefficiencies and protected their uncompetitive industries so long as they

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<sup>1</sup> Just like mercantilism, also neomercantilism is not a coherent doctrine.

<sup>2</sup> Defined as a form of capitalism that emphasizes long-term strategic thinking and decision-making by all actors, taking into account interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental factors.

became competitive in the international market. Now, the role of the governments, the purpose of which has been seen by liberals to simply “clean up disasters and to fix market failures, socialize risks they should otherwise get out of the way” (Mazzucato, 2020) was rediscovered.

“Neomercantilist thought preceding 1945 contains many ideas that resonate in the contemporary age” (Helleiner, 2023). In his book (2021) he posited that we “may be headed towards, or are already in, a new era of neomercantilist thought and policy” which he associated with *developmentalism*<sup>3</sup>. Drawing historical analogies is useful, because “those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it”, as Santayana stated in 1896. Even K. Marx’s statement, although he has not been very popular these days, that history appears “first as a tragedy, second as a farce” becomes relevant. Hypocritical support for protectionism and economic nationalism by the advanced countries nicely illustrate this.

This article will start by creating the theoretical framework, particularly evaluating benefits and costs of FT and protectionism. It will proceed by evaluating the changing global context in which the evolution of attitudes towards FT and protectionism has been occurring. Special attention will be paid to the implications of tectonic changes in the global economy with China as the leading economy, and the reactions of advanced countries to such tectonic changes (fourth part). China is also a leader in many fields, especially in the field of technology. The fifth part of the article concentrates on the evolution of attitudes regarding protectionism in theory, and policy creators in advanced countries with their recent return to protectionism, while still advocating FT for all. Such hypocritical turnaround will be critically evaluated in the concluding remarks.

## 2. Theoretical framework

The evaluation of the transition from development protectionism of what are now industrial countries to FT, and recently to what we call *strategic neomercantilism* as a combination of defensive

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<sup>3</sup> The development model which was first followed by L. American countries, and later by the newly industrialised Asian countries. Recently, some elements of it can be traced in Trump’s policy in the US.

protectionism backed up by offensive IP has to start with the neomercantilism launched back in 1791 by the US Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton to promote American industrialization. Half a century later List built upon Hamilton's, critique to develop a more generalized case for state-led industrialization in his 1841 book *The National System of Political Economy*. Belief that List is an opponent of FT is not completely true. He namely claims that FT "is not a good solution for underdeveloped nations that are not yet ready for foreign competition,<sup>4</sup> though he holds that worldwide FT among nations would become the ideal situation in the distant future" (Priestley, 2019: 1, 3).

Free trade or protectionism dilemma has obviously been very much alive throughout the history in practice and in theory. Free trade arguments supplanted mercantilist views only in the early to mid-eighteenth century. "Formal imperialism started to be deemphasised and what historians called *the imperialism of free trade* emerged" (Giplin, 2001: 43). Now, advanced countries started their development combining liberalism at home with external protectionism. However, this does not mean that they have developed primarily thanks to such protectionism as economic historians explain. Only after reaching a high development stage, they turned into changed the skin to FT advocates as the win-win solution (a solution in which both advocates win), as a general receipt for all countries irrespective of their level of development. Now, when China is becoming a very serious competitor, their attitude has changed again. They started to use extensively protectionist and industrial policy measures to limit their import from China, to decouple from it, reduce dependence and vulnerabilities and de-risk bilateral relations with the objective to defend national economy against rival states' attempts to undermine their capabilities. This proves Helleiner's (2022) statement, that „neomercantilism, arises when elites become aware that the power and wealth of their nation is diminishing relative to its rivals.”

The genesis of FT maxim can be traced as far back as to Plato's work (2015) and much later A. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Promotion of the specialization of work tasks allowing individuals to

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<sup>4</sup> According to him, nations pass through four stages in their economic development: (1) pastoral life; (2) agriculture; (3) agriculture and manufacturing; and (4) agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. Nation's policies should always correspond to their current stage (Priestley, 2019: 5).

become more productive, as the benefits of increased productivity reduce the cost of producing goods and services, was emphasised as the benefits of FT. The classicists,<sup>5</sup> from Adam Smith theory of absolute advantage, and David Ricardo's on comparative advantages onwards, to the more elaborated factor-endowments approach of Heckscher-Ohlin (H-O) all claim that FT is the best solution, because it enhance efficient allocation of resources and productivity, improves welfare (more choices for consumers) and finally stimulate innovations. Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage, suggests that by specializing in the production of goods in which country has a comparative advantage and trading for goods they are less efficient at producing, they can maximize overall production and consumption, leading to higher levels of welfare. Consequently, the trade is beneficial for both parties.

The major emphasis of theories was on demonstrating positive effects of trade to all countries in an interdependent world. "Policy-makers have by definition taken a benign view of deepening interdependence for economic and political reasons" (Hillebrand et al., 2023: 190) while putting aside negative effects, the fact that some may lose by trading internationally.

International trade can certainly lead to overall economic growth and efficiency gains, but its benefits are unequally distributed, with the gains accruing disproportionately to capital owners, while workers and marginalized groups in industrial countries may experience little or no improvement in living standards. Free trade can lead to job displacement and wage stagnation in industries that face competition from lower-wage countries' import. This can exacerbate income inequality and lead to a "race to the bottom" policies in terms of labour standards, environmental regulations, and consumer protections, as countries compete to attract investment and trade by lowering costs for businesses. This can erode living standards, quality of life and degrade environment. American political economist Carey, the follower of the "father" of protectionism Hamilton, has pointed out in his *social mercantilism* (Tyszka-Drozdowski, 2024) the possible negative environmental effects of international trade. He supported

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<sup>5</sup> Although Marx did not specifically work on international trade, he also revealed his support for free trade (see Ghorashi, 1995 in Svetličič, 2019: 496).

a combination of “neomercantilist goals with a concern for environmental protection” (Goldman, 2023).

Under the influence of the external environment, oligopolization of global markets, the new theories of trade have explained the trade which couldn't be explained by H-O theory, or exclusive by the differences in comparative advantages. By introducing economies of scale and scope, they explain trade in differentiated products (intra industry trade) on oligopolistic (imperfect competition) markets, by including the industrial economics into trade theory. In such a way they “opened the doors for possible arguments for government intervention” (Krugman, 1993: 363) as explained by the strategic trade theory. It provides a rationale for protectionist measures and industrial policy in order to create external economies in the economic sectors more important for the national economy.

Unprecedented growth of China has reminded us that the size of a trading country matters, that some countries can also lose, depending on the size of the country (more in Damijan, 1998). Krugman was originally very influential in arguing that “economic growth in low-wage nations is in principle as likely to raise as to lower per capita income in high-wage countries; the actual effects have been negligible.” Even more, he claimed, already then “that economic growth in the Third World is an opportunity, not a threat” (Krugman, 1994b). However, by 2008, he changed his view positing that “the data seemed to suggest that the effect was much larger than he had suspected” (Saval, 2017). Quantity is bringing about qualitative changes. American prof. of economics, J. Ghos (2024) added the role of power<sup>6</sup> in in setting prices and wages in international trade and in influencing the rules of the game.

In their advocacy of FT, particularly in the early period of fighting neomercantilists, academics overemphasised the benefits of FT, parallelly sweeping under the rug the fact that there were also losers of in international trade, and that the benefits were unequally distributed. The task of the states to compensate losers with redistribution policies, which was very strongly advocated by classical political economists, was underscored. Namely, Smith clearly emphasised that one

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<sup>6</sup> R. Gilpin explained the role of power shifts in shaping the international order much before (1981).

of the three tasks “of the sovereign is to protect, as far as possible, every citizen from injustice[...]. That the establishment of complete justice, complete freedom and perfect equality is very simple secret, which most effectually secures the highest degree of prosperity to all three classes” (Smith, 1767/1991: 445, 450). Ricardo was even clearer with the assertion that “the unequal distribution of the benefits of international trade must be corrected by the state” in order to maintain its great common benefits and “that every state would be very foolish not to do this” (Ricardo, 1817/2005: 320). In view of enormous inequalities and polycrises, job displacement and wage stagnation, environmental degradation and enhanced vulnerability, the increasing role of the state to compensate for such costs is now becoming even more burning issue. What is more, this is necessary in order to neutralize a real danger of big corporations taking control away from governments in the *surveillance capitalism* (Zuboff, 2018).

Another reason for over-emphasising the benefits of trade was to avoid pouring gasoline over the fire of the rising protectionism, economic nationalism and xenophobia.

The antipode of FT protectionism is aiming to shield certain young or emerging industries in a country by temporary protection from international competition, in order to become competitive and preserve domestic jobs. Some industries, considered essential for defence or critical infrastructure can also be protected based on the arguments of national security. Neomercantilists “believed that state wealth and power could be cultivated with strategic trade protectionism and other forms of government economic activism, to promote industrialization, as critically important for state power” (Helleiner, 2023).

Protectionism was mostly based on the infant industry argument. List argued that: “Industrial protectionism would equalise wealth and power between countries that would provide ‘the most efficient means of furthering the final union of nations’ (List [1841] 1909a: cited in Helleiner, 2021: 232). According to him, a nation wishing to climb must start at the lower rungs of the ladder and consider FT a distant future ideal, viable once the nation has attained mature or superior domestic industries. In the meantime, List (Hirst, 1965: 313) explains, its extant infant industries must be protected from destruction by inexpensive imports through moderate tariffs. The result is that consumers’ welfare decreases as they pay excessively for the goods

that would otherwise have been cheaper if imported. This particularly hurts the already poor in the advanced countries, since they cannot afford to shop like the rich ones, and even more so those in the less developed countries (LDCs). "If the West throws up barriers to imports out of a misguided belief that they will protect Western living standards, the effect could be to destroy the most promising aspect of today's world economy: the beginning of widespread economic development, of hopes for a decent living standard for hundreds of millions, even billions, of human beings" (Krugman, 1994a). Even a senior fellow of the right-wing Cato Institute, Bandow (2020), when commenting on Trump's trade war with China claims that "the tariff idea is simply idiotic, chiefly punishing Americans, creating political tensions and triggering off fundamentalism/inflame nationalist sentiments in China" (Svetličič, 2020b: 1074). As industries mature, tariffs should be lowered and, ultimately, eliminated, so that domestic industries would continue their maturation and improvement through competition (Priestley, 2019: 4).

For List, the cultivation of infant industries was also a strategy for challenging a globally dominant power. By contrast, contemporary American populist conservatives see industrial protectionism as a way to preserve their country's global economic dominance threatened by the most dynamic emerging powers. On the other hand, the famous Chinese leader<sup>7</sup> and thinker from the early twentieth century Sun Yat-sen was much more optimistic about the prospects for the state-led economic modernisation and industrialisation in China than List's Eurocentric assessment. Sun expressed a strong belief in the ability of China to catch up with the 'wealth and power of the European nations' quickly if its government adopted the right kind of activist policies (Wei et al., 1994: 4). He saw industrialisation as the key to ending the 'miserable condition among the Chinese proletariat' and insisted that the Chinese state had to ensure that this process took place in a way that avoided the kinds of domestic inequality and class tensions that he had witnessed in Europe first-hand in the 1890s

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<sup>7</sup> Deng Xiaoping, the key architect of China's embrace of neomercantilist policies after 1978, was supportive of Sun's ideas. More recently, Chinese president Xi Jinping also praised Sun's thought; referring directly to his economic goals for the country and arguing that the Chinese Communist Party was a faithful upholder of his vision (see more in Helleiner, 2021: 6).

(Helleiner, 2021: 7). In his 1924 lectures on the Three Principles of the People, he posited that: “Only if we “rescue the weak and lift up the fallen” will we be carrying out the divine obligation of our nation (Sun, 1928: 147). Sun also combined his economic nationalism with the idea that China would need to ‘assume a great responsibility towards the world’ as it rose in power (Sun, 1928: 147). His ideas are rarely evaluated in the Western political economy literature, demonstrating a neglect of non-Western thinkers, claim Helleiner (2020: 7).

Protectionism is obviously not uniform. Helleiner differentiated several forms of protectionism; infant industry protection, macroeconomic activism and authentic economic nationalism. His liberal model perceives protectionism not only as a defensive instrument based on the infant industry argument, but proposes that it can also cohabit with liberal ideology, forming a part of aggressive economic nationalism (Helleiner, 2002: 308).

Protection can also be based on the concept of dynamic comparative advantages. Non-competitive industries can in the future develop into competitive ones due to the temporary protection based on the existence of potential comparative advantages. The problem is, however, to define such potentially competitive industries, and who should do this. The failed policy of national champions has proven this in many countries. A clear theoretical answer to address this problem is lacking, and it is dubious whether the underpaid bureaucrats can do this job. Similarly, in a more modern interpretation of protectionism that involves strategic trade policies, in the strategic sectors, competitiveness of the domestic industries, particularly high-tech ones,<sup>8</sup> can be enhanced on the grounds of strong spill over effects on other industries. Its purpose is “helping domestic firms snatch excess returns away from foreign rivals” (Krugman, 1993: 363). In fact, this means that FT is supported only if foreign markets are open, or foreign governments reduce subsidies to their firms.

The major criticism of the protectionism involves its costs, because excessive protection leads to inefficiency.<sup>9</sup> It takes away income

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<sup>8</sup> They are subject to high risks, require economies of scale and give rise to extensive external economies.

<sup>9</sup> Already Hamilton and List warned of the dangers of excessive state economic activism. List insisted that trade restrictions ought to be moderate, carefully targeted, and temporary in order to prevent local firms from falling prey to “indolence” and “to



from unprotected industries and consumers who always pay for such a protection. True, workers in a protected industry gain in the short term (retain jobs, higher wages) but everyone else loses, as they pay the high price of the protection with significantly higher prices for the products of the protected industries. In addition, “many economists believe that even if protection were appropriate in theory, it would be “captured” in practice by special interests who would misuse it to pursue their own interests instead of letting it be used for the real national interest” (Bhagwati, 2008). Consequently, states protect some industries, because their lobbies are better organized and often geographically concentrated, while the consumers who pay for the protection are disorganized and often scattered across the country. Protectionist policies obviously often benefit a small group of domestic producers at the expense of the broader economy, leading to rent-seeking behaviour, corruption and cronyism.

Protectionism also stifles the flow of knowledge, and thus stifles innovation. This results in even greater inequality, instability and social/political conflicts, or xenophobia. The problem is that voters do not understand the economic consequences of protectionism. Consequently, they frequently fall victims to pro-protectionist populists. Protectionism is essentially a policy aiming at impoverishing neighbours (beggar-thy-neighbour), which can induce retaliation from other countries (boomerang effects, striking back spiral, of trade wars),<sup>10</sup> and cause disruption of supply chains. In the end, this could end up being beggar-thyself policy.

In general, it has become clear that a strong correlation between protectionism and the level of development exists. At lower level of development, countries apply protectionism based on infant industry argument. Later, a after catching up period, they start to abolish protectionism, preaching FT and the level playing field principle to everybody else, hypocritically forgetting how they have achieved their current situation. This is in direct contradiction with List’s suggestion

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ensure that firms were not insulated too much from foreign competition”. Hamilton shared this concern, arguing that trade restrictions should only be used if sufficient domestic competition exists to prevent a monopoly (Helleiner, 2023, 2021: 4).

<sup>10</sup> According to one study, when the US, China, or the EU put in place a subsidy measure, there is a 73% chance that one of the remaining countries will retaliate within 12 months (Gopinath, 2023).

“that a dominant power should refrain from ‘lecturing’ foreign countries on dismantling their ‘systems of protection’ (List [1841] 1909a: 153; Helleiner 2021: 3). Additionally, the weak intellectual property protection in the catching up periods is gradually enhanced, simultaneously with the technological upgrading, with the obvious intention to start protecting one’s own innovations, products and services on the global market. Similarly, national authorities also protect national industry by not being initially open to foreign direct investments (FDI). Later on, the restrictive legislation in this area is relaxed with enhanced local capabilities, and the countries start to promote FDI. Recently, however, under the threat of China, the defensive protectionism has spread also in the field of FDI and intellectual property rights, mostly based on national security arguments.

### 3. Changing the global context

Context is extremely important for any trade policy, just like in life in general as it has been proven by Darwin in his *Origin of Species* (1859) addressing the failed experiment of kidnapped children from Terra del Fuego. Many a theory has failed, not taking context or changes therein, sufficiently into account (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991). In the late 1960s, for instance, the most prominent economists of the era, such as Paul Samuelson and Milton Friedman, felt they were more like physicists than psychologists (Malmendier & Hamilton, 2024). Every historian knows that all events in history need to be evaluated in the historical context. This plays a crucial role in comprehending the human behaviour, societal dynamics, as well as the motivations and actions of people and groups across different areas. In such a way, we can gain a deeper understanding of peoples’ actions, avoiding misinterpretation in reaching objective perception of the past and present. In such a way, we can see how contextual factors, the conditions and circumstances of the time,<sup>11</sup> have played a significant role in shaping trade patterns, strategies, and outcomes for the countries and businesses engaging in global commerce. This is why we would like to evaluate

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<sup>11</sup> See the works of Pierre Bourdieu (theory of society), Clifford Geertz (cultural context) and Michel Foucault with his transdisciplinary approach of linking together philosophy, anthropology, sociology and history in the formation of ideas.

the influence of the changes in the context, which is so frequently underestimated, on changing the trade and development policies of different countries.

After the industrial revolution that ushered in tectonic technological changes, through the leading role of GB, the Pax Britannica gradually weakened. It was substituted by the Pax Americana and the leading role of the US, after its catching up period. In the meantime, the world faced two world wars and endured terrible economic destruction, Great Depression of 1929 and economic reconstruction after WW2. Bretton Woods's system was established to stimulate and regulate international trade as an important development instrument. According to J. J. Servain Schreiber's bestselling book, *Le Défi Américain* (The American Challenge, 1976), the destroyed European economies were, under the threat of American *colonization*. Nevertheless, the years between 1950 and 1975 were a Golden Age of exceptional prosperity, ending with the oil crises and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system.

**Table 1:** Major changes in the global environment 1970–2024

Political	Economic	Cultural	Systemic
End of the Cold War (1989–1991)	Transition from socialism to capitalism in former socialist countries	Transformation of the value system, individualism winning	Transition from GATT with more space for special treatment of LDCs to WTO with mostly universal rules
The spread of democracy, progress in protecting individual freedoms	1970–2008 hyper globalization	Homogenization of products/services, tastes	Increasing role of China in international organizations
Rise of populism, stronger role of governments	Great recession 2008–2011	Social crisis, middle class in the developed countries hurt by globalization the most	Austerity policies
Global spread of capitalism	Big technological changes, Internet, digitalization, AI,	Strong impact on the way of life, consumer habits...	Surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2018), or strategic capitalism (Hillebrand et al., 2023)

Political	Economic	Cultural	Systemic
Geopolitical changes, rising Asia/China and BRICs	China and other emerging economies became a motor of global growth. Change of the development strategies of LDCs; from import substitution (1970s) to export promotion (1980s) and ECDC	Consumerism also spreading in LDCs	Changes in the global governance to adjust to the increasing role of China and BRICs in international organizations
Erosion of Pax Americana, the US hegemony	Trade conflicts/ wars/, rise of protectionism in developed countries	The rise of the political right, even fascism	The emerging new system moving more in the direction of multilateralism
Environmental and climate crises; development model crisis	Escalating environmental degradation and climate change, and shift towards sustainable, inclusive, green development	Enhancing awareness about the environment and climate changes	Rio and Paris conferences addressed these issues (poor implementation of the decisions) Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs),
2000's Health crises: Ebola, SARS, Covid 19	Deglobalization	Social crisis, erosion of trust	Enhanced international cooperation to address the crises
New Cold War	VUCA chaotic world with many black and grey swans (Taleb, 2010)	Reappearance of history related political, cultural, values conflicts. Rejection of the western ways of doing things	Search for a new system: conflicts between democracy and authoritarianism

Source: Author

As a reflection of the improving growth rates of the world economy, and good results of the newly industrializing countries (Asian tigers) following the export promotion strategies, the zeitgeist changed and a shift in the development strategies of LDCs occurred. The import substitution strategy (1945–1960) transformed into an export acceleration one (1960–1975). LDCs realized that FDIs are not only an imperialistic instrument, but can also facilitate their development. “FDI from being part of the problem became part of the solution, almost a panacea” (Sauvant, 2015: 59).

Hyperglobalization decreased the inequalities between and increased those within the countries, while the indebtedness of LDCs, also accompanying the collapse of the BW system, also surged. The LDCs also started to look for solutions in mutual economic cooperation. Liberal approach towards FDI started gradually to evaporate, first in the LDCs (simultaneously with the collapse of negotiations on the Code of Conduct on Transnationals in 1980s) and much later, simultaneously with the technological progress of China, also in the advanced countries. Restrictions on FDI have begun to rise, in parallel with the penetration and growth of Chinese investment in advanced economies. With the help of FDI, there was also the takeover of some large high-tech companies in developed countries. That is why the restrictions are mostly explained by security arguments

The next major change came after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with the collapse of the socialist countries and their transition from socialism to capitalism. Some LDCs for which socialism was the model for their own development, became disoriented. After the transition's recession, the centre of gravity in the world economy started to shift to Asia. As a result, many fears, even paranoia, started to emerge in developed countries feeling threatened by new developments. The post WWII Cold War, "red scare" substituted previous "yellow peril" re-emerged again as new "yellow peril" (more in Svetličič, 2020a).<sup>12</sup> The Cold War is now returning in quite a different form. The competition between capitalism and socialism inherent in the previous Cold War is now being replaced by the competition between capitalist democracy on one side and autocratic state governance (Russia), hybrid capitalist Chinese economy and an autocratic political system on the other (Svetličič, 2022: 103). Initially, the strong bargaining power of LDCs fighting for the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the 1970s has gradually evaporated, simultaneously with the Washington consensus winning. In the 1970s, stronger global integration was regarded as a development instrument, while now, due to hyperglobalization

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<sup>12</sup> The Yellow Peril was the name given to would-be immigrants from Asia to the US before World War II. Namely, in 1917, the US Congress passed the Immigration Act, which defined the Asian Prohibited Zone, from Turkey, the Sinai Peninsula to India and a large part of China, and prohibited the entry of illiterates, alcoholics, anarchists, epileptics, criminals and prisoners, homosexuals, vagrants, polygamists because there was a fear of the dilution of cultural American identity.

and the rise of the Chinese economy, it has become a problem. The bargaining power of LDCs has strengthened again today with China's initiative to change the global order.

At the same time, the mind-sets have also changed. The radicalism of the 1970s today looks less radical and more understandable, in light of much more severe challenges. Developed countries' population is, namely, joining the club of radicals, demanding substantial social reforms (Svetličič, 2022: 103).

#### **4. China's Rise And The Defensive Protectionism Of The Developed Countries**

China's emergence as a world's manufacturing hub has posed a competitive threat to domestic industries in developed countries. China's growing economic influence and strategic investments in critical industries, such as technology, telecommunications, and infrastructure, have raised national security concerns among the developed countries and triggered off the policies to protect sensitive industries and technologies from the foreign (China's) influence and espionage. One of the reasons was China's lax enforcement of intellectual property rights and its practices of forced technology transfer. Concerns about intellectual property theft and infringement have prompted developed countries to implement defensive protectionist measures to safeguard their technological innovations and business interests.

The "America first, a win-lose ideology based policy, resulted in and gave birth to similar unilateral economic nationalist tendencies, as well as resurgence of IP<sup>13</sup> around the world, and it increased the uncertainties that escalate trade tensions and geopolitical rivalries in the global economy. As a rule, such self-damaging trade wars intensify the rise of political tensions and political fundamentalism (populism, terrorism) in the world in general" (Svetličič, 2017: 33, 36).

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<sup>13</sup> According to IMF, 3000 trade restriction (trade, services, investments) were imposed in 2022 (mostly by the USA, remark by the author), three times more than in 2019. The number of industrial policy measures increased by nearly six times in 2023 (see Gopinath, 2023).

The present revival of economic nationalism,<sup>14</sup> even with a touch of autarchic, isolationistic tendencies, is a sign that the pioneer of protectionism, the USA, together with other advanced countries, is going back to its roots. “The pendulum of history” has swung back to economic nationalism with a neomercantilist touch, based on a *realist* assumption that countries are amoral and put their own interests first. For realists, the highest goal is the survival of the state, which explains why states’ actions are judged according to the ethics of responsibility, rather than by moral principles” (Antunes & Camisão, 2018: 4). Pursuing other national interests is thus considered amoral. History is reimagined as a farce, in line with the famous Marx’s statement.

The return to protectionism is now defended in a similar way as it has been in history, as the developed countries resort to the infant industry argument (see Smith, 2016). In the early, catching-up development stages, protectionism was regarded as a development instrument, i.e. “a strategy for catching up” (Helleiner, 2020: 3). However, the same reasoning cannot be applied to the highly developed countries with competitive markets.

Contemporary neomercantilism is different. It is mainly a defensive reaction to the rising power(s), especially China, and at the same time an offensive response to the new VUCA (*Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity*) global context, to which Covid-19 has just added new layers of complication and uncertainty. It is more a self-preserving defensive reaction of the USA, and by a lesser extent of other developed countries, to retain their privileged position in the international economic relations. It is in fact a part of the US struggle for keeping the position of the global economy’s hegemon. The US and many other advanced countries introduced such measures to defend their national producers hedging against the geostrategic risks inherent in intensive economic interdependence (dependence on global value chains). Such neomercantilistic measures, hidden non-tariff barriers, import or export quotas, voluntary export restraints, dumping and countervailing duties, regulation of FDI, different administrative

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<sup>14</sup> It is mostly defined as state centric realist ideology putting national “unity, identity, and autonomy” (Shulman, 2000) or culture (pride), or reducing vulnerability, as the main national goals. What is crucial is that the nation state is at the centre, while liberalism is more cosmopolitan, although putting individuals and pursuit of wealth maximisation in the centre.

barriers, safety regulations, different standards, phytosanitary measures, quality control, government purchases etc. were frequently introduced under the pretext of security arguments.

The described institutional obstacles not formally breaking international commitments can be considered *hidden protectionism*. On the other hand, it is what Krugman worryingly designates as: “disguised protectionism which will eventually give way to cruder, more open trade barriers” (Krugman, 1994b). These are much more important barriers to trade than the rather low tariffs, in spite of their hikes in trade wars. “It was found that while promoting FT and demanding free access to foreign markets, the EU, USA, China, India, Russia and other countries actively prevent access of foreign goods to domestic markets” (Serpukhov 2013). In spite of the fact that “there are few economic policies that generate more kneejerk opposition from the economists than IP<sup>15</sup> such protectionism is combined with IP.<sup>16</sup> A major source of scepticism about IP is that governments simply do not know which sectors should be subsidized at the expense of others. This has not stopped governments from making abundant use of it, even when they seem ideologically hostile to it” (Juhász et. al., 2023: 2). Helleiner (2002) is thus right claiming that the economic nationalism’s ideology does not merely involve defensive protectionism, but can also cohabit with liberal ideology, forming a part of aggressive economic nationalism.

## 5. The Evolution Of Trade Development Policies

Pax Americana and Bretton Woods system established after WW2, created the infrastructure for the liberal international economic order based on FT. the GATT system gave some free space for LDCs

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<sup>15</sup> Deputy managing director of the IMF Gita Gopinath clearly stated that, while IP can help addressing market failures, they have historically been costly and often failed (2023). Hufbauer&Jung’s evaluation of US experiences with IP (2021) second such an opinion, claiming that import protection seldom pays off. R&D subsidies work best when they encourage a competitive approach and defer to broad guidance by science and engineering experts. Welfare gains from IP are relatively modest. They range from 0.40% of GDP for the United States to 1.36% for Luxembourg, with larger gains for more open economies. On average, gains from optimal industrial policy are equal to 0.69%. (Bartelme et. al., 2019: 4).

<sup>16</sup> The rationale for such policy arises from the existence of external economies of scale (see Bartelme et al., 2019: 36).



in implementation of such principles. It allowed LDCs to follow protectionist policies as a part of the import substitution industrialization. Such inward looking strategy was also a response to external economic shocks and negative effects of globalization. Theoretical background was the infant industry argument.<sup>17</sup> Poor results of such policies and Washington consensus policies, advocated by not only advanced countries, but also international organizations, led LDCs to change such strategy. In the 1980s, they started to liberalize their foreign trade policies. Laissez-faire has returned in the garb of the so-called “efficient market hypothesis”, from the 1990’s onwards. This hypothesis served as a theoretical basis for deregulation of financial markets, which finally led to the worldwide crash of 2008/09 (Chaloupek, 2015: 12) generally called the Great Recession.

Reality has exposed many systemic holes and the illusions of the prevailing order. Rethinking of the mind-set as a basis of such a system started. Changing context, tectonic changes in the global economy, and the rising China becoming a motor of a world economy contributed substantially to such rethinking. When it comes to policy, the result has been a resurgence of protectionist policies in the advanced countries, while in some LDCs this happened even earlier, as a part of their strategy of self-reliance and economic cooperation (ECDC) in their quest for NIEO. Nevertheless, the protectionism of LDCs was “paradoxically in fact weaker than it was for developed countries in their catching up periods” (Chang, 2003: 13).

The infant industry argument is theoretically valid for the case of LDCs, or countries at lower development levels. The situation is different when it comes to advanced economies, although they now also try to justify their current move to protectionism with this argument, in spite of otherwise being vehement proponents of the FT principle. However, industrial countries, especially the world leading the USA, as well as the UK, *Portugal, Holland, France and Germany*, have not practised FT throughout their history. From *Pax Hispanica (1598 to 1621)*, to *Pax Hollandica* (late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries), *Pax Britanica* (19<sup>th</sup> century) and finally *Pax Americana* (20<sup>th</sup> century) they all employed high tariffs. Today’s dominant “preachers” of FT and

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<sup>17</sup> Hamilton first systematically set out the infant industry argument in 1791, later developed by List (not the other way around; see Bairoch, 1993: 17).

globalization, i.e. virtually all of today's developed countries, were in their early developmental stages neomercantilists.<sup>18</sup> "With some variations, the developed countries protected their developing industries that were then lagging behind the major economic powers of the time, either the UK or the USA. The gap between "real" and "imagined" histories of trade policy is the greatest in relation to Britain and the United States. /.../ These two countries were, in fact, often the pioneers and frequently the most ardent users of interventionist trade and IP measures in their early stages of development" (Chang, 2003: 1). What is more, the USA is "the mother country and bastion of modern protectionism" (Bairoch, 1993: 30).<sup>19</sup>

Mercantilists used governmental regulations to augment state power at the expense of rival national powers (the zero-sum or beggar-thy-neighbour principle). It was only after WW2, with its industrial supremacy unchallenged, that the USA liberalised its trade and started to champion FT. Compared to Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the US was not so unequivocal in doing so. The then already weakened UK remained protectionist until the 1960s. Similar was the development in other developed countries, particularly Germany,<sup>20</sup> frequently incorrectly considered the mother of the infant industry protection. Some developed countries implemented such policies even at a time of promulgating the FT approach to the rest of the world.

Advanced countries started to follow the liberal approach and the FT maxim only after their catching up period. Until the developed countries had won their leading role, they were 'climbing up the protectionist ladder', discarding this principle only after they had reached the top, starting to impose liberal policies on the rest of the world (Washington Consensus, IMF, WTO regimes...). As soon as they had

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<sup>18</sup> Some parts of the following chapter draws on ideas in the article by Svetličič, 2020b.

<sup>19</sup> Between 1816 and the end of WW2, the USA had one of the highest average tariff rates on manufacturing imports in the world (40%–48%). Given that, the country enjoyed an exceptionally high degree of 'natural' protection due to high transportation costs, US industries were literally the most protected in the world until 1945.

<sup>20</sup> During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, while maintaining a low average tariff, Germany accorded strong tariff protection to strategic industries like iron and steel. Sweden provided similarly targeted protection for the steel and engineering industries. Both countries, as well as Japan actively used non-tariff measures to promote their industries, such as the establishment of state-owned "model factories, state financing of risky ventures, and support of R&D etc." (Chang, 2003: 24)

attained the summit of greatness, they followed List's advice: "Nation can do nothing wiser than to throw away these ladders of her greatness, to preach to other nations the benefits of FT, and to declare in penitent tones that she has hitherto wandered in the paths of error, and has now for the first time succeeded in discovering the truth" (List, 1885: 295–296).

