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MAKSYM KOLOMOIETS AND MARTIN HÁJEK: The Well-Informed Critique of the Economy: A Study of Lay Economic Reasoning in Ukraine

DAN RYŠAVÝ, PAVLÍNA HRABALOVÁ AND PATRIK POLÁŠEK: What Differentiates the Ethnic Tolerance of Czech University Students? The Role of Field of Study, Family Background, Gender and Friendship

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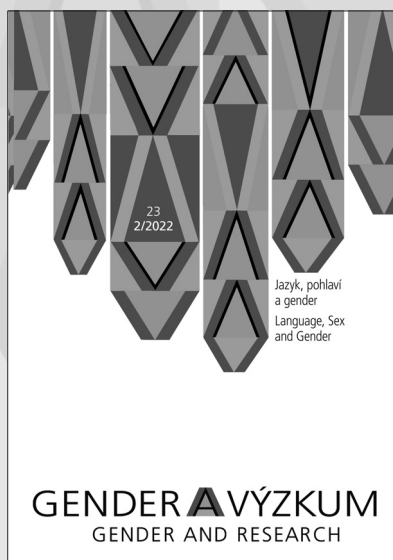
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A Crusade for Social Anthropology: An Analysis of Politics in Post-Socialist Debates*

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Abstract: This article aims to apply critical scrutiny to post-socialist discourse, an ongoing series of debates concerning the relationship between sociocultural anthropology and ethnology in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). To achieve my goal, I single out Petr Skalník's writings and subject them to twofold scrutiny. In the first part of my article, I offer factual criticism and point out the factual shortcomings of his work. The second part of the article puts the writings under sociological scrutiny, based on what I call a 'political reading', and proceeding from the sociology of science of Pierre Bourdieu. This perspective shows how scholars' concrete utterances in their factual accounts are related to power struggles within the scholarly community. This approach demonstrates how Skalník's concrete factual misrepresentations intrinsically relate to his objective of establishing sociocultural anthropology in post-socialist Czechia and the associated struggles between Czech anthropologists and ethnologists. The present analysis, by extension, allows us to better understand the post-socialist transformation of CEE academia and casts doubt on the veracity of post-socialist discourse itself.

Keywords: post-socialism, academic politics, European ethnology, sociocultural anthropology, sociology of science

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Introduction

This paper aims to apply critical scrutiny to what I call ‘post-socialist discourse’ – namely, an ongoing series of discussions addressing the relationship between two scholarly traditions: Western sociocultural anthropology and the ethnology of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). I trace the origins of the discourse to the 1990s, although attempts to capture the relations between the two traditions did not, of course, originate at this time. Much earlier, we find scholars commenting on the differences between the two (Bromley, 1980; Hofer, 1968; Hynková, 1972; Lass, 1989; Skalníková & Fojtík, 1969; Stocking, 1982). However, since the fall of the Eastern Bloc, a sense of escalated relations between the two traditions has emerged. The post-revolutionary context opened a space not only for political and economic transformations but also for changes in research and higher education. Sociocultural anthropology, though not entirely unknown in the region before, began to challenge the established division of scholarly labour in CEE and partly claimed the space occupied by ethnology. Thus, post-socialist discourse can be read as a testimony to the mutual struggles between the two traditions in the post-socialist context. This discourse has several national segments where scholars debate in local vernaculars. These segments reflect the national specifics of the struggles. It also includes an overarching segment using English as its *lingua franca*, which overlaps at times with the national segments. Especially since the 2000s, contributions have grown rapidly, and discussions have ramified unpredictably. After more than three decades of incessant debating, finding one’s footing in the complicated web of accounts is almost impossible.¹

For the purposes of my critical scrutiny, I single out Petr Skalník’s contributions to post-socialist discourse. Beginning in the early 1990s, Skalník established himself as a prominent champion of anthropology in CEE and Czechia and became a household name of post-socialist discourse. Measuring his devotion to the cause of anthropology by the number of published texts, we note that Skalník markedly surpasses other Czech contributors to the debates. Between 2002 and 2022, he produced or co-authored more than one text on the topic every two years.² His writings resonated deeply with the experiences of other champions of anthropology in CEE. Thanks to his fluency in English and high productivity, Skalník features as almost the sole representative of Czechia in the English-speaking segment and as a recognised spokesperson for Czech ethnology and anthropology in the wider international community.

¹ The amount of literature has grown substantially since the 1990s. I refer to only a selection of contributions, among which several are edited volumes (Bošković & Hann, 2013; Dracklé et al., 2003; Hann et al., 2005b; Holubová et al., 2002; Skalník, 2002a) and articles (Brković, 2018; Buchowski, 2004, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Čapo, 2014; Ciubrinškas, 2015; Hann, 2009; Martínez, 2020; Sárkány, 2002; Scheffel & Kandert, 1994; Skovajsa, 2008; Testa, 2020).

² This work amounts to thirteen texts in total (Hann et al., 2005a; 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2002e, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2012, 2018a, 2018b, 2020).

I approach my critical scrutiny from two perspectives – factual and sociological. The factual criticism stems from the deeply felt obligation to rectify factual errors in Skalník's writings. Errors represent an unfortunate, though integral, part of any accomplished scholarship. Naturally, Skalník's texts are no exception. Therefore, this article focuses on the misleading and incorrect claims found in Skalník's texts. Factual criticism is especially important given Skalník's prominence.

Nevertheless, I believe Skalník's factual errors result from his distinctive partisan positioning in Czech academia, which may not always be apparent to the reader. Thus, my other line of enquiry dissects Skalník's writings using what I call a 'political reading'. This perspective is grounded in the sociology of science developed by Pierre Bourdieu, a framework which I will introduce in more detail later in the article. Bourdieusian sociology adopts a distinct reflexivity towards works of scholarly nature, viewing them not only as offering factual, interpretive, or explanatory accounts but also as instruments in the power struggles in academia. The language that these works employ can be approached as a political oratory. The goal is to persuade or discourage, mobilise readers, provoke action, establish a norm, win individuals over, or denigrate opponents. The term 'political' touches on the political dimension of life within academia, manifesting in the struggles for disciplinary autonomy, funding, recognition, jobs, or students. My political reading is not merely a matter of the chosen sociological perspective: reading Skalník, we find that political concerns are strongly present in his writings.

Thus, while the first part of my article approaches Skalník's writings at face value, the second part approaches them with a pinch of salt and attempts to show how his individual statements, irrespective of their documentable verisimilitude, can be interpreted as tools in the struggles over the institutionalisation of sociocultural anthropology in post-socialist Czechia. The second part is divided into three sections. The first introduces the Bourdieusian perspective. The second outlines the specific context in which I situate Skalník, a necessary precondition for the political reading of his factual statements. In the third section, I intend to show how he used specific statements as a means to legitimise anthropology and delegitimise ethnology in the struggles between anthropologists and ethnologists.

This article touches on two questions of general importance. First, it follows the historical sociology of science in trying to explain the success or failure of research projects or scientific paradigms, academic disciplines, and individual scholars (Johnston, 1986; Steinmetz, 2010). The outcome of Skalník's project, I believe, has wider implications for understanding the post-socialist transformation of Czech academia. Second, this article discusses the status of the post-socialist discourse to which Skalník's texts contribute. The essential question to ask is whether politics has not infused the post-socialist discourse to the extent that the factual accounts which make up the discourse are too distorted to be used as reliable sources.

A preliminary understanding

To understand the motives guiding Skalník's pen, it is necessary to provide a preliminary understanding of his texts. Skalník identifies a single Czechoslovak (and later Czech and Slovak) disciplinary tradition, which he variously calls *národopis*, ethnography, and ethnology. Each name was preferred in a different era and reflected distinct historical circumstances. The term *národopis* originated in the nineteenth century, while 'ethnography' was introduced after 1948; 'ethnology' began to be used after 1989. However, all three refer to a single discipline, the continuity of which was not severed by the political upheavals of the twentieth century. Neither the two World Wars, the communist takeover in 1948, the Prague Spring twenty years later, the Velvet Revolution in 1989, nor the dissolution of Czechoslovakia substantially affected the discipline's continuity. This continuity allows Skalník to emphasise the unchanging specifics of the discipline. He views the tradition of *národopis* / ethnography / ethnology as methodologically and theoretically obsolete, partly due to its nineteenth-century positivist, historicist, and nationalist bedrock and partly due to state socialism and its Marxist–Leninist ideology, which flowed into the discipline in the second half of the twentieth century (Skalník, 2005b, p. 13).

Due to its obsolescence, Skalník calls for the discipline's 'anthropologisation' (Skalník, 2002d, p. 104). In the title of a short article published later, Skalník (2005b) asks whether we can create anthropology out of *národopis*. If the latter scholarly tradition is to ever survive as a respectable discipline in the contemporary world, it must innovate by adopting methods and theories from sociocultural anthropology. As Skalník expressed elsewhere, his preference lies in social anthropology (Hann et al., 2007, p. 36; Skalník, 2007). His stance is phrased in a spirit as uncompromising as that of F. W. Maitland: contemporary Czech ethnology must choose between becoming anthropology or becoming nothing (Evans-Pritchard, 1950, p. 123).

In a different article, Skalník (2004) complains that the 'Malinowskian revolution' in ethnology could not be completed (p. 287). Ethnologists are presented as the main villains hindering its realisation. Skalník (2004) contends that a successful establishment of anthropology would definitely expose their incompetence and discredit them as scholars (p. 290). He once remarked that 'ethnography is to anthropology what alchemy is to chemistry' (1999) or that 'social anthropology with its revolutionary theory and method causes havoc' in ethnologists' ranks' (Hann et al., 2007, p. 38; Skalník, 2007, p. 190).

Skalník's diatribes against Czech ethnology naturally lead us to enquire into his deeper motivations. Why does he feel compelled to criticise ethnology from an anthropological standpoint? Where does the need to anthropologise it come from? Are anthropology and ethnology not two separate disciplines pursuing different objectives? Should Skalník not offer suggestions to improve anthropology rather than criticise Czech ethnology? It seems as if, according to Skalník,

the quality of Czech anthropology somewhat depended on Czech ethnology. Let us, however, postpone these questions until later and focus on factual criticism first.

Factual criticism

For the purposes of factual criticism, it would be convenient to begin with Skalník's two most recent contributions: an encyclopaedia entry and a journal article, the latter of which is a partly updated version of the former (Skalník, 2018b, 2020). The encyclopaedia entry titled 'The Anthropology in Post-Socialist Europe' promises an Olympian undertaking covering anthropology's post-socialist predicament in twenty-two countries, from East Germany in the West to Russia in the East and from Estonia in the North to Albania in the South. Several of Skalník's statements rest on his knowledge of the local situation, but it becomes evident that he set an impossible task for himself. Indeed, the entry almost solely covers the situation in Czechoslovakia and Czechia, which Skalník uses to represent the hardships of anthropology in the entire region – a dubitable means to an impossible goal. I do not pretend to be acquainted with the state of anthropology in all the countries relevant to Skalník's entry. Such an amount of knowledge is, without exaggeration, unattainable in a single lifetime. Therefore, my criticism touches only on his writings on the history of the Czech and Czechoslovak disciplines.

Skalník (2018b) claims that there are four common denominators which explain the predicament of anthropology in CEE. First, 'anthropology' has been understood as biological anthropology, a natural science study of human beings. Second, local academia has been decisively influenced by the German academic tradition. Third, the region has been influenced by nationalism, which encourages scholars to focus on studying their own nation at the expense of studying other ethnic and national entities. Fourth, the region has been heavily influenced by communist hegemony and Marxist–Leninist ideology.³ While each point holds some merit, I do not believe that the influence of German academic tradition and mistaking *sociocultural* anthropology for *biological* anthropology significantly impacted the discipline's predicament. Given the constraints of space and the fact that Skalník elaborates on the first two points rather poorly, I will focus only on the remaining two points: the influence of nationalism and Marxism–Leninism. Regarding the latter, it needs to be emphasised that although Skalník sometimes speaks of communist rule, he usually reduces it to the influence of Marxism–

³ There is a certain ambiguity in Skalník's denominators. When he elaborates on the first point, he does not speak of biological anthropology but suddenly introduces 'anthropology's schizophrenic character' in the region. Skalník's (2018b) elaboration on this schizophrenic character fits the influence of nationalism (p. 2). Moreover, when Skalník moves from the third to the fourth point, he begins to speak, without prior explanation, about ethnography. This suggests that anthropology is in some way connected to ethnography.

Leninism on the epistemic content of science. His texts do not elaborate on other facets of communist rule, such as the planned economy, political purges, institutional reorganisations, or the presence of the Communist Party, apart from a rather common-sense understanding of the Czechoslovak socialist regime as oppressive.

Speaking of nationalism and Marxism–Leninism, Skalník strongly asserts that both influenced the mindset of local scholars, with consequences for the subject matter, methodology, and theory. Regarding the former, Skalník portrays CEE ethnographies as inheritors of the nation-building of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, therefore, as exclusively preoccupied with the study of their own nations, excluding other national and ethnic minorities as legitimate subjects of ethnographic enquiry: '[t]he contents [of the discipline] are decisive and have primarily been the self-celebratory study of one's own nation' (Skalník, 2018b, p. 4). He contrasts these disciplinary traditions with the traditions that study peoples *in the plural* and originated in colonial empires. He adds that anthropology 'was looked upon with awe, suspicion, and rejection under communist rule' (Skalník, 2018b, p. 4). Although Skalník strangely and out of the blue connects the 'rejected anthropology' with communist rule and not with nationalism, as one would expect, the whole section is phrased as if the emergence of anthropology has been hampered due to a narrow-minded nationalism surviving among ethnologists to this day.⁴

The bulk of ethnographic oeuvres supports Skalník's contention about the 'primary content' and the self-celebratory study of one's own nation; however, this contention obscures the fact that Czechoslovak ethnographers also extensively studied non-Czech communities, as evidenced by the multitude of such works. The most common was the study of groups which settled in the borderlands following the expulsion of Germans after WWII. This included not only Czech and Slovak repatriates from Romania, Ukraine, Poland, or Bulgaria but also Greeks and Ukrainians (Heroldová, 1986; Kašpar, 1986; Matějová, 1982). In addition, research on the Roma, Cubans, and Vietnamese was also conducted (Haišman, 1989; Heroldová & Matějová, 1987; Secká, 1987). The 1980s saw the rise of research on Pacific and Asian ethnopharmacology (Šita, Silná, et al., 1986; Šita, Škvařil, et al., 1986). Several ethnographers studied the coexistence of non-Czech groups with the Czech majority and dared to look for variables influencing the rate of assimilation (Heroldová, 1984, 1985; Secká, 1988). The research on ethnic

⁴ Skalník omits the popularity of travelogues and young adult fiction from the Wild West. These genres have been very popular among the Czech public since the nineteenth century and motivated many adolescents to study ethnography and ethnology. His statement similarly avoids the fact that in spite of nationalism, there have been strong disciplinary traditions of African, Amerindian, and Oriental studies, with their representatives contributing to *Československá ethnografie*, a prominent ethnography journal published between 1953 and 1962.

groups carried out in the 1970s and 1980s was inspired by Yulian Bromley's theory of ethnos and supported by the publication of a translation of Bromley's book *Ethnos and Ethnography* (Bromley 1973/1980). For no evident reason, Skalník (2018b) denies the comparative dimension of research on ethnic groups, claiming that comparative Soviet ethnography was only 'superficially followed' (p. 4).

Moving on to Marxism–Leninism, Skalník (2018b) claims that '[t]he power monopoly of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia imposed Marxism–Leninism and historical materialism as the only framework for scientific discourse' (p. 6) or that communist rule 'made ethnography an auxiliary branch of knowledge the goal of which was to supply suitable data to the theory of Marxist historical materialism' (p. 4). Apart from theoretical content, Skalník (2018b) additionally mentions an ideology-induced change in the subject matter which occurred after 1948: 'a change from the study of national (mostly peasant) culture to the study of working people, poor farmers and their folk culture, miners, and other industrial proletarians' (p. 4).

Skalník's statements, unaccompanied by any analysis whatsoever, open up a space for further questioning. I would especially like to focus on six themes touched upon in Skalník's texts: (1) the relation between Marxism–Leninism and nationalism in ethnography; (2) the study of contemporary society in ethnography; (3) the relation between ethnography and anthropology; (4) the alleged hegemony of Marxism–Leninism in ethnography; (5) the legacy of Marxism–Leninism in contemporary ethnology; and (6) Skalník's use of disciplinary labels.

(1)

Skalník appears to be sustaining two incommensurable claims. As we have already seen, he attributes ethnographers the interest in studying their own nation and claims that this interest 'continued to dominate' after 1948 despite the introduction of Marxism–Leninism and Soviet ethnography (Skalník, 2018b, p. 4). However, he also mentions a change from the study of one's own nation to the study of proletarians. Therefore, were socialist-era ethnographers preoccupied with studying their own nation or with studying the proletariat? Surprisingly, Skalník is right on both points. This confusion stems from the poor analytical apparatus of his texts. Socialist-era ethnographers studied the working class, mostly various kinds of wage-earners, and its culture and adopted the Marxist–Leninist view on history as propelled by the class conflict. At the same time, however, ethnographers wrote texts about national history, presenting history as a process propelled by national struggles. Nonetheless, the relationship between the Marxist–Leninist and nationalist ideologies continues to present one of the most intriguing aspects related to communist rule and evinces remarkable variability across the countries of the Eastern Bloc (e.g. Górný, 2018; Grill, 2015; Holý, 1996; Křestan, 2012; Mervart & Růžicka, 2020; Slezkine, 1994; Šnirelman, 1997; Verdery, 1991). Unfortunately, Skalník ignores this body of scholarship and does not show how exactly the co-existence of the two ideologies was made possible in Czechoslovak ethnography.

(2)

Skalník (2020) mistakenly claims that '[p]ractically no substantial study of contemporary "socialist" society was undertaken' (p. 124). Again, it is fair to produce the names of ethnographers concerned with research on contemporary socialist society. Outlines for such research were drawn by Olga Skalníková and Karel Fojtík (1969, 1971). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, ethnographers wrote about the socialist village, as this was one of their main specialisations (Frolec et al., 1984; Jiráček, 1982; Kadeřábková et al., 1981; Pargač, 1988; Robek & Svobodová, 1979; Švecová, 1975; Valášková, 1984). The claim regarding the absence of research on contemporary socialist society is all the more striking, given Skalník's emphasis on the ideological conditioning of ethnographic research. Ethnographers in leading positions declared that research on contemporary socialist society is ideologically important (Robek, 1979).

(3)

Within socialist-era ethnography, there was room for anthropology, which Skalník denies. In the spirit of fairness, it is appropriate to mention the matters which Skalník acknowledges. Beginning with the Stalinist period in 1948, the leading specialist on non-European societies, Josef Voráček, was ousted from the *Národopis* Department at Charles University (Petráňová, 2016), and several young Czechoslovak ethnographers of Marxist–Leninist persuasion took part in writing against American cultural and British social anthropology (Nahodil, 1950, 1951; Nahodil & Kramářík, 1951). A perfect example to emulate was the volume edited by Soviet ethnographer I. I. Potekhin (Potekhin, 1951/1953). It was translated into Czech in 1953 and brought together articles by leading Soviet ethnographers who pilloried American and British anthropologists for a variety of crimes, including racism, colonialism, and pornography. Yet, the title indicates a lack of denominational discrimination, which Skalník disregards. It does not refer to Anglo–American *anthropology* but to Anglo–American *ethnography*. Even though Soviet ethnographers and their Czechoslovak colleagues depicted American and British anthropology as inferior projects (for their lack of a Marxist–Leninist grounding), they did not portray anthropology as an alien discipline (Nahodil, 1953, pp. 7–9). For example, Czechoslovak ethnographers, under the influence of Engels, extolled L. H. Morgan, the pioneer of American anthropology (Nahodil, 1954) or even occasionally praised E. B. Tylor and L. Lévy-Bruhl, who were otherwise criticised for their idealism (Nahodil, 1957; Nahodil & Kramářík, 1951). Similarly, Hana Hynková (1972) later denied the existence of any differences between ethnography, ethnology, and social and cultural anthropology, as, according to her, all the labels refer to a single discipline (p. 195).

There are more clues which show that anthropology was neither wholly rejected nor always looked upon with suspicion, as Skalník claims. With the 1960s decolonisation underway and the heightened interest of the Eastern Bloc in the newly independent countries in Asia, Africa, and America, several Czechoslo-

vak ethnographers began to conduct fieldwork outside Europe (Bahenský, 2016; Woitsch, 2021). Ladislav Holý, having written a dissertation on kinship in East Africa from a Marxist–Leninist perspective, went to conduct fieldwork in Sudan. Milan Stuchlík undertook research in Chile, Jiřina Svobodová in Senegal, and Olga Skalníková visited Guinea. Even Holý's dissertation thesis made extensive use of works by British social anthropologists (Holý, 1963). Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, more ethnographers found inspiration in anthropology, although not all were lucky enough to conduct fieldwork outside Czechoslovakia (Holý, 1968; Scheufler, 1971; Skalníková & Fojtík, 1969, 1971; Wolf, 1971). In the early 1970s, Vladimír Scheufler collaborated with Zdeněk Salzmann, a Czechoslovak-born American anthropologist, on a book on a Czech village (Salzmann & Scheufler, 1974).

The popularity of anthropological inspiration culminated in the early 1970s, when the new political situation strongly disfavoured anthropology. However, the question is whether this phenomenon was motivated by personal animosities instead of epistemic rivalry. Nevertheless, knowledge of anthropology was never completely eradicated after the early 1970s. František Vrhel and his colleague Oldřich Kašpar, who were employed at the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies in Prague at the time, specialised in Latin America and produced works on the folklore and mythology of American indigenous groups (Kašpar & Vrhel, 1986, 1989; Vrhel, 1976; Vrhel & Kašpar, 1985). According to the former students with whom I spoke, Vrhel lectured on anthropology. He even wrote an appreciative article on American cognitive anthropology Vrhel (1985). Other ethnographers in Czechoslovakia knew and quoted anthropological literature, although they picked up themes which supported their conjectures related to folk culture (Frolec, 1984; Leščák & Sirovátka, 1982).

Skalník could effectively defend his stance by arguing that, until the 1990s, there was no independent Czechoslovak tradition of sociocultural anthropology or that ethnographers (save for a few exceptions in the 1960s) did not adhere to the Malinowskian standard of fieldwork. However, I believe that the absence of the Malinowskian standard was not caused by the methodological narrowmindedness of Czechoslovak ethnographers, as Skalník claims, but by a lack of financial sources that would sustain long-term fieldwork. Innumerable works have proven time and again that especially the original expansion of anthropology in the twentieth century was possible largely due to non-state funding schemes (Goody, 1995; Mills, 2008; Price, 2016; Stocking, 1995). No such scheme existed in Czechoslovakia, where ethnographers had to make a virtue out of necessity and conduct only short field trips.

Therefore, nothing warrants Skalník's categorical verdicts of the communist rule effectively suppressing anthropology. It is hard to agree with Skalník's (2020) words that sociocultural anthropology 'was seen as a direct competitor to Marxism and therefore suppressed' (p. 123). Moreover, and this is a point that should be stressed, all the individuals who began experimenting with anthropological-

style fieldwork shared institutions with colleagues who specialised in local ethnographic issues, such as pottery, folklore, or mining regions. For example, before she visited Guinea, Skalníková had been known as an expert in the ethnography of the working class (Skalníková et al., 1959). Svobodová would later specialise in the ethnography of the socialist village (Svobodová, 1973).

(4)

It is questionable whether all works of ethnographers and folklorists were subjected to Marxism–Leninism and nationalism to the same degree and whether there was no space for currents outside of these two intellectual frameworks. This is a complicated issue, which Skalník ignores altogether. For the sake of brevity, I chose a work which does not conform to the supposed hegemony of these ideologies: *Odeporicon*, a renaissance humanist travelogue by Johannes Butzbach from 1506. A translation of certain parts accompanied by the translator's notes and a critical study were conducted by Karel Dvořák, a folklorist working in the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies in Prague (Dvořák, 1975). Dvořák's accompanying text shows nationalist and Marxist–Leninist influences. He highlights some of Butzbach's narratives as anti-feudal, which accounts for Marxism–Leninism. Dvořák is also motivated by his disagreement with an earlier critical edition authored by German scholar Horst Preiss. Dvořák disagrees with Preiss' dismissive remarks on the backwardness of the Czech people, which attests to Dvořák's nationalist sentiments. Yet neither Marxism–Leninism nor nationalism prominently features in Dvořák's writings. He mostly employs philological and folklorist methods, which are distinct from both nationalist and Marxist–Leninist frameworks. We could go through other ethnographers' works one at a time, and we would find that not only do they profoundly differ in their emphasis on nationalism and Marxism–Leninism but also in their utilisation of other intellectual currents, which casts doubt on Skalník's claims of a prevailing Marxist–Leninist hegemony.

(5)

Skalník (2018b) claims that the 'legacy of Marxism in postcommunist European anthropology is significant to the present day. The Marxist terminology may be gone but the methods persist' (p. 5). The problem is that Skalník does not specify what Marxist–Leninist methods he believes persist and does not adduce any evidence. My reading of the post-socialist context is different from his. If we look at Czech ethnographers who began their careers during socialism and continued to work in the post-socialist era, we can perceive a wholesale abandonment of Marxism–Leninism and a strong adhesion to various idealist currents (see Krupková, 1991; Šalanda, 1997; Vrhel, 1993). Some notions akin to Marxism–Leninism continued to echo in ethnology. For example, ethnologists continued to base some of their explanations on general socioeconomic conditions or mentioned the middle class's emergence in the nineteenth century as an important feature of nation-building

(Stavělová, 2006). However, to describe such explanatory tools as Marxist–Leninist is to ignore that the same strategy is employed by many non-Marxist–Leninists as well. At the same time, Skalník is right when he claims that the nationalist framing continued to dominate ethnology, and I find Skalník’s dictum of the self-celebratory study of one’s own nation true even in post-socialist conditions – again with the only difference that ethnologists continued to study non-Czech groups as well (e.g. Brouček, 2016; Otčenášek, 1998).

