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DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITĀTES HUMANITĀRO UN SOCIĀLO ZINĀTŅU INSTITŪTA UN HUMANITĀRO UN SOCIĀLO ZINĀTŅU FAKULTĀTES STARPTAUTISKO ZINĀTNISKO KONFERENČU RAKSTU KRĀJUMS

20. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences
„Sociālās zinātnes reģionālajai attīstībai 2025”
materiāli
(2025.gada 17.-18. oktobrī)
I DAĻA. SOCIOLOĢIJAS UN SOCIĀLĀS PSIHOLOĢIJAS AKTUALITĀTES

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES OF THE INSTITUTE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES OF DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITY

The materials of the 20-th International Scientific Conference
“*Social Sciences for Regional Development 2025”*
(17-th – 18-th October, 2025)
PART I. ISSUES OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITĀTES
AKADĒMISKAIS APGĀDS “SAULE”

Apstiprināts DU Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu institūta Zinātniskās padomes sēdē 2026. gada 18. martā, protokols Nr. 3.

Meņšikovs V. (zin. red.) *Daugavpils Universitātes Humanitāro un Sociālo zinātņu institūta un fakultātes starptautisko zinātnisko konferenču rakstu krājums. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences „Sociālās zinātnes reģionālajai attīstībai 2025" materiāli. I daļa.* Socioloģijas *un sociālās psiholoģijas* aktualitātes. Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitātes Akadēmiskais apgāds „Saule", 2026. 85.lpp.

Rakstu krājumā iekļauti Daugavpils Universitātes Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu institūta un Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu fakultātes 20. Starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences „Sociālās zinātnes reģionālajai attīstībai 2025" (2025. gada 17.-18.oktobris) materiāli: universitātes zinātnieku, doktorantu, kā arī citu Latvijas un ārzemju sadarbības augstskolu zinātnieku raksti ekonomikas nozarē. Par rakstos atspoguļotajiem faktiem, viedokļiem un terminoloģiju atbild rakstu autori.

Ir iekļauts datu bāzē: / Included in the database:
Electronic Journals Library of University of Regensburg.

ISSN 2255-8853

SATURS / CONTENTS

Elena Batunova, Albina Davletshina (Germany)

EVERYDAY ASSETS UNDER PRESSURE: HOUSING GOVERNANCE AND RESIDENT WELL-BEING IN DAUGAVPILS (LATVIA) AND NARVA (ESTONIA)

This article analyses the influence of various housing governance systems on the upkeep and daily resilience of Soviet-era housing in two non-capital post-socialist cities: Daugavpils (Latvia) and Narva (Estonia). Although the two cities have different types of institutions, they both face similar challenges: ageing housing, declining population, and insufficient funding. Centralized governance in Daugavpils provides technical capacity but constrains resident initiative, whereas decentralized structures in Narva facilitate autonomy but result in inconsistent outcomes. Based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in 2025, that included interviews, site visits, and document analysis, the study demonstrates how residents contribute to maintaining buildings in good condition through small everyday actions which are often overlooked in research and policy. These actions help keep houses functioning and improve people's emotional well-being. The results indicate that daily care is essential for housing resilience, and future policy must acknowledge and facilitate the interaction between formal systems and lived experiences. The article presents initial results from an ongoing research project.

Keywords: housing management, housing resilience, resident well-being, post-Soviet cities, Daugavpils, Narva

1. Introduction

In many cities in former Soviet countries, Soviet-era housing continues to shape urban forms and influence how people live in urban spaces. The Soviet state implemented mass housing construction in the post-war period to address enormous housing needs, declaring that this was a temporary solution to the housing problem. The service life of these buildings was supposed to be relatively short. Today, demolishing Soviet-era buildings often proves economically and environmentally unfeasible, especially in shrinking, resource-constrained post-socialist cities. At the same time, ageing structures that fail to meet modern energy efficiency requirements, a lack of funding, and changes in the demographic composition of the population raise questions about the long-term sustainability of Soviet-era residential buildings.

These contradictions are particularly relevant in non-capital cities such as Narva (Estonia) and Daugavpils (Latvia). In both cities, Soviet-era residential buildings form the backbone of the urban housing stock, and local authorities and residents must manage housing maintenance with limited resources. National and EU policies, including the Renovation Wave strategy, actively promote the large-scale, comprehensive renovation of the housing stock. However, at the local level, the implementation of these ambitious initiatives faces the reality of the interaction between the capabilities of institutions and the daily practices of urban residents.

Figure 1. Case study locations: Narva (Estonia) and Daugavpils (Latvia), 2025

Source: Map by authors

Researchers have paid considerable attention to post-socialist transformations in housing and governance (Tsenkova, 2009; Hegedüs et al., 2017), as well as to issues of wealth creation through housing privatisation (Lux & Sunega, 2015) or residents' satisfaction with housing from the socialist period (Herfert, Neugebauer & Smigiel, 2013). Relatively little research focuses on how residents, in interaction with other local actors, maintain these residential buildings daily. Existing studies often explore the work of formal institutions and policies related to the level of state power and local self-government, as well as supranational institutions. Small-scale daily practices of care, such as minor repairs, improvements and coordination of neighbours' actions, often remain underestimated.

This article explores the question: how do locally established housing management systems affect the efficiency of housing maintenance, and how do residents contribute to its sustainability and liveability?

We explore this question using qualitative methods, including a series of field studies conducted in 2025 in the cities of Narva and Daugavpils. As part of the field research, we conducted semi-structured interviews with various actors in the city, visual surveys with photographic documentation, and studied literary sources and official documents.

2. Comparative Context

Daugavpils in Latvia and Narva in Estonia are both medium-sized cities whose urban fabric and social life remained profoundly shaped by the legacy of the Soviet period. The Soviet state almost completely rebuilt both cities after World War II, and they grew rapidly as regional industrial centres. The extensive mass housing construction supported industrial growth and formed the existing microdistricts, composed of apartment blocks, schools, kindergartens, and green courtyards.

The cities' development trajectories since the early 1990s have many similar patterns. Both Daugavpils and Narva experienced the collapse of their industrial base during the 1990s and continue to struggle with unemployment and low incomes. Demographic decline, which has become a new normality for many post-socialist cities (Wu et al., 2022), has also occurred at a similar pace in Daugavpils and Narva. Both cities have lost more than 30% of their population since the 1990s. Their demographic trajectories also characterise ageing and out-migration of young people due to economic reasons.

In both cities, Soviet-era housing dominates their urban landscapes, while new residential construction remains limited. Multiple factors shape this situation: from the low incomes of residents, which make new housing largely unaffordable, to the opportunity to expand living space by relocating within the existing housing stock due to demographic decline.

Figure 2. Typical Soviet-era multi-apartment housing in Narva (left) and Daugavpils (right).

Source: Fieldwork photos, June and October 2025.

While this housing stock remains relatively affordable, well-connected, and structurally resilient, it is also ageing and increasingly inefficient. The initial construction quality also contributes to the current deterioration. As one tenant in Daugavpils noted, “Many houses were built quickly and poorly, so they require constant repairs.”

Most buildings date back to the 1960s–1980s and require substantial renovation due to thermal losses, outdated systems, and general wear and tear. As EU member states, both Latvia and Estonia are subject to the Renovation Wave strategy under the European Green Deal, which prioritises large-scale energy-efficient upgrades in the residential sector to reduce emissions and combat energy poverty (European Commission, 2020). As a result, the question of how to renovate this housing stock has gained urgency, combining a political necessity and a practical challenge on the ground.

3. Results

3.1. Configurations of Housing Governance and Key Actors

A comparison of Narva and Daugavpils reveals how two distinct governance models structure the management of the housing stock.

In Daugavpils, the municipal organisation Daugavpils dzīvokļu un komunalas saimniecības uzņemums (DDzKSU) predominantly manages the housing stock and is responsible for around 800 apartment buildings. DDzKSU provides technical maintenance services for residential buildings and emergency responses, ensuring savings through economies of scale and the availability of its own maintenance infrastructure. At the same time, this model reduces residents' initiative and creates dependence on the municipal operator, which effectively assumes all responsibility for building maintenance.

Narva has adopted a decentralised model of housing management. Apartment owners' associations and small management companies independently manage individual residential buildings. Residents are actively involved in decision-making because management takes place directly on site. This approach offers greater flexibility and transparency, but it relies heavily on the personal qualities of the manager and mutual trust. When coordination problems arise, technical maintenance becomes problematic.

Thus, Daugavpils illustrates centralised stability with responsibility for building maintenance concentrated outside the buildings. At the same time, Narva demonstrates the flexibility and high level of responsibility of local management structures, albeit with uneven capabilities.

3.2. Everyday Pressures and Barriers

In both cities under study, the housing stock consists mainly of buildings constructed between 1960 and 1980, which now require significant renovation efforts. Each city already has examples of comprehensive renovation projects implemented with the support of national and European programmes (Fig.3), but progress in this area has been slow and uneven.

Figure 3. Renovated housing façade in Narva showing insulation and energy-efficiency improvements on the background of non-renovated building.

Source: Fieldwork photo, June 2025.

Low household incomes limit residents' ability to cover the costs of renovation. "Most residents live on a pension of around 700 euros, so repairs are unaffordable," one respondent from Daugavpils explained. Municipal budgets offer little co-financing.

Institutional barriers play a role in slowing down the process of housing stock renewal. In Daugavpils, for example, the complex and costly licensing process for housing management raises the entry threshold and hinders the decentralisation of management. In Narva, the lack of knowledge and skills, including language skills, among the chairpersons of homeowner's associations makes it difficult for HOAs to participate in national and European co-financing programmes.

Socio-demographic factors also have a significant impact on the renewal of the housing stock. The depopulation and ageing, the fact that residents live outside the city, and low resident activity in the building management process reduce the effectiveness of collective action. Fear of loans and a general level of mistrust, both vertical and horizontal, also hinder the implementation of complex projects.

3.3. Emerging Forms of Resilience and Resident Well-Being

Field research in Daugavpils and Narva helped identify numerous practices that extend beyond the implementation of renovation and technical repair projects for buildings. These practices help to maintain a comfortable living environment and a sense of well-being among residents. Residents, very often older women, clean courtyards and stairwells, repair and renovate street furniture, arrange flower beds and plant flowers (Fig. 4). These actions contribute to the improvement of common areas and partially compensate for the inability to implement large-scale projects.