The liberal international economic system has in fact quite a short history because it was squeezed between two types of protectionism: mercantilism from the 16<sup>th</sup> century up to the early 1880s, followed by the *laissez faire* system and the neomercantilism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chang 20023a). The evolution of protectionism after the establishment of Pax Britannica has clearly demonstrated that the theory was in fact always in service of interests.

The ideology of economic nationalism seeking to advance national interests at the expense of international integration and cooperation historically accelerated as the first reaction to the Great Depression. When the interest and the lessons of the past are waning, if not forgotten, hypocrisy is winning. Developed countries preach one thing and yet do the very opposite. It seems like a seesaw strategy: the protection of domestic companies and free riding on foreign technology initially, but as the situation changes, the seesaw tilts to the opposite side and the countries start to implement FT, FDI and to protect the industrial property of their firms, regardless of the policy prescriptions not to do it that they impose on other countries. Robert Gilpin (1981) is explaining that such oscillations between liberalism and realism in international relations are driven by changes in the distribution of power among states, which in turn shape the international order.

Presently, we also see such hypocrisy when, for instance, the EU wave industry support rules with respect to the most developed countries, such as Germany. However, this was 'not possible' in the cases of Greece and less developed EU members. Another such example was when the US finance minister J. Yellen in April 2024 raised the issue of so-called overcapacity of the Chinese green energy sector, claiming that China's role exerted pressure on other countries, not ruling out taking additional steps to counter Chinese subsidies. Two days earlier China filled a complaint against the US subsidies for electric cars and the US minister of trade K. Tai claimed that the two types of

subsidies were not the same. She emphasized that the US ones are a “contribution to the future of clean technology for the whole mankind while the Chinese ones are the result of unfair and non-market competition, an instrument of undermining fair competition” (Baković, 2024: 16). As the big players are now hurt, the rules of the game are changing. Rather than the international law based system, the rules based system defined by the most powerful actors prevails (more in Svetličič, 2023). Big players are implementing the rules of the game as they please.

Revival of neomercantilism has usually “correlated with national populism” (Judis, 2018), or sovereigntism,<sup>21</sup> simultaneously with the rising popularity of authoritarian values. The situation is almost the same now when new defensive protectionism of advanced countries correlates strongly with the rise of populism, even fascism, that erode democracy in many of them.

However, the FT, laissez-faire only approach was immediately abandoned when countries had faced serious growth/development problems (Great Depression, WW1 and WW2, or, for instance, recently Great Recession, or Covid 19 crisis and China export expansion). Despite such experiences, developed countries have become hypocritical advocates of the free-trade principle as the very best option for all countries, regardless of their stage of development. They have been proposing a one-size-fits-all strategy, a level playing-field approach to others, which they themselves did not employ while they were still less developed (Svetličič, 2020b: 1067), instead successfully combining free trade with protectionism.

The developments in the field of FDI and industrial property rights was also similar. The FDI policy has been historically changing, from more restrictive to more liberal. Based on the prevailing theoretical consensus on the developmentally beneficial role of FDI, advanced countries began to welcome inward FDI only after they had reached a higher stage of their development and started to also propagate such a liberal policy for LDCs. The USA was a champion in that. When it was a capital-importing country, it had in place all kinds of provisions to ensure that foreigners investing in the country did not control its economy. The stories of the UK, France and Germany were

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<sup>21</sup> The belief in the uncontested primacy of national-level politics.

different.<sup>22</sup> They did not control FDI until WW2, as they had previously been capital-exporting countries. As they faced the upsurge of American investment after the war, they started to apply several formal and informal mechanisms to ensure that their national interests were not hurt (Svetličič, 2020b: 1072). The three largest East Asian economies also applied extensive controls of FDI throughout their developmental period. Japan and Korea (until recently) relied very little on FDI, while even Taiwan, the most FDI-friendly among the three countries, was below the international average in its reliance on FDI. The restrictive stance of Japan concerning FDI, from the Meiji modernisation (1868) period onwards, has been well known.

Evolution of industrial property protection has been similar to trade and FDI strategies. Early development industrial property protection traces its origins to the industrial revolution, when industrialized countries began enacting national legislation to codify and regulate industrial property rights. Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883) was the earliest international agreements aimed at establishing common standards for patents, trademarks, and industrial designs among member states. The trend of granting patents started in England in the fourteenth century, as before that, England had technologically been a laggard. When the country had become technologically advanced, it established the modern-day Patent Office of 1852. The development of France was similar, while smaller developed countries' experiences are somewhat different,<sup>23</sup> e.g. Japan.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Even more so the experiences of small European countries like Finland and Ireland (see Chang, 2003: 13).

<sup>23</sup> Although following a *laissez-faire* trade policy, Switzerland refused to introduce a patent law until 1907. Its anti-patent policy contributed to the country's development – especially by allowing the 'theft' of German ideas in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, and by encouraging FDI in the food industry (see Schiff, 1971). The Netherlands was the least protected economy among the developed countries. It introduced the patent law in 1817, abolished it in 1869, and re-introduced it in 1912. However, "during its extreme *laissez-faire* period, the Dutch economy remained rather sluggish" (Chang 2003: 10).

<sup>24</sup> It was based on a follower policy, emphasising the acquisition of technology from abroad and limiting patent protection (Maskus, 2000: 143, 145). In the 1960s, Japan was a global leader in counterfeit goods.

“In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the United States was both a rapidly industrializing nation and – as Charles Dickens, among others, knew all too well – a bold pirate of intellectual property. /.../ Back then, American law offered copyright protection – but only to citizens and residents of the United States. /.../ This so irritated Mr. Dickens – who’s “Christmas Carol” sold for 6 cents a copy in America, versus \$2.50 in England – when he toured the United States in 1842, urging the adoption of international copyright protection as being in the long-term interest of American authors and publishers” (Lohr, 2002). He concludes, that the USA’s protectionist property rights policy may look surprising in the context of today’s accusations that China systematically imitates and ‘steals’ intellectual property and forces foreign companies to transfer their technology to Chinese companies. Namely, imitation and “stealing foreign knowledge” was historically the order of the day for the US and other advanced countries in their catching up development stages. “During the early days of its industrialization, the US was a world leader in intellectual property rights violations, a fact often overlooked in the current discourse” (Huang & Smith, 2019). The US intellectual property rights system began only with the Copyright Act of 1790, which explicitly did not grant any protections to foreign works.”

The economies that were shining success stories of development, from the United States in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to Japan and its East Asian neighbours like Taiwan and South Korea in the 20<sup>th</sup>, took off under systems of weak intellectual property protection. Technology transfer came easily and inexpensively until the domestic skills and local industries had become advanced enough that stronger intellectual property protections became a matter of self-interest (Lohr, 2002). A similar development is now to be expected in China.

These cases illustrate the complex dynamics of technology transfer, industrial espionage, and intellectual property infringement, reflecting the pursuit of economic, political, and military interests by various actors throughout history. The more domestic firms become innovative, the more they are seeking to protect their intellectual property rights. Huang and Smith (2019) believe that, countries establish a strong system of intellectual property rights when they can rely on their own ability to innovate at home, thereby displacing reliance on external knowledge.

Overall, the evolution of protectionism reflects a complex interplay of economic, political, and social factors, with different countries adopting varying approaches based on their specific circumstances and objectives. If we confine our analysis to the post industrial revolution period, we can see clear transition of trade strategies from import substitution, protectionist policies to export promotion based on the FT argument, once the advanced countries had achieved higher development stages. Now that China and other emerging economies economically “graduated”, achieving substantial technological development, as well as under the pressures by polycrises, and mounting environmental and climate concerns, industrial countries feel threatened. They start defending themselves by applying ageing protectionist policies to shield domestic industries from foreign competition, particularly in sensitive sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Such policies are explained by the combination of geostrategic, commercial, national economic and value-based (e.g., protecting human rights, democracy, environment) reasons, as well as support for the global norms and global public goods (e.g., global health governance, fighting climate change) for instance.

The renaissance of new neomercantilism and targeted IP can also be seen as a return to the unipolar world order, because the measures are implemented unilaterally without consultations with other nations, or international organizations. Industrial policy<sup>25</sup> has been nothing new for many countries, particularly when we remember its large-scale implementation in the 1980s, or even earlier by Japan, the policy that Gilpin characterised as neomercantilist (Gilpin, 2001: 157). Only later, market mechanism became a central instrument of efficient resource allocation. Historically, industrial policies have often taken the form of protectionism. After decades of neglect, having been written off as ineffective, IP has regained centrality in the wake of multiple shocks. In a way, protectionism and IP are twins, although today, the function of IP is also to promote outward-oriented strategy.

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<sup>25</sup> These are just some instruments of industrial policy, which are much discussed, but rarely explicitly defined. Juhász et al., 2023 defines IPs as those government policies that explicitly target the transformation of the structure of economic activity in pursuit of some public goal. The goal is typically to simulate innovation, productivity, and economic growth” (2023: 4) or in other words “actions and strategies used to favor the more dynamic sectors of the economy” (Jesus, 2015).

Many countries have recently demonstrated strong emphasis on such policies<sup>26</sup> by adopting several strategic documents.<sup>27</sup> The US IRA is, for instance, supported as significant achievement by some prominent economists like Krugman (1992: 439), although he earlier declared himself as a “cautious activist”.

While protectionist measures may be justified on economic grounds at lower levels of development, at more advanced levels of development they can undermine the principles of FT and have adverse effects on global economic development and equity. Finally, it also carries risks of trade retaliation, reduced efficiency, and hindered global economic growth.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Our analysis leads to the following general conclusions:

- a) Countries always established policies congruent with their development objectives, socio-political context and the level of development, being more restrictive at a lower level of development and more liberal as they advanced technologically and institutionally. After reaching the dominant position in the world economy, countries start to advocate the FT principle for all. Hypocrisy is winning.

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<sup>26</sup> The total number of the annual IP interventions globally has increased from 34 in 2010 to 1568 in 2022. Most of such measures were introduced by high income countries: Western Europe and longstanding OECD members 13.514 while East Asia and Pacific introduced only 676 (Juhász et. al., 2023: 37).

<sup>27</sup> The largest is the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a massive US\$369 billion plan of subsidies and tax credits up to 2032 which is a real game-changer of a global industrial relations (see Gili & Tentori, 2023: 51). The EU has adopted Green Deal (committed to spend EUR 1000 billion over 10 years in order to attain climate neutrality by 2050), EU Industrial Strategy, Digital Europe Programme, the Chips Act among many others aimed at promoting competitiveness, innovation, sustainability by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities and enhance resilience of European industries. China „joined the club” shortly after joining the WTO. The origin of IP of China goes back to 2006, when China launched “indigenous innovation” in the Medium and Long-Term Plan, by fostering the development of strategic emerging industries. The strategy helped to kick-start explosive growth in exports and a skyrocketing increase in China’s GDP. The trend continued by “Made in China 2025” plan in 2015 and many other plans that followed.



- b) Protectionism is not limited only to LDCs. The initial development-oriented protectionism applied by now advanced countries has transformed into the defensive new neomercantilism, while offensive IP has turned into strategic neomercantilism, all within the framework of economic nationalism, creating space for trade wars with all detrimental development effect for the world economy. Such a change can lead to the transformation of capitalism into strategic capitalism.
- c) The level of protection also depends on the volatility of external conditions. When a country is faced with different crises or shocks, it starts to defend itself by increasing protection of the domestic economy.
- d) The size of countries initially regarded as unimportant, became suddenly important also in theory.
- e) Although new neomercantilism will probably remain with us for some time, FT is still considered as the best long term policy though needing much stronger redistributive role of government to compensate the losers. Although both FT and protection have positive and negative aspects and can cohabit, empirical evidence supports the FT arguments more.
- f) New situation demand new thinking, new approaches and changes in mind-sets, leaving behind the naïve assumption of the *free market utopia myth* (Polanyi, 1944) and redundant, marginalized role of the governments.

Let us explain in some details the above conclusions.

The revival of protectionism and industrial, policy, which we are now facing in advanced countries, may sound as a theoretical surprise to the advocates of FT. After the rise of the US as the hegemon in Pax Americana, academics and their political followers have all, with not the slightest doubt, advocated that FT is beneficial to all countries, yet marginalizing its costs. Protectionism, tariffs and other barriers to FT were considered as costly and inappropriate development strategy. The only exception were LDCs for which some protection at early development stages, before their industry would gain comparative advantages, were considered as temporarily appropriate.

Under the pressures of changing the global context, structural changes and the rise of China, the rebellion of the public against

globalization and FT, industrial countries started to implement new forms of protectionism, coupled with offensive industrial policies<sup>28</sup> and xenophobic economic nationalism. A kind of old neomercantilistic mentality started to infiltrate the mind-sets of general public and policy makers. Particularly under the pressure of the third yellow peril, or contemporary China threat, developed countries rediscovered, otherwise theoretically criticized protectionism (neomercantilism), economic nationalism and IP as a defence measures against China's rising import and FDI. A defensive protectionism that we can even call new neomercantilism, combined with the offensive IP, was reborn. Helleiner (2021) refers to this as to the *strategic neomercantilism*.

Some of these developments are winding down under the influence of circumstances, but many may prove relatively long lasting. Nevertheless, the return to extreme economic nationalism, like between the two world wars, is not to be expected. In spite of all the attacks on FT, as well as globalization as its manifestation, both have survived and will survive, although not in their today's shape, because they are simply a manifestation of the global division of labour and all its benefits (more in Svetličič, 2019). Paradoxically, the original supporters of FT, i.e. the advanced countries, are now more sceptical, while the major supporters of globalization are today newly emerging economies. "There is a case for FT, but it is more subtle and above all more political case that we are used to making," posited Krugman (1993: 362). The final outcome of such divergent trends will probably be the coexistence of FT and protectionism, with more FT in some sectors (the flow of information, research cooperation, governance...) and enhanced protectionism in others (de-risking value chains, security related activities, reindustrialization efforts, health related products, agriculture, water...). The revival of neomercantilist thinking and policy seems unlikely to reverse quickly. This is a bad news for the world's economy, and particularly LDCs, since "the rise of protectionist unilateral trade measures and the more widespread use of IP in large economies can adversely impact developing economies' exports and hinder their prospects for structural transformation"

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<sup>28</sup> Most of the modern industrial policy is outward-oriented, also including fostering exports, as well as encouraging innovation; R&D and FDI (see Gili & Tentori, 2023: 40). Different forms of subsidies and export-related measures constitute together almost 90% of all intervention (see Juhász et al., 2023: 12).

(UNCTAD, 2024: 36). This leads to the shrinking of international trade and its fragmentation, which could dramatically affect the world economy, costing up to 7 % of GDP (Gopinath, 2023).

The polycrises and amoral inequalities created by the existing system, have also forced advanced countries, in addition to LDCs, traditional advocates of changes in the international economic system, to start rethinking of the stone-carved postulates of FT and globalization. The size of countries theoretically considered as unimportant, became very important after the USA and other countries felt the consequences of the rise of China. Not only international trade, but also the development theory started to be under attack.

It became obvious that the time has arrived to rethink some of the assumptions behind our theories and pay more attention to the previously more or less ignored context, as well as people's social preferences, in order to ensure a more nuanced view. Old ideas should not limit our ability to rethink established theories because "the difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones" (Keynes: 1936/2016). In such a way we can also escape the danger of enhancing discriminatory protectionism and industrial policies, fragmenting international trade and triggering trade wars. To prevent it, "such measures must be implemented in "a targeted, timely, temporary, and transformative way" (Mildner & Schmucker, 2023: 184).

The international system should, in the future, avoid hypocritical implementation of protectionism while advocating FT: Advanced countries should be more self-critical by allowing others to do what they themselves have done, in a manner adjusted to the contemporary context (Svetličič, 2020b: 1077). Today, LDCs obviously need more policy space for their development strategies.

How to change the situation? Certainly not by doing what has been done in the past, i.e. being back to the old normal, and business as usual. The new situation and new context demand broad interdisciplinary and holistic thinking in order to understand the contextual richness and messiness of real life, and this could be secured by broad-minded intellectuals rather than specialised "idiots", leaders rather than politicians. As Linda Yueh (2018) pointed out in her review of the *Great Economists*, they were all generalists and thinkers about big issues, very much grounded in the broader social sciences. Adam Smith was as much a sociologist as he was an economist.

When it comes to FT, this does not only require abandoning the absurdities of neoclassical economics and a return to political economy, but a more profound return to the social sciences. We can also add that overcoming of the Western-centrism in social sciences is highly needed in order to understand the complexity of the world today. We should also not forget that never in history was isolation from the outside world good for world peace, even less so for the countries that applied such an isolationism (Baković, 2024: 16).

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# Research Of The Possibility And Development Of Biodiesel Production From Lipids And Waste Lipids Of The Industry And Hospitality

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

Limited reserves of fossil fuels, as well as economic and environmental reasons, have caused an increasing demand for biofuels. Biodiesel, as an alternative to fossil fuel, is an increasingly common biofuel today, especially in the developed European market, and it is primarily produced from vegetable oils. The main obstacle to the greater use of biodiesel is the high cost of production due to the high price of edible vegetable oil. In addition, European countries do not have the ability to provide sufficient quantities of raw materials for the production of biodiesel, because the increase in the production of vegetable oils is limited by agronomic and climatic conditions. Therefore, we are looking for alternative raw materials, which will ensure economical production with the rationalization of operating costs, the greatest possible degree of energy independence and efficiency, and all this while implementing environmental protection measures, i.e. alternative raw materials are being sought, the application of which could ensure the sustainable production of biodiesel. One of the options for achieving that goal is the production of biodiesel from lipids left behind and collected after their use in restaurants and in the food industry, which are mostly discarded at the place of their creation. Biodiesel can also be produced from the by-products of the technological process of the production of edible vegetable oil, from oils and fats as secondary products of animal origin, from waste mineral oils, from lipids from sewage sludge, etc. The permanent availability and low price of these lipid materials, as well as the problem of their disposal in the environment, make them potential alternative raw materials for the production of biodiesel. Therefore, research was conducted

on the possibility and development of biodiesel production from the aforementioned lipids and waste lipids, the results of which are presented in this scientific paper.

*Keywords:* biodiesel, lipids and waste lipids, waste oil, by-products of oil production, lipid by-products of animal origin

## 1. Introduction

Biodiesel is a methyl ester produced from vegetable oils, or animal fats of diesel quality (Premović & Milićević, 2015). Biodiesel fuels are yellow in color and have an oily smell, they do not contain mechanical impurities, and at room temperature they are easily mobile and transparent liquids (Kiš, 2006). The application of this biodegradable, non-toxic fuel made from renewable sources is characterized by low emission of polluting substances. It is the data on the reduction of environmental pollution using biodiesel, as well as the fact that it is made from renewable sources, that has made biodiesel a very attractive energy source today (Premović & Milićević, 2015).

Biodiesel is used in its pure form (B100) and as a mixture with fossil fuel in different concentrations (B5, B10, B20) (Jovanović et al., 2005), where biodiesel improves the lubricity, filterability and cetane number of the fuel (Furman et al., 2004). Biodiesel has proven to be an effective substitute for fossil diesel in vehicles and working machines in construction, industry and agriculture (in internal combustion engines) (Jovanović et al., 2005; Premović, 2011).

Compared to conventional diesel, biodiesel fuel is characterized by a higher content of oxygen (11%), a reduced amount of carbon (77%), while the proportion of hydrogen is approximately the same. Due to the increased oxygen content, the heating power of biodiesel compared to diesel of fossil origin is lower (37 MJ/kilogram compared to 43 MJ/kilogram), and fuel combustion is improved (Fukuda, 2001). Biodiesel contains very little sulfur and phosphorus, therefore the emission of SO<sub>x</sub> gases is negligible. Compared to conventional diesel, biodiesel has a higher density, a higher cetane number and higher viscosity, which is many times lower than the viscosity of the oil from which it was produced. The transport and storage of fuel is safer in the case of biodiesel, considering that the ignition point of biodiesel is over 120°C, while for the diesel of fossil origin it is 55°C.

In industrial conditions, biodiesel is most often produced by the transesterification process (Ma & Hanna, 1999; Fukuda et al., 2001; Zhang, 2003). Transesterification is the reaction of oil or fat with alcohol with the participation of appropriate catalysts, resulting in fatty acid esters and glycerol (Ma, 1998; Furman et al., 2006), which after separation is processed to produce glycerol suitable for use as a raw material in the chemical industry (Ma & Hanna, 1999; Fukuda et al., 2001; Premović, 2011).

In the process of transesterification from alcohol, the following can participate: methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol and amyl alcohol. Methanol and ethanol are most often used, especially the former due to its low price and the physical and chemical advantages it has over all other alcohols (Clark et al., 1984; Premović, 2011). Fat transesterification involves a series of reactions: triglycerides are first reduced to diglycerides, which are then reduced to monoglycerides. Monoglycerides are eventually reduced to fatty acid esters (Premović, 2011). The main factors that affect the transesterification process are: molar ratio of glycerides and alcohol, catalysts, temperature and reaction time, content of free fatty acids and water in oil and fats (Ma & Hanna, 1999; Predojević & Bošković, 2009; Premović, 2011). The alcohol/oil molar ratio, usually that of methanol/oil, is one of the most important parameters of the oil methanolysis reaction. According to stoichiometry, three moles of alcohol react with one mole of triglycerides, resulting in three moles of methyl ester and one mole of glycerol. In order to achieve the highest yield of methyl ester, it is necessary to perform the reversible methanolysis reaction in the presence of excess alcohol. The molar ratio has no significant influence on the quality parameters of the produced biodiesel, such as: acid number, saponification number and iodine number of methyl ester. However, a large excess of alcohol makes it difficult to extract glycerol, because its solubility increases, which shifts the balance of the reaction in the direction of product decomposition, reducing the methyl ester yield (Predojević & Bošković, 2009). The used catalysts influence the rate of the ecolysis reaction, and they can be classified into homogeneous and heterogeneous based on their solubility in the reaction mixture. Depending on the nature of the catalysts used in the transesterification process, they can further be classified (Dorđević, 2022) into: acidic, basic and acid-basic, and in recent times the

use of biocatalysts has been increasingly analyzed. The choice of catalyst is most often determined by the characteristics of the starting oil. Alkaline catalysts (NaOH, KOH, Na-methoxide, K-methoxide) have a wide commercial application, since their application enables up to 4000 times faster chemical reaction, compared to the same content of added acid catalyst. Higher yields are obtained using Na-methoxide or K-methoxide, but they are sensitive to the presence of moisture and are more expensive than NaOH and KOH, which are therefore widely used commercially. However, in order for them to be successfully applied, the starting raw material must meet certain criteria of composition and quality, namely an acid number of less than 1 mg KOH/g, and in addition, all reactants must be anhydrous (Freedman et al., 1984; Mittelbach, 1996; Predojević & Kovljen, 2007). Lipases (free or immobilized) can be applied as biocatalysts, which is confirmed by the results of various studies (Fukuda et al., 2001): for example, the research conducted by Jackson & King (1996) on corn oil, as well as the group of authors Iso et al. (2001) conducted on safflower oil. Oil transesterification can be done without the presence of a catalyst, in supercritical methanol, and it represents an alternative method for converting vegetable oils into methyl ester. The advantages of this method are that it requires a shorter reaction time, and since it is a non-catalytic process, purification of the product after transesterification is much simpler. This method is also more acceptable from the point of view of environmental protection (Saka & Kusdiana, 2001). It was observed that the increase in the reaction temperature, especially under supercritical conditions, has a significant effect on the ester yield. In supercritical transesterification conditions, alcohol conversion increases from 50–95% during the first 10 minutes. While in catalyzed processes the presence of water shows a negative effect on methyl ester yield, during transesterification with supercritical methanol, water content has a positive effect on methyl ester formation (Demirbas, 2006).

Biodiesel production can be carried out by a one-stage, or two-stage process. The single-stage biodiesel production process is applied in the case that the starting raw material, i.e. starting oil, does not contain free fatty acids and water. In the case of a single-stage process, direct alcoholysis of the starting oil is carried out with the presence of a catalyst. If water is present in the starting oil, then free

fatty acids are created, or the ester hydrolysis reaction is encouraged. If in the alcoholysis reaction, which is catalyzed by a base, free fatty acids are present in the starting oil, then the side reaction of saponification is favored, which is undesirable. As the saponification reaction proceeds, soaps are formed from the free fatty acids of the starting oil with the addition of a catalyst, which causes a decrease in the yield of biodiesel, and also makes it difficult to separate and purify the produced biodiesel (Predojević & Kovljen, 2007, 2009; Shahbaz et al., 2021; Đorđević, 2022). Therefore, when the starting raw material for the production of biodiesel is oil containing free fatty acids and water, it is necessary to apply a two-stage biodiesel production process. One of the possibilities of reducing free fatty acids in the starting oil is their removal by the process of saponification, after the completion of which the alcoholysis reaction is carried out, in the presence of a base as a catalyst. The development of this process requires the existence of additional units for the separation and purification of oil, but also a larger amount of applied catalyst, which requires additional investments and costs. An alternative option is the application of the esterification process, of the free fatty acids present in the starting oil, with an acid catalyst, whereby alkyl esters of fatty acids are formed. The esterified raw material is then subjected to basic alcoholysis in order to obtain additional esters more quickly. The alcoholysis that takes place in the presence of acid catalysts is a significantly slower reaction than the alcoholysis that takes place in the presence of basic catalysts. However, with its application, it is possible to effectively use inedible and waste oils, animal fats, fatty by-products from industry and other oily raw materials with a high content of free of fatty acids in the production of biodiesel (Avhad & Marchetti, 2015; Athar & Zaidi, 2020; Đorđević, 2022).

Limited reserves of fossil fuels, as well as economic and environmental reasons, cause an increasing demand for biofuels, among which biodiesel occupies a special place, especially in the developed European market.<sup>1</sup> The main obstacle to a greater use of biodiesel

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<sup>1</sup> "Rational and effective governance requires that protection be considered in a country environment and those natural resources that are of particular importance for current and future economic development. In this way, resources are saved for future generations, and this is the main difference between a sustainable policy development and traditional environmental protection." (Maksimović, 2020: 246–246).

is the high cost of biodiesel production, due to the high price of the starting raw material, edible vegetable oil, whose raw material base in European countries is also insufficient, since it is very much restricted by agronomic and climatic conditions, so a significant part must be replaced by importing vegetable oils. Therefore, there is an ongoing and intensive search for alternative raw materials, the application of which could ensure the sustainable production of biodiesel, and one of the alternatives is the application of lipids and waste lipids from industry and catering. Lipids, after their use in households, restaurants and in the food industry, as well as by-products of the technological process of the production of edible vegetable oil, as well as oils and fats, by-products of animal origin, waste mineral oils, lipids from sewage sludge, etc., which are otherwise mostly rejected at the place of their creation, could be applied as an alternative raw material to vegetable oils and oilseeds in the production of biodiesel. Their permanent availability, low price and increasingly intense problems and costs regarding their adequate disposal in the environment, with or without prior purification, make them potential alternative raw materials for the production of biodiesel. Therefore, research was conducted on the possibility and development of biodiesel production from the aforementioned lipids and waste lipids, the results of which are presented in this scientific paper.

## 2. Lipids And Waste Lipids In Biodiesel Production

For the production of biodiesel, instead of seeds and oilseeds, the raw materials that could potentially be used include by-products of industrial production and meat and fish processing, by-products of the production of edible vegetable oils, lipids remaining after wastewater treatment, waste oils and fats. The biodiesel produced from waste raw materials has worse cold properties compared to biodiesel produced from crude vegetable oils, but in all other properties it meets the prescribed quality requirements (Zekić et al., 2013). Most of these lipid raw materials are discarded as waste. The situation is similar with waste edible oil after its application. It is collected to a lesser extent from the food industry and from restaurants (and is mainly added to animal feed), while the waste oils from households mostly end up in the sewage system (Predojević & Kovljen, 2006, 2007).

Available amounts of waste edible oils and fats available for biodiesel production amount to 20–25% of the total amount of edible oils and fats that are placed and sold on the market (Jurac et al., 2012).

The quality standard defines the quality requirements, which must be met, in order for biodiesel as a fuel to be an adequate substitute for fossil diesel (Mitrović et al., 2008), therefore it is important to find optimal processing processes, adequately prepare and measure reactants and adjust reaction conditions, which will ensure renewable production of biodiesel of adequate composition and quality from lipid raw materials of different origin.

### *2.1. Lipids-By-Products Of Animal Origin In Biodiesel Production*

The results of the conducted research indicate that chicken fat (Marulanda et al., 2010; André Cremonese et al., 2015), duck tallow (Kwon et al., 2014) and beef tallow (Teixeira et al., 2009) can be used in the production biodiesel. However, the biodiesel produced from these fats has a high cetane number, which is a consequence of the low content of free fatty acids and the high content of saturated fatty acids in these raw materials. That is why it is important to carry out research in order to eliminate the observed shortcomings for the application of this type of raw material in the production of biodiesel. Industrial facilities for the production and processing of meat produce 30–40% by-products of animal origin, the processing of which produces about 25% fat, 25% meat bone meal and 50% water. The total amount of by-products per live weight in the meat and fish industry is about 50% for cattle, 42% for pigs, 37% for poultry and 57% for most fish (Jurac, 2011). Estimates of the amount of individual raw materials for the production of biodiesel can be made according to the amount of primary raw materials from which they come: for oils and fats as secondary products of animal origin, the estimates are as follows: primary fats from the red meat industry; 10–15% of live weight, rendering technical fat; 3–4% of live weight for red meat and 0.6% of live weight for poultry meat (Jurac et al., 2012). In 2004, the production of red and white meat at the international level amounted to 250 million tons of live weight. If we take into account the estimate that 50% of this is by-products, 125 million tons of by-products were available for



processing that year, that is, since available fat as a by-product in the meat production process is about 10% of live weight, annually it is possible to obtain about 25 million tons of fat as a side product from the meat industry (Jurac, 2011). Analyzing the data on the amount of animal fat that was used in the production of biodiesel in Europe in the past period, from 2010 to 2016, it is observed that the amount of animal fat that was processed into biodiesel in Europe in the past period showed a growing tendency, since it had a minimum value of 300,000 tons in 2010, while in 2015 and 2016 it had a maximum value of 485,000 tons (Stange, 2015). According to the available amounts of animal fat, there is a lot of room for increasing its use in the future throughout Europe, as well as the world.

## *2.2. Waste Lipids In Biodiesel Production*

In addition to edible vegetable oils, the raw materials used for the production of biodiesel in the world and in the member countries of the European Union are gradually taking an increasing share in alternative sources, among which waste oil is leading. When analyzing the data on the amount of waste oil that was used in the production of biodiesel in Europe over the past period, from 2010 to 2016, it can be seen that the amount of waste oil that was processed into biodiesel in Europe in the past period showed a permanent tendency to increase, since in 2010 it had a minimum value of 500,000 tons, while in 2016 it reached a maximum value of 1,670,000 tons (Stange, 2015).

The term “waste oil” refers to the oil that has been used and is no longer suitable for use, which can come from many different sources (Refaat, 2010). The primary application of waste oil in the member states of the European Union is for energy purposes. France (with 243,000 tons), Italy (with 200,000 tons) and Spain (with 105,000 tons) stand out among the European Union member states in terms of the amount of the oil collected. According to the use of collected waste oil for energy purposes, Ireland leads the way (86%), followed by Austria (74%) and the Netherlands (72%). Re-refining of the collected waste oil is realized in the highest percentage in Italy, with 55%, followed by France (with 19%) and Spain (with 16%) (Regional Activity Center for Cleaner Production, 2000).

In our country, there are available capacities for processing waste oil into biodiesel. There are also potential producers of biodiesel from waste vegetable oil with a capacity of over 1000 tons per year. These are the Bioplanta company from Bačka Topola, with an available capacity of 4000 tons/year and the BioenergoOil company from Sombor, with an available capacity of 1400 tons/year (Radovanović, 2013; Leskovac, 2013).