(6)

To underscore the vigour with which Marxism–Leninism engulfed ethnography after 1948, Skalník mentions changes related to the name of the discipline. Skalník (2018b) writes that ‘the official names of departments were changed uniformly into *etnografie a folkloristika* [ethnography and folklore studies]’ (p. 6, emphasis in original).

Skalník is right that young Czechoslovak ethnographers doted on Soviet ethnography and perceived it as the unrivalled ideal, hence adopting the label ‘ethnography’ (see Kramařík, 1953; Nahodil, 1951). However, the rest of what he claims is wrong. University departments were created in 1950 based on a Soviet inspiration, and the two seminaries revived shortly after WWII – the *Národopis* Seminary in Praha and the Seminary for Ethnography and Ethnology in Brno – were incorporated into the newly established departments (Connolly, 2000; Janeček, 2017; Válka et al., 2016). The Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies in Prague was created as late as 1960. Its direct predecessors were the Department of Prehistory and *Národopis*, the Department of *Národopis*, and for some time, there was only an Ethnography and Folklore Studies section within the Department of Czechoslovak History and Archival Science (Janeček, 2017, pp. 143–147). The department in Brno underwent even more changes, and an independent department with the epithet of ‘Ethnography and Folklore Studies’ existed only between 1964 and 1970 (Pavlicová, 2017; Válka et al., 2016)! Moreover, ethnography and folklore studies began to be perceived as a single discipline only in 1954, six years after the communist takeover, when the previously independent discipline of ethnography was merged with folklore studies in a single institute of the Academy of Sciences (Macková, 2016).

To this appellative mistreatment, we might add other examples. Skalník, without any supporting evidence, claims that ‘[e]thnology, as the name of the discipline that was sometimes employed in the prewar times, was now branded as a “bourgeois” science’ (2018b, p. 6) or that ‘only the terms *národopis* and *etnografie* (...) were acceptable during the communist era’ (2018b, p. 6, emphasis in original). ‘Ethnology’ was not a widely used label during the socialist period, but it cannot be said that it was wholly absent. Skalník (1970) himself used the term in a report on ethnology and anthropology in Japan. The Prague Institute of Ethnography and Folklore Studies published an edition named *Opera Ethnologica* in the 1960s–1980s. Moreover, as he mentions in an earlier article, Skalník (2002c) was

employed at the Institute of Ethnology (*Kabinet etnologie*) at Comenius University in Bratislava until 1976 (p. 51). Alternatively, consider the above-mentioned statement by Hynková. When it comes to the word ‘anthropology’, there are further examples of its use without negative connotations (Holý, 1968; Scheufler, 1971; Skalníková & Fojtík, 1969, 1971; Vrhel, 1985).

Sociological scrutiny

I certainly do not want to be viewed as denying Skalník’s right to criticism. However, as I have tried to show, there is a disparity between Skalník’s categorical verdicts and the available evidence. Instead of minutely showing deficiencies in ethnographers’ works or analysing the complex situation in socialist-era ethnography, Skalník limits himself to broad statements about political ideologies influencing the discipline without delving deeper into ethnographers’ published works or even trying to understand ethnographers’ perspectives. Foreign readers may be tempted to say that Skalník’s English texts are based on his previously published Czech works, which contain a thorough treatment of the subject matter, but I am unaware that he has ever produced any. His encyclopaedia entry, as well as the latest article, sadly, seem to conform to his earlier claim that ‘social anthropology (and for that matter cultural anthropology and ethnology) did not miss anything substantial by knowing nearly nothing about “socialist era anthropology”’ (Hann et al., 2007, p. 36; Skalník 2007, p. 187). Sweeping claims and cavalier treatment of the subject matter more than of a scientific spirit may hint at a political project. Indeed, once we accept that politics played a part in guiding Skalník’s pen, we will be able to see his writings in a wholly different light, which finally brings me to the sociological scrutiny and to the approach that I profess.

My approach is grounded in the sociology of science developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu applies a distinct style of reflexivity, which attempts to reveal the ulterior motives present in the production of scientific knowledge. Whereas other approaches in the philosophy and sociology of science focus on the problem of verisimilitude of factual accounts and the capacity of science to produce them, Bourdieu focuses on factors which condition scientists’ factual accounts but are not necessarily motivated by questions related to the state of the world.

Such an assumption is closely related to the distinct ‘political anthropology’ professed in Bourdieusian sociology, which views human agents as primarily motivated by the accumulation of power at the expense of others. This form of

⁵ ‘Ethnology’ in this sentence refers not to Czech ethnology, which Skalník understands as studying one’s own nation and which he equates with the German *Volkskunde*, but to European ethnology, which Skalník views as a comparative discipline which he equates with the German *Völkerkunde* (Skalník, 2018b, pp. 2, 4). I read ‘anthropology’ in the same sentence as a sarcastic jab at Czech ethnology.

political anthropology has been rightfully criticised for its narrow conception of human agents (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1993; Hage, 2013; Hilgers & Mangez, 2015). However, it also helps us understand some of the important sources of human action, which human agents are strongly motivated to downplay in their accounts. Bourdieu's political anthropology depicts scientists as competing for power by addressing scientific issues. Success in solving scientific issues brings authority and respectability and opens avenues for achieving the means for further scientific production, such as money or important managerial positions. Therefore, success in science can be seen as an essential source of power over other scientists (Bourdieu, 1991b, pp. 15–16). Such a perspective allows us to approach concrete scientific accounts as a means of domination over others. As Bourdieu put it, scientists' works 'contain the claim to a power, founded in reason, over particular individuals' (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 28–29). Besides sticking to the proper scientific procedure, scientists also resort to improper means. They deliberately misrepresent their colleagues' findings by overemphasising less significant factors at the expense of more significant ones or omitting certain information altogether (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 21).

Bourdieu does not merely view scientists as struggling among themselves by addressing issues they see as legitimate in their field of enquiry. He also views them as trying to impose on other scientists the parameters of scientific legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991b, 2004). Struggles over legitimacy are usually represented by clashes between proponents of antagonistic schools within a single discipline. To quote Ghassan Hage (2013), members of each school 'are personally and collectively busy creating the very world in which they can operate best', and the 'winner imposes both their reality and their practical mastery over reality' (p. 87). Maybe unwittingly, Hage reformulates Bourdieusian sociology in ecological terms – the agents (scientists) are constantly striving to create and maintain a niche which allows their practical being (expertise) to gain the maximum efficiency possible. Given the scarcity of resources, this is usually done at the expense of agents who require a different niche to thrive. If one group of scientists – say, Marxists – would become successful in establishing themselves in, for example, sociology, this would be at the expense of other sociologists who do not share Marxist expertise and who would probably try to overturn the unfavourable circumstances.

This brings us straight back to post-socialist discourse and Skalník's writings. His contributions to the discourse can be viewed as tools designed to establish an anthropological niche within an ethnological one by creating a more favourable 'price formation' for anthropological expertise and its products and a less favourable one for ethnological ones (Bourdieu, 1991a, 2004). In what follows, I present my political reading of Skalník's writings, which were designed to achieve precisely that objective. Nonetheless, this requires me to sketch a broader picture of the context, which will allow us to finally understand why Skalník perceives the mutual dependence between anthropology and ethnology in Czechia.

The relationship between anthropology and ethnology in the Czech context

As I wrote earlier, the reader might ask why Skalník, as an anthropologist, attacks ethnology. Why not simply ignore ethnologists? The post-socialist discourse offers examples of strategies which differ from that of Skalník. For instance, he could have argued in the more diplomatic fashion of Chris Hann that, despite any differences between anthropology and ethnology, a mutual collaboration might eventually prove fruitful for both only if they retained their disciplinary identities (Hann et al., 2007, p. 10). Alternatively, he may have adopted an approach diametrically opposed to Hann and preferred by Michał Buchowski (2014) or Jasna Čapo (2014), who tended to play down any differences between ethnology and anthropology and preferred to speak of the ethnoanthropologies of Europe.

Given the Czech context, neither option would be commensurate with Skalník's aims. To see the forces that condition this incommensurability, we should revisit the early 1990s. During this time, Skalník (2002c, 2002d), alongside others, intended to establish an independent anthropology department at Charles University in Prague. Skalník's initially promising negotiations with the university officials faltered, and if anthropology was to gain some space in the Czech academe at all, it had to force itself into coexistence with other disciplines within their institutional background. As a result, anthropology gained marginal space in several university departments (Skalník, 2002c, 2002d). The most important was the footing that anthropology gained within the ethnological institutional framework in Prague: at the university's Department of Ethnology of the Faculty of Arts (formerly known as the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies) and, to a lesser extent, at the academic Institute of Ethnology (known as the Institute for Ethnography and Folklore Studies until the late 1990s). The presence of anthropology, especially at the former institution, sheds light on the relationship between anthropology and ethnology in Czechia and exposes Skalník's motivations.

Turning to ethnology was not only a matter of exigency or desperate choice but also of deep affinities between Czech ethnology and anthropology. In the 1990s, Czech champions of anthropology were also involved in the other discipline. Most of them had originally studied or practised ethnography at university departments, academic institutes, and museums in Czechoslovakia. This was the case of anthropologists-émigrés (Ladislav Holý, Andrew Lass, and Petr Skalník), as well as local scholars (Václav Hubinger, Josef Kandert, and Josef Wolf). The relations went even deeper in Skalník's case. His mother, Olga, was a prominent ethnographer throughout the socialist era. His father served as an editor at the publishing house of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, where he edited, among other books, the translation of the Potekhin's volume. In addition, there are pervasive similarities between the two disciplines. Both are interested in small-scale societies and their customs, religions, and cultures, and both depend on fieldwork. As I have shown before, there was always space for the so-called exotic ethnography within Czechoslovak ethnography.

These fateful connections brought the two disciplines closer to each other in the 1990s, when anthropology could not get hold of institutional independence. Had Skalník and others succeeded in establishing an independent anthropology department in the 1990s, there would likely have been fewer incentives for his harsh criticism of ethnology. Both disciplines would have simply gone their separate ways without much ado. Since this did not happen, ethnologists became anthropologists' main rivals, their significant Others with whom they had to compete for resources. Hence, nascent Czech anthropology was connected to key ethnological institutions. As ethnologists continued to possess a significant numerical advantage throughout the decades to come, the emerging anthropology was, to a profound degree, at their mercy.

This seems like a foolish move. What benefit did ethnologists derive from adopting the unfriendly anthropologists aboard their institutions? Notwithstanding anthropologists' hostility, ethnologists could benefit from such an arrangement. After the fall of the Eastern Bloc, ethnologists, who were depicted as previously involved with official science under socialism (a depiction to which Skalník contributed, as we have seen), felt compelled to present their discipline as innovating and following recent trends in Western scholarship. For this reason, ethnologists likely saw benefits in providing space to anthropology within their own institutional framework. *Český lid*, the leading ethnological journal connected to the Institute of Ethnology, began publishing anthropological articles. The Department of Ethnology started hosting, among others, two senior American-trained anthropologists of Czechoslovak origins: Leopold Pospíšil (1923–2021) and Zdeněk Salzmänn (1925–2021) (Skalník, 2002d, p. 108). Moreover, ethnologists, to the dismay of anthropologically minded scholars, began to adopt the label 'anthropology' without deeper epistemological commitments (Hubinger, 1998; Nešpor & Jakoubek, 2004; Skalník, 2002c). Although this move was caused mainly by the compulsion to innovate, the equation between anthropology and ethnology in the Czech context had not been without precedent, as we have seen.

This disciplinary union – the quarrelsome coexistence of anthropology and ethnology within the ethnological institutional background – provides context indispensable for understanding Skalník's writings and his question whether we can create anthropology from the already existing tradition of *národopis*/ethnography/ethnology. Skalník's uncompromising writing against ethnology in the context of this disciplinary union can be interpreted as a constituent of an attempted takeover of the ethnological institutional framework. If the takeover was ever to be successful, Skalník had to prove the deficiency of the rival discipline in the first place. This is what he has consistently been striving for in his writings throughout his career since the early 1990s. If, on the contrary, Skalník had adopted the more charitable viewpoints of Hann, Čapo, or Buchowski, he would have undermined his own goals. Let us now discuss the means by which Skalník fought ethnologists and how they relate to the factual errors in his works.

Means of Legitimation and Delegitimation

Beginning in the early 1990s, Czechoslovak academia was understood as having been ravaged by Communist Party rule. There was an observable hunger for Western-educated experts who would offer their expertise and help improve the local situation. A pertinent manifestation of this hunger in ethnology is a series of interviews published in *Slovenský národopis*, a Slovak-based ethnology journal. Among the interviewed were émigré anthropologists Ladislav Holý, Petr Skalník, and Ernest Gellner and émigré ethnologist Vladimír Karbusický (Chorváthová, 1990, 1991, 1992; Krekovičová, 1992). Each interview introduced the expert credentials of the interviewee, their affiliation, degrees achieved in the West, and their rich experience with Western science, all of which served to establish their authority. The interviewees were encouraged to comment on the problems of Czechoslovak ethnology and to suggest solutions to remedy the situation. With the notable exception of Ernest Gellner, the interviewees gladly assumed the position of authority from which they picked at the multiple shortcomings of local ethnology.⁶ There were other spaces in which Western-experienced scholars expressed their contentions. Writing from the same authoritative position, Czech-Canadian anthropologist David Scheffel criticised the ethical standards of Czech ethnologists (Scheffel, 1992). Two years earlier, ethnologist Libuše Volbrachťová-Pourová made observations about the insufficiency of Czechoslovak ethnology in her letter addressed to a rehabilitation committee.⁷

Apart from his standing as a Western expert, Skalník drew legitimacy from at least three other sources, which he emphasised in the interview and his subsequent works. The first was his anthropological know-how, demonstrated by his seminal contributions to the problem of the evolution of the state, which would soon be followed by another on the life of Bronisław Malinowski (Claessen & Skalník, 1978, 1981; Thornton & Skalník, 1993). Malinowski's name can be viewed as further consecrating Skalník's anthropological expertise. In the collective anthropological mythology, Malinowski is viewed as the founding father of modern anthropology who set the binding standard of long-term participant observation for anthropological fieldwork. The second source was Skalník's status of an insider derived from his family and professional involvement with Czechoslovak ethnography. Several other émigrés could claim the same insider status (Holý, Karbusický, Lass, & Volbrachťová-Pourová). The third was the status of a victim of the communist regime. Skalník presented himself as a victim of the regime's harassment, which ultimately led to his emigration in 1976 (Skalník, 2002c, p. 51). In 1990, he successfully underwent the rehabilitation process, which gave him the

⁶ Gellner adopted a very charitable stance towards Czechoslovak scholars, as can be further seen in his critical yet affable review of the work of historian Miroslav Hroch (Gellner, 1994, pp. 182–200).

⁷ The committee was set to remedy the injustices committed on scholars in the socialist era (Volbrachťová-Pourová, 1990).

official status of a person wronged by communist rule (Skalník, 2002c, p. 53). All of the above can be understood as means of legitimisation which helped elevate Skalník to a position of authority.

What were the means of delegitimisation with which he aimed to take authority away from ethnologists? We can discern two. The first method was designed to demonstrate ethnology's parochialism and provincialism. The examples have already been given in the first part of the article. Skalník highlighted the virtues of anthropology, among which were long-term participant observation (as opposed to ethnology's short-term research trips), advanced theoretical framework (as opposed to ethnology's positivism and historicism), and worldliness, which strikingly differed from ethnologists' nationalist navel-gazing and thematic obtuseness.

The second and more important method of delegitimisation was Skalník's appeal to his readers' anti-communism, which was intimately connected to his own experience. The Velvet Revolution in 1989 fostered strong anti-communist sentiments in the public sphere. After the revolution, many communist functionaries were ousted from their positions in the civil service, judiciary, politics, and other institutions of the state. Measures were adopted at the legislature level. The so-called lustration laws prevented former communist functionaries, agents of State Security, or members of the People's Militias from being appointed to positions in the army or civil service (Eyal et al., 1998, pp. 108–109). However, the Czechoslovak way of dealing with the erstwhile representatives of communist rule was not as stringent as in former East Germany, where it led to a large-scale expulsion of former Communist Party members (Noack & Krause, 2005, pp. 25–26). Lustration laws did not touch all former party members, and many retained their jobs or even climbed the social ladder. This led to the conviction among the general public that many ex-communists, as well as those who had benefited from the socialist regime, continued to be undeservedly active in public life. Even today, accusations related to individuals' past activities in the socialist regime, regardless of the inapplicability of lustration laws, are a strong currency that can mobilise public opinion.⁸ What Katherine Verdery (1996) described as the situation in post-socialist Romania is equally applicable to the post-socialist Czech context:

Because the Romanian public generally reviles the name of Communism (...), opposition leaders can capitalize on this by labelling their opponents 'Communists' and 'Securitate'. Any group who charges that the governing party or its nationalist allies are disguised Securitate and crypto-Communists thereby undermines those others' legitimate claim to power, while presenting itself as the true defender of an anti-Communist national interest (p. 90).

⁸ These accusations were recently directed at Andrej Babiš (the now former PM and presidential candidate), Petr Pavel (an army general and the current president), Tomáš Král (president of the Czech Ice Hockey Association), and Igor Stříž (the current prosecutor general).

The revolution in 1989 swept Antonín Robek (1931–2008), one of the most prominent Czechoslovak ethnographers of the 1970s and 1980s and a high-ranking Communist Party member. Robek was the head of the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies at Charles University and the head of the Institute for Ethnography and Folklore Studies at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences for the better part of the 1970s and 1980s. Skalník (2005a, 2005b, 2018b) uses Robek's name as standing for socialist era ethnography with all its alleged vices: its repression of anthropology, nationalism, Marxism–Leninism, and communism. Other ethnographers' names appear very rarely in Skalník's accounts, and Robek's name can be read as synecdochically representing bad socialist-era ethnography. What Skalník does not mention, but many Czech readers probably know, is that many of Robek's subordinates used to be Communist Party members and continued to be active in the discipline and accessed related managerial positions even after the revolution.

Now, it should be clearer why Skalník built his delegitimation strategy mainly on ethnology's subservience to Marxism–Leninism. This tool seems to have been the most suited for the situation. Although Skalník does not profess the explanatory approach of totalitarianism to his subject matter, his sweeping rhetoric resembles it. Skalník depicts socialist-era ethnography as wholly subjected to the deliberation and will of the state, allowing for no exceptions: either you practised Marxist–Leninist ethnography or you could not practice ethnography at all.

Skalník's means of delegitimation were met with reactions designed to counter his rhetoric. Given the strong personal continuity between socialist-era ethnography and post-socialist ethnology, ethnologists felt the need to exculpate themselves and their friends, colleagues, mentors, spouses, and lovers from their erstwhile involvement in official science under communist rule. A distinct explanatory strategy has emerged, which generally accepts that ethnography was influenced by Marxism–Leninism and subjected to the deliberations and coercive measures of the state ruled by the Communist Party. This explanatory strategy differs from Skalník's in adding a seemingly innocuous postulate of the 'islands of freedom' (Balaš, 2022, p. 4). Through this postulate, contemporary ethnologists maintain that within the constricted space of official ethnography, one would find islands inhabited by small groups of ethnographers who were able to defy state socialism and communist ideology and even conduct innovative and cutting-edge research. This approach to the disciplinary past is designed to deflect the kinds of accusations that Skalník levels against ethnologists. Whereas Skalník phrases his texts as if no exceptions existed, for his rivals, the existence of exceptions is crucial because it can support their claim to scientific legitimacy.

As I argued earlier, both strategies work with an underdeveloped analytical apparatus because they only postulate their objects (the omnipotent state, islands of freedom) but do not explain the conditions which made their existence pos-

sible (Balaš, 2022, p. 4).⁹ The reason why I speak of them as frameworks instead of theories is twofold. They do not represent robust explanatory frameworks and are employed in an *ad hoc* manner. As a matter of fact, Skalník himself finds the ‘tiny’ Institute of Ethnology at Comenius University in Bratislava to have been the ‘only exception’ in pre-1989 Czechoslovakia (Skalník, 2002c, p. 51). By now, it should not be difficult to see what lies behind this opinion.¹⁰

Conclusion

I have tried to describe the main weapons of legitimisation and delegitimation with which Petr Skalník has waged his crusade for social anthropology in Czechia. Even though Skalník’s means can be seen as well-chosen for the post-socialist context, they did not have the intended effect. He, as well as other champions of anthropology, were unable to take over the ethnological institutional framework. Ethnologists managed to defend their strong position, which was very likely due to the absence of a robust decommunisation scheme, such as the one instituted in post-socialist East Germany (Noack & Krause, 2005, pp. 25–26). Without such a strong force in the background, a large-scale, one-off personnel change was not possible in Czech ethnology, and Skalník’s swords were but words. The scions of Robek’s era and former Communist Party members continued to be active in the discipline for subsequent decades, holding important managerial posts. This suggests that the tools of legitimisation and delegitimation that Skalník employed in his crusade were not the only potent forces which shaped post-socialist Czech academia.

This does not mean that the crusade for anthropology was an utter failure. Skalník’s texts, irrespective of their veracity, helped establish anthropology’s presence and legitimacy. It can be argued that they drove a wedge between the students of ethnology, some of whom began to strongly identify with anthropology and would later pursue careers in this field. The situation has changed since the 1990s. Today, anthropology has its own professional association and has gained considerable space in various university departments and academic institutes. However, it continues to exist partly within the institutional framework of Czech ethnology.

The sociological perspective I employed in the second part of the article allows for a sort of charitable reading of Skalník’s writings and, by extension, of

⁹ Jan Mervart (2022) has shown that a similar, common-sense totalitarian perspective is employed by contemporary Czech historians and the media (pp. 371–378). Although these historians have objectives that are slightly different from Skalník’s, they also have a stake in depicting Czech(oslovak) history in a certain way.

¹⁰ For an ingenious analysis of similar ambiguities related to the recollections of the life in socialism, see Houda (2019).

post-socialist discourse. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Skalník's writings also aspire to provide factual accounts. In the first part of my article, I attempt to show where his accounts fall short of veracity. I do not claim that all that Skalník writes is wrong, but it seems to me that the factuality of his texts is in inverse proportion to his politics. If Skalník admitted that the realities of the socialist era had been far more complex and tangled, that Marxism–Leninism had not been hegemonic, that there had been a space, however marginal, for anthropology, that there had been a space for the research on the contemporary socialist society as well as on non-Czech groups, and that ethnology and anthropology had not always been detested words, he would undermine his own political objectives. In other words, by accepting complexity, his oratory would lose its edge.

Given their strongly dismissive stance towards ethnology, Skalník's texts present somewhat extreme contributions to post-socialist discourse from among the Czech advocates of anthropology. Although his fellow travellers, as well as younger generations of anthropologists, share this critical attitude towards ethnology, their criticism has been less fierce and frequent. However, the ferocity of Skalník's writing against ethnology allows us to more clearly see the submerged politics in post-socialist discourse. I believe that the same critical scrutiny would throw an interesting light on accounts written by participants from other CEE countries, who also seem to have high stakes in the struggles between anthropologists and ethnologists. This leaves us with an uncomfortable question. In one of his earlier contributions, Skalník (2002b) introduced himself as an 'observing participant', purportedly to give more credence to his accounts. However, can we really trust the observing participants' accounts when their stakes are this high?

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The Well-Informed Critique of the Economy: A Study of Lay Economic Reasoning in Ukraine*

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Abstract: This article provides insight into the lay economic reasoning process through a qualitative gamification-method study conducted in Ukraine. Rather than economically naive individuals, laypeople in the study present themselves as Schützean well-informed citizens who are aware of expert knowledge and capable of using a metapragmatic register of critique in the discussion of the economic reality at hand. The doxic elements of lay economic knowledge, as an obstacle for metapragmatic reasoning, were also revealed in the study. The Ukrainian context of the research ensured that the respondents' economic claims were, on the one hand, largely separated from their political opinions, and on the other, problematized the functioning of the economic institutions, which would remain uncontested in other conditions. The paper engages in discussion with the recent literature on lay economic knowledge and advocates the abandonment of reductionist perspectives on the subject in further research.

Keywords: lay economic knowledge, Ukraine, doxa, well-informed citizen, metapragmatic critique, folk economics, gamification

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Introduction

The economy is actively shaped by both the rational and non-rational motivations of its human actors. Akerlof and Shiller (2009, p. 3) describe non-rational motivations as animal spirits, the emotional drives of economic actors that underlie economic fluctuations and come into play to resolve situations of uncertainty. To safeguard the economy from such influences, economists advocate for

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programmes on financial literacy (Fritz, 2021, p. 29) designed to refine laypeople's economic reasoning. However, the impact of these programmes is negligible (Swedberg, 2018) or even dubious (Artur, 2012; Clarke, 2015). Thus, lay economic thinking remains an economic force with which experts have to cope. Social values inform the market behaviour of economic actors, fuelling, for instance, the so-called housing crisis (Lux et al., 2017; Doling & Elsinga, 2013) while policy-makers adapt their governance to people's imagination of the economy (Diessner, 2023) or face the consequence of being discredited and replaced in favour of populist economic agenda exemplified by Brexit or the Trump presidency in the United States (Po Sang, 2020).