Figure 4. Everyday care practices in a residential courtyard, Daugavpils.

Source: Fieldwork photo, 2025.

Although many elderly residents avoid investing in large-scale renovation projects, they are more likely to pay for regular and timely building maintenance services and take care of their living environment. As one HOA chair in Narva explained, "Pensioners are the most active and interested in preserving and repairing their homes." Their quiet efforts support everyday order and foster a sense of shared responsibility.

Such gestures demonstrate the residents' deep attachment to their place and support their emotional well-being. Residents define their well-being in terms of comfort, accessibility of services, transportation accessibility, social connections, familiar surroundings, as well as greenery, landscaping, and connection to natural areas. "This neighbourhood is pretty nice", "I love my house", "We built this house, ... we are connected to it": those are the voices of the residents in Soviet-era microdistricts in Daugavpils and Narva. Residents' emotional well-being fosters housing resilience, helping Soviet-era estates remain liveable in the face of shrinking populations and constrained resources.

4. Discussion and conclusion

We found that post-Soviet cities, where mass housing buildings predominate, face similar problems related to the ageing of housing stock and the need for its renovation. Although housing management structures differ, both Daugavpils and Narva sustain their housing stock through a combination of institutional support and residents' informal care practices.

Our research reveals that the housing management organisational model impacts responsibility allocation and individual action and cooperation. The centralised administration structure in Daugavpils provides technical maintenance but restricts inhabitants' initiative and horizontal contact. The decentralised management structure in Narva promotes autonomy and individual decisions but fails to renovate the housing stock uniformly. In both cases, residents, especially older women, engage in informal care practices, maintaining, cleaning, and improving common spaces. These simple activities enhance people's emotional well-being and sense of attachment to the place, even in the absence of building renovation. Our findings resonate with earlier studies that have examined institutional fragmentation and housing decline in former socialist countries (Hegedüs et al., 2017; Lux & Sunega, 2015), as well as the attachment of residents to their neighbourhoods (Herfert, Neugebauer & Smigiel, 2013).

Our research shows that resident-initiated actions, being informal, fill gaps left by institutional practices and contribute to the resilience of residential areas. This result complements Tronto's (1993) argument that practices of care ensure social continuity, especially when formal instruments are ineffective.

Although our study did not aim to evaluate the implementation of Soviet-era housing renovation programmes, it found uneven implementation and a large gap between top-down objectives and local capacities. Despite the implementation of several renovation projects, the process is stalling due to insufficient financial resources, cumbersome bureaucracy, concerns over financial instruments, and general mistrust. At the same time, many residents expressed a strong emotional attachment to their homes, even in the absence of material investment, which suggests that the sense of well-being in housing extends beyond its material condition alone (Blunt & Dowling, 2006).

This essay presents merely our initial study findings. Further research should uncover the intricate network of formal and informal behaviours that make Soviet-era residential zones resilient, implemented by many actors. Research should examine how care-based behaviours and formal governance interact in post-socialist societies. Understanding this interaction can help create more inclusive and prosperous housing policies that account for the structures, systems, and human efforts that sustain them.

Acknowledgements:

We gratefully acknowledge the support of municipal representatives and local institutions in Daugavpils and Narva, whose cooperation made this research possible. Our sincere thanks also go to all residents who shared their experiences and insights during interviews.

This research is funded by the Federal Ministry for Research, Technology and Aeronautics (BMFTR) under grant number 01UC2410B.

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Ikdienas resursi spriedzes apstākļos: mājokļu pārvaldība un iedzīvotāju labbūtība Daugavpilī (Latvijā) un Narvā (Igaunijā)

Kopsavilkums

Šajā rakstā analizēta dažādu mājokļu pārvaldības sistēmu ietekme uz padomju laika dzīvojamā fonda uzturēšanu un ikdienas noturību divās ne-galvaspilsētu postsociālisma pilsētās – Daugavpilī (Latvija) un Narvā (Igaunija). Lai gan abās pilsētās pastāv atšķirīgi institucionālie modeļi, tās saskaras ar līdzīgām problēmām: novecojošs dzīvojamais fonds, iedzīvotāju skaita samazināšanās un nepietiekams finansējums. Centralizēta pārvaldība

Daugavpilī nodrošina tehnisko kapacitāti, taču ierobežo iedzīvotāju iniciatīvu, savukārt decentralizētās struktūras Narvā veicina autonomiju, bet rada nevienmērīgus rezultātus.

Balstoties uz kvalitatīvu lauka pētījumu, kas veikts 2025. gadā un ietvēra intervijas, objektu apsekojumus un dokumentu analīzi, pētījums parāda, kā iedzīvotāji ar nelielām ikdienas darbībām, kuras bieži netiek ņemtas vērā pētniecībā un politikā, palīdz uzturēt ēkas labā tehniskā stāvoklī. Šīs darbības nodrošina māju funkcionēšanu un uzlabo iedzīvotāju emocionālo labklājību. Rezultāti liecina, ka ikdienas rūpes ir būtisks mājokļu noturības elements, un turpmākajai politikai ir jāatzīst un jāveicina mijiedarbība starp formālajām pārvaldības sistēmām un iedzīvotāju ikdienas pieredzi. Rakstā prezentēti sākotnējie rezultāti no pašlaik notiekoša pētījuma projekta.

Atslēgvārdi: mājokļu pārvaldība, mājokļu noturība, iedzīvotāju labbūtība, postsociālisma pilsētas, Daugavpils, Narva

***Bella Dubovika, Aleksejs Ruža* (Latvija)**

ATTITUDES OF SICILIANS AGED 23–33 TOWARD THEIR FUTURE: FROM QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION TO QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT

Annotation. The purpose of this article is to present the development of a quantitative research instrument designed to measure attitudes toward the future among Sicilians aged 23–33. The main research task was to transform the results of a qualitative study into a psychometrically valid tool reflecting the multidimensional structure of young people's attitudes toward the future. The study addresses the problem of insufficiently context-sensitive instruments capable of capturing the specific characteristics of Southern European youth, whose expectations for the future are shaped by long-term socio-economic uncertainty, limited institutional trust (Tyler 2006), and moral tension (Mandich et al. 2024). The qualitative stage explored how young Sicilians evaluate such aspects as optimism, pessimism, fatalism, hope, the role of the mafia, justice and belief in a just world, life satisfaction, motivation, generational differences, and social and political engagement. On this basis, a five-dimensional model of attitudes was constructed, including social, emotional, vital, material, and ideological components following contemporary developments in attitude theory (Lewicka 2011; Jost and Kay 2010; Grasso et al. 2019). The Attitudes Toward the Future Questionnaire (ATFQ) consists of 45 Likert-type statements derived inductively from the thematic analysis of eight semi-structured interviews. The methodological novelty of the research lies in combining reflexive thematic analysis with quantitative scale construction, bridging interpretive and statistical approaches in social sciences. This mixed-method integration responds to recent calls for culturally grounded measurement tools that account for the moral and contextual dimensions of youth attitudes in peripheral European regions (Mazzei et al. 2025; OECD 2024). The forthcoming pilot study will test the internal reliability, factorial structure, and construct validity of the instrument. The expected results will provide new evidence of how young Sicilians' attitudes toward their future combine emotional resilience and hope with institutional mistrust, attachment to family and place, and a strong moral sensitivity to justice and change. The study contributes to attitude theory and youth research by offering a replicable methodological model that captures both cognitive and affective aspects of future orientation within a specific regional and cultural context.

Keywords: Sicily, youth attitudes, future orientation, resilience, social justice, regional identity

Atslēgvārdi: Sicīlija, jauniešu attieksmes, nākotnes orientācija, psiholoģiskā noturība, sociālais taisnīgums, reģionālā identitāte

1. Introduction

Sicily occupies a distinctive position within Southern Europe, marked by persistent economic instability, high youth unemployment, and structural dependency on the national center (OECD 2024; Mazzei et al. 2025). These structural challenges have fostered a generation of young adults negotiating a deep attachment to their homeland and the perceived necessity of mobility, influenced by broader cohort-based value shifts (Grasso et al. 2019). Earlier research demonstrates that Southern European youth often express ambivalence toward institutional structures, combining skepticism with strong moral and emotional commitment to family and community (Mandich, Satta, and Cuzzocrea 2024).

The present study continues this line of inquiry by focusing specifically on the attitudes of Sicilians aged 23–33 toward their future, and by developing a quantitative instrument to measure these attitudes systematically. While previous qualitative research explored how young Sicilians articulate belonging, justice, and resilience under conditions of socio-economic constraint, the current stage translates these insights into measurable dimensions.

The research responds to a broader methodological problem: existing attitude scales—such as those of Thurstone (1928), Likert (1932), and Guttman (1944)—tend to emphasize individual cognition or emotion in isolation. In contrast, this study adopts a multidimensional view of attitudes that integrates social, emotional, vital, material, and ideological components. The goal is to construct a culturally grounded psychometric tool that reflects the complex ways in which young Sicilians evaluate their own and collective futures.

The qualitative findings that informed the questionnaire revealed a nuanced emotional and moral landscape. Participants described optimism, pessimism, fatalism, and hope as interrelated emotional frameworks, deeply intertwined with experiences of justice, institutional trust, and moral responsibility. Discussions about the mafia, life satisfaction, motivation, and generational differences highlighted how regional history continues to shape perceptions of agency. Themes of social and political engagement, resilience, and belief in a just world further indicated that the Sicilian future imagination is not uniform but situational—anchored in both disillusionment and aspiration.

In this socio-cultural context, the study aims to bridge interpretive and quantitative paradigms by designing a scale derived inductively from thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. This methodological innovation contributes to youth studies and attitude research by linking lived experience to psychometric precision, enabling a systematic examination of future orientation.