### *2.2.1. Waste Lipids From Wastewater Sludge In Biodiesel Production*

From the waste lipids of the primary sewage sludge obtained by extraction and transesterification of dry matter, it is possible to obtain 14.5% of methyl ester, while from the secondary sewage sludge it is possible to obtain 2.5% of methyl ester per the total amount of dry matter of the sludge. In Europe, primary sewage sludge was examined, which makes up 50–60% of sewage sludge, and which has an average of 4.5% of total dry matter, while secondary sludge contains 0.5% of total dry matter (Kargbo, 2010). Various studies of waste water generated in the process of processing olives and other raw materials for oil production were also conducted. It was established that residual wastewater can be used in the production of enzymes and biofuels, etc. (Federici et al., 2009).

### *2.2.2. Waste Mineral Oil In Biodiesel Production*

In the Republic of Serbia, the consumption of mineral fuels is around 4 million tons per year, and more than 700 million dollars are allocated for the import of mineral fuels. Estimates of the amount of waste mineral oil generated on the territory of our country are incomplete. It is known that about 106,000 tons of waste motor oil and about 257,000 tons of mixed organic-aqueous emulsion are left behind annually. The most important application of this waste oil is based on its characteristic that it can be physically burned, and therefore it is used in the production of biofuels.

Domestic facilities that can adequately treat these waste oils are the Oil Refinery in Belgrade and Ekosecond in Belgrade. However, despite this, the largest amount of waste oil from vehicle engines

ends up in landfills or in city sewers. A large part of the used oils is burned uncontrollably in home furnaces, it is used as a protection and impregnation of wood, to lubricate various molds (building blocks), destroy weeds, dust, etc. (Mitrović et al., 2008).

### ***2.2.3. Waste Edible Oil (From Food Preparation) In Biodiesel Production***

Waste edible oil can also be used for the production of biodiesel. "Waste edible oil is any oil that is produced by catering and tourist activities, in industry, trade and other similar activities in which more than 50 meals are prepared per day." Waste edible oil is collected for processing and obtaining biofuel" (Pravilnik, 2010).

Estimates are that 700,000 to 1,000,000 tons of edible waste oil are collected annually in the member states of the European Union (Kulkarni & Dalai, 2006). In the Netherlands it is estimated that 20–30 liters/year per capita can be collected (oil consumption is 80 liters/year per capita), while in Austria it is estimated that the amount of fresh rapeseed oil intended for biodiesel production would be substituted with the collected waste edible oil (Furman et al., 2005). It is estimated that around 10,000 tons of waste edible oils suitable for biodiesel production can be collected annually in our country (Strategija, 2015).

In addition to serving as a raw material for the production of biodiesel, the advantage of collecting waste edible oil is the reduction of the wastewater treatment costs. At the same time, the number of rodents in drainage systems, which use waste oil as food, also decreases (Virkes, 2008).

Data from Europe and the world show that about a half of the edible oil used for food preparation is consumed in restaurants and industry, and the rest in the household, of which about a half of the applied oil is absorbed into the food, while the other half is left behind as waste. If it is assumed that oil for the production of biodiesel is collected exclusively from restaurants, the potential amount of such raw material is 20–25% of the amount of the oil used in food preparation. Data from the European Union indicate that the total amount of residual edible oil per year is about 5 kilograms per capita (Cvengroš & Cvengroševa, 2004), and in the Republic of Croatia it is about 2 liters per capita per year (which represents a potential of about 9 million

liters of waste edible oil annually). For the area of the city of Zagreb, a survey was conducted on the amount of waste cooking oil collected from business entities and information was obtained on 1,400,000 liters of waste cooking oil per year (Virkes, 2008).

Waste edible vegetable oils generated after application in households, restaurants and/or the food industry, are generally discarded without further application. Permanent availability, low price of these oils, about 50% of the price of new vegetable oil, and ecological advantages, solving the problem of their disposal in the environment, make them a potentially attractive and economical raw material for the production of biodiesel. Base-catalyzed transesterification is sensitive to a large proportion of water, as well as to a high content of free fatty acids in the starting material, since these impurities affect the side reaction of triglyceride saponification (Predojević & Bošković, 2009; Jurac, 2011; Đorđević, 2022). Waste edible oils contain these impurities, as well as solid impurities in a larger content, therefore, when used in the production of biodiesel, waste edible oils must first be subjected to standardized filtering and purification procedures. Based on the content of free fatty acids, waste edible oils can be classified into two groups: yellow fat (contains < 15% free fatty acids) and brown fat (contains > 15% free fatty acids) (Al-Hamamre & Yamin, 2014).

It is known that food frying takes place at a temperature of 160–200°C, where a part of the applied oil is absorbed by the product being fried, and a part of the product being fried breaks down and separates, remaining in the oil (Cvengroš & Cvengroševa, 2004; Jurac, 2011). In the oil itself, when it is used for frying food, physical and chemical changes occur, which can differ depending on the type and composition of the oil, as well as the conditions that occur during frying, primarily on the temperature at which the food is fried (Kulkarni & Dalai, 2006). Reactions in the oil itself and reactions of oil and food, as well as the presence of absorbed oil in food, create physico-chemical changes on the surface and in the product itself, which is reflected in changes in the nutritional, sensorial and rheological characteristics of the fried product (Brdarić et al., 2011; Jurac, 2011).

In edible oil used for frying food, changes in physical and chemical properties occur as a result of chemical reactions in the oil itself and reactions of the oil with water and oxygen at elevated temperature

(Jurac, 2011). During the frying of food, three types of chemical reactions occur: thermolytic, oxidizing and hydrolytic, which cause a series of changes, such as the formation of volatile substances, an increase in viscosity, polarity and content of free fatty acids, a change in color (darkening), a decrease in the value of the iodine number, change in refractive index, decrease in surface tension and increase in oil foaming tendency (Nawar, 1984; Kleinova & Cvcengroš, 2009; Brdarić et al., 2011).

Viscosity and carbon and coke residues in biodiesel obtained from waste cooking oil are slightly higher than in methyl ester produced from rapeseed oil. The low-temperature properties of the biodiesel from waste edible oil are weaker than those of the biodiesel from rapeseed oil, and therefore it is necessary to mix it with fossil diesel during colder periods (Jurac, 2011). The increased share of polar and polymeric compounds is an important parameter for determining the degree of degradation of used waste oil, and due to the increased share of polar compounds, waste edible oil absorbs a larger amount of water compared to fresh oil.

If not disposed of properly, waste edible oil, which is used in the household, catering and/or industry, can represent a global problem for the environment, and especially for water systems and/or for the sewage network, since the production of these waste oils is increasing and they are usually discharged into natural receivers and/or into sewage drains. In this way, wastewater treatment problems arise, which require additional investments in energy consumption. Waste oils can also be included in the food chain in the production of animal feed and thus become potential causes of various health problems for animals and humans (Felizardo et al., 2006). For these reasons, a number of developed countries have introduced fines in the case of the discharge of waste edible oils into drains.

The possibilities of biodiesel production from waste edible oil collected from industry, restaurants and households has been the subject of numerous research projects.

Biodiesel can also be produced from waste edible vegetable oil that remains after industrial production and food processing. The thus obtained waste edible oil must first be filtered, and then it can be added as a mixture to classic diesel or biodiesel, or it can be used as an independent fuel (Volmajer & Kegl, 2003).

Researchers from the Faculty of Technology of the University of Novi Sad conducted research on the possibilities of using edible waste oil collected from restaurants and households in the production of biodiesel. After examining the composition and quality of the waste edible oil, they found that it can be successfully used in the production of biodiesel (Predojević & Kovljen, 2006, 2007, 2009; Predojević & Bošković, 2009).

In countries where tourism is an important economic activity, great importance is attached to catering, especially restaurants and catering facilities where different types of food are prepared. An example of such a country is our neighboring Mediterranean country, the Republic of Croatia. Brdarić et al. (2011) conducted research on the management of waste edible oils from catering facilities of the restaurants in the area of Osijek-Baranja County. Researchers have established that almost a half of the fresh cooking oil becomes waste cooking oil after being used in thermal processing (for frying food). The results of the conducted research indicate the need to raise the awareness of restaurant management and administration and the need to hand over residual waste edible oils to authorized collectors. It was also established that it is necessary to additionally educate employees of catering establishments on the method of determining the degree of oxidation of the applied edible oil, as well as on the need for its separate storage. In the Republic of Croatia, the collection of waste edible vegetable oil is on the rise. By proper disposal and management of waste cooking oil, it is possible to make a significant contribution to the preservation of the environment and human health, as well as to provide numerous economic benefits at the local and state level, and among other things, to ensure the creation of new jobs (Brdarić et al., 2011). In the Republic of Croatia, waste edible oils and fats are collected by several authorized companies, such as the Vitrex company from Virovitica, which produces biodiesel from these (Virkes, 2008). The Biotron d.o.o. company collects waste edible oil from all McDonald's restaurants in the Republic of Croatia, which comes from frying their products. The collected amounts of waste edible oil are entered in the accompanying documentation (Jurac, 2011). The collected oil is taken to Austria for processing (Virkes, 2008). Data from 2009 and 2010 indicate that 164,960 kilograms of waste cooking oil were collected from McDonald's restaurants, and restaurants acquired

322,000 kilograms of oil in the same period, which indicates the fact that about 50% of the oil used for frying food ends up as waste, and the rest of the oil is absorbed by the fried products, which have 6–11% absorbed oil in their composition, while a very small part of the oil is lost through daily filtration or comes out with steam during the frying process. The obtained waste edible oil is a suitable raw material for the industrial production of biodiesel. In the technological process, waste edible oil is sent to cleaning and filtration, and then it is mixed with pure vegetable oil, and the mixture is refined and sent to the process of obtaining biodiesel, i.e. transesterification (Jurac, 2011).

### **3. By-Products Of Edible Vegetable Oil Production Technological Process In Biodiesel Production**

#### ***3.1. By-Products Of The Production Of Unrefined Edible Oil In The Production Of Biodiesel***

People's growing awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the consumption of foods that have positive effects on their health, i.e. foods rich in protective components, is accompanied by the constant improvement of the edible oil production process. Therefore, there was a need to produce unrefined edible oils. Today, unrefined edible oils are an important ingredient of proper human nutrition because they provide desirable nutritional properties, but also desirable sensory properties, such as taste, smell, aroma, color and appearance of food (Dimić et al., 2012; Esalami et al., 2014; Premović et al., 2014; Premović, 2022). Olive oil is one of the oldest, most famous and most used edible oils, which in the category of unrefined vegetable oils is traditionally produced and used in the largest quantities in Europe and in the world. Olive oil, especially virgin olive oil, which is produced by extracting oil from fresh and healthy olive fruits, stands out because its consumption is highly recommended due to its exceptional nutritional value and numerous positive effects and benefits for human health, since olive fruits are rich source of oils, vitamins, minerals, organic acids and pigments, i.e. to contain a high level of bioactive compounds. Therefore, the demand for olive oil is constantly increasing. Olives are among the oldest and most important fruits grown in the Mediterranean countries, and today they are increasingly represented and processed

into oil in all regions of the world where the climatic conditions are favorable for their growth (Premović et al., 2014; Esalami et al., 2014, 2015, 2018; Vujasinović et al., 2020; Mihajlović et al., 2023). Olives and olive oil are used directly in human nutrition, and the remaining pomace can be used for various purposes, primarily as animal feed and for the production of energy and biodiesel (Federici et al., 2009).

The by-products of the production of edible vegetable oils originating from other raw materials can be used as raw materials for the production of biodiesel (processing of sunflower, soybean, palm, rice, etc.) (Virkes, 2008; Predojević & Bošković, 2009; Jurac, 2011; Premović, 2022).

### ***3.2. By-Products Of Production Of Refined Edible Oil In The Production Of Biodiesel***

According to Stamenković (2016), the quantities of by-products obtained from the refining of vegetable oils in Serbia are as follows:

- Phosphatid residue (lecithin)/oily substances: 1130/546 tons
- Waste bleaching earth/oily substances: 754/241 tons
- Waste oily perlite/oily substances: 163/117 tons
- Deodorized distillate/oily substances: 856/856 tons
- Soap mixtures/oily substances: 1349/1349 tons.

Of the by-products of the edible oil refining process, the greatest potential for biodiesel production lies in waste bleaching earth, which is obtained during the refining of all vegetable oils, and to a lesser extent, waste oily perlite, obtained during the physical refining of sunflower oil. In 2014, the “Victoriaoil” factory produced 335 tons of waste bleaching earth and 137 tons of oily perlite with a total of 205 tons of oil. The price of disposal of oily cakes is 120 euros/ton, that is, it amounted to a total of 56,600 euros for 2014, which makes their use as raw material for obtaining biodiesel particularly promising. In addition, the regenerated bleaching earth can be used again as an adsorption agent or in the construction industry depending on the applied regeneration procedure (Cvetković et al., 2016).

Therefore, if the factory for the production of refined vegetable oil processes oily cakes into biodiesel, it also achieves savings in the costs of their disposal, which further justifies and favors the production of biodiesel from oily cakes (Cvetković et al., 2016).



In addition to the above-mentioned by-products, oil refining also produces a refinery by-product fat in the amount of about 6%. By saponification of the refinery fat by-product and breaking the resulting emulsion with acid at elevated temperature, about 40% of fatty acids are obtained from the initial amount of the fat refinery by-product, which can be converted into methyl esters by combined acid-base transesterification (Pickard, 2006).

## 4. Conclusion

Research is ongoing aimed at developing the biodiesel production process from secondary and waste materials obtained in the production and processing of edible vegetable oils and meat and meat products, lipids from waste water, as well as waste oils, both edible and mineral. They aim to improve reactants and reaction conditions, in order to contribute to the selection of reactants in an optimal ratio, the development and improvement of existing accessories and equipment and the development of a continuous production process. This should enable the economically justified production of biodiesel of adequate composition and quality, with respect for the principles of environmental protection, i.e. the development of sustainable production of biodiesel from these secondary raw materials, of different origin, primarily from industry and hospitality, the quantities of which are constantly increasing. In this way, a contribution is made to the country's energy independence from the import of expensive and polluting fossil reagents, while at the same time ensuring a better combustion process, with reduced exhaust gas emissions, and improving engine lubrication, i.e. achieving greater efficiency and durability of the used engines.

In order for this to be possible, it is necessary to establish and develop a system for the collection of secondary raw materials and waste edible oils and mineral oils. In order to organize quality collection of waste oil, it is necessary to organize adequate collection of waste oil from businesses and households, which could be achieved by expanding the activities of the existing utility companies. It is necessary to educate and inform the public about the importance of disposal of waste oil, and inform business entities and citizens about the establishment of a system of organized collection of waste oil and

their obligations in this regard. Along with the increased supervision of inspection services in the field of environmental protection (at all levels, from local to national), it is also important to establish a partnership with domestic biodiesel producers, who have the necessary capacities for the production of biodiesel from these raw materials.

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**Part B:**  
**SOCIAL APPROACH IN THE**  
**GEO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT**





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## Zur Bedeutung von Religion für die Gesellschaft

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### Abstract

Im ersten Kapitel dieses Beitrages werden einige Grundfragen gestellt und Lösungen gesucht. Ausgehend vom Bild eines „guten“ Gottes, der die Menschen liebt, wird versucht, auch das „Böse“ in der Welt zu verstehen. Im Anschluss an den französischen Atheisten André Comte-Sponville wird jeder Mensch als ein spirituelles Wesen gesehen, das dem Leben jedes Menschen, als Einzelne und Gemeinschaft, Sinn vermittelt.

In den Kapiteln 2 und 3 werden die klassischen zwei Dimensionen der Katholischen Soziallehre, Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit versus Dienst am Gemeinwohl einerseits und Nächstenliebe zwischen Prinzip der Solidarität und subsidiärer konkreter Umsetzung in kleineren Kreisen andererseits, behandelt.

Die Kapitel 4 und 5 bemühen sich um eine Weiterentwicklung der Katholischen Soziallehre zu einem christlichen Gesellschaftsgebilde, das theoretisch fundiert und praxistauglich gestaltet ist. Zwei neue Dimensionen kennzeichnen dieses Gebilde, dessen Aufgabe heute – vor allem in Europa – besonders dringlich ist, weil die Kirchen ihre Prägekraft und ihren Einfluss in den Gesellschaften verlieren und viele bisherige religiöse Selbstverständlichkeiten fragwürdig geworden sind. Diese zwei Dimensionen sind Erneuerung versus Bewahrung, bzw. Umkehr versus Frieden einerseits und Einheit versus Vielfalt bzw. Ordnung versus Leben andererseits.

Vor allem aber will dieser Beitrag möglichst viele zum gemeinsamen Weiter-Arbeiten einladen und der Verfasser wartet auf Rückmeldungen der kritischen Leser.

*Schlüsselwörter:* 10 Gebote Gottes (als Handlungsempfehlungen für Einzelne und Gemeinschaften). Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis (Rückblick und Vorausschau). Interreligiöser Dialog. Interkulturelles Verständnis. Christliche Gesellschaftslehre. Katholische Soziallehre.

## Zur Bedeutung von Religion für die Gesellschaft

Seit meiner Jugendzeit habe ich mich mit dem Phänomen „Religion“ auseinandergesetzt und habe mich auch in verschiedenen formellen und informellen Funktionen in der Institution „Katholische Kirche“ konkret betätigt. Besonders erwähnen möchte ich Leitungsfunktionen in der Katholischen Hochschuljugend Österreichs während meines Studiums in Wien (1956–1961) und meine Tätigkeiten bei der Linzer Diözesan-Synode (1969–1972).

Auch meine Beschäftigung mit außereuropäischen Gesellschaften während meines Sozialwissenschaftlichen Studiums in Leuven, Belgien (1961–1964) und während meiner Tätigkeit als „Dozent“ für Soziologie und Entwicklungspolitik an der Deutschen Akademie Klausenhof (1964–1966) beinhalteten Auseinandersetzungen mit nicht-christlichen Religionen und den Einflüssen von Religionen im Allgemeinen auf die unterschiedlichen Gesellschaften, ihre Gruppen und Einzelindividuen. Reisen in außereuropäische Länder und durchgeführte Studien vermittelten mir viele interessante Informationen und Anregungen.<sup>1</sup>

Unter verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten setzte ich mich auch wissenschaftlich mit dem Phänomen „Religion“ auseinander<sup>2</sup> und bin mit A. Comte-Sponville der Meinung, dass Spiritualität eine menschliche Grundbefähigung darstellt, der heute – vor allem in Europa – zu wenig Beachtung geschenkt wird (Comte-Sponville, 2009). Dazu kommt, dass tugendhaftes Verhalten in der Regel als nicht zeitgemäß angesehen wird und daher zu wenig Wertschätzung erfährt (Comte-Sponville, 2001). Religion prägt aber alle Bereiche menschlichen Lebens, vor allem Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur und Kunst, sind überall von Religion stark beeinflusst, wenn auch die Gestaltungsweisen im Laufe

<sup>1</sup> Bereits 1965 besuchte ich eine Reihe west- und zentralafrikanischer Länder und den Nahen Osten. Später bis in die Zweitausender Jahre auch weitere afrikanische und ostasiatische und südostasiatische Länder sowie Australien und Nordamerika.

<sup>2</sup> Diese Arbeiten beginnen 1966 mit einem Beitrag „Pfarrerwahl in Syrien – Demokratisierung in der Kirche“ in der Zeitschrift „Seelsorger“ Heft 6, Wien 1966 und dauern bis heute an. Entsprechende Hinweise können der Festschrift zu meinem 65. Geburtstag: Pracher Christian, Strunz Herbert (Hrsg.): Wissenschaft um der Menschen willen, Verlag Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 2003, S. 771 ff. bzw. der Festgabe zu meinem 80. Geburtstag: Hofer Bernhard / Pass Claudia / Pracher Christian / Strunz Herbert (Hrsg.): „Religion“ und Gesellschaft, Mercur Verlag, Wien, Berlin 2018 entnommen werden.

der Geschichte und in verschiedenen Kulturen sehr unterschiedliche Formen angenommen haben, die in differenzierter Weise erinnert werden, aber einige Grund-Ähnlichkeiten aufweisen. Auf einige von diesen will ich im Folgenden hinweisen und vor allem Besonderheiten des Christentums und seiner jüdischen Basis hervorheben.

Jan Assmann (2016) und René Girard (2009) haben auf die Entstehung und einige Konsequenzen des Monotheismus in Ägypten und besonders im Judentum und im Christentum hingewiesen, und neuerdings hat David Steindl-Rast auf Ähnlichkeiten zwischen der Weisheitslehre des Laotse und dem Christentum hingewiesen (Steindl-Rast & Balts, 2024). Diese Ansätze wollen wir hier nicht weiter verfolgen, sondern wir wollen uns hier mit folgenden fünf Schwerpunkten und Behauptungen auseinandersetzen:

1. Gott liebt alle Menschen.
2. Ich bin nicht wie alle anderen Menschen.
3. Zum Allgemeinen Wohl kann ich etwas beitragen.
4. Einheit ist auf allen Ebenen und in jedem Bereich nur in Vielfalt zu erreichen.
5. Unsere Sehnsucht heißt Sicherheit, unser Ziel Friede.

## 1. Gott liebt alle Menschen

Gott ist und bleibt – für alle Menschen – ein großes Geheimnis. Steindl-Rast meint in seinem Kurzkomentar zum ersten Weisheitsgedicht des Taoteking: „Alles – wirklich alles im Sinn eines erfüllten Lebens – hängt von unserer Beziehung zu diesem Geheimnis ab.“ (Steindl-Rast & Balts, 2024: 15) „Gott ist Liebe“ haben die letzten Päpste in unterschiedlicher Weise betont.

Kardinal Reinhard Marx hat in seinem Buch über Freiheit (Reinhard, 2020) das Leiden der Menschen den Preis für die Freiheit genannt und gemeint, dass echte Entscheidungsfreiheit für Menschen nur vorliege, wenn sie sich für das Gute oder das Böse frei und selbstbestimmt entscheiden können. Damit musste das Böse möglich und für den Menschen machbar sein. So entstand das Theodizee Problem, mit dem sich in jüngerer Zeit vor allem Johann B. Metz (1928–2019) auseinandergesetzt hat (Baptist, 2011). Metz, in Zusammenarbeit mit Johann Reikerstorfer, setzte sich u.a. mit der Gottbegabung des

Menschen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung auseinander und skizzierte auch ein „Weltprogramm des Christentums im Pluralismus der Religionen und Kulturen“, das dringlich theologisch weiterzuentwickeln ist (Baptist, 2011: 158).

Mich persönlich hat die Aussage des seinerzeitigen VÖEST-Pfarrers und späteren Pfarrers von Leonding bei Linz stark beeindruckt, als er uns als Jugendliche auf unsere Frage, was ein katholischer Sanitäter, der Priester war, im II. Weltkrieg zu einem sterbenden Soldaten gesagt bzw. getan hat, kurz antwortete: Da war nie viel Zeit und immer große Gefahr: Da hat man ihn gefragt: „Glaubst Du, dass Gott Dich liebt“ und wenn er wenigstens genickt hat, hat man ihm die Absolution gegeben und ihm ein Kreuzzeichen gemacht. Immer wieder haben einige den Krieg oder schwere Krankheiten und Krisen überlebt, aber nur wenige haben Gott oder den Menschen, die ihnen geholfen haben, gedankt, obwohl das doch mehr als selbstverständlich wäre. Und wie ist das bei uns heute? Haben wir nicht allen Grund, Gott und Menschen zu danken. Lassen wir uns von Steindl-Rast zur Dankbarkeit einladen (Steindl-Rast, 2018) oder folgen wir der interreligiösen und interkulturellen Quelle für ein gutes Leben, die auch Dankbarkeit heißt (Ekmekcioglu, 2024).

Zum Glück trösten in vielen unserer Familien Eltern und Verwandte die Kinder, die sich verletzt haben oder aus anderen Gründen traurig sind, mit den Worten: „Alles wird wieder gut“ und geben so Hoffnung und Beruhigung. Diese Hoffnung auf das Gute hat mein langjähriger „Chef“, Professor Erich Bodzenta auf der Inschrift an seinem Grab mit „Gott ist kein Schuft“, drastisch zum Ausdruck gebracht und damit sein Gott-Vertrauen klar ausgedrückt. Letztlich können wir alle nie sicher sein, sondern nur auf die Barmherzigkeit und die Liebe Gottes hoffen, wozu uns Christen Papst Franziskus immer wieder ermuntert (Papst Franziskus, 2016).

Bevor Gott Moses auf dem Berg Sinai die Verhaltens – und Haltungshilfen für das Volk Israel auf zwei Tafeln übergab, führte Gott sein Volk aus der Sklavenherrschaft der Ägypter in die Freiheit. Juden und Christen gedenken bis heute dieser Befreiungstat, aber die dankbare und liebevolle Zuwendung von Juden und Christen zu ihrem Gott und ihren Mitmenschen lässt nach wie vor zu wünschen übrig. Welches Verhalten wird dem Volk Israel auf den zwei Tafeln empfohlen?

Auf der ersten Tafel finden sich drei Empfehlungen Gott gegenüber, die auch gesamtgesellschaftliche Bedeutung haben:

1. „Ich bin der HERR, dein Gott, der dich aus Ägypten geführt hat, aus dem Sklavenhaus. Du sollst neben mir keine anderen Götter haben. Du sollst dir kein Kultbild machen und keine Gestalt von irgendetwas am Himmel droben, auf der Erde unten oder im Wasser unter der Erde. Du sollst dich nicht vor ihnen niederwerfen und ihnen nicht dienen. Denn ich, der HERR, dein Gott, bin ein eifersüchtiger Gott: Ich suche die Schuld der Väter an den Kindern heim, an der dritten und vierten Generation, bei denen, die mich hassen; doch ich erweise Tausenden meine Huld bei denen, die mich lieben und meine Gebote bewahren. (Ex 20,1–6)

Hier kommt deutlich zum Ausdruck, dass eine Ablehnung Gottes und eine Hinwendung zu „anderen Göttern“ oder Ersatzbildern bzw. die liebevolle Zuwendung zu Gott und ein den Verhaltens-Empfehlungen-Entsprechen nicht folgenlos bleiben.

Du sollst den Namen des HERRN, deines Gottes, nicht missbrauchen; denn der Herr lässt den nicht ungestraft, der seinen Namen missbraucht. (Ex 20,7)

In der Antike und bei vielen Völkern steht der Name für die Gesamtpersönlichkeit, was auch einer der Gründe ist, warum dem Namensrecht auch in Österreich große Bedeutung und besonderer Schutz zukommt. Es stellt bis heute eine besondere Verfehlung dar, Gott (und auch Menschen) zu instrumentalisieren und zum eigenen Vorteil oder für andere Zwecke zu benutzen.

2. Gedenke des Sabbats: Halte ihn heilig! Sechs Tage darfst du schaffen und all deine Arbeit tun. Der siebte Tag ist ein Ruhetag, dem HERRN, deinem Gott, geweiht. An ihm darfst du keine Arbeit tun: du und dein Sohn und deine Tochter, dein Sklave und deine Sklavin und dein Vieh und dein Fremder in deinen Toren. Denn in sechs Tagen hat der HERR Himmel, Erde und Meer gemacht und alles, was dazugehört; am siebten Tag ruhte er. Darum hat der HERR den Sabbat gesegnet und ihn geheiligt. (Ex 20,8–11)

Die Einhaltung des Sabbats am siebten Tag der Woche und die Interpretation der Heiligkeit dieses Tages in der Weise, dass „Ruhe“ entsprechend für alle und alles gelte, hatte auch spezifische gesellschaftliche Folgen. Die Entwicklungen der Moderne, insbesondere die Beschleunigungstendenzen und die sogenannten wirtschaftlichen

Sachzwänge, die Schicht- und Nachtarbeit, 24 Stunden Arbeit und pausenloses Funktionieren vieler Einrichtungen haben dazu geführt, dass auch spezifische Krankheiten, manchmal Zivilisationskrankheiten genannt, entstanden sind, deren Gesamt-Ursachen und -Folgen eingehend untersucht werden sollten. Jedenfalls sollte allen, die durch einen unnatürlichen Lebensgestaltungsrythmus betroffen sind, wie z.B. Nacht-Schicht-Arbeitern, nicht nur ein erhöhtes Entgelt geboten werden, sondern auch entsprechende Abschwächungen der Belastungen zugestanden bzw. präventiv zur Schadensminimierung vorgeschrieben werden. Niemand darf seine Gesundheit (oder sein Leben) verkaufen. Dies entspricht nicht der „gottgewollten Lebensordnung“.

Die Vernachlässigung der ersten Tafel der 10 Gebote in Theorie und Praxis, insbesondere auch durch die christlichen Kirchen, führt meiner Meinung nach nicht nur zu einem Einfluss-Verlust der Kirchen in den Gesellschaften, sondern hat auch Auswirkungen auf viele Lebensbereiche, die üblicher Weise nicht mit Religion und Kirchen verbunden werden.

Auf der zweiten Tafel finden sich die Empfehlungen allen Mitmenschen gegenüber. Dass diese „Empfehlungen“ keine einschränkenden Gebote und Verbote darstellen, sondern das Zusammenleben der Menschen erleichtern und friedlich gestalten sollen, wird insbesondere in der vierten Empfehlung ausgedrückt:

3. Ehre deinen Vater und deine Mutter, damit du lange lebst in dem Land, das der HERR, dein Gott, dir gibt. (Ex 20,12)

Die Gesellschaftsstrukturen haben sich in den verschiedenen Ländern und Kulturen seit Verkündung dieser „Gebote“ stark verändert, sodass es notwendig ist, zu überlegen, auf welche Weise der Sinn dieses Gebotes und sein Verständnis den jeweils gegebenen gesellschaftlichen Strukturen entsprechend bzw. sie berücksichtigend, verstanden und gestaltet werden sollen und wie auch ihre Zukunftsfähigkeit gewahrt werden kann.

4. Du sollst nicht töten. (Ex 20,13)

Ein in der Öffentlichkeit immer wieder diskutiertes Thema ist in diesem Zusammenhang das Verbot der Todesstrafe und auch die Haltung zum Selbstmord. „Gott allein ist Herr über Leben und Tod“ ist die Ansicht vieler. Aber es gibt auch andere Ansichten, die zu diskutieren sind und über deren gesellschaftliche Umsetzung gesprochen werden muss. Einzel-Ansichten durchsetzen zu wollen und dafür vielleicht auch

verschiedene Formen von „Gewalt“ anzuwenden, erscheint problematisch. Gewaltloser Widerstand wird vielfach propagiert, aber auch nicht allgemein in gleicher Weise verstanden. An anderer Stelle habe ich mich mit den Prinzipien gewaltlosen Widerstandes, wie sie Martin Luther King verstanden hat, beschäftigt (Papst Franziskus, 2003). Für ein friedliches Miteinander der Menschen und Völker ist aber nicht nur eine Beendigung der Kriege zwischen ihnen notwendig, sondern es braucht auch Maßnahmen der Versöhnung wie sie Nelson Mandela (Mandela, 1995: 13) und Desmond Tutu (Tutu, 2000) vorgeschlagen haben. Aber es werden auch die für die Christen blamablen Erfahrungen in Ruanda (Friedli, 2003: 35,63) aufzuarbeiten sein.

Schon nach dem Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges hat Papst Benedikt XV. spirituelle Voraussetzungen für einen „echten“ Frieden formuliert, aber seine Enzyklika *Pacem Dei Munus Pulcherrimum* wurde bis heute nicht für eine konkrete Friedensarbeit der Katholischen Kirche genutzt. Schlagnitweit meint, dass erst Johannes XXIII. die Friedenssicherung in die Katholische Soziallehre eingeführt habe (Schlagnitweit, 2021: 53). Auch *Pacem in Terris* von Papst Johannes XXIII (Papst Johannes XXIII, 1963). hatte weder großen theologischen Einfluss noch praktische Konsequenzen. Schlagnitweit hält die Enzyklika „*Pacem in Terris*“ von Johannes XXIII. für die „Gründungsurkunde moderner katholischer Politik- und Friedensethik (Schlagnitweit, 2021: 54). Die Übersetzung in Taten von vielen steht noch aus.