Researchers in the lay economic knowledge domain tend to depict it as an affective, normative and narrative perspective on economic issues. Emotional reasoning, based on communitarian norms and values, conflicts with the objective and genuinely rational reasoning in which experts engage. For instance, Shiller (2017) describes how people perceive significant economic events such as the Great Depression in narrative terms, Vila-Henninger (2017) and Haferkamp et al. (2009) elucidate voters' justification of economic policies based on social solidarity norms, and Lillquist et al. (2020) demonstrate that the citizen's perception of public debt is based on affective imaginary rather than being proof-driven. In terms of generalisations about ways of thinking, van Bavel and Gaskell (2004) distinguish between systemic and narrative modes of economic thinking used by both experts and laypeople. In their empirical research conducted in Chile, they found that experts attempted to colonise economic discourse via the systemic mode, while laypeople resisted using a 'culturally situated narrative mode of thinking' (van Bavel & Gaskell, 2004, p. 435). More recently, Swedberg (2018), in calling for research into folk economics, draws on the ancient distinction between expert (episteme) and lay (doxa) knowledge. Sociologists, he argues, should study the varieties of doxic knowledge present in the various ways people think about the economy.

Our aim is to contribute to this ongoing debate with our empirical research, which reveals a hitherto neglected instrumental use of expert knowledge in lay reasoning typically invoked to critique the current economic reality and its governance by experts. By employing an innovative gamification technique for data generation, we obtained and analysed conversational qualitative data on laypeople's casual reasoning. The participants in our study – while generally accepting expert knowledge as valid – were able to selectively borrow useful pieces from expert knowledge to criticise the expert paradigm in its own terms. In demonstrating the inadequacy of abstract explanations of economic phenomena by comparing them to the observed reality of economic and institutional backwardness in Ukraine, Ukrainian laypeople challenged the factual accuracy of technical expert knowledge. The fact that Ukraine was marked by general public scepticism towards the institutional order during the research period (2016 and 2020) facilitated unveiling the complexity of lay thinking about the economy by our research.

The reasoning of Ukrainian laypeople appears to be not only *imaginative* in the sense of its being subjective and culturally situated (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008; Swedberg, 2018), but also conceptually grounded and evidence-based. However, this does not mean that lay critique exposes expert knowledge as socially and politically conditioned and therefore flawed (van Bavel & Gaskell, 2004; Mosse, 2018); rather, it only shows that lay critique also recognises and is aware of expert knowledge on occasions of its practical inapplicability.

Drawing on the conceptualisation of critical registers by Boltanski (2011), we documented how people used the metapragmatic register of critique in combination with the practical foci and doxa frequently described in the literature. To support this insight, we invoke the theoretical model of the well-informed citizen proposed by A. Schütz (1964), which describes fittingly the observed reflexive use or rejection of expert knowledge in the economic thinking of Ukrainians. The existing literature on *folk economics* and *economic imaginaries* presents only a fraction of what lay economic thinking is and overlooks the well-informed aspect of lay reasoning. A recent exception is Po Sang's (2020) study of laypeople employing proof-driven reasoning equivalent to that of experts on China's economic recession in Hong Kong discussion forums. The main contribution of our research is an empirically supported claim that, in addition to the affective, normative and practical narrative reasoning that economists and sociologists typically synonymise with lay economic thinking, laypeople are able to choose an interpretatively adequate manner of reasoning in accordance with a given situation and employ cohesive logic based on the choice made. In particular, the ability of laypeople to utilise expert knowledge throughout their reasoning gets little to no attention within current economic sociology.

Theoretical background

Lay reasoning has always had a significant impact on the economy. On occasion, this has led to the creation of price bubbles (Shiller, 2015), or in contrast, its conservative nature has hampered economic innovation, with the protracted acceptance of life insurance being a point of reference (Zelizer, 1979). In academic research, these massive manifestations of lay thinking have been viewed – more or less with scepticism – as cases of logically failing *fast thinking* (Kahneman, 2011), herd behaviour (Shiller, 2015), or situationally *bounded rationality* (Simon, 1986). In contrast to economists, sociologists do not tend to suspect ordinary people of being inferior in their ability to reason and act – i.e., of being ‘judgemental dopes’ (Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 66–68). Indubitably, sociologists view the reasoning of ordinary people as massively constrained by sociocultural structures; however, these are variable external limits that are not inherent in thinking itself. In this sense, experts are also ordinary people, but they have had the chance to contemplate specific facets of the world without practical everyday life constraints – that is, to pursue theoretical knowledge *with passion* (Weber, 1919/2004, p. 8).

In his little-known article, Alfred Schütz, *homme d'affaires* and sociologist, characterises modern society as a function of people's belief that nobody can understand the lifeworld in its entirety – that is, only partial knowledge of the lifeworld is possible (Schütz, 1964, p. 120). This partial knowledge is socially distributed in such a way that we can identify three ideal types of actors: experts, ordinary people¹ and well-informed citizens. The expert's knowledge is narrow but systematic and based on evidence. The ordinary person has broad and vague knowledge, yet this knowledge is sufficient for all practical purposes. In between these poles stands the well-informed citizen who possesses broad, evidence-based and practical-oriented knowledge. These are pure types, which means that anyone 'is at any moment simultaneously expert, well-informed citizen, and man on the street, but in each case with respect to different provinces of knowledge' (Schütz, 1964, p. 123). An expert on cooking may be an ordinary person in physics, but a well-informed citizen in political matters. In particular, a well-informed citizen differs from other types of actors in being able to make an informed decision about 'who is a competent expert and even to make up his mind after having listened to opposing expert opinions' (Schütz, 1964, italics in original). If this is relatively unimportant in fields such as physics and art history, it is critical in the domains of practical human activity, including economic practice. The citizen who aims to be well-informed must be capable of transcending the practical mode of reasoning and questioning others' definitions of reality, as discord between different situational definitions is inherent in modern societies.

Especially during social change (e.g., societal transformation or crisis), dissonance between various institutional definitions set by experts and definitions rooted in the lifeworld becomes manifest; the adoption of one definition has a significant impact on understanding a crisis and the measures taken to overcome it (Lodge & Wegrich, 2011). Boltanski (2011) identified a distinction between two registers of critique available to people when they want to voice their discontent with social matters. The first is pragmatic critique characterised by 'ignoring differences of interpretation of what is happening' (Boltanski, 2011, p. 61); for example, one may make a complaint about a neighbour making noise at night because it disturbs their sleep. The second is the metapragmatic critique, which points out that institutions do not produce the expected reality; for example, when the market fails to make the fair exchange of goods and services possible or when the state fails to protect its citizens (Boltanski, 2011, pp. 105–107). A prerequisite for the use of the metapragmatic register is the reflexivity of the actor. It is not enough to say that something is wrong from one's perspective (i.e., factual, moral, affective or rational perspective), but it is also necessary to state – from a general perspective – how that thing should be in a given situation.

In the economic field, experts believe that generalised truth must be expressed in technical terms, which is predicated on knowledge of economic facts

¹ 'The man on the street' in the original.

and theories (Dekker & Kuchař, 2020). Accordingly, economists view ordinary people who lack specialised economic knowledge as operating only in a pragmatic mode; when a layperson criticises something, economists assume they are using this mode of criticism to shift the situation towards a more advantageous state from a subjective standpoint. For well-informed citizens, however, institutional critique has a metapragmatic character because the rightness of – institutional – action is by default linked to values, normative standards and the factual state of affairs. (Boltanski, 2011, p. 69).

Building on Schütz's concept of the well-informed citizen, we move beyond the two idealised attitudes of a condensed view of economic affairs previously identified (Swedberg, 2018; van Bavel & Gaskell, 2004), which correspond to two distinct ways of knowing and reasoning. The first stance is expert knowledge, which is coherent, abstract, systematic and evidence-based (Swedberg, 2018). Experts use precise economic constructs devoid of emotional connotations to reason about the economy as a sort of mechanism in which everything falls into place. If the market does not work as it should, experts explain it in terms of inefficiency or weak governance, but never as the product of vile intentions. Folk economics places the lay position at the other end of the spectrum. Laypeople reason based on communitarian values and pragmatic orientation (Haferkamp et al., 2009; Vila-Henninger, 2017; White, 1984). Their view of the economy is affective-normative, and they perceive institutions and processes either as the best possible order of things or as an arena in which individuals and groups with different interests and a propensity to break the rules compete. Laypeople pragmatically criticise a malfunctioning economy from the perspective of the harm being done to their personal interests – being essentially a typical rational actor – or due to perceived injustice inflicted on some social group. In contrast to these oppositional types, well-informed citizens have a broader horizon of relevance; they do not limit themselves to purely practical utility or that which is important from a scientific point of view. Their attitudes compel them to use both types of knowledge (Schütz, 1964, pp. 130–131). Although firmly grounded in the reality of everyday life, they seek out bits and pieces of expert knowledge and use the perspective of experts to understand not only the immediate situation but also its potential future outcomes. Although they cannot match experts in the systematicity and comprehensiveness of their knowledge of the economy, they are able to use evidence and theoretical knowledge to discuss the economy in a relatively unbiased manner. Simultaneously, they recognise the importance of communitarian values and consider economics a societal component in which people coexist. Ultimately, they care about both the abstract correctness of their claims as well as the societal genesis and impact of economic phenomena on simple folk.

This conceptualisation does not aim to depict actual experts or laypeople, but rather describes the potential and apparent ways in which laypeople understand and reason about the economy. Real-world experts also incorporate some elements into their theorising that can be considered irrational (Klamer, 2007; Tarim

et al., 2023). Many laypeople are also able to operate with complex economic terms in their reasoning, although they might reinterpret them differently from experts.

The last important concept relevant to economic thinking, as observed in our research, is *doxa* or doxic knowledge, which has a phenomenological origin but has been popularised by the social inequality sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984, p. 471). *Doxa*, to Bourdieu, is ‘an adherence to relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self-evident’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 471). It is a practically oriented and tacit form of knowledge acquired during socialisation. In contrast to Swedberg, who contrasts *doxa* with *episteme* and labels it an attribute of lay reasoning (2018, pp. 8–10), according to Bourdieu, *doxa* is specific to a particular field of knowledge – say, expert or lay knowledge – and is the product of symbolic power in that field. Therefore, *doxa* is maintained by a right-thinking (orthodox) majority in a given field, which polices the application and maintenance of common knowledge by silencing any argumentation assumed to be incorrect (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 168–169). In this sense, *doxa* discourages people from taking the metapragmatic stance because it makes any questioning or even debate about self-evident matters heterodox. However, doxic knowledge does not transform lay actors (or experts) into judgemental or cultural dopes; rather, social norms constrain the repertoire of reasonable actions available to social actors in specific situations (Lux et al., 2017).

To summarise our theoretical argument, we conceptualise the attitude of the well-informed citizen as forming their personal explanations for the economic reality based on expert knowledge, social values and available evidence. The peculiarity of this attitude is not that it stands somewhere between the expert and the everyday attitude, but that it transcends both, which are only partially relevant to the interpretation of what is happening in the economy. What is at stake, then, is not primarily the correctness of knowledge but its relevance to the situation at hand. Even the generally correct expert economic knowledge might be rejected as an explanation or guide to action for specific situations in the lived world. The main goal of lay economic reasoning is to ensure the actor a dignified position in society. In this regard, the significance of morality and fairness is paramount, specifically for normative reasoning about the economy. Well-informed citizens should be able to produce complex and metapragmatic critiques of the economy by making certain types of available knowledge relevant – that is, knowledge that situates economic action in a broader social context.

Context of the research

Because our research uses data obtained in Ukraine, we briefly outline the sociopolitical and economic situation in Ukraine. This contextualisation is necessary, as previous research has indicated that the economic reasoning of lay actors is

linked to their political worldviews (Bénabou & Tirole, 2016; Boyer & Petersen, 2018). Major events in economic history are also discussed, as they provide occasional context for the economic reasoning of Ukrainians.

Before 1991, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union's planned economy system, which largely failed to provide citizens with a range and variety of goods comparable to that provided by Western capitalism, resulting in – inter alia – the fetishisation of consumption as a means of status distinction in post-Soviet Ukraine (Wanner, 2005). The subsequent liberalisation of the economy was intended to reverse this situation, with a promise of overall economic growth and the privatisation of municipal assets, such as state-owned enterprises and real estate. Although the latter was half completed, with the notable exception of land privatisation, the results of the former were close to disastrous. The liberalisation of markets was accompanied by severe economic shocks and manipulated by an emerging class of entrepreneurs with influence in politics – the oligarchs (Dabrowski & Antczak, 1995; Puglisi, 2003).

This peculiar historical development raised suspicions in the minds of members of the populace about both state-socialist ideology and free-market ideology. It has also bred distrust of the political and economic elites and the economic programmes they employ to legitimise their power (Elster et al., 1998). The consequence of this is extremely weak politico-economic identification among Ukrainians, which has been captured in public opinion surveys. For example, the findings of a study by Baliuk et al. (2018) reveal that almost two-thirds of Ukrainians did not identify themselves on the ideological spectrum. This finding was confirmed by a World Values Survey study in which 41% of the respondents selected the '*don't know*' option when asked to classify themselves on the left-right political scale, while another 20% selected the option at the midpoint of the scale (Haerpfer et al., 2022). Together, these two groups form a majority that is devoid of standard ideological preferences. Conceivably, the preference held by the remainder of the population may be a right-wing ideology. However, the popularity of right-wing political parties in Ukraine has been low throughout Ukraine's modern history – compared to, for instance, Central Europe – which might be explained by Ukrainians adhering to the ideals of civic rather than ethnic nationalism (Shulman, 2004).

Ukraine's ideological vagueness in the economic domain is advantageous for research on lay reasoning because it indicates a low likelihood that this reasoning is merely an extension of a personal political worldview. Undoubtedly, cultural and educational factors are still relevant, as are specific elements of historical memory and the country's unique institutional settings. For example, Euromaidan (the 2013–2014 surge of demonstrations and civil unrest) was followed by an economic recession: in 2015, people were reeling from hyperinflation (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2021a), while Ukraine's GDP lost almost half its value (IMF, 2021b). The public sector remains vast due to incomplete privatisation (World Bank, 2017; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Develop-

ment [OECD], 2021). This is complemented by a strong perception of corruption (Transparency International [TI], 2021) and the presence of a shadow economy (Department for Strategic Planning and Macroeconomic Forecasting [DSPMF], 2022), which is indicative of the poor functioning of public and private institutions in Ukraine. Consequently, distrust and suspicion of state and economic institutions are pervasive across all parts of Ukrainian society.

We are aware that research on lay knowledge in a society that struggles with persistent inefficiencies and repeated social, political and economic shocks will not yield insight into reasoning under conditions of relative economic stability – that is, a prosperous economy with institutions functioning in a largely uncontroversial manner, as is typically the case in Western states (Leiser et al., 2016). The war in Ukraine began with the Russian invasion of Crimea and Donbas in 2014, which possibly pushed Ukrainian economic reasoning even further into obscurity. However, the Russo-Ukrainian war, especially before its escalation by the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022, should not amalgamate or substantially rearrange the qualities and relevance of expert, lay and well-informed citizen reasoning, by e.g. shifting the spectrum of what is covered by the word crisis, or affect the trust in state economic institutions by the performance of a state military. Rather, research in the context of *primarily economic* instability in the years of 2016 and 2020 in Ukraine provides insight that deepens our awareness of how laypeople react to uncertain financial situations and how they reflect on their ability to effect change. Such a setting unveils economic reasoning that would otherwise remain hidden, thus permitting the examination of situational influences on lay economic thinking.

Research methods

To capture the complex structure of lay reasoning, we utilised a board game-like technique for data generation. This approach has proved successful in previous research (Barker, 1979; Čanigová, 2022; Hájek et al., 2020; Holthus & Manzenreiter, 2021; Swan, 2012). Games were used to facilitate conversations among the participants about socially sensitive issues such as economic reasoning. Nobody wants to look like an antisocial or economically incompetent person, which might have happened if the research participants were required to articulate their personal reasoning in a research interview setting. With games, the participants can instead project themselves into an in-game role if they are worried about losing face (Goffman, 1967, p. 12). The game design thus allowed us to induce the participants to exhibit how laypeople construct and negotiate acceptable, legitimate knowledge of various economic phenomena and to investigate how this lay economic knowledge and reasoning are related to its practical application.

The game comprises two sets of cards that are meant to be matched. The first set (blue cards) contained cards conveying constructs that represent various

economic actors, institutions and processes (e.g., 'Banks', 'Credit', 'Welfare Benefits', 'Taxes' and 'Inflation'). The second set (orange cards) bore various statements, ranging from broad definitions (e.g., 'Capitalising on Savings' and 'Stable Profit') to evaluative expressions, which typically had positive or negative connotations (e.g., 'Result of One's Own Mistakes', 'Road to Riches' and 'A Noose Around the Neck'). Several cards in both sets represented abstract or everyday life dichotomies, for example, 'To Be Old' and 'To Be Young', 'Manifestation of My Own Responsibility' and 'Responsibility of a State'.

The cards were initially placed on a table front side up so that the players could get acquainted with the text written on them. The cards were then turned face down – thus concealing the text – and shuffled, after which the game began. The objective of the game was to collect the most pairs of term and definition cards. For each game move, a player selected two cards – one blue, one orange – and turned them upwards, revealing the text. To collect a pair and thus earn a point, the player had to convince his teammates that the definition on one card matched the concept on the other. Other players could comment on or object to the validity of the pairing. If the pairing of the two cards was contested, an argument aimed at reaching a consensus regarding the meaning of the pair of selected cards ensued among the players. If the majority agreed that the cards were a valid pair, the player could collect them; otherwise, the player had to leave the cards in play. The participants took turns until only the cards which were not viable to match left. The game ended when nobody could make a pair. The matches were supervised by lay moderators who explained the rules, resolved blocked debates if necessary, and regulated the game's overall flow. All conversations were recorded and used as data for the research analysis.

In total, 10 matches were conducted in which 35 individuals participated, excluding the moderators. The number of players per match ranged from 3 to 5, and the length of a match varied between 30 minutes and over 2 hours. The sample of participants was purposely constructed to cover various social backgrounds in Ukraine and comprised both genders, all age categories, the employed and unemployed, and students and pensioners. Eight of the 10 matches were conducted in Kyiv, one in Lutsk and the other in a small village in the Ivano-Frankivsk region. A portion of the study sample was recruited by the lead researcher and the other by a local research agency, DigData LLC. The first wave of the study was conducted in 2016 and the second in 2020; there were no significant differences between the findings of these two waves. A list of the participants and matches is included as supplementary material.

The recorded arguments contain rich insights into the ways laypeople produce and intersubjectively validate economic knowledge in a spontaneous manner – similar to casual conversations at a bar, a social event, and during a family encounter or in chit-chat between friends. We analysed the arguments qualitatively to determine the meaning patterns in the participants' reasoning. We did not measure the associations between the cards quantitatively because

the study sample was small, and more importantly, the pervasive contextuality of accounts and arguments justifying the card pairings would make numerical analysis meaningless. Moreover, our aim was not to measure the economic literacy of Ukrainians but to explore the variety of ways in which they reason out economic matters. It is also worth noting that group consensus on card pairing was often based on shared doxa, or at least in apparent conformity to doxa; therefore, the cards were simply paired by the players with minimal, if any, argument. This tacit coordination rendered any attempt to uncover the motives and reasons for the consensus speculative.

To address the specifics of the data, the analysis was conducted in the following manner. All recorded arguments were transcribed and coded using the Atlas.ti software. We conducted our analysis with a focus on instances of disagreement about the congruence between pairs of cards. This approach was beneficial because during the argument, the players were compelled to explicate their thoughts in order to convince the other players. In addition, an argument, by definition, requires active involvement; in contrast, the players appeared disengaged when there was tacit consensus. Across all instances of disagreement found in the data, three generalized approaches irreducible to one another were identified; these are presented at the beginning of the Results section.

In terms of gender, education and socio-economic background, no systematic differences were found in our results. Individuals of all backgrounds and genders in the sample were able to use the metapragmatic register, sought to be well-informed, and were able to use or understand any generalised type of reasoning that was recognised in the data. Some groups tended to have an opinion leader, but it appears that such a leader was defined much more by the interpersonal relationships between players than by gender, education or profession. For example, Layla (a player in Match 9) stated that she works as an economist. Contrary to what one might expect, she was not the opinion leader in the group; instead, this role was shared by Heorhiy and Oksana, who also appeared to be more knowledgeable in economic terminology.

Findings

In general, the participants exhibited high fluidity in their ability to justify their oftentimes random card pairings. People in different groups were also able to pair a construct card with the definition cards of opposite meanings. This indicates that a plausible and, ultimately, incorrect definition was often sufficient to conclude the argument.

The following three generalized approaches were identified from the data: (1) The default approach was textbook reasoning, which involves searching for correct but abstract definitions. This approach is associated with expert reason-

ing; (2) expert perspectives were challenged for their inadequacy in explaining the economic reality at hand or a lifeworld perspective; and (3) expert perspectives were challenged by normative reasoning based on social values. This disagreement did not necessarily involve a clash of perspectives of a different kind. Rather, it would happen that two players argued about the correct definition of, for instance, the central bank, with the arguments of both players staying at the abstract level of economic orthodoxy. The identification of these approaches is reflected in the structuring of the findings presented subsequently, along with other aspects identified in the lay arguments, such as the use of the metapragmatic register of critique or the doxa-driven obstacles to such critique.

Recognising expert knowledge in lay economic reasoning

In the introductory section, we demonstrate that lay knowledge of the economy is often considered to be at odds with that of experts. It is portrayed as incomplete, imprecise or even contradictory, but functional for practical purposes in situations of uncertainty (Simon, 1986; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; van Bavel & Gaskell, 2004). We did not contest this in our research, as it corresponds to the phenomenological analysis of the lifeworld. Lay knowledge is a product of subjective experience sedimentation and a natural attitude towards the world, which relies on a different system of relevance than the theoretical-scientific attitude (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973). Rather, we were curious about how lay actors interact with expert knowledge to become what Schütz (1964) called well-informed citizens. In this vein, our first finding is that lay participants who consistently used specialised terminology and demonstrated expert-like knowledge of economics enjoyed a dominant position in the arguments. Across all the matches, those whose argumentative style most strongly resembled that of experts were the key players in establishing group consensus. Consequently, these participants were recognised as well-informed citizens, in contrast to others with no specialised knowledge of economic matters.

The authority of these lay experts was based on the fact that they did what everyone else was trying to do – only better. All laypersons in our sample valued economic expertise. The typical argument aimed to be as close as possible to what economic expertise was thought to be. In their arguments, participants were able to achieve a high degree of precision, much higher than the game cards indicated, as the following excerpt from the transcripts illustrates:

Layla: I have [the cards] ‘Social Benefits/Welfare’ – ‘Fast Profit’. I suppose the state pays you welfare, either due to unemployment or for a child. Well, it is a fast profit.

Oksana: A tiny one [*laughs*], but profit.

Heorhiy: To me, it’s not much of a profit; it’s basically a benefit. Profit is when you’ve invested and earned something. But what did you invest here when you received a benefit?

[The players engage in a debate about profit being possible only after some sort of investment, which is resolved when the more fitting expert term suddenly occurs to Oksana.]

Oksana: It's income!

Heorhiy: It's income, yes, but it's not profit. It's not like you'd cripple yourself intentionally to receive the benefit.

(Match 9)

In this example, Layla began with an argument that social benefits could be considered a fast profit because – although it was not said – they require little time to process. The argument was accepted by Oksana with an ironic remark signalling that the congruence is not strong. However, Heorhiy objected to such a pairing, as it is inconsistent with the expert definition of profit. In the process of the lengthy argument about economic terminology, which is omitted from the excerpt, Oksana suddenly remembered the concept of income as a more fitting term to describe social benefits. Heorhiy agreed with her but insisted on the distinction between the concepts of income and profit, which showcases the degree of insight and finesse in laypeople's usage of economic terms.

The overall tendency of such expert-like statements indicates an aspiration to reach the same conclusion as experts, which was achieved in relation to the degree of knowledge at hand possessed by the players. Even a vague acquaintance with the term in question was enough to compel players to present as much knowledge as they possessed – knowledge gained from economic courses or books. In dire cases, Wikipedia or other encyclopaedia-like sources came into play to resolve a debate, which further proves that laypeople normally pursue recognised and theoretical explanations about the economy.

This largely explains how laypeople think about abstract economic facts – they simply recall bits of expert knowledge to the best of their ability. However, laypeople must consider the economy beyond abstract specialised knowledge; they cannot ignore the reality of everyday life interactions and behaviour within the economic system (i.e., their immediate personal involvement with the concrete reality of the economy). Thus, the two layers of economic reasoning merge in laypeople: an issue can be explained from both the abstract (expert) and concrete (everyday life) perspectives. In contrast to expert knowledge, lay reasoning possesses an additional layer of complexity.

What is the place of economics in the lay critique of identified problems within the local economic system?

If the reality of everyday interactions and their portrayal in specialised definitions are consistent, laypeople readily subscribe to expert discourse. However, in our study, the participants' experiences of actual economic reality often did not correspond to the abstract specialised knowledge taught in economics schools.

There are several reasons for this. One recurring justification for this dissonance was the local Ukrainian context, as seen in the following example of an exchange between a young couple and their friend:

Jane: 'Road to Financial Stability' – 'Mortgage'. [*Everyone sighed*].

Dane: Let's put it this way. I disagree with this statement in Ukraine, but elsewhere in the world – yes.

Mark: Yes, yes. Overall, here there's no mortgage as it ought to be in the first place.

Dane: Well, there is a state-provided mortgage already, but it's for a very limited number of people.

Mark: Yeah, there's like only ten thousand people who can obtain it annually. But elsewhere in the world, yes, you receive it with 1 to 2 percent interest to pay.

Dane: So, after all, this pair of cards counts. I reckon that – again – not in Ukraine. But in the world, yes.