2. Development of the Research Methodological Framework

Classical models of attitude measurement—Thurstone's (1928) method of equal-appearing intervals, Likert's (1932) summated ratings, and Guttman's (1944) cumulative scaling—provided essential conceptual foundations yet focus mainly on evaluative or emotional components. In contrast, this research aims to capture the full multidimensionality of attitudes toward the future among Sicilian youth, encompassing behavioral readiness, value orientation, and ideological perception.

The study conceptualized attitude as a dynamic relation between meanings and emotional evaluations within a semantic field. The tool, titled the *Attitudes Toward the Future*

Questionnaire (ATFQ), was developed to analyze how individuals perceive opportunities for self-fulfillment, stability, and justice both within Sicily and abroad.
The theoretical basis also draws from work on identity and belonging (Lewicka 2011), civic trust (Tyler 2006; Jost and Kay 2010), and regional youth research (Grasso et al. 2019; Mazzei et al. 2025). These perspectives highlight that in contexts of structural inequality, attitudes are shaped simultaneously by emotions, social norms, and ideological narratives.

3. Instrument Structure and Item Design

The Attitudes Toward the Future Questionnaire (ATFQ) was developed as a structured quantitative tool derived from the thematic analysis of eight semi-structured interviews with Sicilian young adults aged 23–33. The aim was to translate the qualitative insights into measurable indicators that reflect the multidimensional nature of young Sicilians' attitudes toward their future.

The final instrument is based on five interrelated attitudinal domains, each encompassing several aspects and corresponding statements formulated from the participants' narratives. The items are presented as Likert-type statements (1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree), allowing the assessment of both emotional and cognitive components of future orientation.

3.1 Social Dimension

This dimension captures values related to work, education, and belonging. Respondents described the importance of professional stability and self-realization through work, often contrasting it with the precariousness of the local job market: "In Sicily you can work, but you cannot build your life." Education was viewed as a key instrument for personal change, though many felt its value was undervalued: "Here you study a lot, but merit counts less than knowing the right people." Three thematic aspects emerged within this dimension. The work and career aspect reflects the significance of meaningful employment, concerns about instability, and the dignity associated with secure work. The education and skills aspect encompasses the perceived importance of education, as well as the frustration caused by mismatches between qualifications and available opportunities. Finally, the community and belonging aspect highlights pride in one's origin, skepticism toward institutions, and a generally weak sense of civic participation.

3.2 Emotional Dimension

The emotional domain reflects a psychological orientation toward the future, encompassing hope, motivation, fear, uncertainty, and self-belief. Participants often articulated an emotional duality between optimism and fatalism: "We are used to dreaming, but reality wakes us up too fast." Hope was perceived as both a moral duty and a coping mechanism: "If you lose hope here, you lose yourself." Within this dimension, several thematic aspects emerged. The hope and motivation aspect includes sustained optimism, persistence, and belief in change. The fear and uncertainty aspect captures anxiety, insecurity, and emotional fatigue associated with ambiguous future prospects. Finally, the self-belief and adaptation aspect reflects resilience, mobility, and the use of creativity as strategies for coping with instability.

3.3 Vital Dimension

This domain reflects the importance of psychological and physical well-being as prerequisites for envisioning the future. Many respondents linked health and family support to motivation and life continuity: “If my family was not behind me, I would have already left everything.” Safety and stability were described as fragile ideals: “You always live with the idea that things could collapse — jobs, plans, even the future itself.” Three thematic aspects can be identified within this domain. The health and well-being aspect encompasses mental health, stress, and emotional balance as foundations for planning ahead. The safety and stability aspect refers to the sense of security, transparency, and fairness in institutional processes. Lastly, the family support aspect highlights the protective role of family, its encouragement, and the tension between dependence and autonomy.

3.4 Material Dimension

Economic concerns emerged as a central factor shaping future attitudes. Financial independence and access to housing were perceived as nearly unattainable goals: “You can study, you can work, but you can never really live on your own.” Migration was often described as both necessity and opportunity: “Leaving Sicily doesn’t mean abandoning it — it means surviving.” Within this domain, several interconnected aspects were identified. The economic prospects aspect reflects financial insecurity, the desire for fair remuneration, and the pressure to emigrate in search of stability. The housing and mobility aspect captures the idea that migration is often a prerequisite for independence, with many viewing a potential return as a long-term aspiration. Finally, the migration plans aspect highlights mobility as a strategy for self-development, emphasizing circular migration as a sustainable life trajectory.

3.5 Ideological Dimension

The ideological domain addresses values related to justice, equality, civic trust, and collective vision. Respondents often expressed strong moral expectations and disappointment with institutional inefficiency: “Justice exists, but it arrives too late and only for some.” A recurring theme was the belief in moral renewal through education and personal responsibility: “Change will come only when people stop waiting for miracles and start being honest.” Within this dimension, several thematic aspects can be distinguished. The trust in institutions aspect reflects low institutional confidence, perceptions of corruption, and concerns about a lack of transparency. The justice and equality aspect encompasses beliefs in meritocracy, fairness, and respect for rights and human dignity. Finally, the vision for Sicily aspect captures hopes for regional transformation driven by courage, education, and active civic engagement.

Each attitudinal domain contains three statements per aspect, resulting in a total of 45 items. Every item was phrased to preserve the respondents’ authentic language while ensuring conceptual clarity and neutrality. The instrument was designed bilingually (Italian and English) and underwent a back-translation procedure to ensure semantic equivalence.

The ATFQ thus represents a multidimensional, culturally grounded instrument for analyzing how young Sicilians perceive, evaluate, and emotionally engage with their future—integrating social, emotional, vital, material, and ideological factors derived directly from qualitative data.

4. Discussion and Expected Contributions

The ATFQ demonstrates how qualitative interpretation can guide psychometric construction. It operationalizes the interplay of social, emotional, vital, material, and ideological factors shaping young Sicilians' attitudes toward their future.

Theoretically, the research extends attitude studies beyond ABC-component models by adding vital and ideological dimensions reflecting health, well-being, and moral evaluation. It also aligns with recent scholarship that situates emotional and moral reasoning within socio-political contexts (Jost and Kay 2010; Pitti and Tuorto 2021).

Methodologically, the work showcases reflexive thematic analysis as a foundation for scale creation, thereby enhancing construct validity. Substantively, it provides insight into how Sicilian youth combine resilience with skepticism toward institutions, a pattern echoed across other peripheral European regions (Mazzei et al. 2025).

5. Conclusion

The *Attitudes Toward the Future Questionnaire* represents an empirically grounded, culturally sensitive instrument for assessing how Sicilian youth imagine and evaluate their futures. Built on qualitative evidence and classical measurement theory, it integrates emotional, social, and ideological perspectives into a coherent framework.

The forthcoming pilot will test its reliability and factorial structure, paving the way for comparative research on youth in other Mediterranean regions. In the next stage, an empirical validation study will be carried out among young Sicilians to assess the instrument's psychometric robustness, evaluate construct coherence, and refine item composition where necessary. Overall, the study contributes both theoretically—by expanding the multidimensional concept of attitude—and methodologically—by demonstrating how contextual meaning can be quantified without loss of cultural specificity.

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SICĪLIEŠU 23–33 GADUS VECU JAUNIEŠU ATTIEKSMES PRET NĀKOTNI: NO KVALITATĪVAS INTERPRETĀCIJAS LĪDZ KVANTITATĪVAI MĒRĪŠANAI

Kopsavilkums

Šī raksta mērķis ir prezentēt kvantitatīva pētniecības instrumenta izstrādi, kas paredzēts, lai mērītu 23–33 gadus vecu sicīliešu attieksmi pret nākotni. Galvenais pētījuma uzdevums bija pārveidot kvalitatīvā pētījuma rezultātus psihometriski derīgā instrumentā, kas atspoguļo jauniešu attieksmes pret nākotni daudzdimensionālo struktūru. Pētījumā aplūkota problēma par nepietiekami kontekstuāli jutīgiem instrumentiem, kas spētu atspoguļot Dienvideiropas jauniešu specifiku, kuru nākotnes gaidas veido ilgstoša sociālekonomiskā nenoteiktība, ierobežota institucionālā uzticēšanās (Tyler 2006) un morālā spriedze (Mandich et al. 2024). Kvalitatīvajā posmā tika pētīts, kā jaunie sicīlieši vērtē tādus aspektus kā optimisms, pesimisms, fatālisms, cerība, mafijas loma, taisnīgums un ticība taisnīgai pasaulei, apmierinātība ar dzīvi, motivācija, paaudžu atšķirības, kā arī sociālā un politiskā iesaiste. Pamatojoties uz iegūtajiem datiem, tika izstrādāts piecdimensionāls attieksmju modelis, kas ietver sociālo, emocionālo, vitālo, materiālo un ideoloģisko komponenti, balstoties uz mūsdienu attieksmju teorijas attīstību (Lewicka 2011; Jost un Kay 2010; Grasso et al. 2019). Attitudes Toward the Future Questionnaire (ATFQ) sastāv no 45 Likerta tipa apgalvojumiem, kas induktīvi izstrādāti, balstoties uz astoņu daļēji strukturētu interviju tematisko analīzi. Pētījuma metodoloģiskā novitāte ir refleksīvās tematiskās analīzes apvienošana ar kvantitatīvas skalas konstruēšanu, tādējādi savienojot interpretatīvo un statistisko pieeju sociālajās zinātnēs. Šī jaukto metožu integrācija atbilst jaunākajiem aicinājumiem izstrādāt kultūrā balstītus mērīšanas instrumentus, kas ņem vērā jauniešu attieksmju morālās un kontekstuālās dimensijas Eiropas perifērajos reģionos (Mazzei et al. 2025; OECD 2024).

Plānotajā pilotpētījumā tiks pārbaudīta instrumenta iekšējā uzticamība, faktoru struktūra un konstrukta validitāte. Sagaidāmie rezultāti sniegs jaunus pierādījumus par to, kā jauno sicīliešu attieksmēs pret nākotni savienojas emocionālā noturība un cerība ar institucionālu neuzticēšanos, piesaisti ģimenei un vietai, kā arī izteiktu morālo jutīgumu pret taisnīgumu un pārmaiņām. Pētījums papildina attieksmju teoriju un jaunatnes pētniecību, piedāvājot replicējamu metodoloģisko modeli, kas aptver gan kognitīvos, gan afektīvos nākotnes orientācijas aspektus konkrētā reģionālā un kultūras kontekstā.