In jüngster Zeit hat sich der deutsche Philosoph Gunnar Hindrichs mit dem Militarismus auseinandergesetzt und versucht, die neun Hauptfaktoren, die für den Einsatz von Gewalt zur Durchsetzung von Werten häufig angeführt werden, zu entkräften oder wenigstens „Einsicht in die Fluchtlinien, in denen der Krieg unserer Gegenwart – der Krieg der Zeitenwende – steht“, zu gewinnen (Hindrichs, 2024:7). Denn eine Philosophie des Krieges gibt es nicht, aber vielleicht gelingt es Hindrichs mit seinen Reflexionen, dem Krieg etwas von seinem Zauber zu nehmen. „Wer aber dem Krieg seinen Zauber nimmt, der nimmt ihm zugleich seine Macht.“ (Hindrichs, 2024: 9).

#### 4.1. Du sollst nicht die Ehe brechen. (Ex 20,14)

Diese Empfehlung für das Verhalten wurde im Verständnis der Kirchen, vor allem im Judentum und Christentum, je nach den Zeit-Umständen immer wieder anders verstanden und besonders zur „Disziplinierung“ der Menschen herangezogen. Die verschiedenen



„Ehe-Formen“ von der Antike bis heute sollen dazu dienen, das Zusammenleben der Geschlechter und Generationen für alle Beteiligten möglichst günstig zu gestalten. Ehe-Schließungen auch zwischen Herrscher-Häusern dienten und dienen zum Teil noch heute auch dazu, eine Versöhnung zwischen den Beteiligten herbeizuführen und/oder sie zu besiegeln. Ehebruch war daher nicht bloß eine persönliche Verfehlung dem jeweiligen Ehe-Partner gegenüber, sondern konnte dazu führen, dass alte Feindschaften zwischen Herrscherhäusern und Völkern wieder aufbrachen. Wie weit hat sich das gängige kirchliche Verständnis von dieser großen Verhaltens-Empfehlung entfernt.

#### 4.2. Du sollst nicht stehlen. (Ex 20,15)

Es ist richtig und wichtig bei allen Geboten und Verboten jeweils schon den Anfängen zu wehren. Aber als man in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit (nach dem 2. Weltkrieg) dem damaligen Erzbischof von Köln Joseph Frings (1887–1978) nahelegte, in einer Predigt darauf hinzuweisen, dass es verboten sei, vom Bahn-Gelände in Köln Kohlenstücke (und vielleicht auch anderes) wegzutragen, soll der spätere Kardinal gesagt haben: Ich will diesen armen Leuten, die gar nichts zum Heizen haben, nicht auch noch die letzte Chance, wenigstens ein wenig zum Heizen zu bekommen, verbieten. Da soll es dann in Köln geheißen haben, wenn ein Armer Kohlen-Stücke für den eigenen Bedarf wegnimmt, heißt das nicht stehlen, sondern „fringsen“.

In ganz anderer Weise hat der radikale französische Frühsozialist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon Eigentum pauschal als Diebstahl bezeichnet (Proudhon, 2024) und damit klar gegen die gängige europäische Position, dass jedem Menschen wohl erworbenes Eigentum zustehe – und auch vom Staat geschützt werden müsse – Stellung bezogen. Eine interessante Sonderfrage, wie die Handhabung des Patentrechtes de facto die Mächtigen und Etablierten bevorzugt, hat der britische Nobelpreisträger Robert Laughlin in seinem Buch „Das Verbrechen der Vernunft“ beschrieben, in dem er gezeigt hat, wie leicht mächtige Pharma-Unternehmungen, deren Patent geschützte Produkte Krankheiten lindern helfen, verhindern können, dass – deutlich kostengünstigere – neue Produkte auf den Markt kommen (Laughlin, 2008). Die Frage der Eigen-Vorsorge wird daher unter verschiedenen Perspektiven zu einer wichtigen gesellschaftspolitischen Frage, die gemeinsam von vielen verantwortlich diskutiert werden muss. Dass der Ort solcher und anderer Diskussionen, deren Dringlichkeit außer

Frage steht, heute fragwürdig (durchaus im doppelten Sinn) geworden ist, zeigt das Buch von Richard David Precht und Harald Welzer „Die vierte Gewalt“, das sich kritisch mit der sogenannten Mehrheitsmeinung auseinandersetzt (Precht & Welzer, 2024).

5. Du sollst nicht falsch gegen deinen Nächsten aussagen. (Ex 20,16)

Die üblichen Übersetzungen dieses Gebotes „Du sollst nicht lügen“, oder „Du sollst nicht die Unwahrheit sagen“ tragen dazu bei, den ursprünglichen Öffentlichkeitscharakter dieses Verbotes zurückzudrängen und die Individualisierung dieses Gebotes zu fördern. Das beeindruckende Buch des Dissidenten und Philosophen bzw. späteren Präsidenten der Tschechoslowakei Václav Havel „Versuch, in der Wahrheit zu leben“ trug wesentlich zum Nachdenken vieler über den Verlust von Wahrhaftigkeit, vor allem in den modernen Gesellschaften, bei (Havel, 2000). Nach der Wende meinten viele: Das, was Havel ausdrückt, war typisch für das kommunistische System des Ostens, wir im Westen haben die freie Meinungsbildung, bei uns gilt das kaum. Die „Vorkommnisse von Lainz“, wie die Tötungen von alten Bewohnern im Pflegeheim Lainz durch angestellte Hilfsschwesterinnen bezeichnet wurden, zeigten mir deutlich, wie beunruhigende Tatbestände verharmlost dargestellt und Verantwortung nicht wahrgenommen werden kann. Die Gesundheitsexperten weisen immer wieder darauf hin, dass bei Qualitätskontrollen im Gesundheitswesen zwischen Strukturqualität, Prozessqualität und Ergebnisqualität unterschieden werden muss. Von der immer wichtiger werdenden Humanqualität wird in diesem Zusammenhang leider noch zu wenig gesprochen. Die Hilfsschwesterinnen, deren Fehlverhalten dadurch nicht verteidigt werden soll, waren in ihrer Tätigkeit vielfältig überfordert, was ihren Vorgesetzten, Diplom-Krankenschwestern und Ärzten, die für Struktur- und Prozessqualität mitverantwortlich waren und sind, bewusst gewesen sein sollte. Wer hat eine entsprechende Verantwortung übernommen? Was hat sich klar zum Besseren – nicht nur in Lainz – geändert? Die Schließung von manchen Abteilungen – wegen Personalmangel – kann es ja wohl nicht sein.

In diesem Zusammenhang wird auch darauf hingewiesen, dass ein gegenseitiges Nicht-oder Miss-Verstehen nicht nur auf (bewusste) Falsch-Aussagen zurückgeht, sondern auch, wie die Kommunikationswissenschaft lehrt (Schulz, 1997), die jeweilige Aufnahme des

Gehörten durch die Empfänger einer Aussage die Kommunikation darstellt. Dies hat Schulz von Thun durch sein Modell des vier-ohrigen Hörens einer Botschaft dargestellt, das durch einen vier-mündigen Sender ergänzt werden könnte, wodurch die Möglichkeiten eines Sich-Nicht-Verstehens erheblich gesteigert werden, auch wenn nicht gelogen wird.

Darüber hinaus wissen wir, dass die Menschen nicht nur mit Worten lügen können, sondern dass die Möglichkeiten des „Tarnens und Täuschens“ sehr vielfältig sind.

Václav Havel hat aber in seinem Werk auch auf die Wichtigkeit der Verantwortungsübernahme der jeweils Handelnden für ihr Tun hingewiesen und zugleich betont, dass das verlässliche korrekte Handeln der Vielen von größter Bedeutung dafür ist, was in einer Gesellschaft und im Zusammenleben der Menschen Bestand hat (Zantovsky, 2014: 10).

6. Du sollst nicht nach dem Haus deines Nächsten begehren. Du sollst nicht die Frau deines Nächsten begehren, nicht seinen Sklaven oder seine Sklavin, sein Rind oder seinen Esel oder irgendetwas, das deinem Nächsten gehört. (Ex 20,17)

Dieses neunte Gebot wurde später, im Buch Deuteronomium (Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2019: 192), in zwei Teile geteilt:

6.1. Du sollst nicht die Frau deines Nächsten begehren und

6.2. Du sollst nicht das Haus deines Nächsten verlangen, nicht sein Feld, seinen Sklaven oder seine Sklavin, sein Rind oder seinen Esel, nichts, das deinem Nächsten gehört.

Hier wird deutlich, dass die Gier eines Menschen, die mit einem nachvollziehbaren Begehren, nämlich dem Wunsch nach der (schönen) Frau des Nächsten, beginnen kann, keine Grenzen mehr kennt und schließlich alles umfassen kann, was einem anderen gehört. Was mit Neid beginnt, der aber auch Triebfeder für eigene Anstrengungen sein kann, wie Helmut Schoeck darstellt, (Schoeck, 1971) darf nicht in Raffgier ausarten, sondern kann an ihr Ende kommen, wie die britischen Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Collier und Kay hoffnungsvoll darstellen (Collier & Kay, 2002).

## 2. Meine Einmaligkeit ist unverzichtbar!

Religiöse Überzeugung oder das, was einem wirklich wichtig ist, trägt zur Identität und Authentizität, zum Selbstbild und Fremdbild jedes Menschen bei. Die Persönlichkeitsbildung, die früher die selbstverständliche Leistung der Herkunftsfamilie war und auch entsprechend – in der Regel – geleistet wurde, verliert diese Funktion sukzessive, ohne dass klar erkennbar wäre, wer (welche Einrichtung), diese Aufgabe übernimmt. Was eine(r) zum Allgemeinwohl beitragen kann, kann niemand anderer in gleicher Weise übernehmen, aber fast alle(s) sind (oft mit großer Mühe) ersetzbar.

An anderer Stelle habe ich mich der Frage „Wer bin ich eigentlich? Gewidmet (Zapotoczky, 2021a) und mich an Kants allgemeine Frage: Was ist der Mensch? angelehnt. Kant war der Meinung, dass die Frage „Was ist der Mensch?“ durch die Antworten auf drei Unterfragen:

Was kann ich wissen? (Die Frage der Metaphysik)

Was soll ich tun (Die Frage der Moral) und

Was darf ich hoffen? (Die Frage der Religion)

gut erfasst werden könne (Buber, 1961: 9). So wichtig Metaphysik, Moral und Religion für die Menschen sind, muss festgehalten werden, dass es auch ganz andere Fragen gibt. Ausgehend vom Weisheitsspruch „Der, der ich bin, schaut traurig auf den, der ich könnte sein“ kann im Anschluss an die phänomenologische Soziologie des Österreicherers Alfred Schütz (Schütz, 1960) und seine Aussage: „Der Mensch kann nicht sinnvoll handeln, sondern nur sinnvoll gehandelt haben“, gefragt werden: Wer will ich werden? und den aufgezeigten Sinnstrukturen von Schütz entsprechend: Wer werde ich bei meinem Tod gewesen sein? Wobei mich persönlich das Selbstbild mehr interessiert als die möglichen Fremdbilder.

Im UNESCO-Bericht zur Bildung für das 21. Jahrhundert wurde festgehalten, dass die Menschen ihr Leben lang bildungsfähig bleiben, auch wenn sich Merkfähigkeit und Gedächtnisleistung verändern (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, 1997). Auch die Schwerpunkte der Bildungsziele können sich im Laufe des Lebens nicht unwesentlich verändern, was auch aus dem Alterswerk des Wiener Soziologen Leopold Rosenmayr zu ersehen ist (Rosenmayr, 2016).

Die UNESCO hat in ihrem faszinierenden Bericht „Bildung“ als eine notwendige Utopie bezeichnet und sich auf neun Schwerpunkte konzentriert, die sie in drei Teilen behandelte:

Teil I: Perspektiven

1. Von der lokalen Gemeinschaft zur Weltgesellschaft.
2. Vom sozialen Zusammenhang zu demokratischer Partizipation.
3. Vom wirtschaftlichen Wachstum zur menschlichen Entwicklung.

lung.

Teil II: Prinzipien

4. Die vier Säulen der Bildung.
5. Lebenslanges Lernen.

Teil III: Orientierungslinien

6. Von der Grundbildung bis zur Universität.
7. Lehrer auf der Suche nach neuen Perspektiven.
8. Optionen für die Bildung: Der politische Faktor.
9. Internationale Kooperation: Bildung im globalen Dorf.

Allen neun Schwerpunkten ist der Prozess-Charakter eigen: Bildung ist und bleibt immer im Werden und damit in Veränderung.

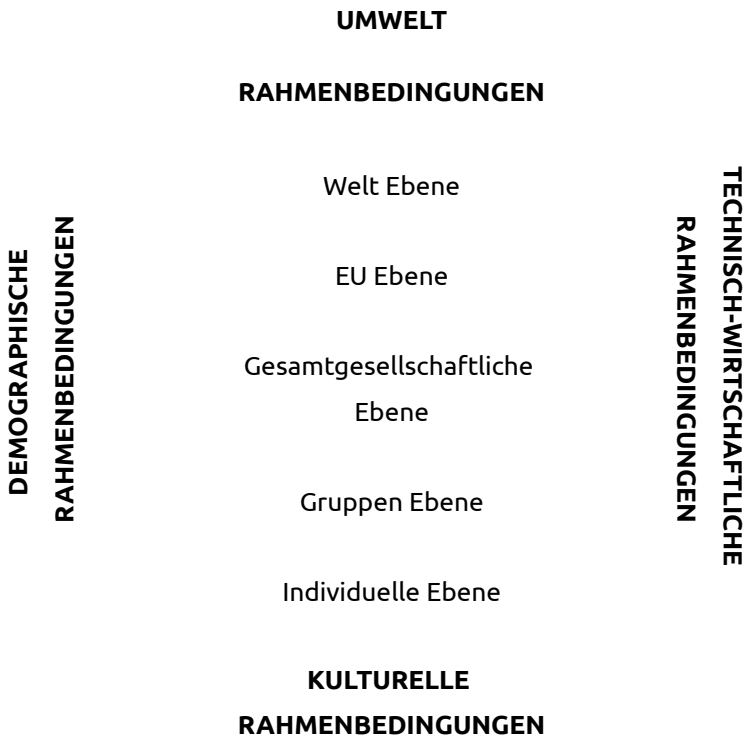
Machthaber und Macht-Strategen unterschiedlicher Weltanschauungen und kultureller Prägung haben immer wieder versucht (und versuchen es nach wie vor), den Geist in die Flasche zu sperren. Aber das alte Wort: Der Geist weht, wo er will, gilt nach wie vor, obwohl es subjektiv und vielleicht auch objektiv immer schwerer wird, diesem Ziel entsprechend zu leben.

Alle drei Teile des Berichts Perspektiven, Prinzipien und Orientierungslinien, sind eingehend zu diskutieren und kein Bildungsverantwortlicher sollte sich dem entziehen. Hier wollen wir uns auf die zwei Prinzipien beschränken, weil nur dann, wenn möglichst viele sich mit den Prinzipien einverstanden erklären, kann von der Mitte der Beteiligten aus eine Bewegung entstehen, die immer weitere Kreise erfasst und zu entsprechendem Handeln führt.

Die Globalisierung und die Digitalisierung verändern vieles, die künstliche Intelligenz in ihren schillernden Formen bringt neue Möglichkeiten, aber auch neue Gefahren. Trotzdem müssen wir den Bildungsprozess als Einzelne, Gruppen, Gesellschaften, Staaten-Gemeinschaften und als Weltgesellschaft angehen und versuchen, unter den sich verändernden Rahmenbedingungen jeweils das als günstig erkannte Ziel anzustreben: Eine gigantische, schöne, unmögliche Dauer-Aufgabe!

Es war ein seltener Glücksfall, dass die UNESCO auf Anregung des seinerzeitigen Präsidenten der Kommission der Europäischen Union Jacques Delors und mit entsprechender Unterstützung der EU eine 15-köpfige Kommission von Welt-Experten beauftragt hat, einen Bericht zur Bildung für das 21. Jahrhundert zu verfassen und dass Jacques Delors nach Ende seiner Amtszeit in der EU-Kommission die Leitung dieser Expertenkommission übernehmen konnte. Es wurde also ein hervorragendes Dokument auf Welt-Ebene verfasst. Allein dieses seltene Ereignis ist schon bemerkenswert, aber die Mehr-Ebenen-Grafik zeigt, dass damit noch kein Prozess in Gang gesetzt wird und viele weitere Schritte nötig sind, noch dazu, wenn sich zusätzlich alle Rahmenbedingungen, von denen in der Grafik nur vier wichtige aufgeführt sind, verändern.

**Figure 1.** Mehrebenenanalyse der UNESCO Bildungsprinzipien



Aber das Leben ist eben in allen Bereichen und besonders auch im Bildungsbereich kompliziert, und wir sind herausgefordert, wie wir – auf den uns zugänglichen Ebenen und somit indirekt auf allen Ebenen – einen Beitrag leisten können. Immer weniger können wir davon ausgehen, dass alles Gute von oben kommen wird, sondern bescheidene Kleinarbeit ist immer mehr die Basis für größere Schritte. Freilich fordert dies Beharrlichkeit, Geduld und Durchhaltevermögen. Zugleich können Erfolge im überschaubaren Bereich leichter gesehen werden und den Beteiligten auch Freude machen. Zunächst aber müssen wir uns mit den zwei Prinzipien der Bildungs-Utopie des UNESCO-Berichtes auseinandersetzen.

Der Prinzipien-Teil des Bildungsberichtes geht davon aus, dass Bildung zwei Hauptaufgaben erfüllen muss: Sie muss „den wachsenden Berg sich ständig ändernden Wissens und das Know-how einer Informationsgesellschaft vermitteln“ und „den Menschen einen Orientierungsrahmen bieten“. Sonst ertrinken die Menschen in der Flut oberflächlicher Informationen, „sowohl in der Öffentlichkeit als auch in der Privatsphäre. Die eigentliche Aufgabe der „Bildung“ ist „die Entwicklung von Individuen und Gemeinschaften“ (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, 1997:73).

**Figure 2.** Die vier Säulen der Bildung für das 21. Jahrhundert



„Die Kommission glaubt, dass in jeder organisierten Form des Lernens jeder dieser vier Säulen das gleiche Maß an Aufmerksamkeit gebührt.“ (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission, 1997: 74) Das erfordert zunächst ein Umdenken der Lehrenden und der für sie Verantwortlichen. Bisher war das Hauptaugenmerk fast ausschließlich auf den Wissenserwerb ausgerichtet. Lernen für das Leben war deutlich weniger gefragt als Lernen für den Beruf und die Wirtschaft. Schulen

und andere Bildungseinrichtungen sind immer noch zu wenig auf die Entdeckung, Förderung und Entfaltung des kreativen Potentials der einzelnen Menschen und der verschiedenen Gruppen gerichtet. Ein langer und schwieriger Umgestaltungsprozess (mit seinen Konflikten) steht bevor, neue Belastungen müssen möglichst gelassen ertragen, neue Chancen freudig genutzt werden.

Zugleich muss das Lernen auf die gesamte Lebenszeit bedarfsgerecht und persönlichkeitsbezogen aufgeteilt werden. Das erfordert neue, flexible Bildungseinrichtungen mit entsprechenden vielfältigen Nutzungsmöglichkeiten. Die alten Vorstellungen von Schule und Bildung werden dafür wenig nützlich, vielmehr unerwartet hinderlich, sein.

Die Einmaligkeit jeder und jedes wird durch diese Veränderungen stärker ins Bewusstsein dringen, und zugleich wird es notwendig sein zu überlegen, wie aus diesen – hoffentlich gemeinschaftsfähigen – einmaligen Einzelnen Teams verschiedener Art und unterschiedlicher Ausrichtung für das Erreichen des gemeinsamen Wohles gebildet werden können.

Nicht nur die Ziele des Lernens und die Lerndauer werden im 21. Jahrhundert andere werden müssen, auch die Art des Lernens wird sich insofern verändern als ich nicht, zumindest nicht in erster Linie, für mich, meine Lebenschancen und meine Karriere, sondern mit Bedacht darauf, welche positiven Auswirkungen mein Lernen (in den vier Ziel-Bereichen und während des ganzen Lebens) auf mein Lebensumfeld, das Wohlergehen meiner Familie und Freunde, der Gemeinde und der Gemeinschaften, zu denen ich gehöre hat, und wie sich meine Bildungsbemühungen mit den Bildungsbemühungen der anderen am besten vertragen. Neue Erfahrungen werden zu machen sein, neue Erkenntnisse werden erzielt werden und hoffentlich wird gemeinsam daraus das Beste gemacht werden.

### **3. Meine Entfaltung fördert das Gemeinwohl**

Gelegentlich kommt jede(r) von uns in die Lage, dass er sich in einem Bereich, einer Situation, einem anderen Menschen gegenüber oder bei einer sonstigen Gelegenheit „völlig daneben“ fühlt. Oft gelingt es, diese Unannehmlichkeit irgendwie zu meistern, manchmal findet man Wege, solche Situationen möglichst zu vermeiden, relativ



selten lernen wir bewusst aus diesen Unannehmlichkeiten. Unser Fehler-Management scheint verbesserungswürdig.

Ein erster wichtiger Schritt liegt darin, einen Freund, eine Freundin zu finden, die einen einfühlsam und vorsichtig (denn die meisten sind, was Fehler anlangt, sehr verletzlich) auf Fehler aufmerksam macht. Einen entsprechenden „Dienst“ leisten da manche „Feinde“, die einem Fehler (gefühlte brutal) an den Kopf werfen. Besonders hart ist es, wenn das Körnchen „Wahrheit“ etwas größer ist. Jede(r) von uns könnte nachdenken, welche Schwäche (Losigkeit) er vielleicht in eine Stärke verwandeln möchte. In meinem Buch „Die Losigkeitsgesellschaft verwandeln“ habe ich, dem Alphabet folgend, Anregungen von A bis Z zu geben versucht (Zapotoczky, 2022). Jede Schwäche, die wir verringern oder in eine Stärke verwandeln können, erhöht nicht nur unser persönliches Wohlbefinden, sondern ist auch ein einmaliger Bestandteil des allgemeinen Wohlergehens.

Wenn schon das, was uns unangenehm ist oder gar Schmerzen macht, Veränderung bewirkt, um wie viel mehr kann erst das, was uns leicht fällt und Freude macht, Verbesserung bewirken und Dinge und Menschen in Bewegung bringen. Was sind unsere Lieblingsbeschäftigungen? Was tun wir gerne und macht uns Freude? Oft wissen wir es nicht genau, spüren es aber irgendwie, weil uns „warm wird ums Herz“, uns freudig und spontan singen oder summen lässt. Manchmal versinken wir ins Träumen oder „vergessen die Zeit“, manchmal sagen wir: „Ich fühle mich wie in einer anderen Welt oder wie neu geboren“ oder ähnliches. Denken wir vielleicht auch im Gespräch mit Freunden, darüber nach, was uns Freude macht, uns beflügelt. Vieles was uns Freude bereitet, tut auch anderen gut, sodass wir sagen können: „Geteilte Freude ist doppelte Freude“ und wenn es einmal nicht so gut geht, wir Trost und Hoffnung brauchen, damit dass wir sagen und spüren können: „Geteiltes Leid ist halbes Leid.“ „Ich bin nie allein, Gott ist immer mein treuer Begleiter.“

Im dritten Kapitel des Buches „Wer bin ich eigentlich? (Zapotoczky, 2021b) habe ich Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten verschiedenster Art aufgezeigt, ohne allerdings die Verknüpfungen vieler Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten mit Weltanschauungen, Religionen und anderen spirituellen Überzeugungen in Verbindung zu bringen. Vor allem die verschiedenen Künste: Bildende Kunst, Literatur und Musik sowie andere „Kulturaktivitäten“ waren und sind, vor allem in den christlichen Ländern Europas,

mit dem Christentum eng verbunden. Überall besitzen diese Aktivitäten eine spirituelle Basis und sind mit ethischen Haltungen verknüpft.

Auch die Arbeitswelt war und ist mit religiös-weltanschaulichen Haltungen eng verbunden, wenngleich der Sinn von Arbeit und Tätig-Sein heute vielen Menschen weniger bewusst ist. Mir war und ist der Sinn der Arbeit und eine menschengerechte Gestaltung der Arbeit und des Lebens ein wichtiges Anliegen (Zapotoczky, 1996: 11–41). Manche Berufe haben eine besondere spirituelle Basis und auf Martin Luther und seine Zeit geht in Europa der Gedanke zurück, dass jeder Beruf ein Dienst an Menschen und somit auch ein Gottes-Dienst ist (Zapotoczky, 2024: 94). Manche Tätigkeiten und Berufe, die zunächst wichtige Dienstleistungen an den Menschen waren und sind, haben das besondere Potential zu Machtmitteln zu werden und dazu gebraucht zu werden, andere Menschen zu beherrschen oder zu bevormunden bzw. zu für eigene (oder fremde) Zwecke auszunutzen. Daher kommt einer entsprechenden Berufsausbildung dieser Berufsgruppen besondere Bedeutung zu. In Österreich haben sich diesbezüglich eigene – durchaus unterschiedliche – mehr oder weniger autonome Institutionen und Eigenheiten entwickelt. Aber auch in anderen Ländern gibt es für manche Berufsgruppen spezielle Sonderregelungen.

Auf einige dieser Gruppen – insbesondere im religiös-weltanschaulichen Bereich – wollen wir im Folgenden kurz eingehen. Die Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften sind für die Heranbildung ihrer Amtsträger – weitgehend autonom – zuständig. Für die Katholische Kirche wurden die diesbezüglichen Regelungen in Konkordaten, zuletzt zwischen der Republik Österreich und dem Heiligen Stuhl festgeschrieben. Die Regelungen mit den anderen in Österreich anerkannten Religionsgemeinschaften orientieren sich an diesen Vorschriften, weisen aber durchaus Unterschiede auf, wie sich im sogenannten Staatskirchenrecht zeigt.

Durch die starke Abnahme der Zahlen der einheimischen Priester und Priesterkandidaten sowie der Ordensangehörigen und Interessenten für Ordensberufe ist eine neue Situation eingetreten: Laien (Männer und Frauen) übernehmen kirchliche Funktionen, die nicht an spezielle Weihen gebunden sind und auch Ehrenamtliche übernehmen verantwortliche Funktionen innerhalb der Kirchen. Vor allem in Europa ergibt sich dadurch ein Bedarf für neue Ämter bzw. für umfassende Strukturreformen. Diese Reformen sollten in erster Linie von den

Bedürfnissen und Zielen der Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften und der Menschen, die sie bilden, ausgehen und nicht von dem jeweils vorhandenen Personal. Auch die Einbindung von „Fremdpersonal“ in die jeweiligen Gemeinden sollte umfassend überlegt werden. Manchmal sind Notlösungen besser als Lösungs-Nötigungen. Zugehörigkeitsfragen sind klar, transparent und möglichst einvernehmlich zu regeln; de facto Nicht-Berücksichtigung wirkt mittel- und langfristig nachhaltig und nachteilig für alle Beteiligten.

Solche Strukturänderungen treffen aber auch viele andere Berufsgruppen, deren Arbeits- und Lebenswelten sich in der modernen Welt ständig verändern und deren religiös-weltanschauliche Grundlagen andere geworden sind, ohne dass es den Berufsangehörigen oft bewusst geworden ist. Viele suchen nach Orientierung, Halt und Sinn und für nicht wenige sind außerberufliche Motivationen oder Arbeits erleichterungen und höheres Einkommen zu zentralen Inhalten ihrer Tätigkeit geworden. Die intrinsische Motivation ist in einer vielfach bedingten Krise und Abhilfe ist für viele nicht in Sicht.

Im Gesundheitsbereich gibt es hoffnungsvolle Ansätze, die oft von Einzelnen ausgehen, wie z.B. im deutschen Sprachraum von Christian Hess und Annina Hess-Cabalar, (2006), Wilhelm Schmid (2016) oder Andreas Michalsen (2017). Aber auch die Ansätze der Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO), die 1948 gegründet und weltweit eine Schwerpunktänderung von der Krankheitsbekämpfung zur Gesundheitsförderung bewirkt hat.

Anlässlich des Jahres der Freiwilligkeit 2011 habe ich auf Ersuchen des damaligen Landeshauptmannes von Oberösterreich, Dr. Josef Pühringer, Überlegungen darüber angestellt, wie vor allem Jugendliche für Freiwilligen-Tätigkeiten gewonnen und dazu motiviert werden können und auch darüber, mit welchen Inhalten die (jungen) Menschen konfrontiert werden sollten (Zapotoczky, 2013). Eine besondere Rolle nahm bei diesen Bemühungen die großartige Ottawa-Charta der WHO ein (1986), die als die beispielgebende Gesundheits-erklärung der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts bezeichnet werden kann. Diese Erklärung besteht aus fünf aufeinander abgestimmten Kapiteln, die für alle Menschen in ihren wesentlichen Zielsetzungen nachvollziehbar sind.

**Figure 3.** Gesundheit für alle bis zum Jahr 2000 (Ottawa Charta)



Was die Charta besonders auszeichnet, ist die Tatsache, dass sich die WHO in dieser Ottawa Charta nicht nur darum bemüht, in einer klar und übersichtlich gestalteten Weise, die Grundvoraussetzungen der Gesundheit für eine „Gesundheit für alle“ darzustellen, Tätigkeitsschwerpunkte zu empfehlen und darzulegen, wie eine bedarfsgerechte gesundheitliche Versorgung der Bevölkerung aussehen könnte und welche Unterstützungsmaßnahmen es zur Erreichung dieser drei Hauptziele bedürfe, sondern zu dieser Erklärung auch eine große Anzahl von konkreten Umsetzungsschritten ausgearbeitet wurden. Leider wurde diese Charta von den Mitgliedsstaaten der WHO weltweit nicht dazu genutzt, die staatlichen Gesundheitssysteme entsprechend umzubauen und auch in der Europa-Region der WHO setzten sich eher die Eigendynamiken der bestehenden (festgefahrenen) Systeme durch, auch wenn manches langsam Wirkung zeigt. Nach wie vor scheint mir die Grundabsicht der Charta, zunächst für einen überschaubaren Zeitraum Ziele zu formulieren und Prioritäten zu setzen, abgestimmt aufeinander das (eigene) Verhalten, die

Umweltbedingungen und die Versorgungsnotwendigkeiten zu regeln und dazu auch möglichst viele Unterstützungskräfte zu mobilisieren, ein beispielgebender Ansatz. Wir werden gut daran tun, diese Anregungen immer wieder neu aufzugreifen und geduldig und beharrlich an einer Umsetzung auf breiter Basis zum Wohl aller zu arbeiten.

Zum Glück gibt es immer wieder weltweit gültige Erklärungen von Welt-Organisationen, die auf die Mitarbeit der vielen Einzelnen, Gruppen und Gesellschaften angewiesen sind, die mit unterschiedlicher Schnelligkeit, manchmal auch gar nicht, von diesen Erklärungen erfahren. Solche Erklärungen, die Ottawa-Charta und der UNESCO-Bericht für die Bildung des 21. Jahrhundert, scheinen mir besonders gut geglückte und auch hervorragend wissenschaftlich begleitete Erklärungen zu sein, geben dem Einzelnen, aber auch einzelnen Gruppen und Gesellschaften eine unverzichtbare Chance, das eigene Bemühen an beschlossenen internationalen Erklärungen orientieren zu können und verhindern die Kritik, als Eigenbrötler oder Sonder-Interessierter bezeichnet zu werden.

Im Gegensatz zum Gesundheits- und Bildungsbereich, in denen auch von Fachleuten empfohlene Grundlagen-Erklärungen von UNO-Organisationen und Umsetzungsschritte vorliegen, sind für Politik und Wirtschaft keine entsprechenden Erklärungen zu finden. Vielfach herrschen „Bilder“, die für den Bestand des Planeten gefährlich erscheinen, sodass es wichtig ist, nach Alternativen zum Main-Stream Ausschau zu halten. Die Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften haben an Einfluss auf Politik und Wirtschaft verloren, auch wenn nach wie vor kritische Stimmen existieren und (vereinzelt) auch in der breiten Öffentlichkeit Gehör finden (Raworth, 2018). Manchmal finden sich auch engagierte Intellektuelle zusammen, die Gründe vorlegen, warum sie auf das Christentum und sein Wirken in der Welt nicht verzichten wollen (Schavan, 2024).