Mark: Well, in Ukraine, it's absent, basically. So yeah.

(Match 7)

Mark and Jane, being a young family, have some detailed knowledge about mortgages, as they are in a stage of life during which people consider taking one. The sighing here – an expression of sadness – is explained by the unfavourable conditions in Ukraine for people who plan on buying a house. The players jointly pointed out that a real mortgage – which is guaranteed by the state – is not accessible to most people. Although there is a banking product called a mortgage, it does not perform the functions of a mortgage; instead, it is essentially a consumer loan due to its high-interest repayment rates. Local institutions were criticised for not working as declared; thus, abstract knowledge of economics was used to criticise the reality at hand.

The extent to which Mark and Dane are accurate in their assessments of what is obtainable outside Ukraine is irrelevant here. They understand the connection between mortgages and financial stability as a general economic truth, a component of expert knowledge, and they use it to criticise the local rules for mortgages. To put it differently, expert knowledge is not declared false per se; it is only recalled for criticism in the here and now with reference to their intersubjective knowledge of the lifeworld. The everyday life experience of laypeople thus serves as the basis for deciding whether expert knowledge, as perceived by laypeople, should be used as a confirmation or critique of the observed functioning of the economy.

A similar pattern emerged when speaking about an institution that is tightly associated with economic expertise, that is, the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU), which is the Ukrainian central bank. It is important to note that the bank was blamed for mishandling the 2015–2016 monetary crisis, but there were also experts who defended the NBU's actions (Adamyk, 2016). Here, we present short excerpts from the transcripts of two different matches:

Polly: 'Plague' – again – 'Central Bank'. [*Everybody laughs*].

Valeriy: Agreed!

Polly: No. I disagree. I don't consider it a plague in a civilised state.

(Match 2)

Mark: 'Good Invention' – 'Central Bank'.

Dane: Well, to think about a central bank as a positive phenomenon. Actually...

Mark: ...that was the idea. [*Laughs*].

Dane: Well, in developed countries, perhaps.

(Match 7)

In the first excerpt, laughing was not merely a reaction to the unexpected congruence between a core state financial institution and a deadly disease, behind the laughter was a shared depreciative opinion regarding the actions of the NBU during the 2015–2016 crisis. Polly, however, refused to ascribe this negativity to central banks in general but pointed out that the 'uncivilised' Ukrainian state was to blame. Similarly, in the second excerpt, Mark reasoned – and laughed – that the 'idea' of a central bank is positive; in other words, it could be a good invention. However, Dane replied that this was only the case in developed countries, not Ukraine. This implies that, contrary to expert abstract knowledge, in Ukraine, the central bank is actually not a good invention.

When the participants refer to 'civilised', 'developed' countries or just 'elsewhere in the world' where economic institutions work like in economic textbooks, they do not provide any evidence for this notion, and, equally, nobody asks for evidence. In reality, it is highly doubtful that any country's institutions would fulfil all normative requirements of economic science, as there are nuances and controversies to be found everywhere that allow an institution to be criticised from a normative point of view. The participants' imagination of a 'civilised' state serves as a useful rhetorical device to portray the local institutions as partially or entirely failing in their role. Furthermore, they simultaneously replace the institutional utopia of abstract economics with the heterotopia of the lifeworld (Foucault, 1986), thus invalidating the mechanical application of idealised theoretical knowledge to the real world.

Several times, the utopia of economics was challenged emotionally, which is another way in which lifeworld experiences enter research debates. With expert knowledge, the economy is an emotion-free system inhabited by more or less rational actors. Neoclassical economists discard the problem of emotions by translating them into utility-maximising strategies deployed by actors (Loewenstein, 2000). Nonetheless, everyday life experiences involve emotions; we are heartened if we succeed and frustrated if we fail to achieve our goals or match our values. Emotional detachment is at times hard to maintain when speaking about economic phenomena encountered *in the flesh* and by which one is personally affected. The discrepancy between the reality delineated in expert knowledge and

its real-world embodiment can be unexpected and drastic, and it is our research participants who might be the ones to face the implications. In the following example, a study participant outlines his experience with land privatisation while trying to pair the 'Land Market' and 'Human Scourge' cards:

Nick: Look. I will just give facts. I have land in Koziatyn. There was a fuss with its privatisation that was ongoing for years – fuss upon fuss. First of all, our state was very corrupt at the time when it all started, and just getting a document was unreal. (...) eighty goddamn ares² almost – yeah, a lot of land. The thing is, when the land is privatised, it is easier to manage, gift and so on. My mother wanted to privatise it from the start. And it still isn't because it's, damn it, basically impossible to do. Do you understand? It remains state-owned. Bang. Full stop. It's like banging your head against a brick wall!

[This speech by Nick was a success, as it suppressed David's resistance, and the cards were paired. Several rounds later, the topic of Nick's unfortunate land ownership situation re-emerged when the 'Privatisation' and 'Utopia' cards were drawn by him.]

Nick: (...) As I say, it's an individual case. But it makes a utopia out of it. In general, why couldn't I? I can privatise anything anywhere, basically. Except for certain things in our country.

(Match 10)

In his argument, Nick, incited by the 'Privatisation' and 'Utopia' cards, does not challenge the expert definition of privatisation but suspends its validity for the current situation. He acknowledges the partiality of his experience with the statement, 'It's an individual case'. Nevertheless, when he says 'it makes a utopia out of it', he is referring to the expert definition of privatisation. In his experience, what is institutionally labelled privatisation is not what he, as a layperson, understands as privatisation. The long struggle with false institutional promises produces negative emotions in him. Even after years of trying, he cannot claim ownership of the land he considers his property. Nick's account showcases how a bad individual experience with a malfunctioning institution nullifies the actual relevance of its abstract definition – his negative experience justifies his argument that privatisation is utopian.

There is another way in which emotions keep expert knowledge from being taken seriously. Experience with an economic crisis can block the legitimacy of abstract knowledge that is predicated on normal conditions. That is not to say that expert knowledge is rejected because of its general falsity; rather, it is rejected because it proved to be false in times of crisis. Although this rejection can be viewed as a cognitive error, the error is intentional. Consider the following exchange regarding inflation:

² 0.8 ha.

Arthur: There, 'Inflation' – 'Human Scourge'.

Valeriy: Yeah, can be.

Viola: But it is useful when there is inflation...

Polly: But it is a human scourge!

Viola: [*sighs*] If not for it, we'd have no troubles at all.

(Match 2)

Viola points out the positive side of inflation, arguing that it is intrinsic to a healthy economy, which is an argument drawn from mainstream economics. On the other hand, Polly implicitly refers to an economic crisis during which everybody lost money due to inflation to get the players to immediately relate to inflation as something horrible. This permits Polly to insist that inflation is principally a negative phenomenon. Considering the value of expert knowledge vis-à-vis Polly's emotions, Viola decided to opt for emotional solidarity – and a cognitive error. Because people were severely impacted by inflation during the crisis, distant and abstract economic explanations could not be adopted.

In this section, we described two forms of refusal to embrace abstract economic knowledge and related institutions that are typical among laypeople: local particularism and negative emotions. This critique of the true but distant utopia of expert knowledge demonstrates laypeople's ability to use the metapragmatic register, which is indispensable to the Schützian well-informed citizen. Generally, we would consider the lay critique regarding inflation, the inaccessibility of mortgages with a decent interest rate, the performance of a central bank or lengthy land privatisation procedures to be a pragmatic critique of the economy stemming from the practical interests of the individual. We also tend to perceive the critique as subjective and rooted in personal experience and/or emotions. However, in the arguments during the matches, expert definitions of economic phenomena were juxtaposed with concrete institutions or events within the local setting to make their incompatibility apparent. Therefore, we propose that this is a metapragmatic critique – a critique of the institutions that do not produce the reality they are expected to produce.

The incorporation of moral values in economic reasoning challenges instrumental rationality

In addition to the heterotopic and emotional obstacles to laypeople accepting expert economic knowledge, we also found that social values and morality play a crucial role that deserves separate delineation. During this type of argumentation, the participants challenged expert knowledge not by referring to the dysfunctionality of the local economic order but instead by referring to the injustice in society. In their ethical reasoning, laypeople often sought to replace abstract conceptualisations of institutions merely fulfilling their role in the economic sys-

tem with concrete agencies and actors. These were viewed as morally fallible, as seeking to maximise their agenda and power and as twisting the rules in their favour.

In our data, we recorded several instances of value-driven judgements condemning pure, economically rational behaviour. We present some examples, ordered from the least evaluative to the more judgemental.

Maria: For some, crisis; for some, stability. As Naimish says, if you see blood spilling in the streets, it's time to make trade deals. For some, war is a fortune; for some, it's not. And some arrange crises artificially to make money. Take oil, for example: nowadays, some earn a lot from it, while others lose their jobs.

(Match 3)

Here, Maria is ostentatiously implicit in saying that making money during a crisis or creating a crisis to make a profit from it is immoral, even if rationally justifiable. Her statement is factually correct but is different from how economics experts would describe the situation – not only regarding her implicit moralisation but also in relation to pointing out the interest groups manipulating the economy. In lay thinking, a crisis is always problematic, unnatural and easily attributable to someone's misbehaviour. In the following excerpt, Jake explicitly condemns fabricating a crisis for profit's sake.

[Group 5 was dominated by the expert-like argumentation of Pavlo, which makes the ensuing consensus around an ethical critique of economic crisis even more significant.]

Jake: 'Crisis' – 'Unfair Institution'. Crisis can be unfair if it is fabricated. In that case, these cards can match.

(Match 5)

In the next excerpt, Brian considers people stimulating inflation for their own profit to be parasites.

[The Inflation and Parasite cards were originally paired by Helena, but all the players jumped into the argument with their own versions as Helena shied away from explaining anything. The common solution was pragmatic: 'inflation eats your money like a parasite'. Alongside this, Brian offered an alternative metapragmatic critique of the problem.]

Brian: Inflation can be made artificially if somewhere there sits some parasite that feeds at the expense of others.

(Match 8)

Across these excerpts, there is a palpable sentiment regarding someone arranging an unfavourable situation to reap profit. These excerpts paint the economy as enjoying a natural and therefore just flow in ordinary times, and if a crisis

occurs, there might be non-natural and, therefore, suspicious reasons for it. In laypeople's economic reasoning, it is unethical for someone to profit from the misfortune of others by purposely causing others to experience loss. When no harm is intentionally produced, no moral judgement is needed, as outlined in Pavlo's explication:

Pavlo: 'Inflation' – 'Complex Calculations'... When there's inflation in the country, one may not only lose a fortune but also earn a fortune. If you get your bearings, if you are constantly engaged with it, [you can] make observations from certain preconditions where you can determine that there will be a collapse of the currency rate. And that money that you have – which you can withdraw without any danger to your life or business, so it won't be lying in the bank – you can spend either on currency or on other material assets.

(Match 5)

Pavlo described inflation as an opportunity to make a profit in the same vein as an economist would. This demonstrates that ordinary people can adopt the expert perspective and envision a crisis as an opportunity. It is worth noting that Pavlo takes an individual perspective, which on the one hand permits him to not consider the effect of the actors' actions on the broader society, but on the other hand, shows that a situation of crisis is not the actor's fault and is therefore exempt from moralisation. Other participants leaned towards a moralistic stance when considering speculative behaviour during crises, yet the excerpt above serves as proof that adopting a detached perspective is not inconceivable and that a layperson can make compromises regarding their moralistic stance if they are well-informed.

In summary, in the arguments in this study, the reasoning of *homo economicus* was complemented by an ethical layer that can occasionally outweigh economic rationality itself. Hence, the social dimension of lay economic theorising places judgement regarding the organisation of the economy on an additional moral scale, complementing the requirements for formally and factually correct statements. This is further evidence that lay economic reasoning is not only pragmatic in its logic but that the metapragmatic register of the well-informed citizen is necessary for deciding when rationality should be put aside and yield to ethical considerations.

Doxa may hinder laypeople from metapragmatic reasoning

Thus far, we have argued that well-informed laypeople, while thinking about economic matters, can embrace available expert knowledge or use the metapragmatic register to criticise such knowledge. At this point, it is necessary to admit that there is a barrier capable of blocking access to the non-pragmatic reflexive

stance. When a particular item of knowledge on economic matters is common sense, it hinders laypeople from adopting alternative perspectives, including the expert perspective. Such knowledge acts as doxa. Empirically, it manifests in attempts to close a debate whenever someone questions doxa, as in the following example:

Valeriy: Yes, ['Interest' – 'Stable Income'] suits me as well. We can't judge everything based on our country, after all.

Arthur: Why is that?

Valeriy: Because this is the country we have – end of story.

(Match 2)

The argument revolved around pairing the 'Interest' and 'Stable Income' cards. It was argued that, in Ukraine, interest does not represent a stable income, given the country's economic instability. Notwithstanding, Valeriy decided to pair the cards because 'we can't judge everything based on our country' – meaning that interest can be a stable income from a general perspective, and thus refusing to reason metapragmatically. When asked why Ukraine is not comparable to other countries, he replied with a typical doxic tautology, terminating the debate by asserting the 'end of story'. The uniqueness of the institutional setting in Ukraine as a fundamentally flawed economic order was an unquestioned, shared tacit knowledge. Another example that captures the doxic belief in the radical alterity of the Ukrainian economic situation is as follows:

[The argument unravelled as the players paired the 'Solidary Pension System' and 'Unfair Institution' cards. Unfairness and, coincidentally, solidarity were too normatively charged for the players to reason from the perspective of an expert. Consequently, the argument devolved into a denouncing of the local pension system from a moral point of view.]

Brian: In my understanding, this system we currently have can barely be considered solidary. With regard to pensioners and the benefits which they receive. Meaning, the thing you have on a card; it's not what we have. This pension system is not the one you're concerned with. It's more (...) akin to what it ought to be, yeah.

Oleh: Well, you see, and I'm speaking from the position of this place where we play this game, the city and the state where we are living.

(Match 8)

A distrust of the institutional setting is so widespread and all-encompassing that it permeates and is integral to local lay economic theorising. Such an argument is an example of a leap in reasoning used to provide a single resolution to a set of complex problems without addressing the individual distinctions of each. The assumption of a broken system, which is universally shared by the research participants, makes it possible to bypass evaluating any given institution and to consider the institutions as malfunctioning from the start.

The second piece of doxic knowledge we identified in the debates refers to individual responsibility for one's well-being. It is typically introduced as something obvious, such as 'My mama always said ...' or 'Not much to say here'.

Alina: My mama always said, never count on those social benefits, welfare or a pension because someday they'll simply get cancelled. Work, work with your own head, and then you will have money.

(Match 1)

Mario: 'Result of One's Own Mistakes' – 'Bankruptcy'. Not much to say here. We all understand that bankruptcy is the result of one's own actions. Guess I take these.

(Match 8)

The emphasis on individual responsibility is possibly related to a lack of trust in the country's institutional setting. As Alina argued, all social benefits may suddenly be cancelled. Alternatively, she emphasises the importance of being hard-working and smart, which also highlights her middle-class background; however, for the blue-collar worker, the corresponding doxic attitude would probably be working hard 'with her own hands'. For Mario, it is the individual's responsibility to be aware of the risks associated with entrepreneurship. It is common-sensical that no one is to blame for economic suicide other than the entrepreneur when he or she is conscious that the state or market institutions do not provide any sort of safety net. At the same time, the acceptance of individual responsibility is most probably a natural stance for any individual who is conscious of their actions. Although economic programmes infamously differ in the role attributed to the individual responsibility of the actor, it has its place even in the most state-centric economies; for example, the Soviet Union determined that the responsible individual must work (Congress of Soviets of the Soviet Union, 1936, art. 12). We want to emphasise that in our understanding, doxic knowledge can be a false consciousness-style manifestation of class relations and can also stem from the specific position of the economic actor as a human (Akerlof & Shiller, 2009), which differs from Bourdieu's conceptualisation. In both examples, there were no objections from the other players, which further confirms the statements' common-sensual nature.

How does such doxic knowledge hinder laypeople from taking a metapragmatic stance? According to Boltanski (2011, pp. 67–72), people use the metapragmatic register to indicate doubt and a distance between what is happening and what is supposed to happen. They ask, 'Is this really that?' In our case, for example, the question is what makes the Ukrainian economy so unique that basic economic notions do not hold there. Doxa does not allow such questions because 'this is the country we have – end of story'. It demands that certain knowledge is taken for granted.

Evidently, the two elements described earlier – a belief in the uniqueness of the institutional setting in Ukraine and the norm of individual responsibility –

represent doxic attitudes among laypeople towards the economy. This confirms the sociological claim that the portrayal of economic actors as driven only by profit-seeking rationality is imprecise and that the social influences of situated reasoning must be accounted for alongside economic rationality. The lay actor is situated at a crossroads of influences of various types, including rational and moral concerns regarding action, the declared and performed reality of economic actors, the suppression or welcoming of emotional reactions and reflexive taken-for-granted knowledge, all of which are constitutional to the judgement of laypeople.

Conclusion and discussion

To transcend the widely accepted distinction between expert and lay economics and thus capture the complexity of lay thinking about economics, we have employed two concepts: the well-informed citizen, pioneered by Alfred Schütz; and the metapragmatic register, advanced by Luc Boltanski. With their concepts, we describe how ordinary people, across their economic reasoning, are capable of using expert *abstract, rational* knowledge when it is available to them but do not always embrace such knowledge.

Unlike behavioural economics, we were not concerned with determining what hinders people from making rational judgements. This is a naive question for sociologists because we do not expect ordinary people to think about their everyday affairs in mathematical equations (Frerichs, 2011). Sociologists view ordinary people as conscious social actors in the economic field who consume rather than produce expertise. Therefore, in our study, the research question concerns how ordinary people deal with theoretical knowledge, alongside experiential, affective and normative knowledge, to cope with non-trivial issues. Thus, our research confirms once again that evaluating lay economic reasoning only on the cognitive rationality vs. irrationality scale – the instrumental rationality of *homo economicus* (Urbina & Ruiz-Villaverde, 2019) – does not do justice to its complexity.

It would be equally imprecise to present the reasoning of laypeople as inherently narrative and emotional in its character or as being based predominantly on social values, which is how it is typically portrayed in the research on lay economic knowledge (Haferkamp et al., 2009; Lillquist et al., 2020; Shiller, 2017; Swedberg, 2018; Vila-Henninger, 2017). This is a seemingly plausible angle to espouse when one attempts to make lay knowledge seem different from scientific reasoning. However, abstract expert-like reasoning was commonplace among the participants (Po Sang, 2020). Occasionally, laypeople used remarkably nuanced expert terminology in their statements and were able to adopt a detached expert perspective on economic issues. Even when expert-like reasoning was not adopted, participants usually signalled that they were aware of the expert perspective but did not consider it an adequate description of the economic reality.

According to Schütz, a well-informed citizen can make a qualified decision about who is a competent expert. In the arguments around card pairing, we observed this capacity in several manifestations. First, in recognising expert knowledge as generally superior to lay knowledge, when an expert definition of an institution or a phenomenon was available, participants tended to endorse it over lay opinions; for example, the distinction between a social benefit, income and profit, the role of central banks and the opportunity structure in crises. Second, the participants were able to specify the conditions of the applicability of expert knowledge. Because publicly and *freely* available expertise is often only general and incongruent with specific situations experienced by people, its adaptation to the local context is necessary. Therefore, our research participants deliberated the plausibility of abstract expert knowledge vis-à-vis their everyday life experience and referred to – in particular – the socio-economic and institutional context of Ukraine. Third, broad refusals to embrace expertise were recurrently justified emotionally, which led to its replacement with a lay explanation (e.g., privatisation and inflation). Although it could be considered an irrationality akin to conspiratorial thinking (Leiser et al., 2017; Leiser & Shemesh, 2018), we argue that such a consideration would ignore the real institutional dysfunction causing affective reaction on the part of citizens. In this regard, consider the study by Peterson and Harvey (2015) for an analysis of the subjective effects of large-scale institutional failure. A frustrating experience with a particular institution may lead to the rejection of its expert definition, and the empty symbolic space is then filled with ad hoc, situationally adequate lay reasoning.

Although our research participants often pragmatically criticised the economic situation in Ukraine, we also encountered instances of the use of the metapragmatic register. For Boltanski, the key feature of metapragmatic critique is reflexivity, which raises the question of whether that particular institution work as expected – and if not, why. In the arguments regarding crisis, inflation and the opportunities inflation offers, some participants reflected on social values (e.g., not doing harm) that should be respected, even if adhering to that value translated to less or no profit. However, this does not imply a loss of personal responsibility for one's own welfare; the participants predominantly agreed that no one ever ceases being economically responsible for themselves, even when a crisis hits hard. The use of the metapragmatic register thus occurred when participants considered the institutional (i.e., expert and rational) definition of the situation, which did not match their lived experience, values or relevant doxic knowledge. The resulting critique was not partisan or one-sided but that of a well-informed citizen. Hájek (2018) discusses how economic bloggers play a similar role.

The interpretive ambitions of our paper must be moderated by acknowledging the limitations of our research. Our findings are based on generalised discourse patterns from the gameplay debates of a relatively small sample of participants. Furthermore, the research was conducted in Ukraine, which had previously experienced significant economic crises and was characterised by a

pronounced distrust of economic institutions at the time. Indeed, in a stable society, lay economic knowledge overlaps in many ways with institutionalised expert knowledge and is generally accepted as economic doxa (Leiser et al., 2016). Thus, deviations from lay economic knowledge may appear to be a form of lay irrationality. The weak institutions of Ukraine (TI, 2021; DSPMF, 2022) constitute a contrasting setting to Western countries with a stable economy, making Ukrainians' critiques substantially more plausible than mere suspicion of their own country's institutions, which can be found anywhere. The Ukrainian context is valuable precisely because of the inadequacy of its description in terms of economic doxa, which enables other types of reasoning about the economy to take the spotlight alongside the nevertheless relevant expert knowledge. The metapragmatic stance, which is neglected in times of institutional stability in favour of pragmatic reasoning, is adopted much more often in times of crisis in order for the actors to identify the situation they are in and describe why it is flawed, who is responsible and how things should be done right.

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Martina Mysíková

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countries, and includes appendices with results

for EU countries. After introducing the data,

which is drawn from EU-SILC 2005-2018 and HBS

2010, the main analytical chapter focuses on

methodological issues connected to measuring

income poverty in a European context, with

a focus on the suitability of the currently applied

equivalence scales. The sensitivity of the at-risk-

of-poverty rate to the OECD-type equivalence

scale differs across countries. If the equivalence

scale applied does not fit national conditions

well, resulting income poverty rates may fail

to accurately inform social policies, especially

in countries with high sensitivity. Two sets of

county-specific equivalence scales are estimated

in this work: an expenditure-based scale using

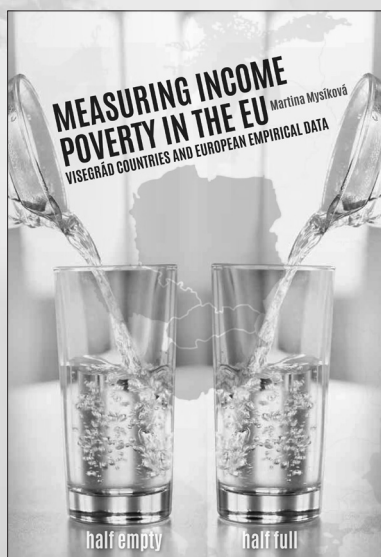
HBS data and a subjective equivalence scale

based on subjective poverty lines and EU-SILC

data. The book discusses the impacts of the

estimated scales on income poverty rates and provides alternative subjective income

poverty measures, which can usefully supplement objective income poverty data.



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What Differentiates the Ethnic Tolerance of Czech University Students? The Role of Field of Study, Family Background, Gender and Friendship*

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Abstract: Working in the context of a rather ethnically homogeneous country, this study examines what differentiates the social distance of university students towards Arab, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and Roma populations. The hitherto neglected effect of the field of study is also of special concern. The authors analysed the results of a large online survey of 3,912 Palacký University students in the Czech Republic. Inspired by Bogardus's social distance scale, we ascertained a significantly greater acceptability of Ukrainians and Vietnamese, on the one hand, and a higher distance towards Arabs and the Roma, on the other hand. Neither the liberalising influence of higher education nor the increased number of students in tertiary education affected the level of ethnic tolerance. With the exception of attitudes towards Roma people, male students and students whose mothers graduated from high school expressed a lower social distance. The research confirmed the contact theory, including the secondary transfer effect hypothesis. Even when controlling for other variables, students in the humanities and social sciences expressed the highest degree of ethnic tolerance. The question remains as to whether greater social distance among health science students and physical culture can contribute to the reproduction of prejudices in the field of health services or leisure sports activities.

Keywords: Bogardus, social distance, ethnic tolerance, university students, fields of study

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Introduction

The present study focuses on the differences in social distance towards four ethnically and culturally defined groups (Arabs, the Roma, Ukrainians and Vietnamese) from the viewpoint of students at various faculties of the Czech Republic's third largest university: Palacký University in Olomouc. In part, study replicates the research on attitudes towards the Roma from 2001, which showed variations in the social distance of students towards this most visible minority across faculties of the same university (Ryšavý, 2003). Moreover, two-decade-old finding has been checked with respect to social distance from Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Arabs. The research results reveal a clear difference between the more accommodating attitudes towards the Ukrainians and Vietnamese, on the one hand, and the more distanced attitudes towards the Arabs and Roma people, on the other hand. The limits of the assumed ordinality in the ranking of the Bogardus scale items pointed out by Ryšavý (2003) was also re-examined. We also controlled for the effect of a number of variables that could influence the degree of social distance, whether it is the characteristics of individual students (gender, duration of study), their study path (type of previous study) or family background. Finally, whether contact with foreigners affects social distance in any way was also tested.