Atslēgvārdi: Sicīlija, jauniešu attieksmes, nākotnes orientācija, psiholoģiskā noturība, sociālais taisnīgums, reģionālā identitāte

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SOCIAL PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINE'S REGIONS

Abstract. The article examines the peculiarities of Ukraine's social policy and identifies social priorities for regional development in wartime. It clarifies the definition of social policy with an emphasis on the factors influencing its formation, structural components, shifts and dynamics. The national components and structure of the country's social policy are identified. This is of fundamental importance for determining and implementing social priorities for regional development. It has been found that the main ones, such as security, socio-demographic issues, and social protection of the population, are common to all regions. However, a significant part of social priorities is determined by the demographic, labour resource, socio-economic and environmental specifics of the regions; their level of economic development; their location in relation to the impact of direct hostilities, occupation, de-occupied territories, the intensity of constant armed attacks and russian influence. While in the southern and north-eastern regions social priorities are limited to social protection functions, in the central regions they can be expanded to include activities to preserve and support social infrastructure and employment. In the western regions, the list of social priorities is being expanded to include the development of housing and social infrastructure; the development of social entrepreneurship; the growth of employment and people's well-being; and an increase in regional budgets for the implementation of social programmes. However, in all regions, especially those that are depressed and affected by the war, the population is on the brink of survival, has reduced real incomes due to the war, and social priorities lack the financial basis for implementation due to large expenditures on military needs and the economic downturn.
Keywords: social policy, social priorities, regions, development, population, demographic crisis, budget expenditures, programmes, partnership.

Problem statement. Social policy and social priorities for the development of Ukraine's regions are closely intertwined. They have always been and remain the focus of attention for the Ukrainian state. However, their implementation over the years has varied in terms of intensity, funding levels and implementation periods. There are both objective and subjective reasons for this. The former are determined by general global, European, national, regional and local patterns and characteristics of socio-economic development; radical digital innovations; changes in the structure of the economy, demographics and employment. The latter are determined by the coming to power of certain political parties and groups, the introduction of certain social doctrines, standards and corresponding institutions. If social policy is developed and implemented at the national level, its manifestations and priorities at the regional level depend on the content and differences in the location and development of regions. This requires constant consideration at the level of scientific justification and practical implementation.

However, the war has had an unprecedented impact on the social priorities of regional development. It concerns the occupation, occupied and liberated territories; regions of combat operations and military influences of varying intensity; mass external and internal migration; demographic crisis; increased social spending and social assistance to the population amid a significant state budget deficit and its growth; economic destruction and decline; heavy losses among the military and civilian population; constant danger and threats to the lives of millions of people; changes in the structure of employment and social and labour relations. At the regional level, this is happening with varying intensity and raises the issue of determining social priorities for the development of Ukraine's regions.

The degree of study of the problem and the identification of its previously unresolved parts. Foreign and domestic scientists, managers and practitioners have addressed and continue to address the problems of substantiating social policy and its components, social priorities, including at the level of regional development. These include the works of Charles Booth, Hansli Terens M., Auguste Comte, Olena Grishnova, Mykola Ihnatenko, Vira Kutsenko, Ella Libanova, Olena Makarova, Mykola Mnykh and Uliana Motorniuk.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to identify the social priorities for the development of Ukraine's regions based on the characteristics of the structure, state and dynamics of the social sphere, the content of social policy and its structural changes, and regional differences.

Presentation of the main material. The social policy of the state is the basis for determining the social priorities of regional development. As a multifaceted phenomenon and process, it has many definitions. Thus, Y. Borodin and N. Sorokina understand it as ‘a set of measures taken by the state and local authorities aimed at ensuring the optimal development of the social sphere, improving the well-being and satisfying the needs of society as a whole and of individual citizens’ (Borodin, Sorokina 2023). These authors consider the goal of social policy to be overcoming social tension; achieving social balance, harmony and well-being in society; and ensuring minimum social protection for the population.

While generally supporting this definition, we consider it appropriate to clarify the goal by replacing the word ‘overcoming’ with ‘preventing’ and then overcoming; to supplement the word ‘achieving’ with the words ‘and maintaining’ and so on throughout the text; to supplement the word “population” with the words ‘and its constant improvement’. In our opinion, this clarifies the goal and gives it momentum, since social policy and its goal are dynamic phenomena, not static ones. The main tasks of social policy as one of the fundamental conditions for justifying social priorities for regional development include guaranteeing the constitutional rights of citizens to work, social protection, health care, education, culture, and housing; creating a social sphere and social space for people's lives and activities; supporting growing spiritual and material needs; regulating the processes of social differentiation in society through social standards and financial, economic and organisational levers, social partnership and social responsibility.

The social priorities for regional development should be developed and implemented in accordance with the main directions of social policy. These include: employment and labour protection policy; social protection; income policy; demographic policy; social development policy (education, health care, culture and sports, tourism and recreation, religion, etc.). The main rules or principles for implementing social policy, and therefore the social priorities for regional development, are social justice, social solidarity, social partnership and social responsibility.

Similar views are held by V. Pichi and Y. Turchyn. In their opinion, social policy in a broad sense means regulating the social sphere and social relations in order to ensure the functioning and development of the social system, conditions for the realisation of social interests and demands of the population, and the comprehensive development of people as individuals. In a narrow sense, it is an activity aimed at ensuring the well-being of citizens and solving other tasks of the so-called big five: health care, education, housing programmes, social security, social assistance services (Pichi, Turchyn 2018).

According to research by U. Motorniuk, social policy in a broad sense is understood as a system of activities aimed at the functioning and development of social relations; in a narrow sense, it is an activity aimed at the social protection of people and a safe social environment for them (Motorniuk, 2016). M. Mnykh believes that social policy is a subsystem of the state's general socio-economic policy aimed at shaping and regulating social relations, social development and social prospects (Mnykh, 2015). Without disputing such a significant number of correct definitions of social policy of varying degrees of completeness and detail, we consider it appropriate to point out the need for their standardisation on a national scale. This will make scientific research more focused and concentrate it on solving its urgent theoretical and practical problems, such as taking into account the effects of war; social security; mechanisms and sources of implementation, regional priorities and differences.

However, understanding the essence, structure and components of social policy is of paramount importance for its implementation, including priorities at the regional level based on various mechanisms and methods. S. Bondarenko and N. Buhas present them as state social guarantees; state social assistance; compulsory social insurance; voluntary social insurance (Bondarenko, Bugas 2021). However, these areas should be expanded (Fig. 1).

Figure. 1. **Main directions of social policy**

Source: Complied by the authors

This proposal seems particularly relevant during wartime. This is due to the increase in social spending, abuse, and the exacerbation of social problems amid a shortage of funding sources caused by the war.

In general, the war has dramatically exacerbated social problems and caused significant changes in the structure, scope, directions, mechanisms and other instruments of social policy in Ukraine. Its negative social consequences include:

- forced relocation and resettlement of large numbers of people, an increase in the number of internally displaced persons, external and internal migrants;
- loss of jobs due to the war and rising unemployment due to the destruction and devastation of enterprises and other places of employment, and at the same time, a shortage of workers due to mobilisation and emigration, especially of men;
- obstacles to receiving social benefits;
- deterioration of public health, increase in the number of disabled people, reduction in life expectancy;
- threats to the life and safety of the population, killings of military personnel and civilians;
- destruction and devastation of social infrastructure and decline in social standards;
- reduction in budgetary expenditure on social needs due to military defence requirements and the state budget deficit;
- unsatisfactory state of the environment and its constant deterioration;
- sharp decline in population, birth rates and demographic crisis in general;
- reduction in population income and low standard of living for the majority of the population, absence of a large and stable middle class;
- increasing lag of the country behind the world's leading countries in terms of key human development indicators.

The war has thus significantly complicated the implementation of social policy. In general, social policy in the 21st century is extremely complex due to the significant dynamics of economic development, innovation, constant political changes, military conflicts and threats, and geo-ecological challenges. In each country, it must correspond to national interests and be subordinate to local, regional and state authorities. It is also influenced by various national historical, ethnographic, cultural and regional traditions, as well as supranational influences. For example, membership in the European Union depends on member states' compliance with European law, standards, rules, etc.

As E. Libanova points out, in modern conditions, ‘the understanding of the driving forces and the relationship between various factors of development, as well as the role and place of humans in civilisational progress, has changed radically’ (Libanova 2008). The experience of economically developed countries that have made an economic leap forward convinces us of the decisive importance of human capital, the quality of the workforce and labour motivation in this process. It is social capital, innovative technologies and digitalisation that currently ensure social progress and the highest rates of economic growth.

Of course, Ukraine, as the largest country in Europe, has significant regional differences. These relate to the specifics, size and structure of natural resource potential, the environment and ecology; the number, density, reproduction and distribution of the population; production and economic specialisation, the volume and level of economic development; the location of production, industrial and social infrastructure; human capital, the structure of labour resources, employment and unemployment. War, destruction and direct lines of combat have significantly deepened regional differences. However, Ukraine is united to a much greater extent by a common national identity, culture, language, faith and traditions; a desire for freedom and democracy; and adherence to the values of civilisation.

Therefore, in order to determine the social priorities for regional development, it is of paramount importance to define national priorities. However, both are based on identifying urgent problems and justifying the mechanisms and sources for overcoming them. These priorities are justified both in the content of state social policy and in the State Strategy for Regional Development. Thus, for the period up to 2027, its strategic goal is achieved on the basis of three strategic objectives:

1. Formation and preservation of a cohesive state in social, humanitarian, economic, environmental, security and spatial dimensions.

2. Increasing the competitiveness of regions.

3. Development of effective multi-level governance.

The priorities for regional development for the same period are: creating security and socio-economic conditions for the return of compatriots to the regions and territorial communities; restoring and developing infrastructure; developing state, regional and local institutions, strategic planning, project management, digitalisation and anti-corruption activities; developing human capital, entrepreneurial activity and ensuring economic growth based on the resource potential of the regions and innovation; restoring the balance of ecosystems and the environment affected by the russian invasion; building partnerships and interregional and cross-border cooperation; developing multi-level governance, bringing regional development management systems closer to EU best practices and procedures; increasing citizen participation in regional, local and state authorities.