Von meinem Freund und Kollegen Herbert Strunz (1961–2018) wurde ich gebeten, meinen Weiterbildungsvortrag, den ich ursprünglich bei einem Seminar der Alexander-Dubček-Universität Trenčín gehalten hatte, schriftlich auszuarbeiten und Strunz hat ihn in verschiedene Sammelbände aufgenommen. Auch in die Gedenkschrift für Herbert Strunz „Wanderer zwischen den Welten“ wurde er aufgenommen (Zapotoczky, 2021c: 57). Folgende Themenbereiche werden angesprochen und kritisch beleuchtet:

- Zum Wandel des Berufsgedankens.
- Zum „Glauben“ an die „Wirtschaft“.
- Zu welcher „Wirtschaft“ soll sich ein „Wirtschaftstreibender“

bekennen?

- Die Heranbildung zukunftsfähiger „Wirtschaftsakademiker“.
- Sinn der „Wirtschaft“ – „Wirtschaft als akademische Aufgabe“.
- Zur Bedeutung von „Wirtschaft“ in der modernen Gesellschaft.

Heute erscheint es mir vordringlich, das Bemühen von Herbert Strunz, das Verhältnis der Religionen zur Wirtschaft, beginnend mit den abrahamitischen Religionen, eingehend zu studieren und Ansätze für eine innere Erneuerung der Wirtschaft zu finden. In der Festgabe für mich zum 80. Geburtstag hat Herbert Strunz Reflexionen zum Verhältnis Katholische Kirche und Wirtschaft vorgelegt, denen er weitere vergleichbare Untersuchungen folgen lassen wollte. Leider hat sein unerwarteter Tod dies verhindert. Mir erscheint es entscheidend wichtig, Selbstreinigungskräfte spiritueller Art in allen Bereichen zu stärken und insbesondere im wichtigen Wirtschaftsbereich zu aktivieren. Später könnten entsprechende Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Religionen und Politik folgen. Die jeweiligen inneren Erneuerungskräfte dieser Lebensbereiche sind zu stärken, weil Einflüsse von außen zwar wichtig sind, aber die immer komplexer werdenden Bereiche nicht mehr entsprechend gestalten können.

Es gibt aber auch viele andere Bereiche, in denen Menschen sich entfalten können. Ein großer Bereich, der heute in neuen Formen an Bedeutung gewinnt, ist der Bereich des Spielens, der unter sehr unterschiedlichen Gesichtspunkten immer wieder untersucht wurde. Nach wie vor sind die Reflektionen von Johan Huizinga über den Homo Ludens ein wichtiger Ausgangspunkt (Huizinga, 1961). Die Einzelnen, die verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen Gruppen sowie Gesellschaften und Kulturen entfalten sich in unterschiedlicher, oft auch widersprüchlicher Weise, sodass neben der Förderung der Entfaltung auch das Management der Vielfalt, die Herstellung von Gemeinsamkeit und Zusammenhalt sowie die Organisation produktiver Zusammenarbeit eine wichtige Aufgabe jeder Gesellschaft und somit auch der Religion darstellt.

## 4. Von der Vielfalt des Lebens zur Einheit des Lebendigen?

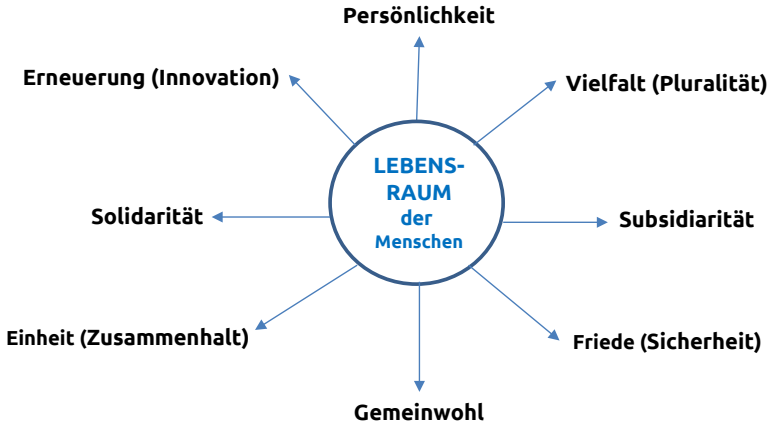
Wie die Entfaltung der Einzigartigkeit jeder Person das Allgemeinwohl steigert und die Solidarität sich in subsidiären Kreisen verwirklicht, so ist die Einheit der Menschen nur durch ein Mit-Sich-Ins-Reine-Kommen von Einzelnen und Gemeinschaften zu erreichen. Wie ist Pluralität konstruktiv, kreativ und produktiv zu managen? In der Regel ist ein Vorgehen in mehreren kleinen Schritten erfahrungsgemäß am ehesten erfolgreich. Schon Immanuel Kant war einem gewissen föderalen Vorgehen zugeneigt und viele politische Erfahrungen zeigen, dass föderale Strukturen sich langfristig besser bewähren als Alternativen, obwohl kein System ohne Schwächen ist (Popper, 1997: 231).

Wenn wir von den jüdisch-christlichen Erfahrungen ausgehen, so wird deutlich, dass sich schon das relativ kleine Volk Israel in zwölf Stämme aufgeteilt hat und dass eine gewisse Gliederung der Anhängerschaft auch bei den Christen gegeben war, allerdings nicht in Juden und Griechen, Männer und Frauen, Freie und Sklaven (die üblichen Gliederungen in den damaligen Gesellschaften), sondern in Gemeinden, wie uns vor allem aus den Paulus-Briefen deutlich wird. Diese frühchristlichen Gemeinden sind auch heute in manchen christlichen Kreisen ein wichtiges Thema (Bildungshaus, 2024). Die übergeordnete Frage ist: Wie umgehen mit Pluralität? Wie Einheit erreichen, die niemanden ausschließt?

Im Zeitalter der Globalisierung (Albrow, 1999: 29) und gleichzeitig zunehmender Differenzierung (Treibel, 2006) aller Lebensbereiche ist eine Weiterentwicklung der Katholischen Gesellschaftslehre sowohl zur Sicherung der Einheit von Kirche und Welt-Gesellschaft und zur Förderung von Frieden (in allen Bereichen und auf jeder Ebene) als auch die weitere Förderung von Persönlichkeitsentfaltung und Gemeinwohl sowie von Solidarität unter Beachtung der Subsidiarität ein Gebot der Stunde und eine Herausforderung für die Zukunft.

Alle vier Dimensionen einer erweiterten Katholischen Soziallehre zeichnen sich sowohl durch Balance-Bemühungen zwischen Persönlichkeit und Gemeinwohl und den Polen der anderen Dimensionen aus und sind zugleich auch durch eine mögliche Best-Erfüllung der jeweiligen Pole geprägt, z.B. durch eine optimale Verwirklichung von Persönlichkeit. Gerald Hüther hat die Würde jedes Menschen

**Figure 4.** Erweiterte Katholische Soziallehre



in das Motto gefasst: „Verletzt nicht jeder, der die Würde eines anderen Menschen verletzt, in Wirklichkeit seine eigene Würde?“ (Hütter, 2018) und Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels haben Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts eine weltweite Solidarität der unterdrückten Arbeiter in den Slogan „Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt euch“ zusammengefasst (Marx & Engels, 2009). Dem setzte Johann Kaspar Schmidt (genannt auch Max Stirner) die Parole „Mir geht nichts über mich“ (Stirner, 1969) entgegen, vor der sich die Autoren des Kommunistischen Manifestes fürchteten, die aber erst in unseren Tagen zur allgemeinen Lebensweise der spirituell heimatlos gewordenen Einzelnen und Gruppen zu werden scheint und eigenes Wohlbefinden zum dominanten Lebensziel vieler Menschen, vor allem der sogenannten modernen Gesellschaften, geworden ist.

Der Respekt vor der Würde jedes Menschen muss ergänzt werden durch die Bereitschaft, sich in die Gemeinschaft einzufügen und zu ihr beizutragen. Ergänzt wird der Einsatz für den Nächsten bei Erste Hilfe-Einsätzen und anderen Tätigkeiten in Not- und Katastrophensituationen durch das Prinzip der Subsidiarität, das es in der Praxis ermöglicht, diese Hilfsbereitschaft auch bei anderen Gelegenheiten ohne Überforderung zu leben. Gestärkt werden könnte dieses Verhalten durch eine allgemeine Haltung, die die Engländer „give me a hand“ nennen und die wir mit „Tu für mich, was leicht geht“ übersetzen könnten.



Diese zwei Dimensionen der Katholischen Soziallehre, Persönlichkeit versus Gemeinwohl und Solidarität versus Subsidiarität, müssen heute durch zwei weitere Dimensionen, die früher selbstverständlich waren und in der Heiligen Schrift immer wieder erwähnt werden, nämlich Einheit versus Vielfalt bzw. Erneuerung versus Frieden, erweitert werden.

Dem Bemühen des Menschen, in das Chaos, bzw. die unendliche Vielfalt des Lebens, Ordnung zu bringen, was z.B. durch den Gleichheitsgrundsatz moderner Verfassungen versucht wurde und wird, entspricht der Wunsch bzw. die Sehnsucht nach Einheit aller in jedem Bereich und auf allen Ebenen. Die zweite Dimension bewegt sich in der Spannung zwischen ständiger Erneuerung (Innovationen der verschiedensten Art) und Sicherheit bzw. Frieden, der ständig erstrebt werden muss, aber nie ganz erreicht wird. Dies erzeugt und erzeugt immer wieder Spannungen unter den Menschen und auch innerhalb der Christenheit, die seit Jahrhunderten in verschiedene Bekenntnisse gespalten ist, obwohl der Appell Christi „Dass alle eins sein mögen“ von allen anerkannt wird. Hans Küng hat sowohl den Einigungsprozess als auch den Friedensprozess in „konzentrischen Kreisen“, beginnend mit den verschiedenen christlichen Konfessionen, dann gebildet von den monotheistischen Religionen, dann allen Religionen und auf vergleichbare Weise von allen Gesellschaften für ein Weltethos (Küng, 1990) nutzen wollen, dann sukzessive für andere Bereiche und letztlich für die gesamte Menschheit als Daueraufgabe und permanente Herausforderung bezeichnet.

Angesichts der Größe der Aufgabe und der Tatsache, dass sie weder endgültig noch perfekt erfüllbar ist, ergeben sich vor allem zwei Versuchungen, denen auch ehrlich bemühte Menschen erliegen können:

1) Die Versuchung der Resignation, der Selbstaufgabe. Aber Resignation ist kein Zukunftsprogramm.

2) Die Versuchung der Künstlichen Intelligenz, die als hilfreiches Mittel zum Umgang mit ständig wachsendem Wissen und Informationen hervorragende Dienste leisten kann, aber nicht zu einer Entscheidungsinstanz werden darf, die auf Wahrscheinlichkeiten aufbaut.

Die alte Ausrede, die viele Kinder und Jugendliche Autoritätspersonen gegenüber vor allem früher, aber auch heute verwendet haben und verwenden: „Die anderen machen es auch“ vernachlässigt

die Tatsache, dass ein falsches Verhalten nicht dadurch „richtig“ wird, dass es viele praktizieren. Das Verhalten wird leichter verständlich, wird eher verziehen, aber nicht richtiger. Fehler können auch dann tödlich sein und bleiben, wenn sie selten sind oder kaum vorkommen. Zwischen Quantität und Qualität gab, gibt es und wird es auch in Zukunft einen – vielleicht lebensentscheidenden – Unterschied geben. Qualitäten zu erkennen ist und bleibt die Aufgabe der Menschheit und jedes einzelnen Menschen. Damit kommt der Positionsbestimmung jedes Menschen auf allen Ebenen und Bereichen des Lebens größte Bedeutung zu, die für Christen im Bekenntnis ihres Glaubens zum Ausdruck kommen kann.

Für mich teilt sich das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis in zwei Teile, einen historischen ersten Teil, der leider weder den wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen und auch nicht der modernen Theologie und Philosophie angepasst ist, noch dem Alltagsverständnis der Menschen entspricht und einen Zukunftsteil, der eher kurz gehalten ist:

*Ich glaube an den Heiligen Geist,  
die heilige Katholische Kirche,  
Gemeinschaft der Heiligen,  
Vergebung der Sünden,  
Auferstehung der Toten und  
das ewige Leben.*

Zwischen beiden Bereichen, dem historischen Teil und dem Zukunftsteil könnte ein Gegenwartsteil liegen, der im Bekenntnis nicht ausgeführt wird und für gläubige Christen durch die Verhaltens-Empfehlungen der 10 Gebote geprägt ist.

Sowohl die Spurensuche nach Gott in der Geschichte der verschiedenen Kulturen und Religionen als auch allgemein verständliche Aussagen darüber, die den Menschen bei ihrer Suche nach Sinn helfen können, vermisse ich in der Verkündigung der christlichen Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften und auch – wenigstens bescheidene – Aussagen über die sechs Zukunfts-Programme des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses sind den meisten Menschen nicht zugänglich.

- **Was ist der Heilige Geist?** Gibt es einen Funken Gottes in jedem Menschen, sodass man an das Gute glauben kann, das vom Bösen nicht überwunden wird. Das könnte mir Hoffnung geben, wenn ich verzweifelt bin.

- Was kann es bedeuten, **an die „Heilige Katholische Kirche“ zu glauben?** Katholisch meinte im antiken Verständnis allgemein. Könnte es sein, dass der Glaube an die Heilige Katholische Kirche trotz aller Fehlerhaftigkeit der aktuell existierenden Kirche, zu der alle Getauften zählen, die Hoffnung auf eine umfassende, gute Gemeinschaft in Aussicht stellt, etwa im Sinne der Aussage der Apostel Petrus, Johannes und Jakobus in der Schilderung der Verklärung Jesu: Hier ist gut sein, hier lasst uns drei Hütten bauen. Die Verfehlungen innerhalb der Kirche werden nicht das Letzte sein, letztlich wird alles gut werden, könnte gerade heute wichtig sein.
- **Gemeinschaft der Heiligen.** Nicht die individualistische Rettung des Individuums durch seinen Gott, im Sinne eines „Rette deine Seele“, sondern eine Gemeinschaft von Gutgesinnten, die zusammenhalten und für einander da sind, ist das erklärte Zukunftsziel, das Christen anstreben. Das könnte Verunsicherte aufbauen.
- **Vergebung der Sünden.** Jeder hat – immer wieder – eine Chance, dass ihm/ihr das Fehlverhalten verziehen wird. Wer einen solchen Glauben bekennt, der muss auch lernen, anderen zu verzeihen. Vergessen kann nur werden, was verziehen ist, meint der große französische Philosoph Paul Ricoeur (2002). Vielleicht sollten wir über die Redensart: „Das vergeß' ich Dir nie“ und seine vielfältigen Hintergründe, immer wieder einmal nachdenken und auch bedenken, dass manche allgemein verwendete Aussagen auch doppeldeutig sein können: Immer können wir auch „ganz andere Seiten aufziehen“. Die gekoppelte Vater-unser-Bitte: Vergib uns unsere Schuld, wie auch wir vergeben unseren Schuldigern, weist deutlich darauf hin, dass Wechselseitigkeit zum Mensch-Sein gehört. Viele Leute haben früher die Aussage verwendet: „Ich will niemanden etwas schuldig bleiben.“ Freilich haben nicht wenige auch gesagt: „Das werde ich ihm heimzahlen.“
- **Auferstehung der Toten.** Der Tod ist nicht das letzte, sagen viele, auch wenn andere meinen: „Mit dem Tod ist alles aus.“ Wir wissen es nicht und können es nicht erfahren. Aber wenn schon von jedem von uns, wenigstens etwas Staub bzw. Asche rein physisch übrig bleibt, erscheint auch eine Neubelebung

möglich, die Auferstehung genannt wird. Uns allen kann das Trost sein.

- Die letzte Zukunftsdimension des Apostolischen Glaubensbekenntnisses, der **Glaube an ein ewiges Leben**, bekräftigt diese Neubelebungs-möglichkeit und drückt auch eine Hoffnung aus, die meint, Leben hört nicht mehr auf, in welcher Form sie auch immer bestehen wird. Unser begrenzter Geist kann das jetzt nicht erfassen, es bleibt aber ein offenes Hoffnungsfeld.

In diesem 6-teiligen „Zukunftsprogramm“ des Christentums liegen große Chancen und zugleich große Gefahren für jeden Gläubigen. Der Heilige Geist, das „unbekannte Wesen“ weht nicht nur, wo er will und lässt sich auch auf die nieder, an die keiner gedacht hat, was sich weder die Betroffenen selber noch andere vorstellen können. Das kann dazu führen, dass „Gläubige“ in einer Phantasiewelt leben und die konkrete Welt nicht mehr verstehen bzw. ernst nehmen. Dann heißt es oft wie von „unsterblich Verliebten“: „Er, Sie hat den Kopf verloren“, „mit ihm, ihr ist nichts mehr anzufangen“, oder „wir müssen warten, bis er, sie wieder „normal“ wird oder auch er, sie „spinnt“. Einige dieser „Spinner“, die außergewöhnliche Fähigkeiten/Begabungen besitzen, „gelingt“ es, zu Märtyrern ihrer Überzeugungen zu werden, andere wurden und werden von ihren Kirchen verfolgt oder gemäßregelt, wieder andere werden zu tragischen Randfiguren u.a.

Jeder dieser Zukunftsprogramm-Punkte vermittelt den Gläubigen die Chance, kleine Ansätze dieser Programme zu verwirklichen, was die Resignation verhindern kann, weil „das Reich Gottes schon angebrochen ist“, der Heilige Geist – wenigstens in Ansätzen – in den vielen lebt, oder die Schlechtigkeiten auch in der Kirche überwunden werden können und die Kirche zu einer Gemeinschaft der Guten, der Heiligen werden kann; die Sünden aller vergeben werden können und sollen, der Tod nicht das Letzte ist, sondern das Leben ewig währt. Zugleich ermöglicht diese Situation, dass die Zukunft schon begonnen hat und jeder in Ansätzen dazu beitragen kann: Möglichkeiten sinnvollen, guten Handelns für jede(n) zu verwirklichen. Dies gibt immer wieder Anlass zur Hoffnung auf Besserung und Zusammenhalt.

Alles Lebendige strebt nach Einheit, Zusammenhalt und Zusammenwirken. Vieles könnten die Menschen von der Natur lernen. Immer wieder werden unerwartete Zusammenhänge entdeckt und

das Wirken von bisher unbeachteten Kräften festgestellt. Viele Lebenszusammenhänge, Abhängigkeiten und Wechselwirkungen, deren Kenntnis manchmal schon bekannt war, blieben lange Zeit unbeachtet oder gingen überhaupt verloren und werden jetzt neu und in neuer Weise entdeckt. Manches Wissen kann sich erst nach langen Schwierigkeiten durchsetzen, manchmal erschweren auch veraltete Strukturen oder „falsche Bilder“ eine neue Sichtweise und oft behalten bereits bekannte Dilemmata ihre Prägekraft. Wir müssen daran arbeiten, die Gesellschaften und ihre Einrichtungen, alle Bereiche und die in ihnen tätigen Menschen offen zu halten für Neues.

Die „Offene Gesellschaft“ war für Karl R. Popper ein geeignetes geistiges Wiederaufbau-Programm für ein darnieder liegendes Europa (Popper, 1960). Von einzelnen Soziologen wird versucht, dieses Programm weiterzuentwickeln (Brunnhuber, 2019). Ohne eine entsprechende spirituelle Basis wird das nicht möglich sein. Die christlichen Kirchen in (Mittel-)Europa scheinen weder personell noch strukturell in der Lage zu sein, den heutigen spirituellen Bedürfnissen in zukunftsweisender Art die nötigen Dienste leisten zu können. Das Volk wurde nicht rechtzeitig befähigt, Eigeninitiative zu entfalten. Aber trotzdem habe ich die Hoffnung. „Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch.“

Außerdem ist im Zusammenwirken vieles möglich. Zugleich ist zu bedenken, das Bewährte zu erhalten. Dies ist dann wirksam zu erreichen, wenn wir uns alles Bewährte, das wir von unseren Vorfahren ererbt haben, nicht nur aneignen, um es zu besitzen, sondern auch dazu, um es authentisch den nächsten Generationen weiterzugeben.

## **5. Erneuerung und Friede als permanente Aufgaben der Menschheit**

Gefeierte Friedensschlüsse waren und sind nicht immer die Garanten friedlicher Entwicklung. Der Augsburger Religionsfrieden von 1555 hat den mörderischen 30-jährigen Glaubenskrieg in Europa 1618–1648 nicht verhindert und die Friedensschlüsse von Versailles und Trianon von 1919 führten nicht zur Befriedung Europas, sondern enthielten die Keime für die Gräueltaten des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Wichtige Überlegungen hinsichtlich der Möglichkeiten und Voraussetzungen eines „ewigen Friedens“ wurden entweder als schwer verständlich

und akademisch (Kant, 1977: 193) oder als zu fromm und unrealistisch oder gar als Rahmen für handfeste Forderungen missverstanden (Papst Benedikt XV, 1920). Friede ist viel mehr als Nicht-Krieg und wird für lange Zeit ein nur in Teilschritten erreichbares Fernziel bleiben. Trotzdem sehe ich keine realistische Alternative zu diesen zwei unterschiedlichen Ansätzen und ihren konkreten Empfehlungen.

Gunnar Hindrichs regt zur Meinung an, dass für Frieden die „Einsicht in die Fluchtlinien, in denen der Krieg unserer Gegenwart“ – der Krieg der ‚Zeitenwende‘ – steht“, notwendig ist (Hindrichs, 2024: 9). Diese Einsicht sei nur abseits des Krieges möglich, denn philosophische Reflexion negiert den Krieg. Die Ansicht, die seit mehr als 200 Jahren als Credo der Aufklärung gilt und sich in die Aussage zusammenfassen lässt: „Wage es, dich deines Verstandes zu bedienen“, muss ergänzt werden durch die sechs Schritte eines zukunftsfähigen Christlichen Glaubens, die im vierten Kapitel angesprochen wurden. Aber der Glaube an das Heilige und Gute reicht nicht aus, es muss auch gehandelt werden. Die neue Formel einer zeitgemäßen (christlichen) Aufklärung könnte lauten: „Wage es, das Gute zu tun.“ Dazu ist es nötig, sowohl zwischen „gut“ und „böse“ entscheiden zu können als auch handlungsfähig zu sein. Das zweite Ziel der vier UNESCO-Bildungsziele für das 21. Jahrhundert lautet: Lernen, zu handeln und zugleich sagt die UNESCO: Der Mensch bleibt sein Leben lang lernfähig. Hoffentlich bleiben die Europäer auch lernwillig und werden nicht lernunwillig. Dafür muss Freude am Lernen geweckt und gefördert werden, woran sich z.B. das Institut Kutschera seit Jahren in Österreich bemüht (Was ist die Kutschera-Resonanz® Methode?, 2024).<sup>3</sup>

Zwischen „gut“ und „böse“ unterscheiden zu können, bedeutet aber nicht zwischen „Guten“ und „Bösen“ trennen zu müssen, denn alle Menschen sind zugleich „Heilige“ und „Sünder“. In dieser Situation ist der Glaube an die Vergebung der Sünden durchaus zukunftsfähig, erfordert aber zugleich – nach christlichem Glauben – die Erfüllung folgender Voraussetzungen:

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<sup>3</sup> Was ist die Kutschera-Resonanz® Methode? (2024). Eine ganzheitliche, ressourcenorientierte und systemische Methode, um deine natürliche individuelle Resonanz freizulegen. Sie ermöglicht eine nachhaltige Entwicklung der Fähigkeiten von Personen, Teams und Organisationen, um gesund, erfolgreich und glücklich zu leben. Philosophie der Methode: Sinn stiften / Ganzheitliches Denken & Handeln / Vertrauen in die Zukunft / Gleichwertiges Miteinander.

- Eine sorgfältige Gewissenerforschung durch den Vergebung-Begehrer.
- Das Bereuen der Verfehlung und den Vorsatz, den Fehler nicht mehr zu machen.
- Den entstandenen Schaden nach Möglichkeit gut zu machen und
- eine entsprechende Buße auf sich zu nehmen.

Das heißt mit dem Glauben an die Vergebung der Sünden ist ein umfangreiches Erneuerungsprogramm der Einzelnen, Gruppen und Gesellschaften zu verbinden, das derzeit nicht einmal im innerkirchlichen Bereich – man denke an den jahrelangen blamablen Umgang mit den Missbrauchsfällen – ausreichend entwickelt ist. Aber wer fehlerlos ist, werfe den ersten Stein. Ein weites Feld der Erneuerung steht jedem und jeder offen. Jedenfalls ist eine Eliminierung der „Bösen“ kein taugliches Vorgehen, es würde zur Selbstvernichtung führen. Wir alle müssen uns unserer Schwächen bewusst werden, zu unseren Verfehlungen stehen und mit Gottes und unserer Mitmenschen Hilfe an der eigenen Besserung arbeiten und zum Heil der anderen beitragen. Ein weites, unerschöpfliches Tätigkeitsfeld.

Wie weit die modernen Menschen von einer entsprechenden Praxis der Vergebung der Sünden entfernt sind, zeigt sich darin, dass innerhalb der christlichen Kirchen in erster Linie darüber diskutiert wird, wie eine rituelle Vollziehung der Vergebung aussehen soll, die Stärkung der Erfüllung der genannten vier Voraussetzungen der Vergebung ist deutlich weniger ein Thema und über Probleme von Gruppen- und Gesellschaftsverfehlungen wird deutlich weniger und wenn, dann oft anlassbezogen, d.h. in der Regel zur „Unzeit“ nachgedacht und selten überlegt gehandelt.

Die Entwicklung von kollektiven Vergebungsritualen ist ein gesellschaftliches Bedürfnis, das bei vielen latent vorhanden ist, aber nicht aufgegriffen und weiterentwickelt wird. Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern, festzustellen und zu bedauern (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1967), genügt in keiner Weise. Aber auch der Versuch, Hauptverfehlungen zu beschönigen und quasi gesellschaftsfähig zu machen, (Schulze, 2006) kann kein zukunftsweisender Umgang mit Fehlern sein.

In dieser Zeit und in Gesellschaften, in denen es oft heißt: „Ihr seid ja von allen guten Geistern verlassen“, scheint es besonders

schwer, einem „guten Geist“ Raum und Entfaltung zu sichern, und es gibt keine realistische Alternative zum Fehler-Bekenntnis und zur Besserungsbereitschaft der vielen. Das heißt: Wir müssen klein und bescheiden anfangen und dabei spielt dann auch eine theologische Reflexion eines großen Wissenschaftlers, nämlich Karl Rahner, über den Alltag eine nicht unbedeutende Rolle (Rahner, 2019). Diese Haltung Rahners zeigt den Elan, der Anfang der 60-iger Jahre viele Menschen, vor allem in Europa und auch in der Kirche, bewegte, das Unabhängig-Werden vieler Länder 1960 in Afrika ermöglichte und zur Ausrufung des Konzils durch Papst Johannes XXIII. führte. Aber auch starke Gegenkräfte unterschiedlicher Art brachte diese Entwicklung hervor, die einerseits diese Entwicklung hemmten (Krätzl, 1999) und andererseits dazu führten, dass sich – vorwiegend junge – Gruppen weltweit radikalisierten und es zur 68-iger Bewegung kam, die dann auch in Österreich deutlich spürbar wurde und in Deutschland zum RAF-Radikalismus führte (Gilcher-Holtey, 2018; Terhoeven, 2024).

Viel guter Wille, Einsatzbereitschaft und Kraft junger Menschen konnten nicht zum gemeinsamen Aufbau genutzt werden und kosteten Menschenleben und wertvolle Lebenszeit. Die spirituellen Nachwirkungen dieser Ereignisse werden nach wie vor zu wenig diskutiert und bleiben damit unaufgearbeitet.

Viele kritisieren in jüngster Zeit die Vierte Gewalt. Manche versuchen in diese oft qualitätsarme Diskussion Ordnung und System zu bringen (Precht & Welzer, 2024). Das Medien-Verhalten verändert sich in der Gegenwart in gigantischer Weise, die Auswirkungen sind weder in ihrem Umfang noch in ihren Auswirkungen auch nur einigermaßen abschätzbar. Auch die religiöse Verkündigung ist von diesem Prozess erfasst. In vielen Bereichen wird nur darüber nachgedacht, was – vom Bisherigen – noch finanzierbar und personell leistbar ist; für Fragen nach den inhaltlichen Vermittlungsproblemen bleibt dann kaum Zeit, Kraft und Interesse. Schnell kann es zu spät sein und vielleicht das Verkehrte „eingestellt“ worden sein. Aber auch hier werden neue Initiativen entstehen können. Die Unsicherheit und Ratlosigkeit scheint umfassend und international zu sein, was den Mächtigen und den Populisten große Vorteile bringt. Aber auch hier gilt: Auch große Bäume wachsen nicht in den Himmel und ein unerwarteter Sturm erfasst gern den, der am meisten herausragt. Trotzdem bleibt es eine Daueraufgabe der vielen, Bedingungen der Exzellenz in allen Bereichen



zu schaffen und zu fördern, damit das „Gute“ auch eine Zukunft hat, sich zu entfalten.

Österreich um 1900 ist bis heute ein begehrtes Studienziel für Untersuchungen über die Entstehung kultureller Exzellenz (Brix & Janik, 1993) und die Nationalitätenfrage. Manchmal bietet auch „Unkraut“ einer schutzbedürftigen Pflanze den wichtigen Rückhalt und trägt so zu ihrer Entfaltung bei. Nicht nur die Natur betreffend lernen die Menschen und auch die Menschheit nie aus.

**Ich glaube an die Auferstehung der Toten**, bekennen wir. Niemand kann sich dies so vorstellen, wie es – hoffentlich – wirklich sein wird. Wie in vielen anderen Bereichen, insbesondere auch was den sechsten Punkt des christlichen Zukunftsprogrammes, **das ewige Leben**, betrifft, müssen wir eingestehen: Wir haben keine Ahnung, aber wenn das „Gute“ überdauert, dürfen wir hoffen, dass ein solches Leben schön sein wird.

Der plötzliche Übergang des Glaubensbekenntnis von den Marksteinen der christlich-jüdischen Vergangenheit zum christlichen Zukunftsprogramm warf in Zeiten, in denen in Europa das gesamte Leben christlich geprägt war, keine Probleme auf, in Zeiten von Säkularisierung, Entkirchlichung und wachsender Zuwanderung von Menschen mit anderem kulturellen Hintergrund, kommt einer perspektivischen Sicht des Lebens sowohl des Einzelnen als auch von Gruppen und Gesellschaften sowie der gesamten Weltgemeinschaft große Bedeutung zu.

Kardinal Franz König hat drei Fragen gestellt, die sein Leben charakterisierten (König, 2013):

- Woher komme ich?
- Wohin gehe ich?
- Welchen Sinn hat mein Leben?

König hat angeregt: Jeder solle sich diese Fragen stellen und für sich beantworten und hat dies in eindrucksvoller und beispielgebender Weise auch selbst getan. Vieles von dem, was er dargestellt hat, wird für Menschen – auch in Europa – in neuer Weise formuliert und gestaltet werden müssen. Eigeninitiative ist gefragt. Die Gedanken von König sind vor allem für die individuelle Ebene inspirierend. Die Christen werden neue Perspektiven auf der Basis der neuen Situation entwerfen müssen und sind dabei auf vielfältige Hilfen angewiesen.

Wer aber soll, kann helfen? Welche Handreichungen zur Selbsthilfe sind möglich? Die Religionen und Religionsgemeinschaften haben in dieser Situation eine neue Aufgabe, die sie ziemlich unvorbereitet trifft und zugleich Last und Chance ist. Oft fehlen den Kirchen das Personal, die Zeit und auch die Befähigung. Vielfach sind auch – nicht nur in den Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften – die bestehenden Bildungsinstitutionen (und ihre Eigendynamiken) zu hinterfragen (und den Bedürfnissen anzupassen).