The current article aims to expand on a limited number of studies that include a particular field of study on the list of factors influencing social distance, here as measured by the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. In a partial way, the current study extends the knowledge within the area of the effects of the massification of higher education and growing predominance of women among university students. Having collected data at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic (2021), this study coincided with the period between the so-called migration crisis (2015–2016) and the actual migration wave of Ukrainians fleeing the hardships of war. Finally, the present study represents a unique replication of research on university students' social distance outside the United States.

The structure of the current article is as follows: First, we introduce the key features of social distance research among college students, starting with the US research tradition established by Emory S. Bogardus. The Czech Republic has become a destination country for immigration only in recent decades. As a more ethnically homogeneous country, it represents a contrasting case not only for research conducted in the USA, but also for research from geographically closer Balkan countries. Second, we present three research questions focusing on the differences in social distance over time with respect to four selected groups and factors that may influence students' level of ethnic tolerance. Upon summarising the current state of knowledge, we describe the local context of the new Czech Republic study and variables we included in the analysis. The results section begins with a descriptive analysis, which is followed by a regression analysis to estimate the net effect of the selected variables on the social distance indicators of university students. The Discussion section assesses the main contributions of the research and the limitations of the study.

Social distance research among college students

Despite critique from both theoretical and methodological positions during the twentieth century, the Bogardus scale gained a dominant position in social distance research among college students. In the United States, Emory S. Bogardus established a nearly century-old tradition of research that continues into the twenty-first century (see Bogardus, 1967; Owen et al., 1977; Parrillo & Donough, 2005, 2013). The design of these surveys has changed only slightly over the years, even though Bogardus modified the scale several times. The research among university students enrolled in social science classes has made it possible to monitor nationwide developments over time. However, in research conducted around the world, the social distance scale has undergone a multitude of adjustments, ranging from a number of items included, through their wording and the way in which the answers are selected and to the diversity of groups against which social distance is measured (see, among others, Tusini, 2022; Wark & Galliher, 2007).

Although Bogardus himself compared the opinions of businesspeople and schoolteachers in one of the earliest studies (Bogardus, 1925), he did not repeat the same procedure for college students. Only the students enrolled in sociology courses and related social sciences were included. The courses on minority groups or race relations were omitted. No one has asked whether the restriction to social science students in a narrow sense shows only the tip of the iceberg; indeed, the attitudes of less tolerant groups of students from other fields of tertiary education may remain ‘below the surface’ and unexamined. Studies from other countries either did not mention the field of study or focused only on one field of study, for example, social work (Helbert & Kim, 2018) or tourism (Kosmaczewska, 2019). However, in their recent study, Velásquez and Eger (2022) recognised the importance of this hitherto overlooked variable. There are rare examples of studies that have taken into account the field of study from the Balkan area and Czech Republic (Djoric & Milojkovic, 2019; Ryšavý, 2003).

With the exception of the United States, research on social distance is concentrated mostly in Europe. In the last few decades, it has been especially widely carried out in Balkan countries (see, e.g., the university student surveys by Djoric & Milojkovic, 2019; Malešević & Uzelac, 1997; Rašković & Vuchkovski, 2016; Šuvaković, 2019). This is not a surprising finding, given the great ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of this region. The Balkan is a place where the Christian West, the Orthodox East and the Muslim South come into contact. Social distance between nationalities is reflected by the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and by longstanding ethnic tensions in the successor states and their neighbouring countries.

In many respects, the Czech Republic represents the opposite case to the Balkan countries. Since the end of the Second World War, the population within the territory of today’s Czech Republic has been relatively ethnically homogeneous and consisted predominantly of Czechs. The only visible minority were

Roma people. A deep political and economic transformation of the country and society after the Velvet Revolution in 1989 allowed the country to host immigrants in the same way as in other Western democracies (Seidlová, 2018). Since the beginning of the millennium, the number of foreigners in the country has tripled. With 6% of foreigners in 2021, the situation in the Czech Republic was similar to that of Finland or Portugal (Czech Statistical Office, 2023). The growing proportion of foreigners in the Czech Republic has not yet led to many studies using the Bogardus scale to compare social distance to a larger number of national groups. The study by Wallace (1999), which tracked attitudes towards six groups of foreigners, is a prime example. Another exception is STEM's 2010 research conducted for the Ministry of the Interior, which, in addition to ethnically and culturally defined groups, included other groups that are often targeted by right-wing extremists (STEM, 2010). Most recently, Jonas et al. (2024) examined the connection between social distance towards the Roma, Vietnamese, foreigners in general, and other stigmatized groups and the Big Five personality traits. However, none of these studies addressed attitudes of university students, instead focusing on the general population.

As mentioned above, the research on the attitudes of Palacký University students towards the Roma was one of the few that showed differences in the average level of social distance among students at various faculties (Ryšavý, 2003). However, an explanation for this finding was beyond the capabilities of the research. One can only speculate that some of the mechanisms mentioned in Hello et al. (2006) played a role. Specifically, they mentioned open-mindedness, stressing different aspects of the world or reduced faith in authorities. These factors could be more strongly connected with multiparadigmatic fields of knowledge, such as the humanities and arts or social sciences, than with the technical fields of study or more normative sciences, such as law, education or medicine and health care. However, the composition of faculty students can also hypothetically explain the variation in attitudes. Therefore, in the current research, we focused on the following research questions:

- (a) *Do the variations in average social distance towards the Roma among students at different faculties still hold true after two decades?*
- (b) *Do students of various faculties differ not only in their attitudes towards the Roma but also towards other ethnically and culturally defined groups?*
- (c) *Can the observed variations be explained by the composition of students in different faculties?*

Students' ethnic tolerance over time and towards different groups

As per the first research question, we must limit ourselves to social distance from the Roma surveyed in 2001. Intolerance towards the Roma people is actually quite strong throughout Europe (Strabac et al., 2012), and according to some authors, the general acceptability of anti-Roma prejudice creates a dominant and

unique form of ethnic bias (Kende et al., 2017). In Central and Eastern European countries, the change in the position of Roma people is hampered not only by widespread negative stereotypes, but also by the fact that they are perceived as a realistic threat (Kende et al., 2021). University students can hardly be expected to be an exception in this regard. Nevertheless, this comparison is also relevant from another perspective. At the beginning of the new century, the Czech Republic underwent an accelerated process of tertiary education massification (Trow, 1973; UNESCO, 2021). The expansion of enrolment in tertiary education may increase distance because people socialised in environments where foreigners are perceived as a threat are now more likely to study at a university. The conclusions of the literature on the relationship between tertiary education expansion and ethnic distance have been unclear. According to a British study by Storm et al. (2017), there has been a decrease in social distance towards minorities, but the effect of education appears to have diminished in recent years. In contrast, Thijs et al. (2018) stated that, in the Netherlands, the increase in prejudice is caused by individuals with higher education. Comparing the attitudes of students at one university at the beginning and after the peak of the massification process can contribute in part to understanding these complex relationships.

As per the second research question, increasing the number of groups towards which students declared their attitudes in the 2021 survey allows us to examine whether the differences between the attitudes of students from various faculties are accidental or whether or not they just involve distance from Roma people. The choices of Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Arabs were not random. The Ukrainians and Vietnamese have long resided in the present-day Czech Republic. Moreover, according to the 2021 census, Ukraine and Vietnam were the most represented immigrant groups among the countries outside the European Union. The majority of the population perceives both of them as hard working (Leontiyeva & Vávra, 2009) and has shown a growing degree of sympathy for them in recent years (Tuček, 2020). However, stereotypes picturing Ukrainians with shovels and Vietnamese people as the owners of small convenience stores and fast food outlets have long prevailed. The Arab group is not depicted in terms of a country of origin but as a group united by language and culture. This group was the smallest in present study. However, the presence of medical students from Arabic-speaking countries is a long-standing tradition in the Czech Republic. In addition, the attitudes of the Czech population changed rapidly from 2015–2016 during the so-called migration crisis (Chouliaraki et al., 2017). In the following years, opinion polls of respondents in the Czech Republic began manifesting a strong negative attitude towards Arabs (Tuček, 2022) or Muslims (Rabušic & Chromkova Manea, 2018). Unlike in many European countries, reluctance to help immigrants prevails, even among people with the highest education levels and students (European Union, 2020). This is reminiscent of the response of US students to the 9/11 attacks, which influenced the conduct and results of social distance research in 2001 (Parrillo & Donoghue, 2005).

Factors influencing the ethnic tolerance of students

Much of the research on prejudice and attitudes towards ethnically different groups or migrants refers to Allport's (1954) theory of intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Different studies focused on the question of under what conditions and in what form the contact between groups weakens prejudices and, on the contrary, when it can strengthen negative attitudes (see, e.g., the opposite findings in Váradi (2014) and Kende et al. (2017) in the case of attitudes towards Roma people). An equally important question is whether contact with one group can influence attitudes towards other groups via the so-called secondary transfer effect (Vezzali & Giovannini, 2012). Even in a relatively ethnically homogeneous society, university students have more opportunities to meet foreigners, either through exchange programmes or through a gradually increasing proportion of incoming foreign students.

If the field of study tends to be an overlooked variable, then comparing the attitudes of males and females is typical. In the US-focused studies by Bogardus, women showed greater social distance. In recent research (Parrillo & Donoghue, 2005, 2013) females had lower social distance scores, but the differences were not always statistically significant. Some geographically and culturally closer studies have either shown no major variation (Djoric & Milojkovic, 2019) or differential attitudes towards minorities (Kudrnáč, 2017). In summary, gender ratios are unlikely to help explain variations in the attitudes of students across faculties. However, their influence should not be underestimated.

The level of education is among the most frequently mentioned factors influencing the degree of social distance towards ethnically or culturally defined *others*. Among the mechanisms that have a positive influence, Hello et al. (2006) included, along with increasing education, a weakening sense of a perceived threat and propensity towards authoritarianism. Education can also increase open-mindedness and help individuals develop cognitive skills. One might ask whether education itself and its liberalising effect (see Velásquez & Eger, 2022) will increase tolerance towards members of ethnically or otherwise defined groups of others. If this applies, there should be an observable difference between the youngest student cohort and students approaching graduation, as confirmed by Parrillo and Donoghue (2013) in the case of US college students. This effect may also explain the variation in attitudes that we focus on in the present study.

Alternatively, we will determine whether the type of secondary education may play a greater role than the duration of tertiary education. It can be assumed that the liberalisation effect will be more pronounced among graduates of secondary general schools (*gymnasium*) with more intellectually oriented subjects in their curricula than among those who attended vocationally or professionally oriented secondary schools. However, we should take into account that the type of secondary school is correlated with the parents' education. There is a strong theory that universities mainly confirm the cultural and social capital that students bring along with them from their families (proved in the case of France

by Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). From this perspective, differences in tolerance may result from students' different family backgrounds. Both ethnic tolerance, which increases with education, and the intergenerational reproduction of prejudices and stereotypes may be at work. Students whose parents achieved a higher education level should show lower levels of distance. In that case, the difference stems not from liberalising tertiary education but from the manner in which families raise their children. We are interested in determining whether the variations in the attitudes of students from different faculties remain persistent, even when controlling for the education of their parents.

Local context of the present study

Palacký University in Olomouc is the third largest university in the Czech Republic, with nearly 23,000 students. Since the turn of the millennium, when the first survey of attitudes towards the Roma population was conducted, the number of students at Palacký University has almost doubled. Eight faculties with hundreds of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes cover most fields of education and training outside of engineering and agriculture. Some of the faculties (e.g. Arts) include a larger number of disciplines. The health sciences are the focus of the Faculty of Medicine and, since its establishment in 2008, of the Faculty of Health Sciences. The faculties at Palacký University differ in the proportion of students enrolled in three-year undergraduate programmes. Multiyear master's degrees prevail in the faculties of medicine and law. This results in longer periods of study, on average. The faculties also differ significantly in the proportion of male and female students. At the time of the present research, male students outnumbered female students only at the Faculty of Physical Culture. On the other hand, the share of female students reached 85% in the Faculties of Education and Health Sciences.

As mentioned above, today's students in the Czech Republic have grown up in a country with an increasing proportion of foreigners. The number of foreign nationals among university students and teachers has also been increasing. At the time of this research, this proportion reached 11% at Palacký University overall but 43% at the Faculty of Medicine. However, foreigners come mainly from linguistically close Slovakia. The number of students from other countries was mostly in the dozens. Most of them study medicine, followed by the natural sciences, art and humanities. On the other hand, a minimum of foreigners (except Slovakian people) study at the Faculties of Education, Physical Culture and Health Sciences. Nevertheless, regular exchange programmes, such as ERASMUS+, may increasingly contribute to contact with foreigners from other countries.

From the school statistics available, it is not possible to demonstrate how much students differ in terms of what high school they attended and the educational background of their parents. However, the EUROSTUDENT VI research showed that high school graduates are more likely to study the natural sciences,

law or medicine, while graduates of vocationally oriented secondary schools make up a relatively larger proportion of students pursuing technical, economic or pedagogical fields as well as the social sciences and humanities. In addition, the graduates of secondary general schools are more likely to come from the families of university-educated parents (Fischer, Vltavská a kol., 2016). In most countries participating in EUROSTUDENT VII, the children of tertiary educated parents were more likely to be studying science, whereas students without a tertiary education background in the family were more likely to be studying subjects in the field of education (Hauschildt et al., 2021). It is likely that the composition of the Palacký University faculties varies according to the type of high school attended as well as the educational background of their parents.

In summary, if the composition of students varies across faculties, studying a particular field may not be a significant predictor of social distance, even in the case of the differences highlighted in the original 2001 study. Therefore, in the present study, we chose to control for the influence of those variables, which may provide alternative explanations for the observed differences.

Data source and variables

The current study is based on data collected from the *Students Palacký University 2021* project, in which an extensive online survey of Palacký University students was conducted in May 2021. The transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for face-to-face interviews. Therefore, the CAWI method was chosen instead. We invited all reachable students to participate in the research via e-mails repeatedly sent to their university addresses and via other supporting channels. Nearly 5,000 students participated in the survey, which is 22% of the overall student body. The response rate was greater among full-time students than among part-time students. In the current study, we worked with a subset of answers from full-time students who answered the question of whether they had friends or acquaintances with foreigners (N = 3912). The structure of the respondents corresponded relatively well to the known characteristics of the base set (Table 1). Female students (74% answering vs. 68% studying of all full-time students) and students of the Faculty of Arts (32% vs. 25%, respectively) were overrepresented. In contrast, the representation of respondents from smaller faculties was lower (e.g., 9% of the university's students attended the Faculty of Law, but only 6% of the respondents came from there). For these reasons, we used weighted data, where appropriate.

Dependent variable

Social distance was measured in the same way as in a survey of attitudes towards the Roma among a randomly selected sample of students in 2001 (see Ryšavý, 2003). The question was as follows: 'Imagine you are in a situation where you

have to decide for yourself, regardless of the opinion of your family or the people around you. In such a situation, would you accept a Ukrainian (Vietnamese/Roma/Arab) person as a life partner, friend, neighbour, coworker or Czech citizen?' We proceeded differently than Bogardus in several respects. First, we used five items instead of seven. Two extreme variants were omitted. This limitation corresponds to the recommendation of Parrillo and Donaghue (2013) that *accepting as visitors only to my country* and *barring from my country* are too extreme responses for these times. Second, we applied items from one of the first versions of the social distance scale (Bogardus, 1925) and not from the one that became more dominant later on (Bogardus, 1960). The reason for this was that the 2001 survey relied on the Bogardus Social Distance Scale taken from a Slovak translation of a foreign textbook (Krech et al., 1962). Third, in contrast to Bogardus's approach, the respondents rated each of the distance levels on a 4-point scale: (1) 'definitely yes'; (2) 'mostly yes'; (3) 'mostly not'; (4) 'definitely not'. The use of the Likert scale is not exceptional (e.g., Hagendorn & Hraba, 1987; Kosmaczewska, 2019). We agree with Mather et al. (2017) that Likert responses provide a finer-grained and more nuanced picture of respondents' feelings. Another advantage is the ability to assess the ordinariness of the order of items.

First, from the responses, we created an index of social distance towards the Roma that was comparable to 2001. At the time, the fields of study of today's Faculty of Physical Culture were still part of the Faculty of Medicine, and the students of the Faculty of Education were not surveyed (Ryšavý, 2003). The index of social distance towards Roma people has values of 0 to 5, depending on the number of levels at which the Roma were marked as acceptable (answers 'definitely yes' and 'mostly yes' were assigned a value of 1) or unacceptable ('definitely no' and 'mostly no' were assigned a value of 0). For the faculty comparisons, we further created a DISTANCE index in a similar manner; this included measures of social distance from all four groups (Ukrainians, Vietnamese, the Roma and Arabs) and ranged between 0 and 20. In both cases, the higher the index value, the lower the level of social distance. Moreover, we calculated four separate iScores based on the proposal of Mather et al. (2017), that were obtained from the multiplication of the value on the Likert scale (1–4) and assessed level (from the lowest value of 1 for *citizens* to the highest value of 5 for *life partners*). In contrast to the distance index, the higher iScore values indicate a greater degree of distance. The range of values for each ethnic group is 15 ('definitely yes' at all five levels) to 60 ('definitely not').

Independent variables

Fields of study/faculty: The faculties of the university differ in terms of the number of fields of study. Some are almost mono-disciplinary (medicine, law, health care or education). Others include a larger number of more or less comparable fields of study that cannot be distinguished in the dataset (the Faculties of Sci-

ence, Arts, Theology or Physical Culture). Moreover, many students, especially those enrolled in the arts and humanities or social sciences, study a combination of fields. Therefore, the students included in the analysis are not categorised by field of study. The faculty at which the student was primarily studying served as an indicator.

Year of study: The independent variable 'year of study' was created by combining the variables 'study programme' (three-year bachelors, two-year follow-up master's or five- to six-year master's degree) and a declared year of study. For simplicity, the highest value was assigned to all doctoral students. Based on this adjustment, the quasicontinuous variable had a range of one (freshmen) to eight (doctoral students).

Gymnasium: The dichotomous variable *Gymn* represents the type of secondary school completed. A value of 1 was assigned to those respondents who completed a secondary general school education before entering university (71%). Others came to universities with experience in different types of vocational schools (value 0). However, the composition of secondary school students in the Czech Republic is the opposite (Czech Statistical Office, 2021). Thus, secondary general schools represent the most direct route to universities.

Parents' education: In the regression analysis, we used two dichotomous variables for mothers' and fathers' education. Thus, we can distinguish parents with three levels of education: a) primary education or apprenticeship, b) completed secondary education or c) tertiary education. More than four-fifths of mothers and almost three-quarters of fathers completed secondary education. In addition, one-third of the parents achieved a university degree.

Friendship with foreigners: A simple question tested the contact hypothesis: 'Do you have friends or acquaintances among foreigners who are long-term residents in the Czech Republic?' Half of the respondents answered affirmatively, which is considerably more than opinion polls among the adult population show (PORC, 2020). The Roma cannot be considered foreigners. However, we can use attitudes towards them to test the secondary transfer effect.

The independent variables correlated with each other only slightly (see the correlation table in the Annex). Parental education was the most closely related. This indicates both a relatively high degree of educational homogeneity¹ (see Katrňák et al., 2012) and the extent to which parents (especially fathers) with upper secondary education went on to study at a university.

¹ Spearman's $\rho = 0.43$ in the case of three levels of mothers' and fathers' education. In the case of mothers and fathers with tertiary education: Pearson's $r = 0.39$.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of independent variables and dependent indices

		N	Min	Max	Mean/ Pct	StDev
YEAR	Year of study	3910	1.0	8.0	2.97	1.2
GYMN	Secondary general school	3906	0.0	1.0	71%	-
MOTHER2	Mother – secondary ed.	3885	0.0	1.0	82%	-
MOTHER3	Mother – tertiary ed.	3885	0.0	1.0	33%	-
FATHER2	Father – secondary ed.	3820	0.0	1.0	72%	-
FATHER3	Father – tertiary ed.	3820	0.0	1.0	34%	-
FEMALE		3912	0.0	1.0	74%	-
Faculties	Theology	3912	0.0	1.0	2%	-
	Medicine	3912	0.0	1.0	11%	-
	Arts	3912	0.0	1.0	32%	-
	Science	3912	0.0	1.0	20%	-
	Education	3912	0.0	1.0	18%	-
	PhysCult	3912	0.0	1.0	7%	-
	Law	3912	0.0	1.0	6%	-
	Health	3912	0.0	1.0	4%	-
FRIENDS	Friendship with foreigners	3912	0.0	1.0	50%	-
UScore	Ukrainians	3854	15.0	60.0	26.68	9.5
VScore	Vietnamese	3821	15.0	60.0	26.77	9.4
AScore	Arab	3814	15.0	60.0	31.93	11.7
RScore	Roma	3828	15.0	60.0	35.68	12.3
DISTANCE	All four groups together	3826	0.0	20.0	14.96	4.4

Note: The Mean/Pct column shows the mean values for the length of study (YEAR) and social distance indices and the percentages for the dichotomous variables. Reference groups are not included in the case of completed secondary school (vocational), parents' education (basic) or sex (male). A smaller DISTANCE index indicates greater social distance, while in the case of iScores (Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Arab, Roma), larger values indicate greater social distance.

Results

The primary aim was to ascertain whether, 20 years after the first research, the students of Palacký University showed a greater or lower level of social distance from the Roma. With the exception of the most intimate item (*partner*), there has been a slight decline in the acceptance of Roma people over the 20-year period, leading to an increase in social distance. The average number of levels of declared Roma acceptance changed from 3.2 in 2001 to 3.08 in 2021 with comparable standard deviations (1.5 vs. 1.7).² The chart depicting the share of the respondents who agreed to accept the Roma at the individual level indicates only small changes between the time before the start of the educational expansion (2001) and after its peak (2021) (Figure 1). The massification of tertiary education has not led to a measurable increase in social distance from Roma people, or other circumstances not captured by research have outweighed the effect thereof.

We reaffirmed the finding of Ryšavý (2003) that the order of the distance levels assumed by Bogardus did not apply to the Roma. University students were more likely to accept a Roma person as a friend (66%) than as a neighbour (55%).³ The same was true to a lesser degree for social distance from Arabs. In total, 76% of the students declared that they would be willing to accept them as neighbours, and 79% declared willing to accept them as friends. However, only 74% would accept Arabs as citizens of the country.⁴ Similarly, students were more likely to respond 'Yes' as a friend (and as a neighbour or a coworker) than as a citizen in the case of Ukrainians and Vietnamese people. In the open-ended questions, some reported that judging the acceptability of foreigners as citizens was difficult. It is likely that these difficulties would not have arisen upon using the more usual version of the Bogardus scale, which offers an item *as speaking acquaintances only* instead of an item *as a citizen*. More important, however, is the finding that the inclusion of the item *as a neighbour* disproportionately increases the index of social distance towards the Roma (and, to some degree, towards Arabs).

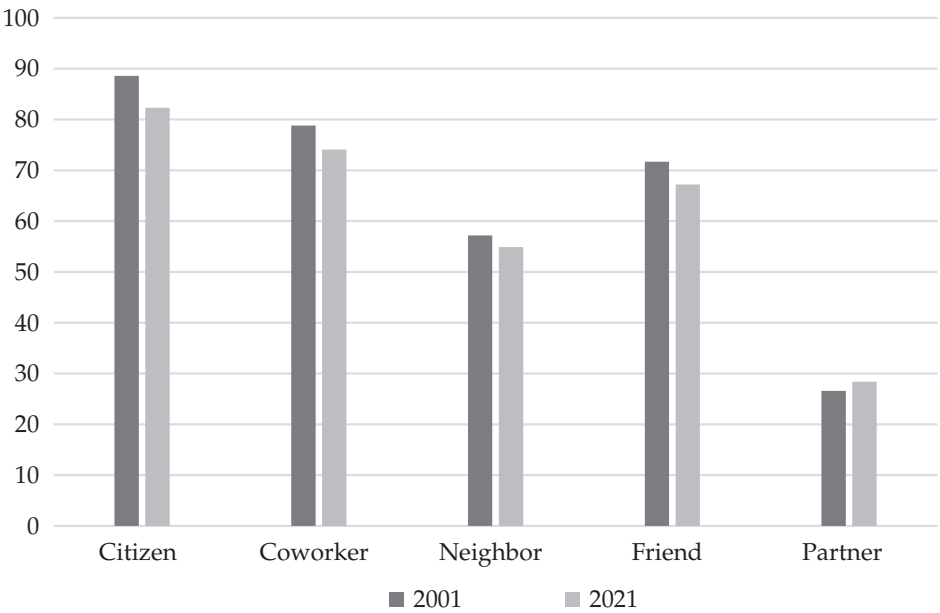
The second objective was to compare the degree of social distance among students of different faculties at Palacký University. The average values for all indices (dependent variables) are skewed towards a lower social distance (Table 1). Figure 2 shows a clear difference between the more accommodating attitudes towards the Ukrainians and Vietnamese, on the one hand, and the more reserved attitudes towards the Arabs and the Roma, on the other hand. The ranking of faculties does not change much for individual iScores. On average, the most tolerant

² Cohen's $d = 0.47$ also shows a relatively small change over time. For the sake of comparability of the data, the answers from students of the Faculty of Education were not included.

³ Guttman coefficient of reproducibility C_R for the whole scale of 2021 was 0.91. However, in the case of items *friend* $C_R = 0.82$ and *neighbour* $C_R = 0.88$. The coefficients' values are slightly higher than in 2001 (Ryšavý, 2003). Calculated according to Řehák (1981).