The social priorities for the development of Ukraine's regions should be differentiated according to the traditionally recognised regions of accelerated, medium and peripheral and depressed development, but with adjustments for the impact of the war. Thus, while Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Odesa regions were among the former before the war, their industrial and agricultural potential, production and social infrastructure, and environment have now been almost completely or significantly destroyed. The exceptions are the capital region and the city of Kyiv, which recovered more quickly from the destruction of the war and are better protected from shelling by air defence systems. Over the past two years, they have accounted for 50% of the country's gross domestic income growth (State Strategy 2020). This is due to the concentration of a significant number of refugees, relocated businesses and the IT sector in these regions.

The other four regions mentioned are under constant attack and threat from russian weapons and are suffering significant destruction. Therefore, social priorities here concern ensuring the safety of citizens and their social protection, as well as the construction of underground facilities for the provision of educational and medical services. Full restoration of social infrastructure is not currently possible. However, it is here that there is significant activity among people to preserve national identity, volunteer work, social responsibility, social partnership and entrepreneurship.

A significant part of the southern regions of the country – Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions – are under occupation, with combat zones along the entire length of the border with russia. Odessa and Mykolaiv and their regions are also under constant intense attack. As a result, the tourist and recreational infrastructure and port facilities have been completely captured or destroyed. Only four of the 18 ports are functioning, and even those are under constant military threat and danger. Therefore, the social priority of restoring the tourism and recreation sector, industry and agriculture, infrastructure and the environment is a matter for the post-war period. Currently, the priority is social protection and security of the population and the provision of essential social services.

The threat of war is also characteristic of the moderately developed regions of Central Ukraine – Cherkasy, Poltava and the more depressed Kirovohrad regions. They receive significantly less local, regional and state funding for the social development of their territories and the maintenance of social infrastructure. This leads to increased depression, worsening living conditions, lower standards of living and quality of life for the population, and growing hopelessness among people.

The border regions of Chernihiv and, especially, Sumy are in even worse conditions due to constant shelling and military attacks by russia. Their leadership prioritises solving the urgent social problems of the population and preserving their lives. The north-western regions of the Ukrainian Polissya – Zhytomyr, Rivne, and Lutsk – are less affected by the war. Due to the deficit in state and local budgets, they do not have sufficient funds to restore and modernise social infrastructure, ensure the growth of the human development index, or implement other areas of social activity. However, on the basis of social responsibility and partnership, volunteering ensures the growth of national consciousness and identity, as well as public activity in solving social problems.

The Podillia and Carpathian regions – Vinnytsia and Khmelnytskyi, as well as Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia – are in a relatively safe position. They are home to the vast majority of relocated businesses, internally displaced persons, skilled workers, and capital. This provided a certain impetus for accelerating economic growth and social development – educational institutions, healthcare, culture and sports, recreation and tourism, social services, housing construction and housing and communal services. Consequently, social priorities here became not only social protection of the population, but also the development of social infrastructure, expansion of housing construction, and growth in employment and people's well-being.

According to estimates by the Centre for Economic Strategy, almost 5.2 million people left the country, 1.3 million to russia and belarus (Abroad 2025), and 4.9 million people internally displaced (UKRINFORM.LV, 2025) (and this number continues to gro,w), which does not contribute to overcoming the depression of individual territorial communities within virtually all regions of the country. Due to the war, the quality of life and health of people is deteriorating almost everywhere, life expectancy is decreasing, mortality is increasing, and birth rates are declining. Therefore, psychological support for the population on a voluntary and community basis should be a priority. The next social priority, especially in the central, northern and south-eastern regions of Ukraine, should be to provide all possible support for the creation of new industries and activities with the aim of increasing employment and the well-being of the population. This also includes the mass restoration of housing on an innovative basis, using solar panels and other non-traditional sources of renewable energy. The social demographic priority with substantial budget payments for the birth of children is of great importance. These priorities need to be implemented today, while simultaneously introducing measures to ensure the security of the population, property and territory of the country.

The definition of social priorities for the development of Ukraine's regions involves the use of effective mechanisms and instruments for implementation. Among the former, state regulation and support, organisational, financial and economic mechanisms, motivation, incentives, social responsibility, social entrepreneurship and public-private partnerships are of paramount importance. The instruments of implementation are regional social development programmes and projects, plans, strategies and agreements.

The financial support for the social priorities of the country's regions is based on the use of budgetary, regional and municipal funds, private investment, funds from non-governmental organisations, assistance from friendly countries, patrons and volunteer activities. This includes revenues from regional development funds, funds for eliminating the consequences of armed aggression, other targeted and regional funds, subsidies and transfers, and investment projects.

Conclusions.

Social priorities for regional development are determined and implemented taking into account the content, objectives and priorities of the country's social policy on the one hand, and regional characteristics and problems on the other. It has been determined that at both the national and state levels, social priorities are generally focused on ensuring people's safety; restoration and reconstruction from russian destruction; prevention of a demographic crisis; ecological restoration and rebalancing; restoration of production and infrastructure and growth in employment; social protection and support.

Special social priorities for regional development are determined by the location, number, density, and demographic structure of the population living in them; natural resource potential; production and economic specialisation; and level of economic development. However, in wartime, they correlate with the level of danger and threats that the war poses to the regions. Therefore, social priorities are differentiated between de-occupied regions and regions of direct conflict and damage (support for the safety of the population and social infrastructure, social protection of people); regions of Central Ukraine (supporting the safety of the population; social protection of the permanent and internally displaced population; preserving production and other activities to provide jobs for workers, employment and the well-being of workers; demographic support); Western regions (supporting security and developing housing and social infrastructure; increasing employment and people's well-being; social protection of the permanent and internally displaced population; demographic support; developing cross-border social cooperation with European countries).

However, a significant problem in implementing the social priorities for the development of the country's regions is the constant threat of war, budget deficits at all levels, a reduction in the scope of employment, and inflation. This complicates the use of existing and new mechanisms and tools for their implementation. There is also the issue of existing and potential abuse in the social sphere (unjustified registration of disability, illegal payments, etc.), which requires enhanced monitoring and control in the implementation of social priorities. Volunteering, social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, and public-private partnerships, which have proven to be effective in Ukraine, also require strengthening. Volunteering, social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, public-private partnerships, and international cooperation with friendly countries, which have proven to be effective in Ukraine, also need to be strengthened.

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SOCIĀLĀS PRIORITĀTES UKRAINAS REĢIONU ATTĪSTĪBAI

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā analizētas Ukrainas sociālās politikas īpatnības un noteiktas sociālās prioritātes reģionālajai attīstībai kara apstākļos. Tiek precizēta sociālās politikas definīcija, īpašu uzmanību pievēršot faktoriem, kas ietekmē tās veidošanos, strukturālajām sastāvdaļām, pārmaiņām un dinamikai. Identificētas valsts sociālās politikas nacionālās komponentes un struktūra, kam ir būtiska nozīme sociālo prioritāšu noteikšanā un īstenošanā reģionu attīstībā. Noskaidrots, ka galvenās prioritātes, piemēram, drošība, sociāldemogrāfiskie jautājumi un iedzīvotāju sociālā aizsardzība, ir kopīgas visiem reģioniem. Tomēr ievērojamu daļu sociālo prioritāšu nosaka reģionu demogrāfiskā situācija, darbaspēka resursi, sociālekonomiskā un vides specifika, ekonomiskās attīstības līmenis, kā arī to atrašanās vieta attiecībā pret tiešās karadarbības ietekmi, okupētajām un atbrīvotajām teritorijām, pastāvīgu bruņotu uzbrukumu intensitāti un Krievijas ietekmi. Kamēr dienvidu un ziemeļaustrumu reģionos sociālās prioritātes lielākoties aprobežojas ar sociālās aizsardzības funkcijām, centrālajos reģionos tās tiek paplašinātas, iekļaujot sociālās infrastruktūras saglabāšanu un atbalstu, kā arī nodarbinātības veicināšanu. Rietumu reģionos sociālo prioritāšu saraksts paplašinās, ietverot mājokļu un sociālās infrastruktūras attīstību, sociālās uzņēmējdarbības veicināšanu, nodarbinātības un iedzīvotāju labklājības pieaugumu, kā arī reģionālo budžetu palielināšanu

sociālo programmu īstenošanai. Tomēr visos reģionos, īpaši depresīvajos un kara skartajos, iedzīvotāji atrodas izdzīvošanas sliekšņa tuvumā, kara dēļ ir samazinājušies reālie ienākumi, un sociālo prioritāšu īstenošanai trūkst finansiālā pamata, jo lieli līdzekļi tiek novirzīti militārajām vajadzībām un valsts ekonomika piedzīvo lejupslīdi.

Atslēgvārdi: sociālā politika, sociālās prioritātes, reģioni, attīstība, iedzīvotāji, demogrāfiskā krīze, budžeta izdevumi, programmas, partnerība.

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SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE FACE OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DILEMMAS

Contemporary local communities are at the center of complex and dynamic transformations. It is at their level that global challenges such as climate change, digitalization, migration, and socio-economic inequalities are felt in a particularly acute way. At the same time, they are precisely the arena for seeking concrete, implementable solutions. Local development is no longer just a matter of investment and infrastructure but has become a multidimensional dilemma requiring difficult choices. The presented paper focuses on analyzing the impact of global changes on the functioning of these communities. Its goal is to identify the dilemmas of local community development. Thanks to an interdisciplinary approach, the social sciences contribute to predicting the directions of social and technological changes that form the basis for responsible development planning. Sustainable development should be based on knowledge and citizen participation, which means not only utilizing expert potential but also actively involving communities in decision-making processes.

Keywords: informational and technological advantage, dematerialization of work, sustainable development, infrastructural capital, technological changes.