Erneuerung und Frieden werden immer weniger auf individueller Ebene lösbar und gestaltbar sein, obwohl persönliche Zufriedenheit ein wichtiger Faktor für Frieden ist. Aber die Gestaltung des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenlebens wird immer mehr eine drängende Aufgabe und wird zugleich immer schwieriger. Vergleichbar der Gesundheit der Menschen, die immer häufiger zu einer Aufgabe vieler Spezialisten wird, die nicht unbedeutende Schwierigkeiten haben, einander zu verstehen und miteinander zusammenzuarbeiten, wird auch die Gesellschaftsgestaltung immer komplexer und auf viele Akteure aufgeteilt, die zunehmende Schwierigkeiten der Koordination, Verständigung, sowie des Verstehens und Zusammenwirkens haben. Darüber hinaus erschwert eine – eher kleinliche, aber hartnäckige – Perfektionierungstendenz die gegebene Situation noch zusätzlich. Zeitdruck erhöht es dann außerdem noch, mit der nötigen Ruhe und Gelassenheit die Problem-Situationen zu meistern. Die freundliche, bescheidene, unaufdringliche Haltung auch nur eines einzigen Menschen kann in solchen Situationen oft unerwartete „Wunder“ wirken. „Gut, dass du da bist“ lautet dann nicht selten ein tiefer Seufzer. Obwohl der, die Gemeinde überzeugt ist: Ich hab' doch gar nichts getan. Viele Situationen schauen sehr unterschiedlich aus, je nachdem aus welcher Perspektive sie betrachtet werden. Auch so gesehen ist eine gute perspektivische Sicht wichtig.

In der Enzyklika über Frieden und christliche Versöhnung geht Papst Benedikt XV. (1854–1922) davon aus, „dass die Gesellschaft großen Schaden erleiden würde, wenn trotz des Friedens zwischen den Völkern weiterhin latente Feindseligkeit und Feindschaft bestehen bliebe (Papst Benedikt XV, 1920: Zi. 4). Darüber hinaus erwähnt der Papst neben der bekannten Tatsache, dass das gesellschaftliche Leben durch Frieden erhalten und gefördert wird, die noch wichtigere Tatsache, dass „ein schwerer Schaden für die Form und das Wesen des

christlichen Lebens entstehen“ würde, wenn Feindschaft bestehen bliebe, denn das christliche Leben besteht in seiner Hauptsache in der Liebe und im Evangelium des Friedens.

Diese klaren und eindringlichen Worte des Papstes Benedikt XV. 1920, die durch Briefe sowohl an die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz als auch an den Erzbischof von Paris schon 1919 begleitet waren, wurden weder innerhalb noch außerhalb der Katholischen Kirche rezipiert, sodass der so notwendige Versöhnungsprozess nicht zustande kam. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg gelang dieser Versöhnungsprozess zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland besser, sodass heute noch von der die EU prägende Achse Frankreich-Deutschland gesprochen wird. Freilich hat man in Deutschland selbst aus diesem Prozess nicht ausreichend gelernt, hat anlässlich der deutschen Wiedervereinigung Ende der 80-iger, Anfang der 90-iger Jahre nicht nur keinen Wiedervereinigungsplan gehabt, obwohl die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands als Ziel im Deutschen Grundgesetz von 1949 festgeschrieben ist und auch kein West-Ost-Jugendwerk, dem deutsch-französischen Jugendwerk der Nachkriegszeit entsprechend, gegründet und auch nicht praktiziert.

Wie verkehrt diese Situation vor allem von der Bevölkerung in den neuen deutschen Bundesländern empfunden wurde, macht das Werk von Gerhard Dittlich (2003) deutlich. Aber auch ein gut nachbarschaftliches Verhältnis zwischen EU und Russland kam aus unterschiedlichen Gründen nicht zustande, obwohl es für Europa und den gesamten „Westen“ sehr wichtig gewesen war und ist (Portisch, 2020).

Nach wie vor bleibt die Meinung Benedikt XV. gültig: „Niemals war es notwendiger, alle Grenzen der Nächstenliebe auszudehnen“ (Papst Benedikt XV, 1920: Zi. 10) und haben die christlichen Kirchen meiner Einschätzung nach die gemeinsame Aufgabe, die Benedikt XV. formuliert hat wie folgt: „Die Kirche als Erbin und Hüterin des Geistes Jesu Christi“, ist „jene wahre Mutter“, die eine solche Zärtlichkeit und Barmherzigkeit (gemeint ist die Haltung und Tat des Barmherzigen Samariters) für ihren Nächsten empfindet.“ (Papst Benedikt XV, 1920: Zi. 12).

Joseph Ratzinger hat meiner Einschätzung nach mehr und bewusster an Benedikt XV. angeknüpft als trotz der Papst-Namenswahl innerhalb und außerhalb der Katholischen Kirche angenommen wird und auch in der ersten Enzyklika knüpft Benedikt XVI. an die Liebe als Frucht der Versöhnung und Grundlage für Einheit und Frieden an

(Papst Benedikt XVI, 2005). Diese Liebe fasst der große tschechische Theologe Tomáš Halík in den Satz zusammen: „Ich will, dass Du bist“ (Halík, 2016) und meint dies nicht nur individualistisch, sondern meint auch, dass diese Aussage auch für Gruppen und Gemeinschaften gilt.

## Zusammenfassung

Ausgehend von einem menschenfreundlichen, gütigen Gott habe ich, den bisherigen zwei Dimensionen der Katholischen Soziallehre:

- Einzel-Persönlichkeit versus Allgemeinwohl und
- Solidarität versus Subsidiarität

folgend, zunächst vor allem die 10 Gebote als Lebensgestaltungs-Empfehlungen Gottes für die Menschen dargestellt und dazu weiterführende Gedanken entwickelt. Anschließend habe ich vorgeschlagen, die Katholische Soziallehre um zwei weitere Dimensionen zu erweitern:

- Einheit versus Vielfalt und
- Erneuerung versus Frieden.

Bei der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Apostolischen Glaubens-Bekenntnis habe ich bedauert, dass der längere historische Teil des Bekenntnisses in einer den wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen von heute nicht mehr entsprechender Form – nach wie vor – formuliert ist und so eine Identifizierung „moderner“ Menschen mit den inhaltlichen Absichten des Bekenntnisses erschwert werde. Der deutlich kürzere Zukunftsteil des Apostolischen Bekenntnisses regt zwar zu neuen Überlegungen an, die aber bisher noch zu keinen systematischen gemeinsamen Reflexionen, weder innerhalb noch außerhalb der Kirchen, geführt haben.

Jedenfalls wird die Gestaltung der Gegenwart im Bekenntnis nicht angesprochen und dort auch nicht als Aufgabe formuliert. Dies begünstigt eine eher auf die „Vergangenheitsbewältigung“ ausgerichtete Haltung der Gläubigen oder es dominieren Zukunftsutopien auf der Gemeinschaftsebene und die aktuelle Lebensgestaltung wird eher auf die individuelle Ebene verlagert, was auch dem Zeitgeist entspricht. Kirche aber ist Gemeinschaft und ist gleichzeitig auch immer jung (Karrer, 1970). In der frühchristlichen Zeit wurden die Christen

von ihren Zeitgenossen charakterisiert durch die Aussage: „Seht, wie sie einander lieben.“ Eine wichtige Basis dieser Liebe ist die Bereitschaft, einander und allen anderen zu dienen.

Das Prinzip „Dienen statt Herrschen“ hat Jochen Schmauch zuerst als eine der neuen Grundhaltungen in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit formuliert (Schmauch, 1967). In der österreichischen (kirchlichen) Öffentlichkeit wird diese Haltung durch zwei Bischöfe, die beide schon verstorben sind, besonders repräsentiert:

Erzbischof Alois Wagner (1924–2002) hat dem Österreichischen Entwicklungshelfer-Dienst (ÖED) eine spirituelle Prägung gegeben und „seine Entwicklungshelfer“ haben den Gedanken „Menschen-dienst ist Gottesdienst“ (Zapotoczky, 2024: 94) in die weite Welt getragen. Dieser Gedanke steht auch hinter dem Motto der Linzer Diözesan-Synode, dessen Präsident Alois Wagner war: „Kirche um der Menschen willen.“

Weihbischof Helmut Krätzl (1931–2023), einer der längst dienenden Bischöfe der Welt, hat nicht nur seine Dienste für die Kirche in einer beeindruckenden Berufs-Biografie beschrieben (Krätzl, 2011), sondern auch seine Dienste in einer zugleich solidarischen und kritischen Haltung auch gegenüber (kirchlichen) Autoritäten treu geleistet.

Das Motto einer „Kirche der Zukunft“ könnte sein „Dient einander und allen anderen“. Jeder andere könnte ein alter Ego, ein anderes Ich sein, dessen Eigenständigkeit und Würde respektiert wird und könnte auch auf Gemeinschaften und Gesellschaften sowie auf den ganz Anderen, wie Max Horkheimer Gott nennt (Horkheimer, 1970), ausgeweitet werden. Ohne Gott, der für uns immer auch ein ganz Anderer bleiben wird, können wir nichts tun.

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# Harmonie Von Ökonomie Und Von Kulturerbe: Die Tradition Der Christkindlmärkte

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## Abstrakt

Wenn Kunst und Kultur über Symbole kommunizieren, dann meist über bekannte Bildsymbole, die sofort verständlich sind. Wird im Sinne des Arguments davon ausgegangen, dass Symbole Bedeutungsträger sind, die die Verbindung zwischen einem äußeren Bild und den Sinnen herstellen, so wirken diese gleichzeitig auf das Denken und Fühlen, sowie auf Wahrnehmung, Fantasie und Intuition und verbinden Bewusstes mit dem Unbewussten. Im Gegensatz zur Sprache kann Kunst und Kultur durch die „Symbolik über die Sinne“ vermittelt werden? Dieser sinnliche Zugang lässt uns neue Welten entdecken und spricht das Langzeitgedächtnis an, wobei hier letztendlich auch der ökonomische Grundgedanke zum Tragen kommt.

*Schlagwörter:* menschliches Gehirn, Symbole, Emotionen, Sinneswahrnehmung, Kulturgut, Langzeitgedächtnis

299

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## Einführung

„Die Tradition der Christkindlmärkte – gelebte Harmonie von Kulturerbe“ ist natürlich ein sehr umfassendes Thema. Daher sollte diese Thematik nicht nur aus einem ökonomischen Blickwinkel betrachtet werden, sondern auch interdisziplinär. Als Beispiel dafür wird der Christkindlmarkt am Wiener Rathausplatz und dessen Angebote für Kinder näher durchleuchtet. Folgendes wird dort angeboten: Ritt auf einem Karussellpferdchen, Fahrt im Rentierzug, Fahrt mit dem Riesenrad und des Weiteren gibt es eine Kinderhütte, wo folgende Aktivitäten angeboten werden: Brett- und Kartenspiele, Winterlandschaft aus Lego bauen, gemeinsames Liedersingen, Kasperltheater, Zaubershow,

Kreativecke, wo Geschenkschachteln präsentiert werden, Eislaufen für Kinder, Kinderstände mit jeder Menge Leckereien, wie Kekse, Tassenkuchen, Kinderpunsch oder heißer Schokolade, Adventkalender, Traumfänger u.v.m. gebastelt werden, Lese- und Bücherecke, wo Weihnachtsgeschichten gelesen oder vorgelesen werden. Highlights an Wochenenden und Feiertagen sind: Advent- und Weihnachtsquiz, Tiere aus Luftballons gestalten, Kinderschminken, Kekse backen...

All diese Attraktionen werden untermauert mit Weihnachtsmusik, gefolgt von guten Düften der Weihnachtskekse. Alles in allem nicht nur ein Mehr an Sachen, die alle Sinne der Kinder ansprechen, sondern auch ein Kulturgut, das seit Jahrzehnten in Österreich und in vielen anderen Ländern der Welt gepflegt wird. Die Fragen, die sich hier stellen:

- Warum macht man das so?
- Was wird damit erreicht?
- Genügt es nicht, dass nur Kekse und ein Kinderpunsch zur Verfügung gestellt werden?
- Geht es nur um Kommerz?
- Oder geht es doch um ein wenig mehr?

## Teil 1.

Die Entwicklung der Kulturen wird Geschichte genannt. Im Laufe der Zeit folgten drei große Revolutionen, die die menschlichen Kulturen prägten.

„In der heutigen Welt gibt es erstaunlich viele verschiedene Kulturen, sowohl im Hinblick auf Werte als auch auf Praktiken.“ (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2012: 20). Auch wenn die Menschheit auf gemeinsame Vorfahren zurückblicken darf, ist doch eine sichtbare Verzweigung der Kulturen zu sehen. Gemeinsame Vorfahren entstanden etwa vor 70.000 Jahren, der Homo Sapiens war jedoch der erste, der Kultur als komplexere soziale Struktur schuf (Harari, 2014: 11). Zum einen: „[...] die kognitive Revolution, die vor etwa 70.000 Jahren die Geschichte überhaupt in Gang brachte“, zum anderen „[...] die landwirtschaftliche Revolution, die vor rund 12.000 Jahren die Geschichte beschleunigte und die wissenschaftliche Revolution, die vor knapp 500 Jahren ihren Anfang nahm.“ (Harari, 2014: 11).

Der niederländische Kulturwissenschaftler Geert Hofstede unterscheidet die menschliche Natur von der Persönlichkeit eines Individuums und der Kultur im Allgemeinen. Für ihn ist die menschliche Natur das, „[...] was allen Menschen gemeinsam ist, vom russischen Professor bis zum australischen Eingeborenen.“ (Harari, 2014: 5). Es sind die physischen und psychischen Funktionsweisen, die Menschen auszeichnen, wie Angst, Trauer, Zorn, Liebe, Freude oder Scham. Was allerdings mit diesen Gefühlen gemacht wird, wird durch Kultur beeinflusst. „Demgegenüber ist die Persönlichkeit eines Individuums dessen einzigartige persönliche Kombination mentaler Programme, die es mit keinem anderen Menschen teilt.“ (Harari, 2014: 5). Sie begründet sich auf Charakterzüge, die teilweise ererbt und teilweise erlernt sind. Kultur umfasst alle Denk-, Fühl- und Handlungsmuster. Damit gemeint sind nicht nur Tätigkeiten, die der Verfeinerung des Geistes dienen, sondern sie beinhalten auch die alltäglichen Dinge des Lebens, wie etwa die Art des Grüßens, des Essens, des Zeigens oder Nicht-Zeigens von Gefühlen (Bolten, 2007: 6; Hofstede, et al., 2017: 10). Nach diesem Verständnis bezieht sich Kultur auf alle grundlegenden menschlichen Prozesse und auf Handlungen im Umgang mit anderen, auch auf jene, die verletzend sind. Kultur kann als Ergebnis eines Lernprozesses innerhalb einer Gruppe angesehen werden und somit sind Lernen und Kultur miteinander untrennbar verknüpft.

Unter Lernen wird eine dauerhafte Veränderung von menschlichem Verhalten verstanden, also ein Prozess, durch den ein Organismus sein Verhalten als Resultat von Erfahrungen ändert, eine Form des Handelns, die eine Wechselbeziehung von Situation und Bedürfnissen anstoßt (Csikszentmihalyi, 2010: 500–502). Laut Jean Piaget, Schweizer Biologe und Forscher für kognitive Entwicklungspsychologie sowie Vertreter der kognitivistischen Lerntheorie, hängt der individuelle Lernprozess vom kulturellen Ambiente ab, das durch äußere Reize aktiv und selbstständig verarbeitet wird, indem das Individuum über unterschiedliche kognitive Fähigkeiten verfügt (Bergmann & Daub, 2008: 91). „Nach Piaget versucht ein Individuum jede neue Interaktionserfahrung mit seiner Umwelt in ein bereits bestehendes Verhaltensmuster einzufügen.“ (Bergmann & Daub, 2008: 93). In der Kognitionspsychologie wird darunter der gesamte Prozess der Selektion, Verarbeitung, Speicherung und Anwendung der menschlichen Informationsverarbeitung verstanden (Hawlitcshek, 2013: 16–17).

Das Lernen kann also als Resultat von Erfahrungen angesehen werden, worauf bei Bedarf zurückgegriffen wird. „Die Veränderungen psychischer Dispositionen, die aus einem Lernprozess resultieren, werden als Lernergebnis bezeichnet.“ (Hawlitschek, 2013: 16). In der kognitivistischen Lerntheorie wird der „[...] Mensch als informationsverarbeitender Apparat“ (Bergmann & Daub, 2008: 93) angesehen, der einen lernenden Organismus besitzt, der durch Wahrnehmung, Erkennen und Nachdenken zur Einsicht kommt und dadurch lernt.

Dem gegenüber steht der Ansatz der konstruktivistischen Lerntheorie, der besagt, dass alles Wissen auf Sinneswahrnehmung und Denken beruht und „[...] wird einzig im Gehirn des Subjekts hergestellt.“ (Bergmann & Daub, 2008: 93). Somit wird Lernen als ein rein subjektiver Prozess angesehen, der von Bedingungen des Kontextes abhängt und Lernstoff wird als Neukonstruktion von Informationen in das bestehende Universum subjektiven Wissens eingegliedert (Bergmann & Daub, 2008: 93).

Kultur besteht aus expliziten und impliziten Mustern von und durch Symbole erworbene und übertragene Verhaltensweisen, die die charakteristischen Errungenschaften menschlicher Gruppen darstellen, einschließlich ihrer Verkörperung in Artefakten. „Kultur, so lehrt es die Anthropologie, hat mit der Tatsache der bewussten Lebensgestaltung zu tun: der Mensch ist das einzige kulturell verfasste Wesen.“ (Theoriebildung Grundlagen, 2011). Somit stellt Kultur die Gesamtheit der erlernten Verhaltensweisen dar und ist ein Faktor für die Handlungsweise eines Individuums als auch Ausdruck einer Bedingungsstruktur für das Verhalten der Mitglieder. „Der essenzielle Kern der Kultur besteht aus traditionellen (d. h. historisch abgeleiteten und ausgewählten) Ideen und vor allem ihren anhaftenden Werten. Kultursysteme können einerseits als Handlungsprodukte, andererseits als konditionierende Elemente weiteren Handelns betrachtet werden.“ (Hofstede et al., 2017: 4). Geht man von dieser Definition aus, so sind für die Entstehung von Handlungsprodukten eines Kultursystems spezielle Techniken, sprich Kulturtechniken, und deren kulturelle und technische Konzepte notwendig, um überhaupt hervor gebracht werden zu können.

Die Deutung von „Kultur“ stellt eine monumentale Komplexität dar, die bis heute noch nicht ganz geklärt ist. Jedenfalls hat der Begriff mit Entwicklung, Vielseitigkeit und Dynamik zu tun, wobei

der Gegenstandsbereich nicht immer ausdefiniert ist. Wissenschaftler\*innen aus den unterschiedlichsten Disziplinen, wie der Anthropologie, der Geisteswissenschaft, der Soziologie oder der Religionswissenschaften, u.v.m., und aus den verschiedensten Zeitepochen, wie zum Beispiel François-Marie Voltaire, Johann Gottfried Herder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Emanuel Kant, Sigmund Freud, Theodor W. Adorno oder auch Niklas Luhmann, haben sich der Betrachtung von „Kultur“ gewidmet. Im August 1982 einigten sich 129 Mitgliedstaaten der UNESCO in der zweiten Weltkonferenz über Kulturpolitik in Mexiko auf folgende Erklärung: Kultur kann „[...] in ihrem weitesten Sinne als die Gesamtheit der einzigartigen geistigen, materiellen, intellektuellen und emotionalen Aspekte angesehen werden, die eine Gesellschaft oder eine soziale Gruppe kennzeichnen. Dies schließt nicht nur Kunst und Literatur ein, sondern auch Lebensformen, die Grundrechte des Menschen, Wertsysteme, Traditionen und Glaubensrichtungen“ (UNESCO, 2018). Wer Kultur oder Kulturerbe vermittelt – insbesondere an junge Menschen –, muss bereit sein, Verantwortung zu übernehmen. Letztere definiert Otfried Höffe folgend: „Verantwortung ist vorrangig die Fähigkeit, das eigene Können und die möglichen Folgen von Entscheidungen einzuschätzen und so zu handeln, dass die erwarteten Ziele mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit erreicht werden“ (Höffe, 1986: 263).

Diese Definition hat besonders in der Soziologie zu Diskussionen geführt, schreibt der deutsche Soziologe Albert Scherr, denn danach würden alle Dimensionen der sozialen Wirklichkeit in ihren unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen somit tendenziell als Kultur bezeichnet (Hormel & Scherr, 2016:186). Mit dieser Begriffsfassung verliert der Kulturbegriff ersichtlich seine analytische Genauigkeit, was dazu führt, dass sozialwissenschaftliche Betrachtungen den Begriff „Kultur“ auf die symbolische Dimension der Wirklichkeit eingrenzen (Hormel & Scherr, 2016:186). Kultur wird somit als „[...] Ebene der Hervorbringung und Verwendung von sprachlichen und nicht-sprachlichen Symbolen bzw. als Wahrnehmen, Denken und Handeln auf der Grundlage von Bedeutungen von der materiellen Ebene der sozialen Wirklichkeit, den ökonomischen und politischen Strukturen, unterschieden.“ (Hormel & Scherr, 2016: 186). In der Kulturanthropologie wird unter Kultur wiederum ein System von Kompetenzen, Überzeugungen, Einstellungen und Wertorientierungen verstanden, die sowohl im Verhalten und Handeln



der Menschen als auch in ihren geistigen und materiellen Produkten sichtbar werden (Maletzke 1996: 16). „Kultur ist die Art und Weise, wie Menschen leben und was sie aus sich selbst und ihrer Welt machen.“ (Maletzke 1996: 19). Tatsache ist, dass die Produktion von Kultur etwas spezifisch Menschliches ist und Homo sapiens sich dadurch vom Tier unterscheidet. Die Besonderheit in der Unterscheidung liegt darin, dass der Mensch ein geschichtlich planvolles Wesen ist, das durch seine Erinnerung und Phantasie Vergangenheit und Zukunft begreift. „Damit eng verbunden ist seine (für das Überleben notwendige) Fähigkeit zur Abstraktion, zum „Sich Ablösen“ vom konkreten Einzelfall, vom Hier und Jetzt.“ (Maletzke 1996: 20). Obwohl das Wort »Kultur« weder in der Antike noch im Mittelalter als solches bekannt war, hat der römische Politiker und Anwalt (ca. 50 v. Ch.) Marcus Tullius Cicero die Weiterentwicklung des Begriffs „cultura“ in seinen „Disputationes Tusculanae“ um die Pflege des Geistes – „cultura animi“ – erweitert, was impliziert, dass Kultur ohne menschliches Schaffen nicht möglich ist. Durch die Einbeziehung des Geistes hat Cicero schon in der Antike darauf hingewiesen, dass der Begriff „Kultur“ kein statischer sein kann, sondern immer einem gesellschaftlichen Wandel im Sinne der Weiterentwicklung des menschlichen Geistes unterliegen wird. Vor allem geht es bei dieser Begriffsdefinition um eine Selbstkultivierung in bewusster Abgrenzung zur Barbarei, also eine zielgerichtete Entwicklung der geistigen und künstlerischen Fähigkeiten. Cicero bezieht sich allerdings auf eine bestimmte Personengruppe, die aus Sicht der damaligen Zeit eine „vollkommene Bildung“ besitzt, also eine Art Elite. Wer Kultur oder Kulturerbe vermittelt – insbesondere an junge Menschen – muss bereit sein Verantwortung zu übernehmen. Letztere definiert Otfried Höffe folgend: „Verantwortung ist vorrangig die Fähigkeit, das eigene Können und die möglichen Folgen von Entscheidungen einzuschätzen und so zu handeln, dass die erwarteten Ziele mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit erreicht werden“ (Höffe, 1986: 236).

Besonders der erweiterte Kulturbegriff spielt in der gesamten Menschheitsgeschichte eine große Rolle, denn das Leben ist von Anbeginn von kulturellem Austausch, gesellschaftlichen Neuinterpretationen und Fortentwicklung kultureller Werte geprägt. Der erweiterte Kulturbegriff weist somit einen dynamischen Charakter auf und impliziert die Differenzierung von Teilkulturen und Subkulturen, was zu kultureller Vielfalt und interkulturellen Begegnungen beiträgt.

Besonders heute gewinnt das erweiterte Kulturverständnis an Bedeutung, da sich eine statische Interpretation ausschließlich auf die Nationalkulturen beziehen würde.

Wissenschaftlich betrachtet gibt es nun einige Erklärungen dafür, warum die Angebote des traditionsreichen Christkindlmarkts so gewählt wurden:

Bei Kindern, aber natürlich auch bei den großen Kindern, den Erwachsenen, sollen bei dem Dargebotenen alle Sinne angesprochen werden. Der Mensch besitzt sieben Sinne: den Sehsinn, den Hörsinn, den Geruchssinn, den Geschmacksinn, den Tastsinn, den Gleichgewichtssinn sowie den Muskelsinn. Alle Sinne stellen den Kontakt des menschlichen Organismus zur Außenwelt her und sind eng mit dem Gehirn verbunden, da es die zentrale Verarbeitungs- und Interpretationsstelle für alle sensorischen Informationen ist. Jeder Sinn ist mit spezifischen Arealen im Gehirn verbunden, die darauf spezialisiert sind, die jeweiligen Daten zu analysieren und zu interpretieren. Unter sensorischer Integration versteht man eigentlich das Zusammenspiel aller Sinne. Darüber hinaus handelt es sich beim multisensorischen Lernen um Lernen, das unter dem Einfluss aller Sinne stattfindet. „Multisensorische Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen umfassen die Fähigkeit, Informationen“ und Reize aus der Umwelt bzw. aus verschiedenen Organismen aufzunehmen und zu verarbeiten.“ (Bottger, 2010: 78). Die Aktivierung der Sinne, die bewusst oder unbewusst erfolgen kann, ahmt bei ihrer Anwendung tatsächlich Sprach- und Denkprozesse, aber auch Lernprozesse nach. Der Mensch lernt durch Nervenzellen, sie sind die Grundbausteine, so werden die Kabel durch Neuronen miteinander verbunden und so werden Impulse und Signale an das Gehirn weitergeleitet. „War Augen hat zum Sehen, Ohren hat zum Hören, eine Nase hat zum Riechen, Haut hat zum Fühlen, für den ist die Welt voller Bilder“ (Hüther, 2010: 32). Allerdings braucht der Mensch dazu noch ein Gehirn. Und dieses Gehirn muss für alles offen sein. Wenn das Gehirn offen ist, was besonders bei Kindern der Fall ist, dann werden diese Reize über die Sinnesorgane zu den sensorischen Arealen der Hirnrinde transportiert. Wichtig dabei zu wissen ist, dass nur dann Erfahrungswerte umgewandelt werden, wenn das Gehirn Impulse erhält. Impulse erhält das Gehirn dann, wenn der Mensch in einen Erregungszustand versetzt wird. Dieser wiederum kann durch Hören, Sehen, Fühlen, Tasten, Riechen oder Bewegen

ausgelöst werden. Klaus P. Hansen (2011) hat als Träger der Kultur das Kollektiv in den Mittelpunkt gerückt, da es Qualitäten besitzt, die dem herkömmlichen Kulturbegriff abgingen. Kollektivität kann Dynamik, Differenz und Wandel erklären, denn: „Jede(r) Einzelne ist wiederum Mitglied unterschiedlicher Lebenswelten und somit durch Multikollektivität gekennzeichnet“ (Hansen, 2011: 47).

Wenn zusätzlich diese ästhetische Empfindung durch Berührungen oder Bewegungen untermauert wird, dann kommt es zu einer sogenannten haptischen Wahrnehmung eines Gegenstands. Und erst durch diese Haptik gelangt der Mensch zu einer zusätzlichen Tiefensensibilität, die Körper und Bewegung ins Spiel bringt und sich in der Skelettmuskulatur, den Sehnen und Gelenken widerspiegelt. In der Wahrnehmungsforschung setzt sich zunehmend die Meinung durch, dass „[...] Sinne und Wahrnehmung überhaupt nur im Kontext von Körper und Bewegung bzw. Aktionen verständlich sind.“ (Hüther, 2010: 32). 29 Die angebotenen unterschiedlichen Attraktionen des Christkindlmarktes, wie zum Beispiel „Ritt auf einem Karussellpferdchen“, „Brett- und Kartenspiele“ oder „Lego bauen“ u.v.m, sind größtenteils mit einer körperlichen Bewegung verbunden, die für die Kinder als neue und gespeicherte Erfahrungswerte im Gehirn verarbeitet werden und als Langzeiterinnerung vorhanden bleiben. Neben der Wahrnehmung spielen noch zwei andere Komponenten, die eng miteinander verknüpft sind, nämlich Gedächtnis und Lernen, eine große Rolle. Ohne Gedächtnis existiert kein Lernen, andererseits sind Gedächtnisformen nicht zwingend an Lernprozesse gebunden, denn zum Beispiel die Wahrnehmung und Speicherung eines Ereignisses ist kaum als Lernprozess aufzufassen. Dennoch sind alle drei Begriffe, wie Wahrnehmung, Speicherung und Lernprozesse an ein Organ im Körper gebunden und alle bewussten und unbewussten Verhaltensweisen werden von diesem zentralen Apparat gesteuert, dem Gehirn. Auch das Gegenüber, mit dem der Mensch kommuniziert, benötigt ein zentralnervöses Decodierungssystem (Pritzel et al., 2003: 1).

Innerhalb des Gehirns werden sensorische und motorische Systeme unter Zuhilfenahme von verschiedenen Gedächtnisformen verknüpft, um die ausgesandten Signale deuten zu können. „Vom ersten Tag an verändert die Erfahrung das Gehirn. Alles, was ein Baby sieht, hört, schmeckt, berührt und riecht, beeinflusst die Art und Weise, in der sich sein Gehirn aufbaut.“ (Gopnik et al., 2000: 214). Schon bei

der Geburt besitzt das Gehirn alle Voraussetzungen zum Denken und Lernen und die emotionale als auch körperliche Entwicklung beginnt ab der ersten Minute des Lebens. „Wir sind Gedächtnis“ (Korte, 2017: 67). Schrieb der deutsche Biologe Marin Korte in seinem Buch „Wir sind Gedächtnis: Wie unsere Erinnerungen bestimmen, wer wir sind“ und meint damit, dass „[...] Individuen durch ihre autobiographischen Erinnerungen zu den Menschen werden, die sie sind.“ (Korte, 2017: 67). Weiters erinnert Korte daran, dass es ohne Gedächtnis keine Kultur gebe und wir alle in einem Gedächtniskörper namens Kultur hineingeboren werden (Korte, 2017: 68). Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen, die in ganz jungen Jahren gemacht werden, prägen zeitlebens das Denken und Handeln eines jeden Individuums. Trotz allem hat der Mensch ein gelehriges Gehirn, denn es besitzt die Fähigkeit, vorhandene Denk- und Verhaltensmuster als auch unverrückbare Grundüberzeugungen und Gefühlstrukturen zu lockern, neu zu formen und umzugestalten (Hüther, 2016: 23). „Wir sehen die Welt, wie wir gelernt haben sie zu sehen, wir hören Dinge, so wie wir gelernt haben sie zu hören. [...] und wir verrichten ein Gros unserer Tätigkeiten und Handlungen – Lesen, Sprechen, Zähneputzen Rad- und Autofahren – quasi automatisch; dennoch sind alle Vorgänge durch Gedächtnisprozesse bedingt.“ (Korte, 2017: 68). Obwohl zur Zeit der Geburt der Bau des Gehirns in seinen Grundzügen längst abgeschlossen ist, ändert sich im Verlauf der folgenden Jahre die Dichte der Synapsen rasant, um sich später wieder zu halbieren.