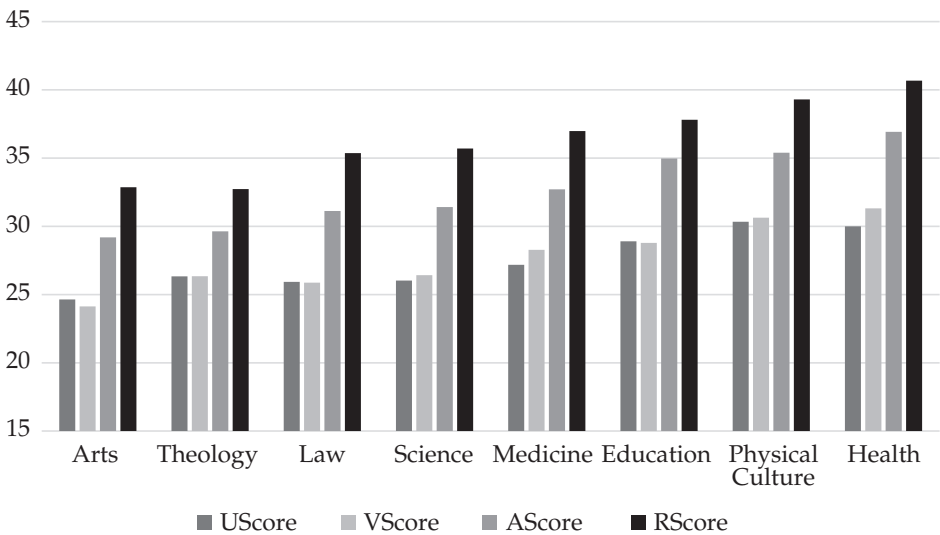
⁴ In the case of Arabs, C_R for the whole scale of 2021 was 0.91. However, in the case of items *friend* $C_R = 0.85$ and *citizen* $C_R = 0.84$.

Figure 1. I would accept a Roma person as... (Sum of 'definitely yes' and 'rather yes')



Note: Does not include students of the Faculty of Education who were not surveyed in 2001. Data from 2021 were weighted by faculty and gender.

Figure 2. Average iScores according to respondents' faculty



students in the Faculty of Arts are distinguished from the students in the Faculty of Theology by their lower social distance from Ukrainians and Vietnamese. Theology students, on the other hand, declared a greater tolerance towards Arab and Roma people compared with students of law and science. Students at the Faculties of Medicine and Physical Culture were among the least tolerant of the Roma in 2001. Twenty years later and 13 years after the split of the Faculty of Medicine, the attitudes of students of the two successor faculties (Medicine and Health Sciences) clearly differed. Students in the Faculty of Health Sciences again showed the highest level of social distance. In 2021, students of the Faculty of Medicine were more tolerant than students of the Faculty of Education, who were not surveyed in 2001.

Ryšavý (2003) used t-tests to determine the statistical significance of differences in the average level of social distance from the Roma, but he did not consider the possible influence of the different compositions of students at individual faculties. Therefore, in the present study, we use a linear regression analysis to answer the third research question. The aim is to determine whether the different structures of students in faculties can explain the detected variations in social distance.

Regression analysis

Linear regression analysis and the ordinary least squares (OLS) method help identify the effects of independent variables. All independent variables were entered into the analysis simultaneously. Table 2 shows the basic results of the regression analysis of the five dependent variables. The DISTANCE index was calculated as an aggregate measure of the acceptability or unacceptability of the four groups. It is worth noting that the positive values of the regression coefficients in the DISTANCE column indicate decreasing social distance. The opposite is true in the case of the specific iScores (Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Arab and Roma). The total share of the explained variance (adjusted R^2) is not high, hence corresponding to the relatively low social distance among university students. However, there are noticeable differences between the effects of the independent variables.

Even when controlling for a number of variables, the field of study represented by the faculty remained the strongest predictor of the level of social distance. This confirms a clear difference between the students of the Faculty of Theology and Arts and the others. The average DISTANCE on the 0 to 20 scale is almost 3 points worse for the Physical Culture and Health Sciences Faculties than for the Faculty of Arts, which serves as a comparative category. The ranking of faculties varies slightly for each iScore. Checking other variables, students of physical culture showed lower tolerance towards the Ukrainians and Vietnamese, while the students of health sciences reported greater distance towards Arab and Roma people. It is worth pointing to a lower degree of social distance towards Arabs on the part of the students of medicine compared with the students of the Faculty of Education. In the case of the Vietnamese and Roma people, the oppo-

Table 2. Results of regression analyses of determinants of total social distance and individual iScores

	DISTANCE	Ukrainians	Vietnamese	Arab	Roma
Constant	14.856*** (0.280)	26.825*** (0.601)	25.538*** (0.589)	31.349*** (0.746)	37.410*** (0.787)
FEMALE	-0.679*** (0.163)	2.091*** (0.349)	2.399*** (0.343)	2.517*** (0.434)	0.045 (0.458)
Theology	0.173 (0.512)	1.341 (1.080)	1.428 (1.077)	-0.250 (1.362)	-0.753 (1.430)
Law	-0.666* (0.299)	1.188 (0.642)	1.645** (0.629)	1.859* (0.796)	2.351** (0.840)
Science	-1.037*** (0.201)	1.920*** (0.431)	2.655*** (0.423)	2.726*** (0.535)	3.024*** (0.564)
Education	-1.550*** (0.210)	3.165*** (0.451)	3.700*** (0.443)	4.473*** (0.559)	3.962*** (0.591)
Medicine	-1.707*** (0.251)	3.196*** (0.540)	4.717*** (0.529)	4.298*** (0.669)	4.865*** (0.708)
Health	-2.799*** (0.356)	4.244*** (0.758)	6.203*** (0.745)	6.544*** (0.947)	6.943*** (0.996)
PhysCult	-2.857*** (0.296)	5.819*** (0.635)	6.714*** (0.622)	6.342*** (0.788)	6.080*** (0.833)
YEAR	0.040 (0.036)	-0.175* (0.078)	-0.018 (0.076)	0.024 (0.097)	-0.198 (0.102)
GYMN	0.450** (0.167)	-0.877* (0.358)	-0.705* (0.352)	-1.231** (0.445)	-1.188* (0.470)
MOTHER2	0.428* (0.200)	-0.889* (0.429)	-0.969* (0.421)	-1.143* (0.532)	-0.970 (0.562)
MOTHER3	0.148 (0.167)	-0.435 (0.358)	-0.278 (0.352)	-0.421 (0.445)	-0.364 (0.470)
FATHER2	0.358* (0.178)	-0.331 (0.381)	-0.573 (0.375)	-0.597 (0.474)	-0.596 (0.501)
FATHER3	-0.164 (0.174)	0.096 (0.373)	-0.016 (0.366)	-0.068 (0.463)	-0.005 (0.489)
FRIENDS	1.192*** (0.142)	-2.859*** (0.304)	-2.525*** (0.299)	-3.207*** (0.378)	-3.325*** (0.399)
Adjusted R2	0.079	0.079	0.095	0.078	0.060
N	3721	3745	3716	3716	3716

Notes: In the DISTANCE index, smaller values indicate greater social distance, while in the case of iScores (Ukrainians, Vietnamese, Arab, Roma), larger values indicate greater social distance. MOTHER2 means a mother with no more than a secondary school education. MOTHER3 means tertiary education and so forth. Unstandardised regression coefficients (standard errors).
Significance levels: ***0.001; **0.01; *0.1. The significance level is only indicative because the sample of respondents was not obtained by probability sampling.

site is true when controlling for the influence of other variables. There are a few students from Arab countries at Palacký University, but most of them study at the Faculty of Medicine.

The regression coefficients in the FRIENDS variable row show that students who have foreign friends or acquaintances expressed lower social distance from all groups. In other words, the attitudes of the university students corresponded to the expectations of intergroup contact theory as well as to the secondary transfer hypothesis. This is worth noting, especially in the case of social distance from the Roma, for whom most of the other factors proved to be insignificant. As the regression coefficient in the iScore Roma column shows, neither gender, year of study nor parents' education has a visible effect on the distance towards the Roma.

The graduates of secondary general schools (*gymnasium*) declared a lower social distance from all groups without distinction. Except for attitudes towards Roma people, the same was true for the children of mothers who had completed some form of upper secondary education. Either there is a liberalising atmosphere in this type of education, or it is an effect of school choice in which the parents of prospective university students are largely involved. The second mentioned alternative would explain why we did not observe a stronger effect of parents' university education on social distance (perceived by their children).

In contrast to the expectation of liberalising tertiary education, the effect of the duration of tertiary schooling was rather weak. Social distance usually does not decrease with increasing years of study at a university. Recent events could contribute to the unique influence of this variable on the distance from the Ukrainians. Those who entered university around the time or soon after the annexation of the Peninsula of Crimea by Russian forces in 2014 reported greater tolerance towards Ukrainian people.

Female students showed a slightly greater degree of social distance at all times, except for the Roma. However, this association did not eliminate the evident differences among the students of the individual faculties. On the other hand, the variations shown in Figure 2 reflect the differences in the composition of the faculty students. The lowest share of contact with foreigners and, conversely, the highest representation of female students increase the values of social distance indices for the Faculties of Education and Health Sciences. Furthermore, there are also smaller proportions of secondary general school graduates and students whose mothers have completed upper secondary education. The opposite is true for faculties of medicine and science.

Discussion

We have demonstrated a significant effect of a variable that is still marginalised in studies of university students' social distance. The field of study substantially contributes to social distance towards ethnically and culturally defined groups.

Using a regression analysis allowed us to control for the influence of a set of variables that could provide alternative explanations for variations in social distance among students from different faculties.

Given the differences in ethnic tolerance of students from different faculties, it would be appropriate in future research to include parallel surveys at schools with fields of study that have not yet been included (Engineering; Agriculture; Economy and Business). Another limitation of the present study is its restriction to a single university town. Students have significantly more opportunities to establish closer relationships with foreigners in the capital city of Prague or in the second largest city, Brno. For example, Hasman and Divínová (2020) showed regional differences in high school students' attitudes towards international migration.

The results of our research differ in several respects from those of long-standing surveys of social science students in the United States. Starting with gender differences, not even the long-term and growing predominance of women among students at Czech universities has led to the change observed in the past among social science students in the United States. Parrillo and Donoghue (2005) pointed to a significantly greater tolerance of American female students, among others, towards Vietnamese and Arabs, which was the opposite at Palacký University 20 years later. The distance score of female students towards Ukrainians was also greater here, with no differences between genders observable only with respect to the Roma.

The degree of ethnic tolerance also does not seem to result from the liberalising effect of additional tertiary education. Unlike Parrillo and Donoghue (2013), there were no significant differences among junior and senior students. In the Czech context, the type of secondary school is of greater importance. Secondary general schools (*gymnasiums*), which are a typical precursor to higher education, can promote both multicultural awareness and an environment in which children from better-off families and social strata are concentrated. It is difficult to distinguish between the effects of these two different explications. However, the combination of the effect of the type of secondary schooling, which may mask the influence of parents' higher education and the beneficial effect of mothers' secondary schooling in particular, is more evidence of the complexity of intergenerational reproduction of attitudes and stereotypes rather than the straightforward liberalising effect of education itself.

The minimal differences in distance towards the Roma over the 20-year period suggest that the expansion of tertiary education may not lead to a deepening of social distance. The present research did not address a verification beyond the attitude towards the Roma. This result corresponds, however, with the conclusions of Katrňák and Hubatková (2022), according to whom the expansion of tertiary education in European countries only slightly weakens inequality in educational opportunity.

In line with a number of previous studies summarised in Pettigrew and Tropp (2005), the present study confirmed the assumptions of intergroup con-

tact theory. Students who reported having foreigners among their friends and acquaintances expressed more positive attitudes than those without such relationships. An important finding is the support for the secondary transfer effect hypothesis (Vezzali & Giovannini, 2012). The students with closer contacts with foreigners also distanced themselves to a lesser degree from members of the most frequently rejected group, that is, the Roma.

The present study is far from the first to point out that the order of social distance levels compiled by Bogardus may not be universally applicable (see, e.g., Lambert, 1952; Mather et al., 2017; Weinfurt & Moghaddam, 2001). We consider the repeated finding that some students would accept a Roma person as a friend and, at the same time, that they would not accept him/her as a neighbour to be factually significant. This surprising connection in all probability stems from different evaluations of different parts of the Roma ethnic group. In this case, an individual would be able to find a friend among the 'Roma elite' and, at the same time, avoid being neighbours with the 'Roma poor' (Ryšavý, 2003, p. 73). In part, this may be an unintended consequence of not complying with Bogardus's request to respond without too much thought.

The differences between the students of the two current faculties, which, 20 years ago, formed a single entity and showed the greatest degree of distance from the Roma, should be considered. The different attitudes of medical students, on the one hand, and healthcare students, on the other hand, are partly because of their different compositions. However, the higher level of social distance on the part of the students at the Faculty of Health Sciences is undoubtedly because of other reasons. This may be because of differences in professional socialisation⁵ and in the experiences of medical and health care personnel when encountering patients from different cultures.

One of the limitations of the present study is that the research was conducted at the tail end of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2021. Research from the first wave of the pandemic highlighted the risk of increasing hostility and xenophobia towards foreigners because of pandemic apprehensions (Bartoš et al., 2021; Daniels et al., 2021). The level of concern varied over time and eased significantly during the course of the research at Palacký University.⁶ The data collection occurred while the universities were closed and had switched to online forms of teaching. This was why the CAWI data collection method was chosen. The present study has not relied on probabilistic sampling but on a full census with an approximately one-fifth return rate.

⁵ Among other things, examples were found of secondary school textbooks for healthcare staff with very tendentious and stereotype-reinforcing content.

⁶ The longitudinal survey within the project *Life During the Pandemic* in April and May 2021, the first waves of which served as the basis for Bartoš et al. (2021), demonstrated a significantly lower level of concern among the youngest population than in the spring of 2020 (see <https://zivotbehempandemie.cz/>).

Conclusion

In the current study, we answered three research questions. First, we ascertained that the increase in the number of university students in the first two decades of the millennium did not lead to a significant change in social distance from the Roma. Moreover, the numerous cases of students rejecting Roma people as neighbours while admitting to friendships with them point to more than just the question of the universal applicability of the Bogardus Social Distance Scale. The problem is that research in which the neighbourhood with the Roma is the only indicator (e.g., the *European Values Survey*) systematically overestimates the extent of social distance towards Roma people. In research of this type, it would be useful to ask not only about the acceptability of the neighbourhood, but also about friendship with the Roma.

Second, the students of different faculties also differ substantially in their distance from Ukrainians, Vietnamese and Arabs. Third, the research has shown a noticeable influence of several factors that reduce or increase the tendency for ethnic distance, such as closer contact with foreigners, the type of completed secondary school and differences between male and female students. However, the effect of the field of study on social distance remained robust, even when controlling for a number of variables that affect the composition of students in different faculties of a university. Looking at the detected and confirmed differences between students of the humanities and social sciences, on the one hand, and between students of healthcare or physical culture, on the other hand, one may ask whether American national studies also only reported the attitudes of the most tolerant sections of students.

A more thorough explanation of the identified differences could be the subject of further research justified, for example, by the typical career paths of university graduates. Public discourse concerning ethnic relations can be shaped—through employment in serious media, nonprofit organisations, charities and so forth—by the graduates of faculties with greater ethnic tolerance, namely, Theology, Arts and Law. Secondary school teachers are also often recruited from among the students of the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Science. Graduates of the Faculties of Education, Physical Culture and Health Sciences, in contrast, more frequently pursue healthcare services, leisure sporting activities and primary education. One question for further research is the extent to which stereotypes and prejudices are reproduced in these areas, which will eventually manifest in an increased degree of social distance.

Velásquez and Eger concluded their analysis of data from the Norwegian Citizen Panel by stating that ‘higher education inhibits perceptions of threat that may manifest during “big events” such as a dramatic increase in asylum seeking’ (2022, pp. 605). In recent years, Czech society has dealt with two such ‘big events’. The first was the so-called migration crisis of 2015–2016. When the number of asylum seekers in European countries doubled annually in 2015, only 0.1% of them applied for asylum in the Czech Republic (Eurostat, 2016). Nevertheless, the

Czech Republic experienced the greatest shift in public opinion on immigration and immigrants in Europe (European Union, 2015). The second event is the real migration wave, which occurred in the spring of 2022. Within a matter of weeks, hundreds of thousands of refugees made their way to the Czech Republic from Ukraine, which was invaded by Russian Federation troops. There is a visible contrast between the intense expressions of solidarity with Ukraine, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the intense rejection and distance from those who, seven years ago, fled from war-torn countries such as Syria and Iraq. Because most of today's refugees are children with their mothers, it is likely that contact between Czech and Ukrainian classmates will gradually increase. In this context, it is worth highlighting even a partial finding that contact with foreigners reduces the level of social distance towards the Roma, which has long been one of the neuralgic points of the coexistence and well-being of various groups within Czech society.

The present study has an unfortunate level of current relevance because of the wave of Ukrainian war refugees. It is difficult to determine how much Ukrainian immigration will change the composition of university students within a decade. Moreover, it is impossible to predict how many similar events will occur in the coming years, whether because of war conflicts, advancing climate change or other reasons. However, it may be safe to assume that, in the future, today's university students—whether they become physicians, lawyers or teachers or who occupy other positions of social importance—will significantly affect the public's attitudes towards migrants from different parts of the world.

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Annex

Table I. Correlations between independent variables (Pearson's r)

	FEMALE	YEAR	GYMN	FOREIGN	MOTHER2	MOTHER3	FATHER2
YEAR	−0.03						
GYMN	−0.00	0.09					
FRIENDS	−0.08	0.09	0.05				
MOTHER2	−0.05	0.01	0.23	0.07			
MOTHER3	−0.03	−0.00	0.22	0.06	0.33		
FATHER2	−0.03	0.00	0.20	0.05	0.30	0.25	
FATHER3	−0.04	−0.00	0.18	0.07	0.25	0.39	0.45

Table II. Correlations between independent variables (Spearman's ρ)

	FEMALE	YEAR	GYMN	FOREIGN	MOTHER- EDUC
YEAR	−0.00				
GYMN	−0.00	0.10			
FRIENDS	−0.08	0.07	0.05		
MOTHEREDUC	−0.05	0.01	0.23	0.08	
FATHEREDUC	−0.04	−0.01	0.22	−0.08	0.43



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Evaluating Egg Donor Recruitment Strategies in Czech ART Clinics: A Critical Analysis of Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations

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Abstract: There is a high demand for egg donors in the Czech Republic, driven by international couples' interest in assisted reproductive procedures due to affordable treatment, no waiting list, and an extended age limit for recipients up to 49 years. For a population of 10.5 million, the country has 48 reproductive clinics. This study aims to evaluate Czech egg donor recruitment campaigns through the lens of free, informed, and specific consent requirements. A quantitative-qualitative analysis of recruitment strategies from 29 unique clinic websites in Czechia was conducted, with 12 sites specifically designed for marketing purposes. The analysis was based on 14 criteria. Of the 29 clinic websites, only three did not indicate compensation amounts, ranging from 800 to 1400 EUR. Thirteen clinics did not provide information on risks associated with oocyte donation, with one falsely stating no risks exist. Twenty-two websites used emotionally evocative quotes and images. Thirteen clinics did not disclose time commitments, and one provided misleading information. Seventeen clinics omitted conditions for donor refusal and the number of allowable donations. Eighteen clinics did not offer post-donation referrals. Conversely, 15 clinics highlighted psychological benefits, and 23 emphasized health benefits. None fully complied with international guidelines on oocyte donation. Analysed websites lack sufficient information for responsible egg donation decisions. The emphasis on compensation, benefits, and suggestive graphics creates an image of safe, community-oriented donation, potentially leading to inadequate understanding of health risks and commodification of the female body.

Keywords: assisted reproduction, oocyte donation, informed consent, misleading advertising

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Introduction

The intensive development of medical technologies along with the change of thinking in society has led to an increase in the use of assisted reproduction, especially with the use of third party reproduction, which has led to an increase in the number of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) cycles with donated sperm, eggs, embryos, and surrogate mothers. The increase in the number of third party reproduction cycles is illustrated by Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) statistics (*Fertility treatment 2019: trends and figures*, 2021) and European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) statistics (Gliozheni et al., 2022). Globally, the demand for donated eggs, sperm, embryos, and surrogate mothers outweighs the supply, but there are huge differences among countries, even countries where legislation allows these procedures.

The Czech Republic is a very common destination for oocyte donation cycles for patients from all over the world. The aim of our study was to evaluate the recruitment strategies of each of the Czech assisted reproduction centres. Our study was inspired by the work of colleagues from the EDNA study *'From scarcity to sisterhood: The framing of egg donation on fertility clinic websites in the UK, Belgium and Spain'*, which showed how clinic websites are essential for recruiting donors. They conducted a comparative analysis of reproductive centre websites in the UK, Belgium, and Spain. Among the results was that in Europe, donation is still presented as an altruistic act of mutual aid between women. Spain, which is another European destination for patients seeking oocyte donation alongside the Czech Republic, made extensive use of highly emotive text and other marketing strategies (Coveney et al., 2022). However, our work did not focus primarily on the narratives framing donation but on the information that clinics provide to potential donors through their websites and the extent to which they meet the ESHRE/Council of Europe recommendations (Keitel, 2018) on informed oocyte donation. This study is a sub-part of the broader project entitled *'Quality and sustainability of substances of human origin programmes in the Czech Republic'*.

The fundamental ethical principle in the field of body part donation is the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, which states in Article 21: *'The human body and its parts shall not be a source of financial gain as such.'* Only compensation for costs incurred in donation is allowed, and there is no legal entitlement to it. Article 5 of the Convention then makes informed consent to any medical procedure a condition of the procedure:

An intervention in the health field may only be carried out after the person concerned has given free and informed consent to it. This person shall beforehand be given appropriate information as to the purpose and nature of the intervention as well as on its consequences and risks (Oviedo Convention and its Protocols, 1997).

The problems of commercialisation of donor procedures have been highlighted by the Council of Europe (Illicit and unethical activities with human tissues and

cells, 2018). For the definition of compensation, there is another document concerning the human body and its parts from living or deceased donors (*Guide for the implementation of the principle of prohibition of financial gain*, 2018). The most recent document addressing this issue is ‘Commercialisation of substances of human origin in the context of novel therapies involving human tissues and cells’ (*Combating the commodification of and trafficking in tissues of human origin*, 2022), which is a response to the ‘Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on standards of quality and safety for substances of human origin’ (Standards of quality and safety for substances of human origin intended for human application and repealing Directives 2002/98/EC and 2004/23/EC, 2022), which is currently under discussion at the EU level.

In 2018, the Council of Europe, in collaboration with ESHRE, published a document specifically focused on oocyte donation, ‘*Donation of oocytes: A guide for women to support informed decisions*’, which focuses on promoting informed consent. To this end, it explains who potential oocyte recipients are, what steps donors must take, what health standards they must meet, and what risks the procedure entails. It also discusses anonymity and the rights and obligations of donors, including the fact that the donor will not have any parental rights over the child (Keitel, 2018). We see this document as a standard for how clinics should inform donors.

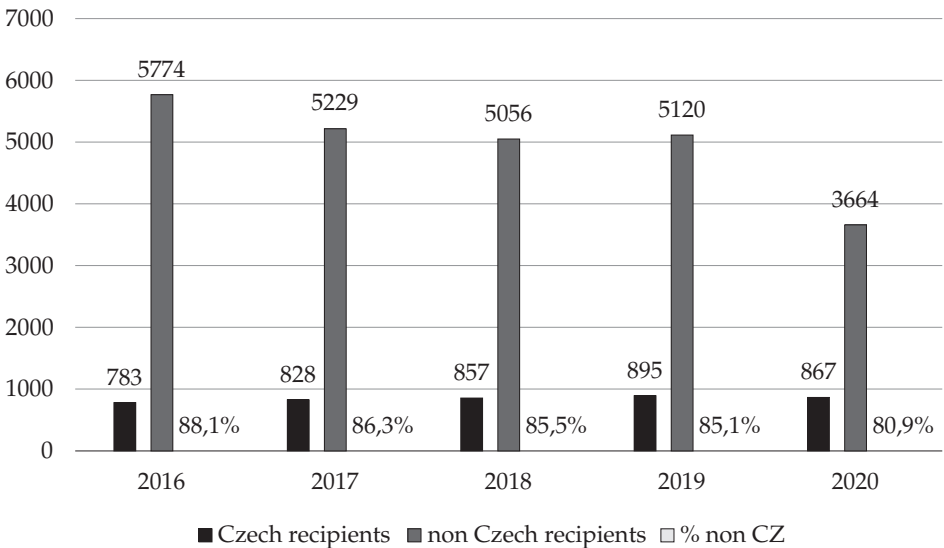
Thousands of patients travel outside their home country to receive healthcare according to their subjective needs (Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2022). Cross-border reproductive care is regulated by EU Regulation 2011/24/EU, which sets out the conditions under which it is possible to travel for healthcare outside one’s home country (*Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare*, 2011). The most common reasons for free movement of patients are the availability of different types of treatment (e.g. for single patients, lesbian couples), the absence of waiting times, legislation governing donation programmes (anonymous vs. non-anonymous donation) (Shenfield, 2010), better quality care, and personal preferences such as the need for privacy (Pennings, 2002).

Situation in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is the world leader in the number of egg donation cycles relative to the country’s population. More than 85% of these cycles are performed on women of foreign nationality, with 99% of egg donors being young Czech women. This statistic is shown as a graph in Figure 1 (Řežábek & Pohlová, 2022), with the decline in interest in the procedure in 2020 due to COVID travel restrictions.