Contemporary local communities operate in conditions of major civilizational shifts, primarily driven by globalization and the information revolution. These processes generate both new developmental opportunities and serious threats, presenting communities with a series of social, economic, and cultural dilemmas. The current megatrends of the information revolution include technical digital convergence, the social dematerialization of work, and the intellectual shift in perceiving the world and social relations. These phenomena increase the complexity of social life, necessitating the development of prognostic methods in the social sciences that account for complexity, uncertainty, and the need to balance what is desirable, possible, and probable (Champy, 2002; Durlik, 2002). The relationship between social and technological changes is one of feedback: new technologies influence social structures (e.g., the labor market, communication), but they also result from new needs and pressures from large-scale business environments (Ahluwalia, 2015; Serpa, Ferreira, 2019).

The progressing dematerialization of work and the growing importance of information competencies are changing the employment structure and creating new lines of social division related to access to knowledge and technology. A particular role can be assigned to new myths, entrenched in social consciousness, which shape the way the future is perceived. Among them are the myth of inevitable technological progress (technological determinism), the myth of entrepreneurship and creativity as a path to success, the myth of global competition requiring flexibility, and the myth of a digital community where territorial boundaries lose significance (Bairoch, Kozul-Wright, 1996). These myths influence the developmental expectations and strategies of regions, as well as the shaping of the social identities of inhabitants. Regional policy grapples with the tension between the necessity for long-term investments and the pressure for short-term economic effects. The coupling of modern technologies and social changes opens up a previously unknown perspective for humanity (Golinowski, 2020). The development of artificial intelligence, next-generation communication networks, big data analytics, digital platforms, and cloud computing – each of these future fields creates opportunities and simultaneously poses threats, especially in the areas of employment, working conditions, deepening social inequalities, violation of personal data, and democratic rights (Schot, Kanger, 2018).

The current level of the world's complexity raises a number of questions regarding the growing dependence of humans on technical systems. These include: How can we assess the effects of advanced technological solutions in increasingly complex societies? How can we develop the prognostic potential of the social sciences while avoiding the well-known traps of determinism? What transformations in the human-technology-society relationship should be considered factors of positive social change?

An important feature of the Central and Eastern European economy remains its strong capital dependence on Western countries, rooted in a chronic capital shortage. This has for years put pressure on governments to compete for foreign direct investment (FDI). This competition has taken the form of offering cheap labor, making the labor market more flexible, and granting broad tax exemptions. Recent years have significantly accelerated the previous dynamics based on digitalization processes in many spheres – from remote work, through e-commerce, to cloud services – forcing the transfer of part of healthcare, social services, and public administration to the online environment. In this context, the countries of the region have become a particularly interesting field of observation. (Golinowski, 2002). On one hand, their transformation experiences reveal the limitations of a modernization model based on external capital sources; on the other hand, they constitute a unique laboratory for implementing new digital solutions in conditions of relatively weaker infrastructure and greater dependence on foreign technology suppliers.

In the modern global economy, there is a deep asymmetry between international corporations and local communities (Aranguren, Magro, Wilson, 2017). Its manifestations are visible in many dimensions, creating challenges for local development and community autonomy. Key aspects of this asymmetry can be found in such spheres as:

- Economic power and resource size – Global corporations have enormous financial capital, advanced technologies, and broad market access, while local communities typically operate on limited budgets, with traditional technologies and limited market reach.
- Influence on decision-making – Corporations can use their economic strength to influence policy and regulatory frameworks, while local communities often lack comparable lobbying power and political influence.
- Informational and technological advantage – International corporations have access to data analytics and global market information, while local communities face challenges of information gaps and technological disparities.

- Differences in mobility and flexibility potential – Corporations can move operations, investments, and resources between countries and regions, while local communities are rooted in their territory, which limits their adaptive capabilities.

The consequence of this asymmetry includes unequal negotiation conditions regarding investment and development, the risk of marginalizing local interests and cultural values, challenges related to environmental protection from business pressure, and the danger of losing local identity and decision-making autonomy (Szymański, 2001; Szymański, 2004).
Among the components of the developmental potential of local communities, one can list:

- Human capital – meaning a synthetic measure of the value of human resources, demographic characteristics of inhabitants, their qualifications, and activity.
- Institutional and democratic capital – showing the efficiency of institutions (authorities and administration) and the observed social activity.
- Technical and infrastructural capital – defining broadly understood infrastructure: housing resources, transport, energy, water, but also telephones and the internet.
- Capital of funding sources – indicating the extent to which the state is able to find the funds necessary to finance development.

Local communities are at the center of complex and dynamic transformations. It is at the local level that global challenges such as climate change, digitalization, migration, and socio-economic inequalities are particularly felt. At the same time, it is here that practical and implementable solutions are sought. In this context, local development ceases to be merely a matter of investment and infrastructure – it becomes a multidimensional dilemma, requiring difficult decisions (Stiglitz, 2010; Kołodko, 2011). Globalization, while contributing to increased competitiveness, forces efficiency, flexibility, and innovative management. Thanks to globalization processes, one can speak of the economic benefits of economic entities operating on a global scale. The success of transnational entities is based on the following premises:

- Benefits from relative production cost advantages – Low production costs, resulting from low labor costs or low taxes, enable entities operating on a global scale to effectively defend their competitive position.
- Benefits from production volume, exceeding the consumption capacity of the domestic market. Through increased production volume, an enterprise can gain a cost advantage and effectively compete against domestic producers.
- Facilitation resulting from international operations – Transnational economic entities have greater opportunities to conduct research and development, gain experience, and then use it to improve or maintain a dominant market position.
- Use of logistics tools to reduce transport and distribution costs when installing points of sale and their networks on a global scale. These innovative operational measures allow transnational economic entities to use more specialized means of transport and storage.
- Use of marketing tools on a global scale via the Internet – Intensive promotional and advertising efforts make it possible to build a relatively coherent product image for the recipient, which will inform and educate about its usefulness and practical application.
- Benefits from product diversification and exclusivity of modern technical solutions – The ability to conduct research and development on a large scale gives these economic entities a potentially greater chance to apply them not only in the leading production segment but also in other market segments.

• Benefits from production mobility – In the context of contemporary globalization processes, the principle of moving entire enterprises from one country to another has become common. Often, the sources of global benefits occur together, so transnational enterprises, entering foreign markets, gain from economies of scale in the production process, logistics, supply, and marketing (Porter, 2010; Romanowska, 2017; Buchta, Eul, Schulte - Croonenberg, 2007).

Optimists regarding the advanced use of new technologies point to the unlimited possibilities for utilizing technological achievements. Their characteristic feature is the exponential growth in the production and flow of information. By integrating media with other electronic forms of communication, new work tools can be obtained in the form of a shared information infrastructure – figuratively speaking, "information superhighways." Miniaturization and computerization reduce the costs of transmitting information, and the means of producing information become more important than the specific content.

The social sciences – sociology, economics, social psychology, management sciences – play a key role in this process. They provide the intellectual tools needed to diagnose, understand, and reveal the tensions that define the development of local communities. These mentioned tensions and development dilemmas are often conflicting priorities and values:

- Economic growth versus sustainable development – Should we invest for quick profit, even at the cost of environmental degradation, or choose "green" technologies and long-term resilience?
- Tradition versus modernization – How to preserve local identity, heritage, and social cohesion in the face of inevitable change and the influx of new ideas?
- Civic participation versus management efficiency – Should residents be involved in time-consuming consultation processes to ensure the legitimacy of decisions, or should we act quickly and "technocratically" in the name of effectiveness?
- Competitiveness versus cooperation – Should the local community compete with neighbors for investors and funds, or rather seek synergy within broader partnerships?
- Social justice versus infrastructural development – How to allocate limited resources: for visible investments (roads, sports halls) or for supporting excluded groups (education, social care)? (Golinowski, 2014; Fagerberg, 2018).

These competing priorities and values require something more than just technical or administrative solutions. The actions taken require a foundation of social solidarity to effectively face these complex challenges. Social solidarity, understood as mutual support and shared responsibility, is a key resource in times of uncertainty and change. In the face of difficult decisions – such as choosing between the priority of immediate economic gains and long-term ecological well-being, or finding a balance between technological modernization and the protection of cultural heritage – it is social solidarity that enables communities to:

- Engage in meaningful dialogue and include all stakeholders in the decision-making process, even when opinions are divided.
- More fairly distribute the benefits and costs of development.
- Build resilience to external pressures, such as globalization or market fluctuations.
- Strengthen trust among residents, local institutions, and decision-makers.

Strengthening social solidarity requires a conscious effort: investment in local institutions, promotion of civic participation, and recognition of the interdependence of all community members. It is not merely a moral ideal, but a practical necessity for a sustainable approach to local development in the 21st century. Without solidarity, communities risk fragmentation – when short-term interests prevail over common goals, and a lack of trust undermines cooperation. Significant importance is attributed to the network of autonomous social institutions, i.e., academic and research and development institutions, cultural institutions capable of reproducing the intellectual and technical potential of the region. The group of managers, producers of innovation, culture and art, and research and scientific communities operating within them can be a driving force for a given community – in the form of new jobs, development of intellectual potential, or capital generated within the local system (Rifkin, 2003; Golinowski, 2005; Fagerberg, Hutschenreiter, 2020).

Under the conditions of the new socio-economic order, local communities are expected to be capable of competing for capital, markets, highly qualified workers, and finally, for environmental protection standards – that is, for those attributes that govern the modern laws of the world economy. The globalization of the economic system, besides its benefits, carries a global character of transmission of economic shocks and their related social consequences. The above discrepancies are, in a way, objectively embedded in the logic of economic and social development. International corporations, driven by the logic of profit, are not interested in taking on protective functions for people or specific regions. Worse still, these economic entities – in their pursuit of reducing production costs – can adversely influence local government representatives through tendencies to influence economic policy. The practice of forcing national governments to provide subsidies or tax reliefs is becoming increasingly common; if these are not met, the entities move to another location.

In most situations, any change is met with resistance from local communities. Potential sources of uncertainty and anxiety can be sought in various spheres – from ensuring basic subsistence, through seeking new technological solutions, increasing economic efficiency, and ensuring justice in income redistribution. Among the many causes of resistance to globalization trends, the following can be distinguished:

- Perceiving new solutions as a threat to one's own skills and position in the social hierarchy – in the role of a second-class citizen for whom the bar of requirements is constantly raised.
- Discrepancies and lack of trust between local elites and opinion-forming environments and the rest of the community.
- Different opinions regarding the validity and need for proposed changes, especially after the emotional factor accompanying the initial implementation phase has faded.
- A low threshold of community resistance to new patterns of solutions – despite understanding their essence, attempts at opposition are undertaken, accompanied by anxiety and fear.
- Perceiving changes as a threat to job security and future material income, compounded by fear of the unknown and an uncertain future within the structures of the global market (Kuhlmann, Rip, 2018; Głuszczuk, 2011; Fagerberg, 2018).