Während der frühen Entwicklungsphasen ist das Gehirn äußerst formbar. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt sind Stimulationen beziehungsweise Impulse von außen, wie Bilder und Geräusche, dringend notwendig, damit die verschiedenen Gehirnsysteme sich überhaupt normal entwickeln können. „Babys und Kleinkinder zwischen ein und drei Jahren benötigen zum Beispiel regelmäßige visuelle Stimuli, damit sich in ihrem Sehapparat die korrekten Nervenbahnen bilden.“ (Gopnik et al., 2000). In diesen Verbindungen steckt die Fähigkeit, die Welt zu meistern, da im Gehirn Informationsverarbeitung in Form von Wahrnehmung, Lernen und Denken stattfindet (Spitzer, 2007: 54–77). Die primäre Aufgabe des Gehirns ist es, dass alle Funktionen und das Verhalten so gesteuert werden, dass der Organismus überleben kann. Dazu ist es notwendig, dass die ausgesendeten Signale der einzelnen Körperteile, die als chemische Stoffe in den Blutkreislauf gelangen und

an das Gehirn weitergeleitet werden, so verarbeitet werden, dass es zu einer bewussten oder unbewussten Wahrnehmung kommt. Wahrnehmung bedeutet Kenntnisnahme von „[...] sinnlichen Gegebenheiten unserer Welt, der Umwelt und des eigenleiblichen Bereichs: Perception.“ (Scharfetter, 2010: 184).

Die höchste Gehirnaktivität wird Kindern mit drei Jahren zugeschrieben. „Wenn ein Kind zwei Jahre alt geworden ist, verbraucht sein Gehirn genau so viel Energie wie das Gehirn eines Erwachsenen. Im Alter von drei Jahren ist das Gehirn eines kleinen Kindes dann doppelt so aktiv wie das seines Erwachsenen.“ (Gopnik et al., 2000: 219). In späterer Folge nimmt die Gehirnaktivität ab und verlangsamt sich, da alle Verbindungen, die zum Überleben notwendig sind, vorhanden sind. Allgemein ist sich die Forschung darüber einig, dass „[...] die neuronalen Prozesse in den frühen Entwicklungsphasen einzigartig sind und die restliche Entwicklung tiefgreifend beeinflussen“ (Gopnik et al., 2000: 224). und Vorschulkinder Gehirne haben, die „[...] im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes aktiver, vernetzter und viel flexibler sind“ (Gopnik et al., 2000: 219–220) als die der Erwachsenen. Eine Vielzahl von aussagekräftigen psychologischen Lernexperimenten hat gezeigt, dass dann am besten gelernt wird, wenn die Handelnden aktiv am Lernprozess beteiligt sind. „Man wird nur richtig gut in etwas, was man selbst tut. Und: Wir erinnern uns an Dinge besser, wenn wir sie selbst herausgefunden haben oder aktiv am Wissenserwerb beteiligt sind.“ (Korte, 2017: 257). Wenn Aufgaben selbst, also ohne Vortragenden oder Computer, erfüllt werden, werden andere kognitive Gehirnressourcen eingesetzt, als wenn Unterstützungen von außen hinzukommen (Korte, 2017: 258). Kognitive Gehirnressourcen beziehen sich auf die Fähigkeiten und Mechanismen, die das Gehirn nutzt, um kognitive Funktionen wie Wahrnehmung, Aufmerksamkeit, Gedächtnis, Entscheidungsfindung und Problemlösung zu unterstützen. Diese Ressourcen sind entscheidend für die effiziente Verarbeitung von Informationen und die Anpassung an neue oder herausfordernde Situationen. Des Weiteren besitzt das menschliche Gehirn die Fähigkeit, sich als Reaktion auf Erfahrungen, Lernen oder Verletzungen zu verändern. Durch diese Neuroplastizität wird es den kognitiven Ressourcen ermöglicht, sich im Laufe der Zeit zu entwickeln und anzupassen, was das Lernen neuer Fähigkeiten und das Überwinden kognitiver Einschränkungen ermöglicht.

## Teil 2.

Noch zwei wichtige Aktivitäten, die Kinder besuchen können, und eine wissenschaftliche Erklärung dazu sind das „Singen“ und „Kekse backen“:

Erstens etwas zur Musik: sie wirkt auf Menschen, sei es bei der Arbeit oder in ihrer Freizeit, beim Autofahren, aber auch bei allen wichtigen Ereignissen wie Geburten, Geburtstagen, Hochzeiten. Daher gehört Musik zum Alltag (Rauhe, 2010: 12). Kaum eine Kunstrichtung wirkt so umfassend auf alle Sinne und ist so allgegenwärtig wie die Musik. Zahlreiche Forschungsergebnisse lassen darauf schließen, dass es viele Möglichkeiten gibt, Musik wahrzunehmen. Dabei kann es sich um aktive oder passive Wahrnehmungserfahrungen handeln, die Musik empfänglich machen. „Obwohl der einzelne Ton erst in der Beziehung mit anderen Tönen einen Sinn ergibt, ist schon ein einziger Klang ausreichend, um eine Emotion hervorzurufen“ (Vollenhofer-Zimmel, 2016:194). Die Wirkung der Musik auf die Psyche und Physis des Menschen ist schon seit Jahrtausenden bekannt. Musik hat im Leben aller Völker eine wesentliche Rolle gespielt. Als die Menschen noch an Götter und andere übernatürliche Kräfte glaubten, wurde der Musik Zauberkraft zugeschrieben. Besonders bei Heilungsritualen wurden musikalische Beschwörungen durchgeführt, die ein intensives, rauschhaftes Erlebnis bewirkten und den Zugang zur magisch-mythischen Welt eines unbegrenzten Seins öffneten. „Die Anfänge der Musik wurden im Altertum und im Mittelalter durch Mythen erklärt. Man glaubte, die Musik sei göttlicher Natur.“ (Wörner, 1993: 2).

„Die Wahrnehmung von Musik beinhaltet – wie die Wahrnehmung von Sprache – komplexe kognitive Aufgaben, bei denen die Information der akustischen Signale analysiert, gespeichert, wieder aufgerufen und interpretiert wird. Dennoch scheint sich der Zweck der Musik insgesamt weit mehr auf den hervorgerufenen Gefühlszustand zu beziehen“ (Roederer, 1995: 221). Unter dem Begriff Kognition, der vom Lateinischen kommt, wird „Kenntnis oder Erkenntnis“ verstanden. Präzise wird von der Kognitionswissenschaft der menschlichen Lüge Geist (?). Es spielt eine zentrale Rolle bei der Verbindung geistiger Aktivitäten und tut dies mit Hilfe des Zentralnervensystems. Allerdings beschränkt sich die Kognition nicht nur auf die Ebene des Zentralnervensystems, sondern ist weitaus komplexer. Aus diesen

Gründen erfolgt die Analyse auf mehreren Ebenen, wobei vor allem die neuronale, physische und soziale Ebene unterschieden werden muss. Dabei entsteht die physische Ebene mit Hilfe von motorischem und sensorischem Verhalten in Interaktion mit Objekten in der Umwelt, während die neuronale Ebene mit anderen Komponenten des Nervensystems und mit anderen Organen in Verbindung steht. (Strohner, 1995: 6). Anders ausgedrückt wird unter Kognition „[...] jene Art von Informationsverarbeitung durch das Zentralnervensystem von Lebewesen oder eine prägende Informationsverarbeitung in künstlichen Systemen verstanden“ (Strohner, 1995: 7).

Das menschliche Gehirn reagiert auf Musik stark emotional und physiologisch, aktiviert Hirnareale, wie zum Beispiel die Amygdala, den orbitofrontalen Kortex sowie das Mittelhirn, und weist signifikante Veränderungen in jenen Bereichen auf, die mit Belohnung, Emotion und Erregung zu tun haben (Suzuki, 2016: 65). „Emotionen sind komplexe, in weiten Teilen genetisch präformierte Verhaltensmuster, die sich im Laufe der Evolution herausgebildet haben, um bestimmte Anpassungsprobleme zu lösen und dem Individuum ein schnelles und der Situation adäquates Handeln zu ermöglichen.“ (werner.stangl|s arbeitsblätter, 2019). Anders ausgedrückt sind Emotionen Gemütsbewegungen, die ein einfaches „Angemutet oder Abgestoßen“ bewirken. Dies reicht vom bloßen Gedanken bis zur Überzeugung grundlegender Freude und Traurigkeit (Ferran, 2008: 54). Musik beeinflusst die Stimmung der Menschen, sie dringt in den menschlichen Geist ein und bringt die Seele zum Schwingen. Außerdem „[...] beeinflusst Musik über den Hypothalamus unsere hormonelle und autonome Steuerung, was je nach Geschlecht und je nachdem, ob man bestimmte Musik mag oder nicht, unterschiedliche Veränderungen der Herzfrequenz, des Blutdrucks und der Östrogen- und Testosteronspiegel bewirken kann.“ (Swaab, 2017: 537).

Ergebnisse der neueren Hirnforschung belegen, dass „[...] Musik das Gehirn sowohl sensorisch, als auch perzeptiv kognitiv anspricht und neuronale Vernetzungen in einer musikspezifischen Weise stimuliert und integriert.“ (Hochreutener, 2009: 285). Besonders das gemeinsame Singen oder das Spielen mit Instrumenten oder allein das Hören von Musik und die Bewegung zur Musik wirken sich positiv auf das allgemeine Wohlbefinden aus und „[...] im weitesten Sinne werden auch die emotionale Erlebnis- und Ausdrucksfähigkeit, die

schöpferische Gestaltungskraft und das soziale Leben angeregt, alles Kompetenzen, welche das Selbstbewusstsein und die Selbstverantwortung steigern.“ (Hochreutener, 2009: 282). So werden durch Musik, wie neurophysiologische Erkenntnisse zeigen, neuronale Netzwerke geschaffen, die bestimmte physiologische Wirkungen auf den Menschen belegen. Langzeitforschungen haben empirisch nachgewiesen, dass Musikerziehung die Entwicklung von Kindern positiv beeinflusst, die Kreativität, das Leistungsvermögen und die Konzentration fördert, sowie Lern- und Leistungsvermögen intensiviert und die soziale Integrationsbereitschaft steigert. Musik stimuliert nicht nur die Hörrinde, wo Informationen gebündelt, gemeinsam, mannigfaltig und vielfältig eintreffen, sondern auch Hirnregionen wie Hippocampus und präfrontalen Cortex, die mit Lernen, Emotion und Belohnung im Zusammenhang stehen (Swaab, 2017: 536). Des Weiteren beeinflusst Musik das Zusammenwirken der Nervenzellen, „[...] deren hochkomplexer Aufbau aus raum-zeitlichen Interaktionsmustern allen mentalen, kognitiven und sozialen Aktivitäten zugrunde liegt, womit sie die Verbindung und Aktivität beider Hirnhemisphären fördert.“ (Swaab, 2017: 537).

Schon ab der 18. Schwangerschaftswoche hört der Fötus. Er kann die Tonlagen der Eltern unterscheiden, reagiert auf akustische Reize von außen und stellt somit erste Kommunikationserfahrungen her, womit die ersten postnatalen Sprach- und Interaktionsstrukturen eingerichtet werden (Welzer, 2017: 54–55). Coenästhetische Erfahrungen sind eine wichtige Informationsquelle für den Fötus in den ersten Lebensmonaten, während er vor der Geburt mit der Mutter kommuniziert. Der Herzschlag der Mutter und der Klang ihrer Stimme erzeugen ein Gefühl von Geborgenheit und Sättigung, das sie später assoziativ mit einigen Ereignissen assoziieren. Sie lassen sich als wirksame Parameter in der Musik wiederfinden. Nach Rene Spitz sind folgende Zeichen und Signale als (?)coenästhetische Erfahrungen zu benennen „[...] Gleichgewicht, Spannungen (der Muskulatur und andere), Körperhaltung, Temperatur, Vibration, Haut- und Körperkontakt, Rhythmus und Tempo, Dauer, Tonhöhe, Klangfarbe, Resonanz, Schall und wahrscheinlich noch eine Reihe anderer.“ (Spitz, 2005: 153). Coenästhetische Erfahrungen weisen auf eine Nähe des „[...] Rezeptionsprinzips zur musikalischen Wahrnehmung hin“ (Brandstätter, 1990: 17). Und sind eine Form der Wahrnehmung, die somit eng



mit der körperlichen Selbstwahrnehmung verbunden ist und sowohl psychologische als auch neurologische Aspekte umfasst. Der Begriff „Coenästhesie“ bezieht sich auf die zusammenhängende Empfindung des eigenen Körpers, die über die einzelnen Sinneswahrnehmungen hinausgeht. Diese Empfindungen sind in der Regel diffus und nicht klar einem spezifischen Körperteil zuzuordnen. Sie spielen eine wesentliche Rolle in der Art und Weise, wie Menschen ihren eigenen körperlichen Zustand erfahren und interpretieren. Diese Informationen werden durch Nervenimpulse von Sensoren in der Haut, in den Muskeln und in den inneren Organen an das Rückenmark und weiter an das Gehirn übermittelt. Insbesondere der insuläre Cortex, der tief in der lateralen Sulcus versteckt liegt, spielt eine Schlüsselrolle bei der Integration dieser sensorischen Daten. Der insuläre Cortex ist entscheidend für die Verarbeitung coenästhetischer Empfindungen. Studien haben gezeigt, dass dieser Bereich des Gehirns aktiv wird, wenn Personen interozeptive Aufmerksamkeit, also die Aufmerksamkeit auf innere Körperempfindungen, ausüben. Der insuläre Cortex hilft, die physischen Zustände des Körpers zu überwachen und zu regulieren und ist eng verbunden mit der emotionalen Bewertung dieser Zustände.

Während dem Fötus die akustische Welt vor der Geburt durch die körperliche und seelische Nähe zur Mutter vertraut und angenehm ist, so ist das Neugeborene nach der Geburt vielen fremden Geräuschen und Klängen ausgesetzt. Babys können sich Geräuschen nicht entziehen, daher lernen sie sehr rasch zwischen Geräuschen zu unterscheiden, die eine Bedrohung durch die Außenwelt darstellen und solchen, die Ruhe und Sicherheit vermitteln. „Nach Kohut entwickelt sich ein »musikalisches Ich« zur Bewältigung der frühen Geräuschangst.“ (Universität of California, 2011: 548). Dieses frühe „musikalische Ich“ hilft dem Kind in späterer Folge, einfache musikalische Formen zu erkennen, sich zu merken und nachzuahmen, das heißt sie können einfache Rhythmen nachklatschen und einfache Kinderlieder nachsingen (Reimer & Rüger, 2000: 272). Durch das Hören von Musik nehmen die Sinnesorgane Ohr und Haut neuronale Energie auf. Anschließend werden diese in elektrische Signale umgewandelt und in die Region des limbischen Systems des Stammhirns weitergeleitet (Cierpka & Feßmann, 2010: 20). Dieses Nervenzentrum steuert die vegetativen Prozesse, also Atmung, Pulsschlag, Blutdruck, Verdauung und Hormonhaushalt, sowie das Erleben von Gefühlen. Von dort aus

geht eine direkte Schaltung zu den Zonen des Langzeitgedächtnisses. Der Mensch wird durch die Musik in einen veränderten Zustand versetzt, bevor eine Denk- und Beurteilungsoperation stattfindet (Cierpka & Feßmann, 2010: 22–25). So wirkt Musik nicht nur beruhigend und entspannend auf diverse Körperfunktionen, sondern wirkt auf das Immunsystem stärkend, krampflösend, schmerzlindernd und stressabbauend.

Besonders der Gesang spielt in jedem Lebensalter eine große Rolle, denn gemeinsames Singen wirkt völkerverständigend und fördert die sozial-konstruktiven Kompetenzen der Kinder. Die eigene Stimme wird als integriertes Körperinstrument wahrgenommen und bietet als körpereigene Ressource ein besonderes Potential für jeden Menschen. „Singen macht uns zum Klangkörper, bringt Körper, Seele und Geist in Schwingung, es beseelt und bewegt. Es kann den Menschen mit sich selbst in Einklang bringen, Menschen miteinander verbinden und so aus Zwängen, Isolation und Einsamkeit befreien“ (Rauhe, 2010: 11). Besonders bei Kleinkindern hat das Singen den größten Nutzwert, denn Singen fördert in jeder Lebensphase die Potenzialentfaltung des Gehirns. Deshalb hat die Generalversammlung des Deutschen Musikrates 2010 beschlossen, dass das Singen wieder gefördert werden soll und der „Verzicht auf Singen im Kindesalter, insbesondere auch im frühen Kindesalter, hat erhebliche Folgen für die Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit und ihrer emotionalen Prägung“ (Rauhe, 2010: 13). Die ontogenetische Perspektive führt zu dem Schluss, dass die Einflüsse prä- und postnataler Klangerlebnisse den weiteren Verlauf der kindlichen Entwicklung beeinflussen. Sie sind also prägend.

So veröffentlichte Adamek laut Rauhe (2010: 13) seine wissenschaftlichen Forschungsergebnisse in einer Publikation (Adamek, 2010) und zeigte, dass Singen im Kindergarten die Sprachentwicklung beeinflusst. Es wirkt sich auch positiv auf ihr emotionales Verhalten, ihre Koordination und ihre kognitive Entwicklung im Vergleich zu Gleichaltrigen sowie auf ihre körperliche Gesundheit aus. (Rauhe, 2010: 13). Er begründet dies damit, dass das Singen insbesondere das emotionale Gehirn, das aus dem limbischen Bereich besteht, und das kognitive Gehirn, das sich im Neocortex befindet, anspricht (Adamek, 2010: 27) Das emotionale Gehirn steuert vor allem Gefühle und Überlebensreaktionen und das kognitive Gehirn hingegen ist zuständig für Sprache und logisches Denken sowie differenzierte Anpassungen an

unsere Umwelt (Adamek, 2010: 28). Durch Singen kann der Mensch in bestimmten Situationen lernen, „[...] die Integration von Emotion und Kognition zu optimieren“ (Adamek, 2010: 39). Und so ein Zusammenspiel von emotionalem und kognitivem Gehirn herbeiführen. Neuere neurobiologische Befunde zeigen, dass Rhythmus und Melodie emotionale Zentren anregen, die Glücksbotenstoffe ausschütten, damit werden Aggressionen reduziert, Lernblockaden behoben und die soziale Bindungsfähigkeit gefördert. Durch soziale Kontakte werden Menschen ausgeglichener und irgendwie ruhiger. Dies macht sich insbesondere dann bemerkbar, wenn sie beispielsweise zusammenarbeiten und dabei Teamfähigkeit und soziale Kompetenz im Vordergrund stehen. Auch Singen wirkt sich positiv auf das Leben der Menschen aus, es steigert die Leistungsfähigkeit des Gehirns, das Lernen und die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung und steigert so die Fähigkeit zur Teilhabe am Gemeinschaftsleben (Blank & Adamek, 2010: 11). Es trägt somit zur gesunden körperlichen, psychischen und sozialen Entwicklung des Einzelnen bei. In dem Buch „Die Frauen von Block 10“ von Hans Joachim Lang, deutscher Kulturwissenschaftler, beschreiben Überlebende von Auschwitz, wie wichtig die nicht erlaubten, abendlichen Kulturdarbietungen waren, die aus kleinen musikalischen Unterhaltungsprogrammen, Tanz- sowie Kabarettabenden bestanden. (Lang, 2011: 200). Eine der Überlebenden, Ima von Esso, erinnert sich, dass immer gewartet wurde, bis die Wärterinnen gegangen waren, die Türe von außen verschlossen und es ganz still wurde (Lang, 2011: 202). Dann begann die bekannte Geigerin Alma Rosé zu spielen: „Schönheit war in Block 10 bis zu jenem Abend ein langvergessener Traum. Niemand dort hätte sich von solcher Schönheit träumen lassen, wie sie in diesem Moment aus ihrem Spiel aufstieg. [...] Frauen und Mädchen aus verschiedenen Ländern versammelten sich im OP des Erdgeschoßes, um ihre Nationalhymnen und Volkslieder zu singen, die Alma auf der Geige begleitete.“ (Lang, 2011: 203).

Unter anderem sind bestimmte physiologische Wirkungen auf den Menschen nachweisbar, denn neurophysiologische Befunde liefern eindeutige Ergebnisse über gigantische neuronale Vernetzungen, die durch Musik geknüpft werden. Des Weiteren zeigen diese Befunde, dass beim Singen Botenstoffe im Gehirn freigesetzt werden, die z. B. Aggressionen reduzieren oder aber Lernblockaden abbauen. Zugleich fördern solche Botenstoffe Glücksgefühle und die soziale

Bindungsfähigkeit des/der Einzelnen. Zusammengefasst machen Singen und Musizieren nicht nur glücklich, sondern fördern die Gemeinschaft, die Verschaltung im Gehirn und regen das Langzeitgedächtnis an. Schlagwort: Nachhaltigkeit!

Nun ein paar Worte zum Kekse backen:

Kekse backen bedeutet ebenfalls, dass die meisten Sinne dabei angesprochen werden. Dieser sinnliche Zugang lässt Kinder nicht nur neue Welten entdecken, sondern sie erkunden dabei ihre spielerischen Fertigkeiten und Fähigkeiten, vor allem, weil das haptische Tun, nämlich das Tun mit den Fingern, im Vordergrund steht. „Die Entwicklung der Fähigkeit der Hand ist beim Menschen mit der Entwicklung der Intelligenz verbunden.“ (Oswald & Schulz-Benesch, 1972: 135). Anders ausgedrückt: Wenn der Mensch denkt, dann denkt und handelt er mit den Händen (Vollenhofer, 2023). Begründen kann man das so, dass die Hand der Intelligenz, der Spiritualität und dem Gefühl folgt. Was wiederum auf das menschliche Gehirn einen positiven Effekt aufweist. Kekse backen hat auch mit körperlicher Aktivität zu tun, die die Bildung und Verschaltung von Nervenzellen stimuliert. Dies ist ein Vorgang, der das Gehirn durchblutet, die Konzentration steigert und Kreativität anregt. Bereits Sokrates stellt fest, dass Bewegung beim Verarbeiten und Speichern von Informationen eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Körperliche Aktivitäten stoßen wichtige Neurotransmitter aus, wie zum Beispiel Serotonin und Dopamin, die bei Gedanken und Emotionen eine wichtige Rolle spielen und die Infrastruktur des Gehirns stärken können, was wiederum eine Förderung des Langzeitgedächtnisses darstellt und für die nachhaltige Speicherung verantwortlich ist.

Das Langzeitgedächtnis ist ein zentraler Aspekt der menschlichen Kognition, der es ermöglicht, Informationen über lange Zeiträume hinweg zu speichern und abzurufen. Es ist essenziell für das Lernen, die Navigation durch unsere Umwelt und die Aufrechterhaltung unserer Identität durch Erinnerungen an vergangene Erlebnisse. Das Langzeitgedächtnis lässt sich in zwei Haupttypen unterteilen: das deklarative und das non-deklarative Gedächtnis. Deklaratives Gedächtnis beinhaltet Fakten und Ereignisse, die bewusst abgerufen werden können, und das non-deklarative Gedächtnis umfasst Fähigkeiten und Gewohnheiten, die durch Wiederholung und Praxis erlernt werden, wie z.B. Kekse backen oder Fahrradfahren. Es beinhaltet auch Prägungen und andere Formen des Lernens, die nicht bewusst

abgerufen werden müssen. Das Langzeitgedächtnis ist hauptsächlich im Hippocampus, einem Bereich im medialen Temporallappen, und in anderen Teilen des Gehirns, wie dem präfrontalen Cortex und verschiedenen kortikalen Arealen, angesiedelt. Damit Prozesse vom Kurzzeitgedächtnis in eine dauerhafte Speicherung übergeführt werden können, ist eine gewisse Zeit erforderlich, genannt Konsolidierungszeit. Dabei werden die Verbindungen zwischen den Nervenzellen, die die zu einer Episode gehörenden Informationen verarbeiten, verstärkt. Dies geschieht sowohl auf synaptischer Ebene durch die Stärkung der Verbindungen zwischen Neuronen als auch auf systemischer Ebene, bei der Interaktionen zwischen dem Hippocampus und der kortikalen Bereiche eine Rolle spielen. Schlaf spielt eine wichtige Rolle bei der Konsolidierung, da während des Schlafes Gedächtnisspuren effektiv im Gehirn verfestigt werden. Der Abruf von Informationen aus dem Langzeitgedächtnis kann durch Hinweisreize, Kontext, Stimmungen oder Assoziationen erleichtert werden. Der Prozess des Erinnerns kann jedoch auch fehleranfällig sein, denn Erinnerungen können durch neue Informationen oder durch die Art und Weise, wie sie abgerufen werden, verändert werden. Durch die Bestimmung von Neurotransmittern, Hormonen und endogenen Peptiden konnten Details über das Zusammenwirken von Hirnarealen aufgezeigt und daraus neue Erkenntnisse über die Beziehung zwischen Gehirn und körperlichem Tun gewonnen werden (Aderhold & Weigelt, 2012: 218). „Durch Anwendung von bildgebenden Verfahren wie Positronenemissionstomographie (PET) und funktionelle Magnetresonanztomographie (fMRT) sowie Anwendung von radioaktiven Isotopen, Elektroenzephalogramm (EEG) und Bestimmungen von Neurotransmittern, Hormonen und endogenen Peptiden“ (Aderhold & Weigelt, 2012: 8). Können diese Gehirnaktivitäten gemessen und sichtbar gemacht werden. Neurotransmitter, die in den Nervenzellen gebildet und in den Synapsen gespeichert werden, sind Botenstoffe, die die Erregung von einer Nervenzelle auf andere Zellen übertragen. Wenn es zu einem Nervenimpuls kommt, dann werden die gespeicherten Neurotransmitter ausgeschüttet.

Das Langzeitgedächtnis ist entscheidend für die persönliche Entwicklung, das Lernen und die soziale Interaktion. Es ermöglicht Menschen, aus Erfahrungen zu lernen, ihre Vergangenheit zu reflektieren und zukünftige Handlungen zu planen. Ohne Langzeitgedächtnis

wäre jede neue Erfahrung isoliert und könnte nicht in den breiteren Kontext des Lebens eines Individuums eingebettet werden.

Gleichzeiten werden alle Aktivitäten von emotionalen Erfahrungen begleitet. So können Emotionen Einfluss auf körperliche und seelische Reaktionen haben und über sie wird ein bestimmtes Ereignis bewertet. Dies geschieht dadurch, dass das Ereignis zunächst wahrgenommen – aufgezeichnet, dann verarbeitet, klassifiziert und schließlich interpretiert wird (Hülshoff, 2012: 13). „Dabei hat eine Emotion zunächst einen körperlich-vegetativen Aspekt: Die Verarbeitung eines Reizes wirkt sich auf unser vegetatives Nervensystem und unterschiedliche Organsysteme aus.“ (Hülshoff, 2012: 13). Somit stellen Emotionen einen Mix aus Herzschlag, Blutdruck, Körperspannung, Gestik, Mimik und Gefühlen im eigentlichen Sinn dar, wobei diese in einer engen Interdependenzbeziehung zueinander stehen. (Jahr, 2000: 8). Damit eine Emotion zu Stande kommt muss ein Reiz, der mit einer sinnlichen Erinnerung gekoppelt ist, vorhanden sein. Ausgelöst werden diese Gemütszustände im Großhirn, vor allem in den Frontallappen, die die neuronale Basis für Bewusstseinsprozesse liefern. Der Frontallappen, der im Stirnhirn vorliegt, ist in der Lage, emotionale Prozesse bewusst werden zu lassen und in gewisser Weise auch zu steuern. Das bedeutet, dass emotionale Intelligenz und Sozialkompetenz sowie die Verknüpfung von Denken und Fühlen hier aufeinandertreffen und somit die biologische Ebene für Fragen nach dem „Wie“ und „Wozu“ des emotionalen Empfindens darstellen (Hülshoff, 2012: 17). Das alles setzt voraus, dass Gefühle mit einer besonderen Art der Wahrnehmung gleichgesetzt werden können und dass Fühlen, Empfinden, Bemerkten oder Wahrnehmen die Emotion selbst ist. An der emotionalen Verarbeitung sind drei wichtige Hirnareale beteiligt: die Amygdala im Schläfenlappen, der cinguläre Kortex mitten im Stirnlappen und der ventrimediale präfrontale Kortex, Teil des präfrontalen Kortex. (Hülshoff, 2012: 414). Dieser ist für den Bereich der sozialen Funktionen höherer Ebenen zuständig, wie Persönlichkeitsbildung, emotionale Planung und emotionale Regulation. (Hülshoff, 2012: 314). Nachdem der Unterbereich des präfrontalen Kortex für Kreativität und die sinnliche Wahrnehmung verantwortlich ist und der ventrimediale präfrontale Kortex für Emotionsregulation und alle Bereiche des Gehirns millionenfach miteinander verbunden sind, sind somit Kreativität, Wahrnehmung und Emotion ebenfalls eng miteinander

verbunden. Jedes menschliche Wesen auf unserer Erde, unabhängig von Abstammung und Kultur, ist somit fähig, Emotionen zu erzeugen und diese auch auszudrücken.

Maria Montessori<sup>1</sup> (2011: 9) behauptete, dass das Spiel älter sei als die Kultur und dass das Spiel tatsächlich Teil der ursprünglichen Aktivität des menschlichen Zusammenlebens sei. Kinder brauchen unbedingt Spiel, denn ihr Instinkt ist so groß, dass sie nach Spiel verlangen. Das Spielen im Leben eines Kindes hat seinen eigenen Zweck, nämlich die Entwicklung selektiver Fähigkeiten, aber auch körperlicher Fähigkeiten (Montessori, 2011: 51–54). So behauptet Huizinga<sup>2</sup> (2013), dass Freiheit ein wichtiger Faktor beim Spielen ist, da man dem Spielen zustimmen oder es ablehnen kann. Daher besteht keine moralische Verpflichtung. Der Mensch begibt sich während des Spiels in „die zeitweilige Sphäre von Aktivität mit einer eigenen Tendenz“, (Huizinga, 2013: 12). Diejenigen Kinder, die nicht die Möglichkeit haben, zu spielen und so ihre Fantasie zu entwickeln, können in der intellektuellen Entwicklung zurückfallen (Huizinga, 2013: 49). Bezogen auf die Angebote am Christkindmarkt bedeutet das, dass „[...] die teilnehmenden Kinder sich bewusst sind, dass die künstlerische Umsetzung weder beurteilt wird, noch Konsequenzen mit sich tragen, wenn dabei »Fehler« gemacht werden.“ Dennoch nehmen Kinder ihre Teilnahme am Markt sehr ernst. Denn Kinder nehmen alles, was sie tun, sehr ernst und deshalb ist ihnen das Spielen sehr wichtig. Es lässt sich jedoch schlussfolgern, dass für sie schwerwiegende Handlungen kaum Konsequenzen für den Rest der Welt haben. Als Beispiel sei ihr Spiel genannt (Huizinga, 2013: 35). Spiel und Ernst sind in der kindlichen Wahrnehmung durch einen dünnen Faden getrennt, sie spielen mit größter Aufmerksamkeit und Ernsthaftigkeit, sodass sogar Loyalität in Begeisterung umschlagen kann. Jedes Spiel kann jederzeit den Spielenden ganz im Beschlag nehmen“ (Huizinga, 2013: 17). Auch André Frank Zimpel<sup>3</sup> (2013: 35) schrieb über das Zusammenspiel von Spiel und Ernst und argumentierte, dass Spiel zum Lernen beitrage, dass es die Entwicklung fördere, was für die Bildung besonders wichtig sei. Durch das Spiel erhält das Gehirn also eine körperliche

<sup>1</sup> Italienischer Arzt und Philosoph, entwickelte die Montessori-Methode.

<sup>2</sup> Niederländischer Kulturhistoriker.

<sup>3</sup> Professor an der Universität Bremen.

Stimulation, die mit der kognitiven Aktivität verbunden ist. Derselbe Autor behauptet, dass das Motiv, das im Spiel auftritt, tatsächlich ein Selbstzweck sei und sich daher vom Lernen unterscheide. Und deshalb bedeutet Spiel einen Übergang vom wirklichen Leben, führt also tendenziell zu einem Ausstieg aus dem temporären Wirkungsbereich (Huizinga, 2013: 25). Somit gilt „[...] die Minderwertigkeit des Spielens hat ihre Grenze im Mehrwert des Ernsts.“ Jedes Spiel hat eine Bedeutung, und das ist sein immaterielles Element. „Sinnggebung gehören zu den wichtigsten Aufgaben und Leistungen des Menschen.“ (Klose, 2003: 38). Diese Sinnstiftung basiert jedoch auf Ideen und Idealen und nicht auf einer auf Erfahrung beruhenden Sinnstiftung. Dies deutet also darauf hin, dass Erfindungsreichtum im Spiel ist und sogar dazu dienen kann, einige Merkmale eines sich entwickelnden Wesens zu bestimmen oder zu schaffen. Das Spiel verknüpft kulturelle und biologische Einflüsse (Schaffung von Metakompetenzen), nämlich Kreativität, Kooperationsfähigkeit, Frustrationstoleranz, Vorstellungskraft, Zuversicht, Solidarität, Weitsicht, Fantasie, aber auch Perspektivwechsel. Durch das Spielen entwickeln Kinder Fähigkeiten, die sie zu einer einzigartigen Persönlichkeit machen, die authentisch ist und nicht mit einer anderen Persönlichkeit verglichen werden kann (Zimpel, 2013: 143).