Several factors can be traced as having an impact on the country’s leading position. The Czech Republic offers IVF with donated eggs at a very low price, when compared to other European countries (Wiecki, 2023), despite the fact that

Figure 1. Number of female oocyte recipients in the Czech Republic by nationality; own adaptation based on Řežábek & Pohlová using their methodology (2022)



the financial compensation of oocyte donors in the Czech Republic is one of the highest in Europe. If we compare data from the UK, for example, where the compensation according to the HFEA is EUR 780 (*Donating your eggs*, 2023), this is almost half the amount compared to some private centres in the Czech Republic, which pay donors up to EUR 1,500 (CZK 35,000). In Spain, the compensation is EUR 980 (Lima et al., 2019). Geographical proximity to large countries where both donation and surrogacy are banned also has an impact—the Czech Republic is thus used as a destination for patients from, for example, Germany, where both procedures are banned (Dostálová & Güell, 2022). A large clientele also includes patients from France, where oocyte donation is allowed but where there is a huge shortage of donated eggs.

Patients from the UK choose the Czech Republic not only because of affordability but also due to the lack of waiting time (Culley et al., 2011). The cheap donation programme is also sought out by patients from the USA, who can receive treatment with donated oocytes in the Czech Republic for a third of the price (Whittaker & Speier, 2010). Therefore, Czech clinics also tailor their offer to foreign couples and have foreign departments speaking different languages (Dostálová & Güell, 2022). The legislation in the Czech Republic is also very friendly to women interested in assisted reproduction. For example, it allows third party reproduction even for women of advanced maternal age. According to Czech

Act No. 373/2011 Coll., on specific health services, the age limit is set to 48 years + 364 days; public insurance companies cover the service for persons contributing to the Czech health system until the age of 40 (*Podmínky pro umělé oplodnění od roku 2022*, 2022). At the same time, according to the above mentioned law, donation is completely anonymous for both the donor and the recipient (*Zákon č. 373/2011 Sb.*, 2023), which has a positive effect on the number of female donors (Craft et al., 2005) as well as attracting many people interested in this treatment (Laruelle et al., 2011). It can be added that, according to Rumpiková (2017),¹ the main motivation of Czech oocyte donors is altruistic, as stated by 84% of respondents. The motivation of financial compensation was admitted by 50% of women. Another reason for donation was also the possibility of free medical examination and verification of one's own fertility (Rumpiková et al., 2017).

The donor can be a woman between the ages of 18 and 35 in good health and mental condition, after a hormonal profile, complete genetic testing, and tests for sexually transmitted diseases have been performed. The main expert guarantor, the Section of Assisted Reproduction of the Czech Gynaecological and Obstetric Society, recommends a maximum of six oocyte retrievals per lifetime (*Doporučené postupy*, 2021), which is the number also recommended by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) (Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, 2014). However, the absence of a donor registry does not allow for these recommendations to be followed. All of the above factors make it possible to provide a truly high supply of donated oocytes, which can increase cross-border demand.

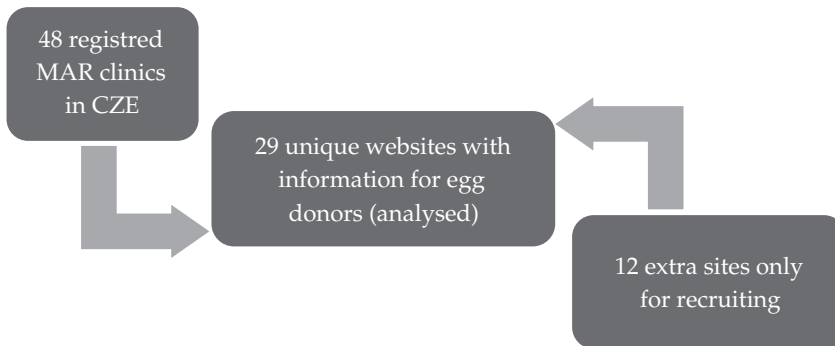
Methodology

As noted above, oocyte donation and the advertising of human body parts are regulated under international and national law. The websites of reproductive service providers play a crucial role in this area (Coveney et al., 2022). This research aims to analyse all relevant information available on the websites of Czech IVF clinics for egg donors. Each clinic has a different advertising and marketing strategy; this text therefore offers a comparison of the information provided by both public and private clinics regarding the egg donation process.

There are 48 reproductive centres in the Czech Republic (*IVF centra v ČR*, 2023), for which, according to our findings, there are 29 unique web presentations. The number is lower because some centres have multiple branches in different locations in the country but a single website. In addition, 12 separate clinic

¹ This is a retrospective study of gamete donors and couples who have undergone fertility treatment using donated sperm, eggs, or embryos. The study was based on an anonymous questionnaire and was conducted in two phases between 2012 and 2015. Two Czech assisted reproduction centres collaborated in the data collection.

Figure 2. Determination of the base set to be analysed; own adaptation



websites primarily and solely created for the oocyte donor recruitment campaign were identified; these were therefore included in the analysis rather than the general clinic website with mostly minimal information and a link to the recruitment page. In most cases, the pages dedicated to donor recruitment had a separate title that did not correspond to the name of the clinic and that referred to donation instead, presumably for ease of search. Examples of titles (always written together as all web addresses) include ‘donor of hope’, ‘donate a miracle’, ‘donate eggs’, ‘I want to donate’, and so on. See Figure 7 in the Annex for the complete list.

The data were collected from November 2022 to April 2023 and, as already mentioned, evaluated all clinics that provide medically assisted reproduction (MAR) and are registered in the register of assisted reproduction centres in the Czech Republic (*IVF centra v ČR*, 2023). Figure 2 graphically illustrates how the research sample was drawn.

The data were divided into 14 research areas covering general information, legislation, recommendations, benefits, and risks, as well as marketing strategies and the occurrence of emotionally tinged texts. The inspiration for the creation of these categories was provided by the article by Coveney (2022) mentioned in the introduction and the Council of Europe’s guideline on informed oocyte donation, with the final form emerging from the content of the websites themselves and, above all, our experience of what information donors themselves seek or value on the websites.

Data were collected in the local language (Czech), followed by quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics) and partial qualitative analysis, followed by translation into English. The most important criterion for evaluation was the relationship of the information provided towards informed consent to the procedure, the standard of which is defined in the repeatedly mentioned ESHRE/Council of Europe manual (Keitel, 2018).

Results

1. Who are the recipients of the oocytes

The first criterion monitored was information on who the oocyte recipients are—that is, in which cases the oocyte will be used. If the website included at least the information that ‘millions of couples around the world are unable to have children naturally for various reasons, and donated eggs will greatly increase their chances of starting a happy family’, it meant a positive point for the clinic for at least partially informing about the recipients. However, a more comprehensive answer was ideal because it helps donors to understand why oocyte donation is important.

- Seven of the 29 clinic websites analysed did not provide any details on who the egg recipients were.
- Clinic 26 is an example of an ideal answer²:

The donor programme is for women who:

- 1) produce no eggs of their own, or only a small number. These are women whose ovaries have not developed properly, women affected by premature ovarian failure, or older women in the menopausal period.
- 2) produce poor quality eggs. Such eggs are unable to fertilise, or the embryos resulting from them stop developing during culture. This group usually includes women over 40 years of age and women who have repeatedly undergone unsuccessful IVF cycles with their own eggs.
- 3) are carriers of a hereditary disease. The woman has been diagnosed with a chromosomal aberration (a change in the structure or number of chromosomes) or a monogenic disease that can be passed on to her offspring.
- 4) underwent surgery to remove both ovaries.
- 5) have undergone certain types of chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

2. Links to oocyte donation legislation

Here, it was observed whether donors receive information about the legal framework associated with donation. If only the phrase ‘donation is anonymous’ was given, a positive score for the clinic was not counted. Information about the legally free nature of donation or elaboration on for whom and why donation is anonymous was needed in order to get a point.

- Eight clinics did not mention any legislation related to donation, not even in the form of emphasised anonymity or that donation should be free of charge with the possibility of cost compensation.

² Original text in Czech.

- The ideal answer in this case was given by Clinic 7, which referred to all the relevant legislation in different ways depending on whether the donor followed the home page or the FAQ section, etc.:

Oocyte donation is legal, anonymous, voluntary, and free in the Czech Republic. Legislation in the Czech Republic allows for treatment with donated germ cells in accordance with Directive 2004/23/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Act No. 296/2008 Coll. and Decree No. 422/2008.

As it follows from the laws in the Czech Republic, oocyte donation is completely anonymous according to Section 10 of the Specific Health Services Act 373 of 2011 for both the donor and the infertile couple. Further anonymity is also maintained for children born using this out-of-body method. This is even after the child reaches 18 years of age.

In countries of the European Union where treatment with donated oocytes is legally permitted, the principle of anonymity applies to germ cell donation. This guarantees that no recipient will ever know who the donor is and no donor will ever know who the recipient is. However, the law requires the health facility to archive information about the donor.

3. Number of donor cycles per lifetime

In this part, the opinion of clinicians on repeated donation, which should be performed no more than six times in a lifetime, was surveyed.

- Seventeen clinics did not provide information on the number of times that donors can donate. One of them even states on its website that repeated donation does not carry risks for future fertility.
- Clinic 20 provided in their FAQ section the ideal answer:

Yes, eggs can be donated repeatedly in the Czech Republic, after consultation with a doctor, each time at least three months apart. As a standard, it is not recommended to stimulate the ovaries for donation purposes more than five times in a lifetime. We recommend a maximum of three times for those who have not given birth. The minimum interval is three months.

Unfortunately, while four clinics commented on the issue, they gave misleading information that donation is virtually unlimited, did not mention the pause, or even encouraged donors to repeat the donation, saying that the process would be easier! For specific examples see³:

³ The clinic numbers can be revealed upon request.

After each donation, our medical team will evaluate the results. Donors who are responsible and whose stimulation has been successful will be very welcome to donate again.

After each donation, the treatment is evaluated and if there are no reasons to discard it (everything goes smoothly and the stimulation is successful), you can decide to donate again.

You can donate repeatedly, after a health assessment, but with a certain time interval for recovery. According to available information, repeated egg donation does not affect your future fertility.

Further stimulation of the ovaries is possible at the earliest three months after the egg retrieval after the previous stimulation. To donate again, just fill in the 'I have already donated' questionnaire or contact the coordinator.

4. Donor profile

In this part of the analysis, it was investigated whether the profiles of the donors (who can donate) are listed, so that the potential self-exclusion of interested women could be used. Such information includes, in particular, age up to 35 years, completed at least secondary education, normal BMI, good physical and psychological condition without permanent medication use, family history without genetic or psychiatric burden, negative tests for sexually transmitted diseases (HIV 1, HIV 2, hepatitis B and C, syphilis) and negative tests for genetic diseases.

- Here, the information was complete in all cases except for one state hospital, which provided only minimal information on its website about the existence of a donor programme and no further details.

5. Conditions for refusal of the donor

In this category, we analysed whether the fact that donors can also be rejected is mentioned, or whether the presentation 'we take anyone who meets the basic criteria' (see Subsection 4) is chosen on each site.

- Particular emphasis was placed on the mention of rejection due to psychological immaturity, but positive points were also given for at least the answer: *'The doctor will decide whether you are a suitable donor on the basis of the results of the examination'*, because 17 clinics did not even give such a short statement.
- Clinic 29 provided the ideal answer:

If you do not pass the health tests, our attending physician will tell you the reasons why you cannot donate eggs. This could be to protect your health, for example if you don't have enough eggs in reserve, or if there is a disease that rules donation out.

6. Time commitment

At this point, it was analysed whether donors receive information about the time required for the procedure.

- Thirteen clinics did not provide any information at all, while others used various infographics or explanations in bullet points.
- One clinic gave misleading information, omitting possible health risks to the donor because it only briefly commented on the fact that hormonal stimulation can be started the following menstrual cycle, takes an average of 10–12 days where the actual collection is a 10-minute affair, and the donor can go home after an hour. We consider such generalisations to be more dangerous than giving no information at all, as it could lead to distorted expectations that even a later face-to-face consultation at the clinic would not correct.

7. Recommendations after collection

Here, it was observed whether clinics provide information on how donors should behave after the donation and during the recovery period, as we consider this information to be very important for a truly informed consent of the donor to the procedure. Positive points were given to those clinics that mentioned at least a resting regime after the donation or the need for a ride home by another person.

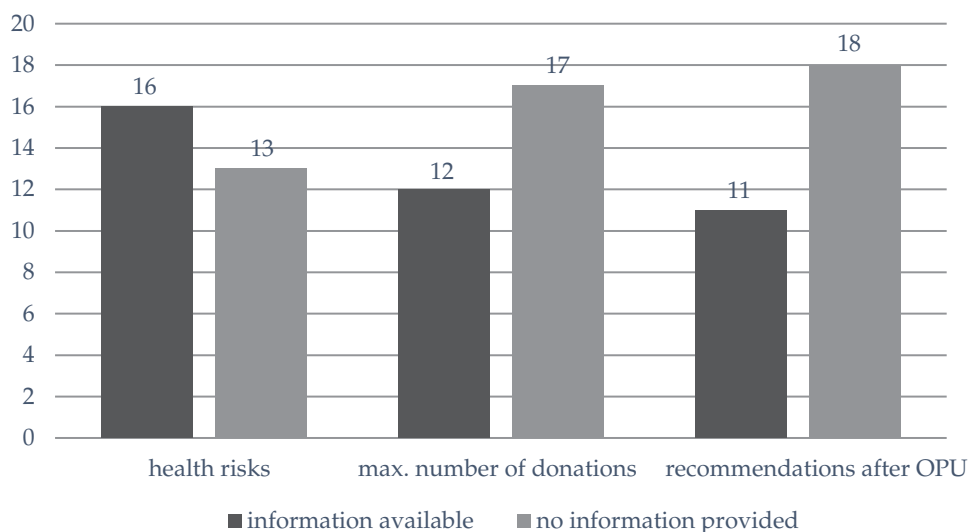
- Eighteen clinics did not make any recommendations about the time after the stimulation, not even along the lines of ‘take care of yourself during recovery’.
- On the other hand, two clinics (Clinics 5 and 7) provided an additional health check-up about a week after the collection. On the websites you can find a similar text:

After the procedure, you can rest for 2–3 hours in our resting room and then you can go home accompanied by another person. You may not drive a car or travel on public transport after the procedure. For a perfect recovery, we recommend rest for 2–3 days. To make sure that your recovery is going well and without complications, there will be one more check-up at our clinic. If it is positive, this will be the end of the process.

8. Risks associated with oocyte donation

This part of the study looked at whether clinics inform donors about the risks, downplay them, or provide misleading information.

- Thirteen clinics did not provide any information on the risks associated with oocyte pick-up (OPU).
- The ideal answer was given by Clinic 8:

Figure 3. Graphical summary of results on risk factors for donation; own adaptation

A complication of hormonal stimulation of the ovaries can be a so-called 'disproportionate and excessive ovarian response', called hyperstimulation syndrome. The ovaries continue to react to the drugs used even after the end of use and after egg retrieval. They are further enlarged and the woman feels pressure in the lower abdomen and 'fullness of the abdomen'. In these cases, the donor comes for check-ups and is given infusions to correct the condition. In most cases, the ovarian overreaction to stimulation resolves spontaneously. Hyperstimulation syndrome affects 1–2% of donors. Hyperstimulation syndrome does not threaten a woman's future fertility. Egg donation is a safe procedure and it is not possible for a woman's supply of these sex cells to be depleted by egg donation. Many of our donors are mothers on maternity leave and have other children of their own even after egg retrieval. After egg retrieval, a woman may feel a slight pain in her lower abdomen as with heavier menstruation. Sometimes light bleeding or mood changes may persist. However, these feelings will subside on their own within a few hours. Conversely, sharp and sudden pain in the lower abdomen accompanied by heavy bleeding and nausea may indicate bleeding into the abdominal cavity. In such a condition, seek immediate medical attention.'

- One clinic⁴ stated in the 'still hesitant?' section that there is no temporary or permanent risk, which we consider very misleading to the point of being dangerous:

⁴ The clinic number can be revealed upon request.

Hormonal stimulation is completely safe; the donor is under permanent medical supervision throughout the cycle. There is no risk of any—temporary or permanent—damage to her body. Do not be afraid of any risk if you decide to conceive a child in the future.

The results for Subsections 3, 7, and 8 are summarised in Figure 3.

9. Health benefits for female donors

This subsection investigated whether the potential donor could read about the health benefits of donation on the website. These include, for example, blood group and Rh factor testing, detailed information on health and reproductive health, tests for sexually transmitted diseases, and genetic testing. Where such information was present on the website, the category was rated positively.

- Health benefits were reported by 23 of the 29 clinics analysed.

10. Psychological benefits

This included statements such as: ‘you will give another woman the opportunity to feel a mother’s love and experience the feeling of a new life being born, which is truly something amazing’; ‘we appreciate our donors and thank them for their decision to donate’; ‘fulfilling a need to help others’; ‘helping someone fulfil a dream of having a child of their own’, and so on.

As donation in the Czech Republic is fully anonymous by law, any claims of securing anonymity in the future were also monitored.

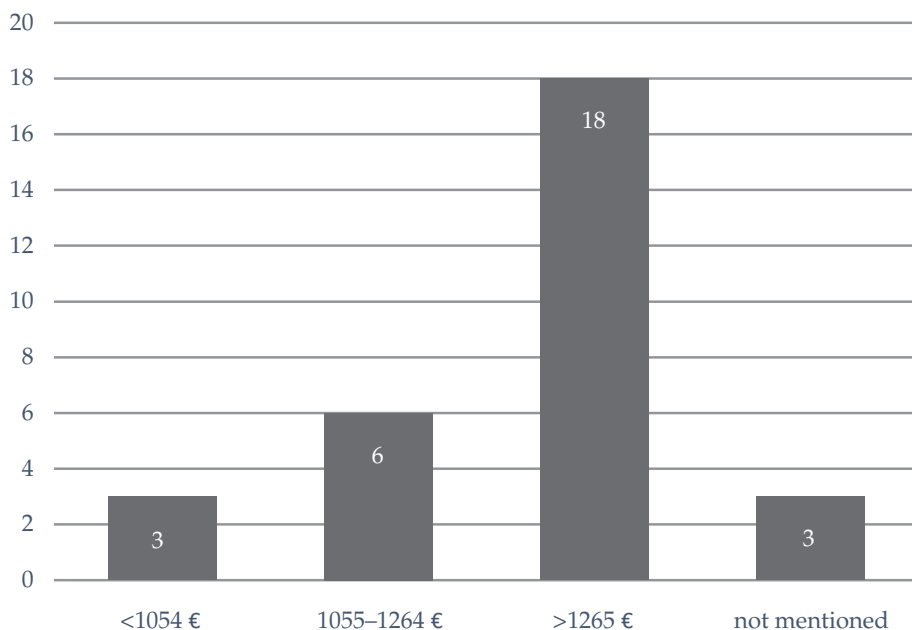
- Psychological benefits were highlighted by 15 clinics.

11. Financial compensation benefit

In this subsection, it was observed whether the clinic comments on financial compensation and how—if the amount is specifically mentioned and/or if the concrete amount was somehow justified.

- The average compensation for female donors is CZK 31,556, with the lowest reward being CZK 20,000 and the highest CZK 35,000.
- Only three clinics did not indicate a specific amount on the website.
- The most common value is 28,000 + 5,000 for participation in some voluntary study.
- Large public hospitals generally offer lower remuneration than private clinics exclusively providing reproductive services.
- No clinic provided a more detailed justification of how the amount was calcu-

Figure 4. Amount of financial compensation provided to donors for oocyte donation; own adaptation



lated (what is compensated and in what amount). The most that is mentioned is compensation for time spent, travel costs, and any lost profits, but all are mentioned only very generally.

The level of rewards is summarised graphically in Figure 4.

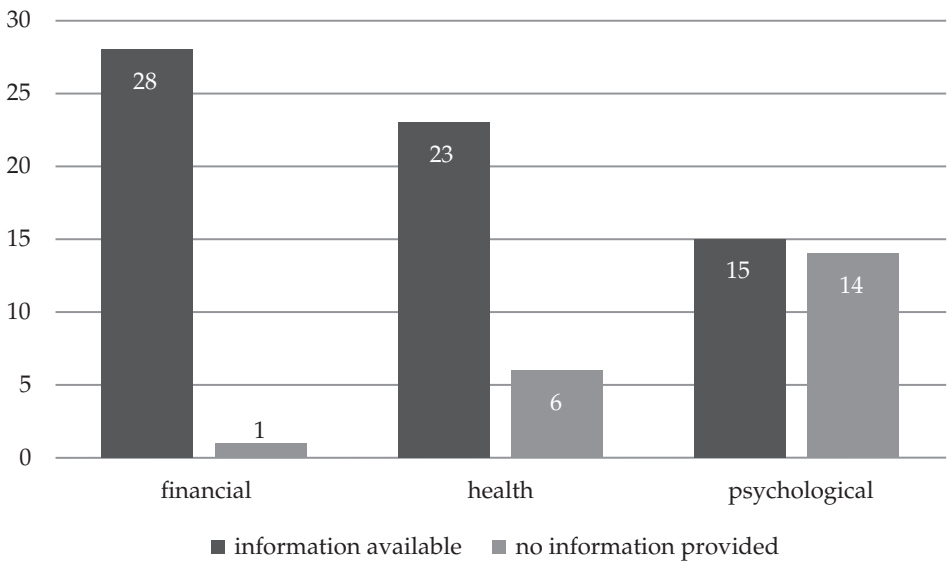
Figure 5 shows the results of the presented benefits from Subsections 9, 10, and 11.

12. Occurrence of emotionally evocative quotations, colours, and suggestions

In this category, it was investigated whether there are emotionally evocative quotes, colours, or other forms of suggestion on the website that may make donors feel manipulated or through which manipulation occurs consciously or subconsciously. The evaluation is limited by our subjective opinion.

- Only seven clinic websites did not use emotionally evocative quotes, colours, suggestions, or otherwise emotional images of children, smiling women, etc.

Figure 5. Graphical summary of results on benefits provided; own adaptation



13. Stories of women donors

The penultimate part of the analysis focused on the occurrence of stories of donors, with those with a photo or direct video being considered particularly suggestive.

- Seventeen clinics enriched their websites with stories of donors, whether in the form of text, photos with text, reviews, or videos.
- Very rare is the occurrence of any negative experiences. The procedure is described as virtually painless and completely uneventful.

14. FAQ

For the last research criterion, it was monitored whether the website contains a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, as such a category can generally be perceived as user-friendly and allows potential donors to better understand the content on the website. The category was therefore only rated as yes or no.

- Fifteen clinics have an FAQ section on their websites.

Discussion

The first of the 14 analysed categories showed that 22 clinics care about donors getting information about exactly who they are helping (who the recipients of the donated oocyte are), which is important in making the case for why donation makes sense. However, none of the clinics acknowledged that surrogate mothers—that is, healthy women who undergo IVF with a donated egg to meet the wishes of the client (who may be, for example, a same-sex couple⁵)—could theoretically be clients too. Since the Council of Europe's guideline for donation also only mentions four cases when women need a donated oocyte (the woman does not have sufficient quality eggs of her own, premature menopause, prevention of transmission of various genetic diseases, and age-related infertility) (Keitel, 2018), we rate this as only ethically questionable.

In Subsection 2, we focused on references to the legislation under which oocyte donation falls. From our perspective, it is important that donors are aware that donation is an altruistic act and as such should be free. Only expense compensation is allowed, although in the Czech Republic this is disproportionately high when compared to the time involved in the donation procedure—see the results for question 11 on the amount of compensation. According to Figure 6, bone marrow donation is currently the most time-consuming Czech donation programme, but here the compensations are minimal—the patient receives a travel allowance if he/she presents travel tickets, the donor is compensated for lost wages upon request, and that is all (Konečná et al., 2022). Nowhere on the websites of haemato-oncology clinics is there information about the amount of compensation, often not even that something is compensated! The reproductive clinics, therefore, can be considered the opposite, even though there is no specific information on how the amount for oocyte donation compensation paid was arrived at.

The guideline of the Council of Europe (Keitel, 2018) also mentions the rights of donors vis-à-vis their future children, a reference we did not find on any clinic website. Only one clinic mentioned that anonymity is maintained for children born thanks to donated oocytes. If donors are not notified in advance that their children may someday meet their half-siblings, we feel that there is a discrepancy regarding informed consent.

For the third subsection, we focused on the information on the number of donor cycles per lifetime, which should be a maximum of six. Here, and in Subsection 8 analysing the risk information, the biggest problems with regard to in-

⁵ In the Czech Republic, surrogacy is not anchored in any legislation; however, the National Centre against Organized Crime (NCOZ) has informed the public about 'Operation Spain', in which they are investigating human trafficking because of the surrogacy business. See <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-kauzy-operace-spanel-v-praze-se-prodavaji-deti-vyroben-na-zakazku-203870>

Figure 6. The time required for individual donor procedures in one collection; own adaptation according to (Konečná et al., 2022)

Donor procedure	Total net time of outpatient visits	Number of outpatient visits	Hospitalisation (days)	General anaesthesia (hours)	Home recovery (days)	Availability of collection points
Blood	approx. 60 min	1	0	0	1 day	Very good
Plasma	approx. 100 min	1	0	0	1 day	Excellent
Hematopoietic cells from bone marrow	5.5 hours	4 (including dispensarisation)	3-4	1	max. 4 days	Poor
Hematopoietic cells from peripheral blood	6.5 hours	7 (including dispensarisation)	2-4	0	max. 4 days	Poor
Haematopoietic cells	First collection 120 min, each subsequent collection 20 min	First collection 2-3 visits, each subsequent collection 1 visit	0	0	0	Very good
Oocytes	8 hours	6	0	15 minutes	1 (retrieval day)	Very good
Kidney	12 hours	3	7	3-6	2 weeks	Poor
Uterus	12 hours	10	7-10	12	45	<i>The programme stopped</i>
Surrogacy	12-19 hours	5-11.5	0-7	0	0-14 weeks	Very good

formed consent emerged, as misleading or even deceptive information was most prevalent. Although the Council of Europe manual confirms that donation does not affect a woman's general ability to conceive, if a woman later develops any fertility problems, lack of quality eggs, and so on, there would be psychological consequences. The manual also gives detailed information on the possible risks, which are quite serious, although it is generally a safe procedure (Keitel, 2018). The combination of information about the amount of compensation as a financial benefit (Subsection 11) and insufficient information about risks (in addition to Subsection 8, this also applies to Subsection 7 on post-collection recommendations) can then create a dangerous mix of information, especially with regard to who the egg donors are in the Czech Republic.