The social sciences play a key role in understanding contemporary social and civilizational processes. They enable the diagnosis of complex phenomena such as inequalities, exclusion, or cultural changes. Based on these analyses, it is possible to design effective public policies that respond to the real needs of citizens. Social solidarity is of crucial importance, as it ensures the cohesion and resilience of local communities in the face of crises. Strong local institutions form the foundation for the effective implementation of development policies and the building of social trust. Through an interdisciplinary approach and the use of forecasting methods, the social sciences also contribute to predicting the directions of social and technological changes, which is the basis for responsible development planning. Sustainable development should be based on knowledge and civic participation, which means not only utilizing expert potential but also actively involving the community in decision-making processes.

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SOCIĀLĀ SOLIDARITĀTE VIETĒJĀS ATTĪSTĪBAS DILEMMU KONTEKSTĀ

Kopsavilkums

Mūsdienu vietējās kopienas atrodas sarežģītu un dinamisku pārmaiņu centrā. Tieši to līmenī īpaši saasināti izjūtami tādi globāli izaicinājumi kā klimata pārmaiņas, digitalizācija, migrācija un sociālekonomiskā nevienlīdzība. Vienlaikus tās ir arī galvenā vide, kur tiek meklēti konkrēti un īstenojami risinājumi. Vietējā attīstība vairs nav tikai investīciju un infrastruktūras jautājums, bet ir kļuvusi par daudzdimensionālu dilemmu, kas prasa sarežģītu izvēļu izdarīšanu. Rakstā analizēta globālo pārmaiņu ietekme uz vietējo kopienu funkcionēšanu. Tā mērķis ir identificēt vietējo kopienu attīstības dilemmas. Pateicoties starpdisciplinārai pieejai, sociālās zinātnes sniedz ieguldījumu sociālo un tehnoloģisko pārmaiņu virzienu prognozēšanā, kas kalpo par pamatu atbildīgai attīstības plānošanai. Ilgtspējīgai attīstībai jābalstās zināšanās un iedzīvotāju līdzdalībā, kas nozīmē ne tikai ekspertu potenciāla izmantošanu, bet arī aktīvu kopienu iesaisti lēmumu pieņemšanas procesos.

Atslēgvārdi: informatīvā un tehnoloģiskā priekšrocība, darba dematerializācija, ilgtspējīga attīstība, infrastruktūras kapitāls, tehnoloģiskās pārmaiņas.

Dorota Kurek (Poland)

PERSON-JOB FIT AS A PREDICTOR OF MILITARY SERVICE CHOICE

The article presents the results of empirical research concerning one of the key dimensions of person-environment fit, namely person-job fit. The study aimed to verify the statistically significant relationship between demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit and the likelihood of reselecting the military as an employer, indicating that the alignment between a soldier and their job serves as a predictor of choosing military service. The empirical research was conducted at the end of 2023 using a diagnostic survey method on a sample of 250 Polish soldiers. The study analyzed ten variables assigned to the two types of fit: demand-abilities and need-supplies. The results confirmed six statistically significant relationships out of the ten examined, demonstrating that need-supplies fit plays a more critical role than demand-abilities fit in the context of reselecting the same employer – in this case, the military. The findings suggest that ensuring alignment in terms of need-supplies i.e., satisfying soldiers' needs through the quality of the work environment – is a key factor in the attractiveness of the military as an employer. This alignment constitutes a predictor of the decision to pursue military service.

Key words: person-job fit, employer, service, military.

Introduction

In recent years, the labor market has undergone significant transformations, driven not only by the emergence of a new generation of employees but, more importantly, by the processes of informatization, automation, and the dynamic development of communication technologies (Nowak, 2021, p. 7). Alongside traditional professions, new roles have emerged that attract the attention of workers and often necessitate reskilling or the expansion of competencies. However, not all professions are being entirely replaced by new ones. In the case of uniformed services, for instance, the profession of a soldier continues to be socially necessary, respected, and considered attractive (Kurek, 2024).

In the context of the growing demand for increasing the size of the Polish Armed Forces, the accurate selection of candidates for military service becomes particularly important. This selection should consider not only candidates' qualifications but also their level of fit with the work environment. The complexity of the person-environment fit phenomenon allows for its assessment across several dimensions: person-job fit, referring to the alignment between the employee and the tasks performed; person-organization fit, concerning alignment with organizational norms, values, and identity; person-group fit, referring to compatibility with a team or task group; and person-supervisor fit, indicating alignment with one's superior (Edwards et al., 2007).

In the context of military service, research typically focuses on the dimensions of person-group fit and person-supervisor fit, and during recruitment, person-organization fit. Therefore, this article places particular emphasis on the person-job fit dimension. The conducted study aimed to identify key areas of fit within this dimension and to detect potential relationships between these areas and soldiers' opinions regarding the re-selection of their employer. Specifically, the study sought to verify the hypothesis that soldiers demonstrating a high level of fit in terms of demand-abilities and need-supplies would be more likely to choose the military again as their place of employment, if given the opportunity. Verification of this hypothesis required gathering soldiers' subjective opinions on person-job fit, which necessitated empirical research. The study was conducted at the end of 2023 on a sample of 250 Polish soldiers

Person-job fit – theoretical background

The issue of person-environment fit has garnered particular attention within the fields of organizational psychology, work psychology, and human capital management. As Dawis noted, fit is "one of the most recognized and enduring lines of theoretical inquiry in psychology" (1992, as cited in Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 281). Fit is defined as a "syndrome with many manifestations" (Schneider, 2001, p. 142) or as "the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched" (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 281). The relationship between the individual and the work environment should be considered in terms of complementarity or supplementarity, which represent two fundamental types of fit (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987, p. 268-269). Complementary fit occurs when the characteristics of the individual and the work environment mutually supplement one another, for example in terms of competencies and needs. In contrast, supplementary fit refers to situations where the individual and the work environment share similar characteristics, such as norms or values. Both types of fit can be analyzed from the perspective of subjective and objective fit. Subjective fit refers to the individual's perception that they belong to a given organization or that the organization meets their expectations (Czarnota-Bojarska, 2010, p. 24). Objective fit, on the other hand, is based on external assessments, such as those conducted during recruitment processes, including evaluations of physical fitness, language proficiency, or educational level, and thus relies on a broader range of information sources (Kristof, 1996).

However, it is important to reference the findings of Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), who demonstrated that subjective measures of fit are better predictors of subjective outcomes than objective measures. Their research highlighted that individuals who perceive a high level of subjective fit are less likely to express intentions to leave, and more likely to report job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

When examining the various dimensions of fit, particular attention should be paid to person-job fit (P-J fit), which refers to the alignment between the individual and the profession. Most research on P-J fit focuses on how fit evolves during the pre-employment phase or in the early stages of employment. However, it is also essential to consider fit after the onboarding phase, when the employee is fully integrated into their role. Studies in this area, particularly those examining the influence of supervisors on the development of P-J fit, have been conducted by Woerkom et al. (2024), (Jixin, 2023).

Person-job fit can be defined as "the relationship between the characteristics of the person and the characteristics of the job or tasks performed at work" (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 284). Within the framework of complementary fit, and specifically in the context of person-job fit, two subtypes can be distinguished: demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit (or supplies-values fit) (Kristof, 1996; Edwards, 1996). The former refers to the adequacy of the employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities in relation to the demands and tasks of the job. The latter focuses on the extent to which the job satisfies the employee's needs, desires, and preferences (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 285).

Person-job fit is recognized as a significant predictor of positive work-related attitudes and outcomes (Guan et al., 2010). In analyzing person-job fit, ten variables can be identified and assigned to the two aforementioned areas. Measuring these variables enables the assessment of the subjective scope of fit (see Figure 1).

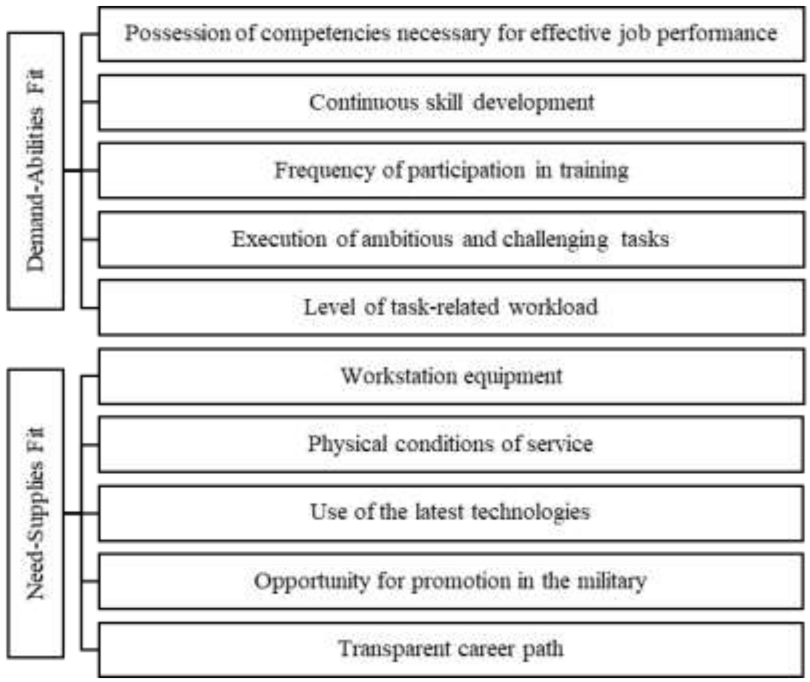

Figure 1. **Person-Job Fit – Scope of Analyzed Variables**

Source: own study results.