## Schluss Abschluss

Zum Schluss, auf einen Nenner gebracht, kann festgehalten werden, dass sämtliche Aktivitäten alle Sinne der Kinder ansprechen sollen, um im Langzeitgedächtnis gespeichert zu werden und ein Wiederkommen zur Selbstverständlichkeit wird. Es soll dadurch die Tradition aufrechterhalten werden mit dem Hintergedanken des ökonomischen Aspekts, denn: Die Kinder sind nicht nur unsere Zukunft, sondern die Erwachsenen von morgen!



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# Geopolitical and Social Significance of the Magna Graecia Development – From Yesterday to Today

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*Original scientific paper*

## Abstract

Magna Graecia is a part of the European civilization. Magna Graecia is one of the famous lands as “Europa Nostra”. Social and geopolitical history has shown that whatever is true and has sound foundations, sooner or later becomes a powerful reality. No historical lie lasts for long, and no morbid condition endures time. The dissolution of the historical South by the application of various forms of violence against a historical people mainly since the year 1861 and the creation of a nation that had not existed in before, was a poor geopolitical experiment, for which hundreds of thousands of people paid with their lives, while millions of others were forced to leave their homes, from Magna Graecia to the ends of the Universe. At the center of the existence of peoples and nations is their culture, the social worldview that peoples shape. It is the essence of the ancient Greek people, or nation in southern Europe. The movements in Magna Graecia declare that they can all together work for the European vision. The State of the North led the European South in the last century to have all the negative records in economic and social indicators. Today, it is a scientific task to highlight this social inequality and geopolitical importance, to unite Southern Europe with the European World, where immediately the people of Magna Graecia will once again become the protagonists and will not be led by politicians and micropolitics of the North, who, as has been written in the press, find opportunities and carry out the various plundering of the European South and have been working for their own interest for so many years.

*Key words:* Magna Graecia, geopolitics, social significance, past, present

## Prologue

■ Magna Graecia is an important and integral part of the European civilization, also known as “Europa Nostra”. General social and geopolitical history has proven to us that whatever is true and has sound foundations, sooner or later becomes an eternal and powerful reality that science deals with creatively and didactically. No historical lie, no utopia and no general lie may last long, let alone forever, because no morbid condition or theory can withstand time. The disintegration of the organization of the European historical South by the application of various forms of violence against the historical people and especially since the year 1861 and the creation of the Italian nation that had not existed before, was a bad social and geopolitical experiment. For this experiment hundreds of thousands of people paid with their lives and millions of others were forced to leave their homes, from Magna Graecia to the ends of the Universe, and mainly in Latin America. At the heart of the existence of peoples and nations is the culture they create, the social worldview that peoples shape. It is the property and status of the ancient Greek people and nation that has lived in Southern Europe. Contemporary movements in Magna Graecia declare that they want and can work all together for the European vision of creative unity. The state of the North has led the European South into decline, and, ever since the last century, to have all the negative records in economic and social indicators. Today, it is a scientific task to highlight this social inequality and geopolitical importance, in order to unite Southern Europe with the European World, where the inhabitants of Magna Graecia can once again become rightful protagonists and will not be guided by wrong politicians and micropolitics. The North, which, as has been written in the international press, finds opportunities and does various sorts of plundering in the European South, working for so many years exclusively in its own interest, is something that creates social inequalities within the very Italian state.

## Part A

Greater Greece has maintained the reputation of historical, social and geopolitical importance to this day. This is keenly felt by the entire European civilization that has been based on the idea of

"Europa Nostra". The multi-cultural city of Naples (Greek: New City) together with the entire Magna Graecia, have shown us several times that all peoples can come together for the creative social/political will of good cooperation of all European citizens, whether they live in western, central, eastern, northern, or southern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

World social and geopolitical history has taught us that whatever is true and has a sound scientific foundation sooner or later becomes a powerful sociopolitical reality. It has been accepted in science that no historical lie could last for long. No morbid condition endures through time and eternity (Ciaceri, 1940: 175–181; Dunbabin, 1948: 68–75; Compennolle, 1981: 759–769; Graham, 1982: 163–195; Franciscis, 1972; Woodread, 1962; Freeman, 1891–1894; Finley, 1984). The disintegration of the historic South caused by application of various forms of violence against a historic people, mainly since the year 1861, and the creation of a nation that had not existed before, was a bad geopolitical experiment, which hundreds of thousands of people paid with their lives, while millions of others were forced to leave their homes, from Magna Graecia to the ends of the Universe. Something similar happened in our East with the terrible Asia Minor disaster in 1922, where the brutality of the genocide was manifested and hundreds of thousands of Greeks of Asia Minor were slaughtered like animals, while those saved were either enslaved, or forced to flee their homes.

With the passage of time it is said that wounds are healed and perhaps today the fullness of time has come to restore the social truth, to heal the wounds and return to what is socially true, geopolitically fair and natural. Is it culturally possible today, after reunification of all European peoples, for the creation of a great European state in the center of the Mediterranean to become a reality? Is it a social duty, sacred and geopolitically maximal, to achieve this goal today? (Nakos, 1990; Pantazopoulos, 1968; Petropoulos, 1961; Triantafyllopoulos, 1968).

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<sup>1</sup> This article is written by Academician Alexios Panagopoulos for the international thematic collection of scientific papers in Belgrade, after the presentation on the exploitation of the European perspective and the cultural importance of Magna Graecia on 9 September 2023, in the auditorium of the "Archivi di Stato" of the Municipality of Naples – Italy.



Could it be possible in the first phase to create a confederation of European populations from the states of the Mediterranean with the ultimate goal of then creating a Mediterranean European ideal, consisting of Sardinia, Sicily, Greece and even Cyprus? The cultural capital of this geographically and geopolitically vast maritime Mediterranean European ideal could be Syracuse, which was the largest ancient Greek city in the classical era as well. Is it time to realize today the dream of Count Ioannis Kapodistrias, the first governor of the New Hellenic State (1828–1831), whose family originated from Istria and the coastal city of Koper, who dreamt of creating such a Mediterranean European Association that would include Sicily, Lower Italy, Greece, Cyprus, and even Sardinia.

Magna Graecia today has twice the population of Mother Greece. The same was in ancient times, when the cities of Magna Graecia were more populous than the cities of Mother Greece. A great result of this Pan-European Union could be a social and cultural union including all the millions of ancient Greek Mediterranean diaspora populations. I should specifically mention that only in the country of Argentina live approximately 20 million people who come from Magna Graecia. Socially and geopolitically, the effort could be made for a strong state organization, or a confederation to incorporate approximately 120 million people living all over planet Earth, who are of ancient Greek origin, even if they do not speak the same language today.

This social reality, when it becomes a geopolitical event, may allow it to play a new, very important geopolitical and geostrategic role in the enlarged Europe of cultures and peoples. Admittedly, in the center of the existence of peoples and nations is their culture, and the social worldview that the peoples form. The new geopolitical and geoeconomic role of Magna Graecia is to more closely connect economically and culturally the Mediterranean peoples, but it is also proof of the survival and existence of the ancient Greek people or nation in southern Europe today. The inhabitants of Greater Greece would also face different issues related to reunification, such as respecting traditions and some rules, given that different religions meet there, for example, Orthodox or Catholic. They would also encounter various issues of secular law, for example the rules of life on Mount Athos and its specific canons (Panagopoulos, 2010a).

In recent years, a social struggle has emerged for the promotion and cultural independence of Greater Greece, and strengthening of the spiritual and cultural union with ancient Greece and Cyprus. The intellectual and political forces that support this view wish to engage in creating a new geopolitical order and social values, which will culturally govern their geographical boundaries. They advocate for the new geopolitical order based on the ethics of and love for ancient Hellenism, which inspires their social ideals with the ancient southern European culture and historical values, the ideals of the ancient Greek virtue, chosen by the hero Hercules known to all of us, rather than the path of evil.

These movements declare that they should completely leave the framework of the various Nightmares (Nightmare in the Greek language is synonymous with the Greek word Ephialtes, this is the Spartan who betrayed King Leonidas during the Battle of Thermopylae, Ephialtes is the name of a Greek god, one of Poseidon's sons, after whom the Spartan was named) that betrayed Leonidas and every leader, all those who acted as enemies of ancient Hellenism, considered to have simply served foreign interests, mainly of the Italian North, by betraying their country. It is also emphasized that conditions need to be created for strengthened social and active participation of citizens in the commons, by returning them to the legal institutions from the system of the ancient Greek organization of the city-states' Direct Democracy. They believe that in this way people will once again become free existences and free political beings, according to Aristotle, so the ancient Greek ideals would once again become politically and spiritually what they once were in order to enlighten and save the new European world again (Aristotle, 1999).

A key element of the Mediterranean European unification will be, as the followers of this view claim, that the prevalence of the spirit of European unity, fraternity, honesty and truth, among them, where the whole will be much more important than its parts. They would be able to socially belong to the European ancient Greece, and this would be much stronger than the feeling of belonging to a city-state or a modern European region.

The ancient Greek world has always been a healthy and stabilizing element for humanity and Europe. They state that in the times of the Inquisition in Western Europe, hundreds of people lost their

lives or suffered from Western European religious fanaticism, while at the same time in Magna Graecia and Mother Greece a corresponding practice was considered foreign to Greek morals and customs and was not significantly present in the society (Cantarella, 1981: 29; History, 1926: 355; Triantafyllopoulos, 1968: 37; Lacey, 1968; Hugh, 1911: 948; Aristotle, 1999: 7; Diodorus Siculus, 1933; Wauters & Benito, 2017).<sup>2</sup>

Although in the southern parts of the Mediterranean, the last millennium witnessed occurrence of Islamic fundamentalism and obscurantism, the ancient Greek world was always a world of social prudence and humanity, a bright, creative world of measure and harmony, among the worlds that had lost the measure as they reached the far East, through extreme practices and inhuman violence and barbarities at the expense of their fellow human beings.

The movements in the Magna Graecia state can all together work towards a cultural ancient Greek movement, or as some call it *Insorgenza Ellenica*. In fact, they have been proponents of this social idea for a long time, with some notable people from the modern philhellenic society and coming from different social and geopolitical spaces, have been inspired by patriotism and love for history and the ancient Greek cultural identity. The political labels such as right, left, centrist, etc., are today without substance, and they simply divided the ancient Greek Mediterranean European peoples, without offering anything meaningful. Today these movements declare that their only essential element is the cultural and social love for the ancient Greek education, which can result in beneficial effects on the pan-European level.

<sup>2</sup> This view is mentioned by Aristotle and adopted by Polybius, systematically refuting the opposing arguments of Timaeus. This information is also interpreted by the jurist G. Michailidis-Nouaros, (in the scientific work: *Tomos – Memoir of Prof. Petropoulos*, Athens, tom. I', p. 121) and look Petropoulos (1961); considering that matriarchal perceptions began to appear from then on. But there are several other opinions like hers Karl Julius Beloch (1912: 350). Compare and to the Io. Triantafyllopoulos, (1961: 37) and see Hugh (1911: 948).

## Part B

At this point, we will proceed to mention some specific characteristics of the ancient Greek world contained in Greater Greece. Magna Graecia and Sicily, as well as Mother Greece, have had a common culture and a spiritual bond for many millennia, ever since the ancient Greek history. The ancient Pelasgians inhabited both these areas of the Mediterranean in ancient times. This is confirmed archaeologically by the Cyclopean walls that have been found in several areas in both Magna Graecia and Mother Greece. The ancient Minoans made several colonies especially in Apulia and Sicily. The Mycenaeans built several small villages as trading posts for their ships to the South. The colonization of the archaic and classical periods ensued, with the establishment of more than 80 cities. Many would move from the Peloponnese and Achaia, so that this area in Sicily, facing the island of Corfu, to this day retains the name of Achaean Coast (Costa delli Achai). The expansion of the ancient Greeks was facilitated by ships, as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, even in the ancient Greek city of Antivaris and the city of King Cadmus, the well-known Tivat of today's Montenegro and Dubrovnik and Cavtat (Epidauros) in Croatia (History, 1926).

Then during the rule of Constantine the Great and the Eastern Roman State, and throughout the Byzantine period, the Adriatic Sea had on both its coasts ancient Greek populations and organized ship supply stations, especially during the period of iconoclasm in Byzantium and the wars with the Arabs and the Persians. But even later, after the fall of Constantinople (1453) due to the Ottoman Turkish introduction of slavery, thousands of people from Mother Greece would occasionally seek refuge in Magna Graecia. Thousands of Greeks who were slaves of the Ottoman conquest moved to Sicily, as well as throughout the Italian peninsula and Magna Graecia.

The people of Magna Graecia brought forth the great forms of spirit and science, genuine science and art, which enlightened the entire European world, and thus the unique wonder of classical European civilization was created. I will mention here the big names: Archimedes, Pythagoras, Nossis, Sappho, Gorgias, Empedocles, Plato, Philolaus, Theocritus, Stesichorus, Aeschylus, Hippasus, Archytas, Herodotus, Xenophanes, Alcmaeon, Parmenides, Zeno, Zeuxis, Arches-tratus, Aristoxenus, Zaleucus, Charondas, Demokides and so many

others. It is no coincidence that they were born or worked in the lands that are today called Magna Graecia. Theirs is also the well-known hero of Salamis, Faulus, who manned his ships from Croton, to go and help effectively in the Naval Battle of Salamis, against the Persian conquerors who wanted to dominate all of Europe (Aristotle, 1999; Alexiadis, 1989; Beloch, 1912; Compennolle, 1981; Christofilopoulos, 1973; Ciaceri, 1940).

The historical name of Magna Graecia was not established entirely by chance. The ancient Greek ancestors of Magna Graecia acquired the most populous Greek cities in antiquity. They had nine cities with pure Greek population. Syracuse was the largest and most populous, as well as the most beautiful city of the European ancient Greek world, and was located in Magna Graecia. They had 500,000 inhabitants, when Athens had only 280,000. In fact, later, when Syracuse became the capital of the Byzantine Empire for six years, Athens and Sparta were but shadows of themselves.

The ancient Greek temples that were built over time were usually much larger in diameter than the temples that existed in Mother Greece. They had eleven ancient Greek Doric ancient temples with more than six columns on their facade. At the same time in Mother Greece, there was only one Doric temple, the Parthenon in Athens, which had more than six columns on its facade. In fact, the temple of Olympian Zeus in Akraganta and the temple of Apollo in Selinunda were each four times larger than the famous Parthenon (History, 1926).

The cities of Magna Graecia had countless winners in the ancient Greek Olympic Games. They were highly valued, they were celebrated as wise people, and they gave away their acquired treasures to all the Panhellenic Sanctuaries of ancient Greece. Whatever I present or describe here, I will not be able to perfectly convey the high majesty of their historic cities and their sacred ancient Greek ancestors. Then, together with the rest of the ancient Greeks, these people became among the first to embrace the teaching of Christianity and from there spread it throughout Europe. This is evidenced by the rare early Christian churches and the historical and archaeological findings. Then with the decree of Milan, the secularization under Constantine the Great and the consolidation of Christianity, the architecturally beautiful Byzantine churches, with their distinct and special art, as well as distinct Byzantine monasteries were built (Alexiadis, 1989; Vavouskos, 1980).

In the Byzantine period, there also emerged the great figures of the Christian spirit. Several well-known Saints of Christianity originated from these places. The well-known Saints include St. Lucia from Syracuse, St. Agatha from Catania, St. Nicholas in Bari from Asia Minor, St. Athanasios bishop of Methoni from Messina, Saint Andrew of Messina, Saints Gregory, Theodore and Leo of Sicily, Saint Leo of Calabria, Saint Luke of Tauromenio, Saint Nikitas, Saint Nicholas of Sicily or Calabria, St. Nicephorus Hexakionitis, St. Nicon of Naples, St. Paul of Sicily later bishop of Corinth, St. Peter of Sicily later bishop of Argos, St. Peter of Syracuse, St. Simeon of Syracuse, Saints Philadelphus and Alpheios. Several people from Magna Graecia moved to Mother Greece, where they lived and were sanctified due to their exemplary lives.

One of the distinguished originating from Magna Graecia was monk Barlaam the Calabrian (1290–1350) who came from the Seminary of Calabria. He studied natural sciences, philosophy and theology in Rome. He played a leading role in the western renaissance, which had begun with Ioannis Katakouzenos as its leader. He taught astronomy and mathematics at the well-known famous university of Konstantinoupolis and was a huge success. Barlaam was one of the early forerunners of the Western Papal Revival and Western Christianity. He renewed his philosophical interest in Plato and the unknown scholars from the East and became the father of Western European and Italian humanism.

These teachers from Magna Graecia shone their spiritual and cultural light on the whole of Western Europe and entire educated Western world, thus facilitating the progress of the entire humanity, while Mother Greece, unfortunately, had to endure the unbearable Turkish Ottoman occupation for 400–500 years. Even in recent times, one can find enlightened people like the old man Arsenije (Γέροντα Αρσένιο) (1918–2008). Elder Arsenios Kobugia had special spiritual gifts. “He was friendly, humble and a man of prayer. He communicated everything to the God of love through prayer and lived in simplicity, trusting in God’s providence. He was distinguished by humility, modesty, restraint and prudence. He didn’t think he was doing anything special. He avoided much socializing with people (sometimes hiding) and considered himself unworthy of honor. He was a traditionalist, as he lived an example of traditional hesychast monasticism, the way old man father Philoteos Zervakos had taught him, but also since he

himself wanted to experience life in such an exemplary way.” (Panagopoulos, 2010b: 13). This culture and knowledge that Magna Graecia spread to Western Europe, should once be recognized by the institutions of Europe. One day, the civilized world of Western Europe should recognize the value of Magna Graecia and its contribution to the science, society and culture of Europe (Diodorus Siculus, 1933; Dunbabin, 1948; Finley, 1984; Franciscis, 1972; Freeman, 1891–1894; Graham, 1982). Otherwise, one gets the impression that European institutions are in a phase of change, that they are shaken, while the political systems are sluggish and insufficiently efficient, and altogether insufficiently prepared to help nations stabilize with the help of their cultural and traditional values. The European institutions themselves are faced with the creation of a new world order, i.e. multi-polarities that divert the focus from democratic standards, stepping mutedly towards totalitarianism (Panagopoulos, 2024).

Also, in recent times, the well-known Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was one of the most advanced European States in Western Europe, with countless leading achievements in the fields of science and economy. Some of the many such achievements include: first economics chair in the world, third country in the world in terms of industrial development in 1856, First Nautical Code in the world, first nautical atlas in the world, first mineralogical museum in the world, the third city in Europe, after Paris and London, to get gas lighting, in 1856, also the first electric seismograph in the world built by Luigi Palmieri, the first cruise ship in Europe named ‘Francesco I’, as well as the first steamship in the Mediterranean known as ‘Ferdinando I’. They made the First railway in the Italian peninsula, for the Naples-Portici route, in 1860. They distinguished themselves as one of the first Academies of Architecture in Europe in the year 1762. They acquired the highest proportion of Doctors, per number of inhabitants, in the Italian peninsula. In the year 1860, the city of Naples was the first city in the Italian peninsula in terms of the number of theaters, publishing houses, newspapers, printing houses, music conservatories, i.e. in culture and art, where the ancient Greek spirit was mainly at the forefront. In the year 1783 in Palermo, they created the first cemetery in Europe, intended for all social classes of people. In the year 1813, they built the first psychiatric hospital in the Italian peninsula (Real Morotroffio di Aversa). In 1832 they created the first

iron suspension bridge in Europe over the Garigliano River (Giornata Nazionale delle Università, 2024; Hugh, 1911; History, 1926; Lacey, 1968; Nakos, 1990).

By 1860, they had managed to have the best economic and tax system with the lowest tax burden in Western Europe and became the First State on the Italian peninsula in terms of the quantity of gold pounds, which was kept in their own state banks in the amount of 443 million, against 225 million collected by all the other states of the Italian peninsula. All these scientific miracles for the world, science and progress, had occurred until the tragic year of the social and economic crash in 1861, when the war conflicts resulted in them losing all their earlier creative freedom.

Then they, unfortunately, accepted, as they still seem to accept, the varied unequal treatment and the aggressive policy of the unjust interests of Northern Italy. Initially this was also done militarily, with battles and conflicts, and at the cost of hundreds of thousands of lives. But then the manner of the attack, since it did continue, changed mainly to an economic one, with the aim of impoverishing the European South, and continued culturally and socially. In the same way, today's Greece is exposed to an unequal economic attack from the powerful banking houses of Western Europe, who are trying to make it a powerless protectorate for exploitation.

In recent years the various movements similar to "Insorgenza Ellenica" call their people not only to unite them with all the remaining pieces of the ancient Greek world, but to also cancel all the negative pathogenicity that was created after the tragic year of 1861. The example of Sicily is typical: for centuries, Sicily has been the destination of many creative people, as it is a place of great natural beauty and fertility, having a good climate and ideal conditions for human life. And yet the wretched and deliberate policy that politicians have exercised for many years, made today's Sicily a poor place, with 2/3 of its population having become emigrants and living outside Sicily (about 5 million in Sicily and 12 million outside Sicily). A terrible demographic crime has been underway, unprecedented in the last century. The State destroyed the European South during the last century, resulting in negative records when it comes to economic and social indicators.

As we noted for the year 1861, when the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was conquered by Northern Peoples, the per capita income of



the Southern Europeans was clearly higher than that of their Northern European conquerors. Over the following decades, a targeted policy of violence turned the European South into a colony of economic exploitation. Even today, most government money goes to investments in the North, so that the economic gap between North and South has been persistently growing. It is enough to compare the modernized railway network of the North with that of the impoverished South. In the North, there are many train and high-speed lines, while in the South one, or none. In no country in the world is there such an unequal and unfair distribution of state funds as in Italy. It is an unacceptable and shameful practice for all of Europe. Thousands of families from Sicily see their children immigrate to Northern Italy or other European countries. A settler from the South who would immigrate for economic reasons to the North would really be going there to a completely different and foreign world, which is why many prefer to leave for America.

Today, perhaps it is indeed the right time and our own scientific task to highlight this social inequality and geopolitical significance and to re-unite, culturally and on many different levels, Southern Europe with the European World, together with Magna Graecia, Mother Greece and Cyprus. These regions of the European South should be reconnected and take the lead again geopolitically, economically, culturally and socially in the united Europe (Lacey, 1968; Nakos, 1990; Pantazopoulos, 1968; Vavouskos, 1980; Woodread, 1962; Kolokotronis 1838, 8).

As a first supportive step we consider that the European South should acquire its autonomy, its self-determination as a separate region and then, because it had it in the past, for many centuries: its own European autonomy, and later possibly also to cooperate dynamically, socially, culturally, geopolitically, legally with the rest of Europe, as a form of autonomous independent legal entity within the European Union. We all believe that we should work and contribute towards a European direction, where the people of Magna Graecia will once again become the protagonists in their own right rather than being led by the politicians and micropolitics of the North which, as has been written in the press, uses every opportunity and carries out the various instances of looting the European South, working for so many years exclusively in their own interest.

All of us, who have to work for reunification of the pieces of the ancient Greek world within the united Europe, feel as Rigas Feraios felt, as he sacrificed his life for the Trans-Balkan Commonwealth of Peoples, against the rule of the Ottomans. Also, Theodoros Kolokotronis, as commander-in-chief of the Greeks in the Revolution of 1821 against the Ottoman yoke, noted when we started the revolution, we did not ask if we had money, if we had weapons, if we had strength and skills. But in all of us there has been a strong desire for freedom, so we all agreed and made the Revolution.<sup>3</sup> “In a word, revolutionary changes have become an integral part of the life and work of both individuals and organizations” (Soloviov, Radosavljević & Panagopoulos, 2012: 96).

## Part C

Recently, the participation of the University of Magna Graecia (Katanzaro) in the first National University Day, following the invitation of the Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities (CRUI), was significant. The “Unveiled Universities” initiative, funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research, was a contemporary opportunity to share the scientific and cultural heritage produced by the academic community for the service of society and the entire territory. The CRUI accepted the request to establish National Universities Day on 20 March 2024 to coincide with International Day of Happiness and within Minerva Week, a period dedicated to the celebration of knowledge, science and education. The conferences, workshops and guided tours at the University of Magna Graecia were intended to reveal the life that takes place every day in the halls of the University, in order to create a strong connection with the rest of the territory. The day’s program ended at 15:00 at the San Giovanni Memorial Complex, with an event that had the characteristic title: From the beginnings of Magna Graecia, to the future of Magna Graecia (Giornata Nazionale

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<sup>3</sup> “When we decided to start the Revolution, we didn’t think about how many we were, or that we didn’t have chariots, or that the Turks besieged the castles and cities, but like a rain, the desire for our freedom fell on all of us, and we all agreed to it. the goal and we made the Revolution” (Kolokotronis, 1838). <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-original-speech-of-Theodoros-Kolokotronis-when-he-went-to-the-Athenian-high-school-around-1835-and-does-anyone-have-it-to-post> (At the 22.4.2024).

delle Università – ‘UMG SVELATA). Experts and professors met within the scientific community and with the historical, naturalistic excursion that described the beautiful peculiarities of the local culture, i.e. the culture of Magna Graecia, with the scientific, social and geopolitical eye directed to the future, and the aim of developing new strategic programs for the University of Magna Graecia in Catanzaro.

The University of Magna Graecia (UMG = University Magna Graecia) participated with great enthusiasm, using this first opportunity to share university knowledge and the ideas of European culture, and at the national level, as was confirmed by Rector Gianni Cuda, as he was thanking the president of the CRUI, Giovanna Iannantuoni for include the University of (UMG) Catanzaro in this nice event, and spoke of the National University Day which also represented a critical geostrategic and geopolitical moment for the future of the University of Magna Graecia.

At the same time, it is significant that the Institute of Philosophy and Pythagorean Sciences of Crotona wants to create a university study center modelled after the Institute of History and Archeology of Magna Graecia in Taranto and the International Center for Joachimistic Studies of San Giovanni in Fiore. This example reminds a lot of the time when liberalism was created and developed, when European universities and scientific institutes supported the idea of liberal theoreticians and thus institutionalized it. “In many countries, research institutions have established new disciplines of political science, as well as international studies.” “These institutions facilitated national cooperation and academic professionalization within specific fields. Nevertheless, the key role was for economists, politicians and intellectuals to develop and distribute the normative view and visions, scientific and political practices of liberal capitalism.” (Maksimovic, 2021: 47–48).

The fact is that beyond all logic, although today a provincial capital of 58,288 inhabitants, Crotona does not yet have a university with steady and postgraduate study centers that could attract scholars from all over Europe and the world. Geopolitically and historically this city of Crotona was once the capital of Magna Graecia. Let us recall that it was the home of the first University of the West, namely the celebrated Pythagorean School of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, where the philosopher Pythagoras from the island of Samos taught his students the secrets

of knowledge and the world. His teaching included a philosophical theory and a theory of the universe which he explained through the theory of numbers and the soul (Michailidis-Nouaros, 1990).

Croton is the place of origin for philosopher and physician Alcmaeon, who, by anatomically dissecting corpses, discovered that the center of human life was not the heart, but the brain, turning medicine into science rather than magic. The city of Crotona was the birthplace of the great physician and surgeon, Demochides, son of Calliphon, priest of Asklepios in Knidos, who studied at the Pythagorean medical school, the best in the Hellenic world. Demochides cured the famous Persian king Darius I of sprain, and later cured his wife Atossa, who was suffering from breast disease (Alexiadis, 1989; Beloch, 1912; Christofilopoulos, 1973; Ciaceri, 1940; Finley, 1984; Graham, 1982).

It would be remiss not to say something about the great philosopher, astronomer, mathematician Philolaus, Pythagorean student of the second generation, according to Diogenes Laertius, whose philosophical and astronomical conception presented the fact that the planet Earth, as an imperfect body, was framed from a twin planet and played a marginal role for the solar system and attributed the greatest importance to the central fire, which he called Hestia, or otherwise the seat of Jupiter, or the center of cosmic activity. Two centuries before the calculations of Eratosthenes (276–194 BC), who supported the non-geocentric model, where at the center of the universe there might, he said, be a great fire and around which the ten bodies rotated counterclockwise, including the Earth, Anti-Earth, Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, with the fixed star sky interpreted as outer fire. He also taught that the ten bodies were distant from the central Fire, according to distances proportional to factors of the number 3, a number considered sacred by the Pythagorean philosophers. The numerical relationships between the planets constituted harmony, a perfect order, perceived by the most advanced minds as sound intelligence, also called the music of the spheres. The philosopher Philolaus is credited with formalizing the role of number for physical models with the following sentence: All known things have a number, and we can understand and know nothing without it (Hugh, 1911; History, 1926; Lacey, 1968; Triantafyllopoulos, 1961). When it comes to the area of Magna Graecia, it

is also inevitable to mention Hippocrates, a philosopher and a man who was the pride of the whole of Greece, yet best known as the father of Greek medical science and creator of the oath that every medical doctor takes. He himself was the child of a Greek philosopher and physician named Irodikos (Panagopoulos, 2020).

For all these scientific reasons there is a need in Magna Graecia and in the city of Croton to build a large study center, for all these scientific reasons there is a need in Greater Greece and the city of Croton to build a large center for the study of both ancient Greek science and ancient Greek ethics and wisdom. Here there is a geopolitical and geoeconomic effort to create a new wax level of scientific, social and humanistic culture through cognitive efforts, and with the help of books to raise the level of scientific knowledge. This would help to separate the populist approach from the scientific study of Magna Greco. Today's activities are far from the systematic scientific order that the city of Croton could determine as a European driving force of national, international, social-humanistic and scientific knowledge.

For all of the above reasons, the people involved in the social/cultural Association of Education and the International Institute of Pythagorean Sciences and Philosophy wish to invite several scholars and scientists to Crotona, such as Prof. Maurizio Giangiulio of the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa, professor of Greek history in Trento, dean of the school of letters and member of the scientific council and professor of the Italian archaeological school of Athens, to form and organize a part for the study of Mediterranean and Ancient Greek History within the framework of the European network.

The Education association in collaboration with Prof. Giangiulio, decided to reprint his work under the title: *Research on Archaic Crotona*, ed. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa 1989, urging the institutions and citizens of Crotona to establish a voluntary fund to reprint this work in Crotona, to start the operation of a University Study Center to cooperate with the International Institute of Philosophy and Pythagorean Sciences, founded by Dr. Luigi Bitonti, a few years ago, and presented to Sandro Pertini at the school institute of Crotona with the intervention of scholars, such as Vittorio Emanuele Esposito, the archaeologist and senator Margherita Corrado and several others.

## Epilogue

It is telling that when the increased feelings of Freedom and the Pan-European Idea of Freedom dominate the peoples of Europe, it is something that transcends our lives, a higher spiritual ideal in front of which the small goals and labors of everyday life seem insignificant, as it brings us to a pan-European union of souls and meanings that creates an unprecedented dynamic, which also constitutes the guarantee for the certain positive result of our goal. And perhaps the day is near when Magna Graecia will again breathe the fresh air of European Freedom and, if supported by the institutions of Europe, of Cultural European Independence, hoping for a better European tomorrow for the Greater Greece and the success of the common European struggle. The University of Magna Graecia (UMG = University Magna Graecia) must participate in such opportunities in order to share university knowledge and European culture at the national level, as mentioned by Rector Gianni Cuda on the National University Day, and this also represents a critical geostrategy and geopolitical moment for the future of the University of Magna Graecia, European culture, European society and United Europe.

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