Egg donors are most often students, women at the beginning of their working careers, or those on maternity leave. This information is confirmed by the websites of the reproductive centres themselves (*Kdo jsou dárkyně*, 2023) as well as by social workers from the Counselling Centre for Women and Girls (Krásenská, 2023). Thus, these are vulnerable groups of women, either with no income of their own (with dependence on parents or husband), with some state support, or with lower incomes overall. When we repeatedly asked informally whether anyone in the reproductive centres had encountered a donor who was a young successful influencer, manager, or entrepreneur, we always received a negative answer. It is therefore fascinating how, while in other contexts a woman is automatically seen as a victim, or while various feminist associations protest against advertisements depicting a woman's body, which according to them, portray her as a commodity or a sex symbol,⁶ or while the media is full of various harsh statements by politicians and human rights organisations when someone makes an unguarded statement,⁷ the decision to donate eggs (or even to become a surrogate mother) is seen as a completely autonomous decision of the woman. Thus, the results of this analysis on the lack of information about the risks are consistent with the findings of Tulay (2019), who found that a large proportion of donor women still are not aware of the risks (Tulay & Atılan, 2019).

At this point, we can also mention that marketing strategies of Czech IVF also include social networks, groups, and forums in addition to websites. It is also very common in the Czech Republic for clinics to distribute posters at colleges and universities, encouraging donors to make quick money while feeling

⁶ In the Czech Republic, for example, an exhibition at the Library of Academy of Sciences called 'Women: Scenes in the library' was withdrawn because it contained nudes. See <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/kultura-feministky-pobourila-vystava-zen-v-knihovne-akademie-ved-cr-331300>

⁷ In the Czech Republic, for example, the police president has been hugely criticised for saying that women make up various allegations of violence to a significant extent. See <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/policejni-prezident-vyrok-znasilneni/r-5c3c43e8351611eeba5b0cc47ab5f122/>

like helping others. This is very common, and most students know about the opportunity to donate from the notice boards at universities. In the past, advertisements on public transport were also common. This choice of marketing channels also confirms the targeting of vulnerable groups such as students, women at the beginning of their working careers, or those on maternity leave, as mentioned above.

The donors sign informed consent during personal consultations directly at the clinic, but given that these are women from vulnerable groups, where lower education can be assumed, we doubt whether the procedure is sufficient. We therefore consider that this could amount to misleading advertising.

In general, according to Section 2(1)(c) of Act No. 40/1995 Coll. on the regulation of advertising, in conjunction with Section 45(1) of the Commercial Code, misleading advertising is the mere dissemination of information about one's own or another undertaking, its products, or its performance that is capable of creating a false impression and thereby conferring an advantage on one's own or another undertaking in competition to the detriment of other competitors or consumers, where it is irrelevant whether such an advantage was actually obtained (*Klamavá reklama*, 2007).

For the purposes of this text, the main relevant point from the aforementioned Act No. 40/1995 Coll. on the regulation of advertising is that advertising for certain services is misleading if it misleads the client (consumer) as to the conditions under which the goods are sold or the service is provided (*Zákon č. 40/1995 Sb.*, 2023). This law was also strengthened to increase the protection of public health by Amendment No. 90/2021 Coll., which further emphasises the importance that advertisements in the health sector must not be contrary to good morals—that is, the advertisement must not fulfil the essence of unfair commercial practice or disguised advertising (*Zákon č. 90/2021 Sb.*, 2021).

According to §7, there are several supervisory bodies that control compliance with the Act on Advertising Regulation, and those affected may also directly contact them with complaints—these include the Czech Trade Inspection Authority, the Trade Licensing Authority, the Ministry of Health, and the State Institute for Drug Control. However, investigation of misconduct does not guarantee compensation but rather only the elimination of misleading advertising or practices, or, according to the specific regulations of the individual supervisory authorities, misdemeanour fines of up to CZK 2 million may be imposed (*Zákon č. 40/1995 Sb.*, 2023). It may be noted that the list of sanctioned entities is usually published by the above-mentioned organisations (*Sankce uložené podle zákona o regulaci reklamy*, 2023).

However, apart from the legal aspect, the psychosocial consequences of such an action also play a role here, which is at least contrary to good morals on the part of the clinics, as they can take inspiration from the oft-mentioned Council of Europe manual on oocyte donation (Keitel, 2018). The consequences can be far-reaching, especially in cases where the donor develops, for example, hy-

perstimulation syndrome or other side complications that come with hormonal stimulation. The feelings can be comparable to those of victims of fraud, which is addressed by Act No. 45/2013 Coll. on victims of crime (*Zákon č. 45/2013 Sb.*, 2013). When the problems are really serious, the circle of victims extends not only to relatives but also has the potential to influence the view of part of society on the topic of donation. This happened, for example, after the publication of an article in a Czech national daily newspaper about the death of an egg donor,⁸ when people in the discussion section generally started condemning donation.

In other words, this issue could also be summarised by stating that medicines and other medical devices must always be accompanied by very detailed information leaflets and, in addition, that there are clear rules on how to inform the professional public about how to use these products. However, in the case of oocyte donation, there is still a need to find a compromise between marketing strategies and factual information for potential donors so that they are not misled or manipulated in any way and give truly free and specific informed consent.

Regarding Subsection 4 on who can donate, the information was complete and met ESHRE/Council of Europe standards. However, for category 5 on the fact that a donor can also be rejected, we found shortcomings as 17 sites did not include this information, while 13 did not even indicate the time commitment (category 6). We believe that clinics are often fighting against themselves in this regard, as they may provide a costly genetic test to a woman who later changes her mind about the procedure due to a previous lack of information or they may have to cope with the possible disappointment of a donor who insists on the donation despite the risks just because of the financial benefit.

For categories 9 and 10, we analysed the health and psychological benefits that were deemed acceptable within the context of informed consent. There was a problem with category 12 on the prevalence of emotionally evocative colours, quotes, and other suggestions, including exclusively positive stories from the donors, which are also described in Subsection 13. That these marketing elements are widely used was confirmed in the study by Coveney (2022). The occurrence of these elements has also been analysed by advertising ethicist Motal (2023), who concludes that the pastel colours chosen (frequently purple, yellow, or turquoise) support the orientation towards a female clientele, as they are colours stereotypically associated with the female gender, often used in shops offering goods targeted at women, and which are also an index of a kind of 'girly' or 'feminine' community, of friendship, but also of modernity and freedom. This, he argues, is alluded to by the frequent smiles of young women, which convey freedom and carefree freedom sentiments, where even the language used can create the idea that donating can help in a completely safe and private environment. The author then summarises the most important points as follows:

⁸ Thought article: <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-zena-neprezila-odber-vajicek-dalsi-bojovala-o-zivot-lekari-osvobozeni-40293578>

Although the ad cannot be said to directly violate human dignity, it contributes to an inadequate understanding of the human body and health, presents the decision to violate the integrity of the human body as a lifestyle decision and associates donation with the idea of a healthy life, which can be considered problematic from a risk perspective. (Motal, 2023)

We fully agree with this conclusion.

For category 14, we surveyed the presence of a section with the most frequently asked questions, which is appreciated by donors, and we also consider it important. Here, it is a pity that not all websites include such a section, because it makes it easier for donors to find needed facts on the website. However, among the questions, we did not find any that dealt in any way with the fact that the mother's genetic material is being transferred, thus omitting the link between heredity and the overall issue of parenthood. Oocyte donation is thus, in our view, transformed into a kind of self-evident image of a 'neutral body part' that can be treated as one wishes.

At the end of this section, it can be said that the situation in Spain, which is considered to be leading in ART, looks similar to that in the Czech Republic. However, it is much larger due to the large number of IVF centres. As with the Czech Republic, most fertility clinics are private. This is also due to the need for donor recruitment because of the high level of interest from foreign clients (Coveneý et al., 2022).

Spanish egg donor websites mention financial compensation for donors but usually do not give a specific amount. In most cases, this is only mentioned on the advertising pages. For example, the remuneration stated on one Spanish website is EUR 750–1100.⁹ In the Czech Republic, the vast majority of centres mention the amount in the title of the website or in the advertising material.

Conclusion

We believe it is important to inform all donors not only about the benefits of donation but also about the potential risks so that they can make informed decisions about donation, their reproductive health, and future parenthood. Failure to do so not only leads to non-compliance with national and European legislation but also to misinformation of donors, which can cause disappointment and feelings of betrayal. Therefore, the results of our analysis may be beneficial, first of all, for the clinics themselves, which can hopefully find a compromise between marketing strategies and providing complete, transparent, and factually correct information, which is crucial for potential donors when searching for information on the Internet before joining a specific donor programme.

⁹ See more at <https://www.easydona.com/chicas/donar-ovulos/te-pagan-por-donar-ovulos-es-anonimo-easydona/>

If information about financial compensation continues to appear on the front pages primarily, this contributes to the commodification of the human body, which we consider to be very problematic. One cannot talk about altruism of donation when for vulnerable groups of women, which according to our findings Czech donors are, are being offered compensation equivalent to the parental allowance of about four months.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Parental allowance in the Czech Republic is currently set at CZK 300,000 and can be withdrawn within 2–4 years after the birth of the child. The standard amount of this benefit is therefore CZK 8,300, as the most common choice is to stay at home until the child is three years of age.

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Annex

Figure 7. List of analysed clinic websites; own adaptation (specialised recruitment pages are shown in italics)

Clinic	Analysed website
1 Arleta	https://arleta.cz/
2 Car FN Brno	<i>https://www.chcidarovatvajicko.cz/</i>
3 CAR FN Olomouc	https://car.fnol.cz/darcovstvi-vajicek-a-spermii
4 CAR of the gynaecology-por.clinic of the 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague	https://www.apolinar.cz/uvod/centrum-asistovane-reprodukce-3/darcovsky-program/
5 Eurofertil	<i>https://darujivajicka.cz/</i>
6 Europe IVF	<i>http://www.chcidarovat.cz</i>
7 FertiCare	<i>https://darkynenadeje.cz/</i>
8 Fertility Port	https://fertilityport.com/cs/darcovstvi-vajicek/
9 Fertimed	https://www.fertimed.cz/
10 FN Motol	https://www.fnmotol.cz/kliniky-a-ambulance/kliniky-dospela-cast/centrum-reprodukcnimediciny-a-reprodukcnigenetiky/#submenu-darovani-vajicek
11 Genitrix	https://genitrix.cz/reprodukcnimedicina/darcovsky-program/
12 Gennet	<i>https://www.darujazrak.cz</i>
13 Gynem	<i>https://darovanivajicek.cz/</i>
14 Iscare	https://www.iscare.cz/crm/darcovstvi/darkyne-vajicek
15 IVF Centre Podolí	https://ivfpodoli.weebly.com/daacutercovskiyacuteprogram.html
16 IVF Clinic	https://darovani.ivfclinic.cz/
17 IVF Cube	https://ivf-cube.eu/o-darcovstvi
18 IVF Zlín	<i>www.darovatvajicka.cz</i>
19 Natalart	https://www.natalart.cz/index.php/cs/
20 Next Fertility Pilsen	<i>https://www.daruj-vajicka.cz/</i>
21 Prague fertility centre	<i>https://www.darcovstvivaajicek.cz/</i>
22 Pronatal	<i>https://www.darovanivajicka.cz/</i>

	Clinic	Analysed website
23	Reprofit	https://www.darkynevajicek.cz
24	Reprogenesis	https://www.reprogenesisdarcovstvi.cz
25	Sanatorium ART ČB	http://www.sanatoriumart.cz/reprodukni-medicina/darcovsky-program/
26	Helios Sanatorium	https://www.sanatoriumhelios.cz/
27	Sanus	https://www.sanus.cz/darujte-vajicka/
28	Stellart	https://www.stellart-clinic.cz/
29	Unica	https://www.darujtenadeji.cz/

Jamie Susskind: *Future Politics: Living Together in a World Transformed by Tech*
Oxford 2018: Oxford University Press,
544 pp.

'Politics in the twentieth century was dominated by a single question: how much of our collective life should be determined by the state, and what should be left to the market and civil society? Now the debate is different: to what extent should our lives be directed and controlled by powerful digital systems – and on what terms?' The opening line of this book perfectly summarises what Susskind sets out to do. A daunting and ambitious task, but Susskind delivers an engaging, well-argued and easy-to-read work. Dividing the book into six chapters, Susskind thoroughly explains the issue at hand, along with the relevant theories and concepts, perhaps reflecting his background as a barrister. While the writing style can be a bit repetitive and elaborate, it ensures that anyone can read and enjoy the book—with or without prior knowledge of political science, law and economics.

Susskind takes some of our most well-known concepts, such as 'democracy', 'liberty', 'freedom of thought' and 'accountability', and discusses how they have changed over time due to the integration of digital systems and devices into our daily lives. For once (and as a welcome change), the focus is not only on big tech companies and social media platforms and how they influence and change—for better or worse—our daily lives and well-being. For example, a smartwatch may seem like an innocent device that not only helps us know what time it is but also gives us access to messages, e-mails and health updates. However, the watch can also manipulate or nudge us to do things we might not want to do. For instance, a notification reminding you that you need to walk those extra 1000 steps to achieve your fitness goals can be ignored the first time. However, as the day goes by, the smartwatch

may keep reminding and interrupting you throughout the day, making you feel guilty until you eventually go out and walk the 1000 steps.

One might say that it is just a smartwatch and that it is good for your health. Yes, but if such a small device can force us to get up, what will future devices and technology be able to do? If the behaviour of one individual can be so easily changed, imagine what will happen to entire populations. As Susskind argues in this book, this is not just a question but a social transformation that is already taking place. Susskind does not write about a dystopian future in which technology and artificial intelligence (AI) have taken over the whole world. As he argues, we still do not know what the future holds, so we should focus more on the role of the state and its politics.

There is little to disagree with the opening premise that the state's role is to serve the general interest. Who else would serve the general interest? Yet, to some degree, relying too much on the state also takes away agency from individuals. Yes, politics can set clear rules for what is and is not allowed in an increasingly technological world. However, arguing about future politics can be abstract, as we do not yet know which technological developments tomorrow may bring.

Another thing that could have been explored further in the book is the option of simplicity. Sometimes, we tend to make life more complex than necessary. Do we need a smartwatch or Amazon's Alexa to answer our questions and perform tasks for us? What about augmented reality, which combines our physical world with the virtual world? Lately, we have seen a trend in which deceased celebrities are brought back to life as holograms to perform 'live'. While this allows fans to experience a performance from one of their beloved artists, how does one obtain consent from a deceased person to bring them back to life? Is

it ethically correct to do so, and does the hologram have any rights? In this case, the saying ‘*just because you can do it doesn’t mean you should*’ holds true.

One last point before ending this review is the book’s critical discussion of freedom of thought. Social media platforms can silence and manage content online. However, as we give up more of our personal information and preferences in the digital world, algorithms can easily force us to do things that we might not do, as in the smartwatch example above. This is a new form of surveillance, which we accept when we do not carefully read the conditions of use and simply tick the ‘Agree’ box. Therefore, we need to rethink politics. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise that information has become a form of power and that only a few people have access to it.

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Dennis C. Grube: *Why Governments Get It Wrong: And How They Can Get It Right*
London 2022: Macmillan, 240 pp.

In this ambitious book, Dennis C. Grube sheds light on an ongoing question in politics: Why do some governments seem to fumble through, while others seem to be on top of everything? The book provides a framework that can be applied so that governments can ‘get it right’ and improve our lives in the process. Grube sets the stage with an international scope and a non-partisan perspective on what needs to be considered when governments—or anyone in politics—present, create, communicate and implement policies meant to initiate change. The book also offers a unique perspective on the causes of government failure, with a comprehensive historical analysis of the challenges faced by policymakers in de-

signing and implementing effective policies. Furthermore, this work provides practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to navigate complex institutional environments.

One of the central themes discussed in this book is the importance of understanding the political and bureaucratic contexts in which policies are developed and implemented. In particular, Grube argues that effective policy design and implementation require a deep understanding of the institutional and organisational contexts in which policies are situated. This requires policymakers to pay attention to the complex details of policy implementation rather than simply focusing on policy design. In modern politics, we are often faced with wicked problems whose solutions are not easy to find. For this reason, it is of utter importance that we pay attention to more than just the problem. We cannot rely exclusively on data and evidence; we need to have a persuasive story and narrative, as well as provide a trustworthy solution to the problem.

One of the key contributions of Grube’s book is his emphasis on the need for policymakers to be mindful of the unintended consequences of policy interventions. He argues that policymakers must be aware of the potential for policies to create such negative consequences and must be prepared to address these in a timely and effective manner. Grube provides a range of examples of policies that have had unintended negative consequences and emphasises the importance of ongoing policy monitoring and evaluation to identify and address these negative effects.

This analysis is supported by a range of case studies from around the world, including examples from the United States, Australia and the European Union. Using his background as a former advisor and speechwriter to two former premiers of Tasmania, Grube examines health care, education and environmental regulation,

among others, and provides detailed examples of successful and unsuccessful policymaking efforts. In each case, he underscores the importance of attention to detail, effective communication and sustained policy monitoring and evaluation, as well as provides practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to improve policy outcomes.

Another significant contribution of Grube's book is his emphasis on the importance of evidence-based policymaking. He argues that policymakers must be willing to engage in rigorous research and analysis to develop policies based on sound evidence. In this regard, he provides examples of successful policymaking efforts that have relied on rigorous research and analysis and, once again, emphasises the importance of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policies to identify areas where further research might be needed.

Furthermore, Grube's analysis highlights the importance of effective communication and stakeholder engagement in building policy support. He argues that policymakers must effectively communicate the benefits of policies to the target beneficiaries and be open to collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Grube provides detailed examples of close collaboration and engagement in successful policymaking efforts and offers practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to build coalitions and networks of actors to support policy change.

Grube also emphasises the importance of leadership in driving effective policymaking. He states that effective policymakers must be able to inspire and motivate their colleagues and take calculated risks in pursuit of policy goals. This requires a combination of strategic thinking and effective communication. For Grube, successful governments must strike the right tone, and effective storytelling is crucial when it comes to gaining support. Further-

more, he believes that policy framing is a key element in gaining followership. If people do not follow the logic behind the arguments, it can be tough to gain support, even for policies backed by data.

While this book represents a valuable contribution to policy analysis and design, it is not without its weaknesses. First, the book focuses primarily on the challenges of policymaking and lacks a comprehensive analysis of the factors that contribute to policy success or failure. For example, the book does not give much attention to the role of external factors, such as economic conditions, technological change or global events, in shaping policy outcomes. While the case studies are informative, they are not exhaustive and may not fully capture the complexity of policymaking in different contexts. Moreover, when external events are mentioned, they are portrayed as events that can cause the right momentum for a policy to be proposed or implemented. It does not consider the ambiguity that lies in never knowing when they occur. Therefore, it will not always be a sustainable plan to map out policies that can potentially be efficient when a natural disaster, global pandemic or economic hardship comes along.

Another potential weakness of the book is that its recommendations may be difficult to implement in practice, particularly in contexts rife with political polarisation or institutional fragmentation. Grube's recommendations emphasise the importance of collaboration, evidence-based policymaking and stakeholder engagement, but these goals may be difficult to achieve where competing interests or ideological divisions exist. For example, in some cases, policymakers may face pressure to prioritise short-term goals or partisan agendas over longer-term policy objectives. With different varieties of democracies, different power struggles may arise. In a majoritarian democracy, voters have greater transparency when it comes to punishing the

elected government in case it does not do as promised, whereas in a consensus democracy, it is more difficult for voters to blame only one party for the successes and failures. All governments are affected by external factors, unions, interest organisations and lobbying actors. Yet, some democracies have a stronger tendency to let those affect the policies and ultimately have a greater effect on the support or opposition towards it.

Finally, the book lacks a clear theoretical framework or conceptual model for understanding policymaking. While Grube's analysis is informed by a range of historical perspectives, the book does not offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding policymaking processes and outcomes. This may limit its appeal to readers seeking a more theoretically rigorous analysis of policy.

Despite these limitations, this work remains a valuable contribution to the field of policy analysis and design. Grube's analysis is supported by a range of case studies from around the world and provides a wealth of practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to navigate complex institutional environments. The book also emphasises the importance of attention to detail, effective communication, stakeholder engagement, evidence-based policymaking and leadership in driving effective policymaking. By highlighting the challenges and opportunities involved, this work provides a valuable resource for policymakers, scholars and practitioners seeking to improve policy outcomes.

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Sabrina P. Ramet: *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943–1991*

New York 2023: Routledge, 358 pp.

This work is an insightful addition to the already vast literature on the communist takeover of East Central Europe, which led to the creation of the communist societies that dominated this part of the world from the end of the Second World War to the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. Ramet primarily focused on examining politics, culture and society, with particular attention to 'the unintended, dysfunctional consequences of communist policies' (p. 2). This somewhat sets her book apart from other volumes that deal with the same topic. At the very beginning of the volume, she highlights two principles that the communists in Europe wanted to attain as their ultimate goals in creating new societies: 'equality (even though not to the exclusion of privileges for high-ranking communists or of the political dominance of the Politburo and Central Committee of the communist party) and control of political life, the economy, the arts, and social life in general, as well as, in those countries where it was possible, the religious organizations' (p. 3).

The volume reads very well; it is easy to follow because it is organised chronologically and is divided into several sections devoted to different periods in the development of the communist regimes. The section preceding all others, *Communism's unintended consequences: An introduction*, provides information on the objectives and the rationale of the volume, setting the tone and direction taken by the author's writing. Here, Ramet first introduces information on the general traits of the communist system in East Central Europe, effectively defining the given system and the manner in which it functioned. At the same time, she provides contextual information on the states she is about to discuss in more detail in the following sections.

The three following sections, *The Soviet bloc, part one: 1944–1956*, *The Soviet bloc, part two: 1956–1980*, and *The Soviet bloc, part three: 1980–1989*, respectively, are devoted to the three different phases in communist thinking and systems as implemented in East Central Europe. Each period is further marked by a significant milestone, usually an event or series of related events that eventually came to represent a watershed in the development of the societies in question. In Ramet's words, these include 'the emergence of "people's democracies" in East Central Europe, Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito's defiance of Stalin's imperialism, post-Stalin disenchantment, Nikita Khrushchev's onslaught on Stalin's "cult of personality", the Polish October, the Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring, Romania's "national Stalinism"' (Foreword, p. xvii), etc. In that respect, Ramet develops her arguments by contextualising the main political, economic and cultural developments, additionally showing the interconnected relationships between them.

After having defined 'Communism', the way it operates and the ways in which communists came to power in the introductory section, Ramet discusses Poland, East Germany (the German Democratic Republic, as it was officially called), Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania by approaching various issues, including women's rights, gender inequality, music, arts, political developments and socio-economic issues, among others, within the three perspectives of politics, culture and society. The Soviet Union looms large in her analysis, as she shows the overwhelming influence and grip Moscow had over the societies in question.

The last two sections, *Socialist Mavericks: Yugoslavia and Albania, 1943–1991* and *Epitaph*, respectively, mark the portions of the volume in which the author first approaches Yugoslavia and then Albania. Arguably, these two countries can be considered—each in its own right—peculiar po-

litical, economic and social experiments in implementing rather specific policies in ways that set them apart from the rest of communist Europe. The author then continues her discussion, presenting her final thoughts on the systems the communist leaders wanted to instal and making ample references to what has already been argued in the previous sections of the volume.

The final two sections of the book, particularly those that deal with Yugoslavia and Albania, are smaller in length and may seem somewhat less informative. However, this appears so only at face value, as Ramet has provided quite a few references to both Yugoslavia and Albania in the previous sections, mainly intending to compare these two states to the rest of then-communist East Central Europe. In fact, at the beginning of the volume, she refers to Robert K. Merton's work, this time in *Epitaph*, again explaining her choice of having tackled 'unintended consequences as there can be problems also with consequences which are anticipated but not intended or chosen' (p. 317).

Indeed, Ramet's volume is a valuable addition to a rather large and ever-increasing body of literature on the topic that still fascinates many political scientists, historians and political economists, among others, mainly because her analytical angle is somewhat different from those of other authors who have written on the topic. In that respect, university students at both undergraduate and graduate levels, professionals in the field and history enthusiasts will all welcome this book. This is because, by assuming an insightful analytical angle and offering insightful comments, the author provides a brief-though-effective examination (review style) of the main events in the communist world in the period after the Second World War. Some of these comments came from the author's personal experiences while visiting and doing research in the countries mentioned. There may be readers who will read said comments as a

disadvantage of the book though these, in my opinion, also have informative value. It is, however, essential to note that the volume is largely based on the author having used mainly secondary sources. Hence, the volume and the information provided in it may not be as novel, but rather partly recycled knowledge already presented in other academic treatments dealing with the same topic.

All in all, the book deserves credit for trying to tell the story of communism from a slightly different and partly more engaging perspective and for doing so in a compelling but concise manner that will undoubtedly be appreciated not only by those who are familiar with Ramet's scholarship.

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