When analyzing variables within the domains of demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit, it is essential to emphasize that each variable plays a significant role in assessing the overall fit between the individual and the job. Within the demand-abilities fit domain, particular attention should be paid to the employee's belief in possessing the competencies necessary for effective job performance, which reflects the extent to which job requirements are met. Continuous skill development and the frequency of participation in training programs indicate readiness for growth and adaptability to changing service conditions. The execution of challenging and ambitious tasks reflects the level of professional demands, which may influence motivation and perceived self-efficacy. Additionally, the level of task-related workload is crucial for evaluating whether the scope of responsibilities aligns with the employee's capabilities, which has implications for psychological well-being.

In the need-supplies fit domain, workplace equipment and physical working conditions pertain to the characteristics of the work environment, influencing both satisfaction and performance. Access to modern technologies may be perceived as an added value, contributing to job satisfaction and signaling the employer's innovation and modernity-factors that also enhance the professional appeal of the employee. Furthermore, opportunities for promotion and a transparent career path are essential for fostering a sense of fairness and developmental prospects, directly impacting engagement and retention levels. It is important to underscore that a lack of fit in either domain may lead to occupational stress and reduced job performance-phenomena that are particularly undesirable in the context of military service.

In conclusion, the variables illustrated in Figure 1, when considered collectively, enable a comprehensive assessment of subjective person-job fit. This assessment is crucial not only for enhancing job performance, satisfaction, and employment stability within the military, but also for increasing the attractiveness of the military as a workplace, thereby influencing individuals' willingness to pursue military service.

Results of empirical studies. The empirical research, the analysis of which made it possible to answer the research problem, was conducted on a sample of 250 soldiers at the end of 2023. The structure of the sample was described using three key variables: gender, age, military corps, and length of military service (table 1).

Table 1.

Structure of the research sample

Criterion	**Answers**	**N**	**%**
Gender	Female	22	8,80
	Male	228	91,20
Military corpus	Enlisted Personnel Corps	2	0,80
	Non-Commissioned Officers Corps	44	17,60
	Officers Corps	204	81,60
Age	18-30 years	37	14,80
	31-40 l years	91	36,40
	41-49 years	77	30,80
	50 years and more	45	18,00
Length of military service	Up to 5 years	21	8,40
	6 -10 years	40	16,00
	11 – 15 years	50	20,00
	16 – 20 years	40	16,00
	More than 20 years	99	39,60

Source: own study results.

A total of 250 soldiers participated in the study, the vast majority of whom were male (91.2%). The largest subgroup consisted of officers (81.6%), followed by non-commissioned officers (17.6%) and enlisted personnel (0.8%). In terms of age, the most represented group was soldiers aged 31-40 years (36.4%), followed by those aged 41-49 years (30.8%) and 50 years and above (18%). The youngest group, aged 18-30 years, accounted for 14.8% of the sample. Military service experience was unevenly distributed: the largest proportion of respondents (39.6%) had more than 20 years of service, while the smallest group (8.4%) had up to 5 years of service.

The study focused on the assessment of person-job fit, specifically within the dimensions of demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit. Soldiers expressed their views using a five-point Likert scale (Table 2).

Table 2.

Respondents' Opinions Regarding Demand-Abilities Fit and Need-Supplies Fit

Statements	Strongly agree	Rather agree	Hard to say	Rather disagree	Strongly disagree
Demand-Abilities Fit					
I possess the competencies necessary for effective performance in my position.	26,91%	51,81%	14,46%	4,02%	2,81%
In the military, I have the opportunity for continuous skill development.	8,03%	50,60%	23,69%	14,06%	3,61%
I am satisfied with the frequency of my participation in training.	8,43%	44,58%	23,69%	17,27%	6,02%
During service, I have the opportunity to carry out ambitious and challenging tasks.	19,68%	46,99%	19,28%	10,84%	3,21%
I am not excessively burdened with tasks.	6,02%	18,47%	25,70%	24,50%	25,30%
Need-Supplies Fit					
My workstation is fully equipped.	16,47%	45,38%	10,44%	24,10%	3,61%
I am satisfied with the physical conditions of service.	10,84%	49,40%	25,70%	12,05%	2,01%
During service, I have the opportunity to use the latest technologies.	9,60%	29,20%	23,60%	27,20%	10,40%
I have the opportunity to be promoted in the military.	22,80%	53,20%	13,60%	8,00%	2,40%
The military offers a transparent career path	7,66%	24,60%	25,40%	20,97%	21,37%

Source: own study results.

Respondents were asked to assess two key dimensions of person-job fit: demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit. Within the first dimension, the evaluation focused on the following aspects: possession of essential competencies, opportunities for skill development, frequency of participation in training, the nature of tasks performed, and perceived workload. The second dimension concerned workplace infrastructure, physical working conditions, the use of modern technologies, and career development prospects within the military structure.

Using a five-point Likert scale, the highest proportion of respondents (78.72%) confirmed that they possess the necessary competencies to perform their duties effectively. Additionally, 66.67% indicated that their service allows them to undertake challenging and ambitious tasks ("Strongly agree" and "Rather agree" responses). Conversely, the lowest level of agreement was observed regarding the perception of workload, with only 24.49% expressing the belief that their tasks are not excessively burdensome.

In the need-supplies fit domain, only 32.26% of respondents agreed that the military offers a transparent career path. However, a significantly larger proportion (76%) acknowledged the possibility of career advancement, and over 61% confirmed that their workstations are fully equipped.

Comparative analysis of the two dimensions revealed a higher level of subjective fit in the demand-abilities domain than in the need-supplies domain.

Considering the relevance of both dimensions to professional experience and job satisfaction, respondents were also asked to indicate their preferences regarding the potential re-selection of an employer, assuming the possibility of making the employment decision again (Table 3).

Table 3.

Soldiers' Perspectives on the Re-selection of the Employer

Response Options	N	%
Polish Armed Forces	166	66,40
Other uniformed services (excluding the military)	20	8,00
Public organization (state-funded)	11	4,40
Private (commercial) organization	52	20,80
Non-governmental organization (NGO)	1	0,40

Source: own study results.

More than 66% of respondents, when faced with the possibility of choosing their workplace again, indicated that they would select the military. One in five soldiers expressed a preference for employment in a commercial organization, while 8% stated they would consider testing their abilities in another uniformed service. The least frequently chosen options were public sector and non-governmental organizations as potential places of employment.

Given that two-thirds of respondents would choose the military again, a statistical analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between variables within the demand-abilities fit and need-supplies fit domains and the re-selection of the employer. To this end, Chi-square tests and Cramér's V coefficients were calculated. The aim was to verify whether person-job fit serves as a predictor of career decision-making.

Table 4.

Relationships between variables within the demand-abilities fit domain and the re-selection of the employer

Statements (Demand-Abilities Domain)	p	V-Cramera
I possess the competencies necessary for effective performance in my position.	0,001	0,21
In the military, I have the opportunity for continuous skill development.	0,003	0,19
I am satisfied with the frequency of my participation in training.	No significant relationship	
During service, I have the opportunity to carry out ambitious and challenging tasks.	No significant relationship	
I am not excessively burdened with tasks.	No significant relationship	

Source: own study results.

The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between possessing the competencies necessary for effective job performance and the opportunity for skill development, and the re-selection of the employer. Among respondents who indicated they would choose the military again as their employer, 83.03% reported having the essential competencies required for service. Additionally, 63.25% declared that the military provides continuous opportunities for professional development.

Table 5.

Relationships between variables within the need-supplies fit domain and the re-selection of the employer

Statements (Need-Supplies Fit Domain)	p	V-Cramera
My workstation is fully equipped.	0,02	0,17
I am satisfied with the physical conditions of service.	No significant relationship	
During service, I have the opportunity to use the latest technologies.	0,02	0,17
I have the opportunity to be promoted in the military.	0,04	0,16
The military offers a transparent career path	0,02	0,17

Source: own study results.

Focusing on the relationship between variables within the need-supplies fit domain, four out of five analyzed variables demonstrated statistically significant relationships, with moderate effect sizes. One-third of respondents who would choose the military again as their employer indicated that the career path in the armed forces is transparent. Additionally, 43.38% reported having access to modern technologies, 68.49% confirmed that their workstations are fully equipped, and 81.93% pointed to the possibility of promotion within the military structure.

In total, six statistically significant relationships were identified out of ten analyzed variables across both need-supplies fit and demand-abilities fit domains. These findings suggest that the following factors are key determinants of the re-selection of the military as an employer: possession of essential competencies, opportunities for skill development, adequate workplace equipment, access to modern technologies, promotion opportunities, and a transparent career path.

Importantly, respondents who demonstrated a higher level of need-supplies fit were significantly more likely to express willingness to choose the military again, compared to those with a higher demand-abilities fit. This indicates that what the organization provides to the employee – in terms of meeting their needs – is more influential in shaping future career decisions than what the employee offers to the organization.

Summary

The assessment of person-job fit not only during the job search phase but also after full integration into the role remains a critical issue for both employees and employers. It is therefore essential to identify variables within this dimension of fit that are perceived positively or negatively by employees, as these perceptions directly influence the level of demand-abilities and need-supplies fit.

In the conducted study, ten variables across two domains were evaluated, with the aim of not only identifying the scope of fit but also verifying the hypothesis that fit influences preferences regarding the re-selection of an employer. The results confirmed the research hypothesis: respondents who indicated they would choose the military again as their employer more frequently demonstrated need-supplies fit than demand-abilities fit. This finding supports the conclusion that, in the context of employer selection, the extent to which an organization meets the employee's needs is more influential than the employee's competency-based alignment with the job.

Therefore, it is justified to emphasize that ensuring need-supplies fit is a key factor in attracting and retaining military personnel. Particular attention should be paid to workplace equipment, promotion opportunities, career path transparency, and access to modern technologies, as these areas of organizational activity significantly contribute to the military's attractiveness as an employer within the need-supplies fit domain.

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PERSONA-DARBA PIEMĒROTĪBA KĀ MILITĀRĀ DIENESTA IZVĒLES PREDIKTORS

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā ir prezentēti empīriskā pētījuma rezultāti par vienu no galvenajiem personas–vides saskaņotības aspektiem – personas-darba piemērotību. Pētījuma mērķis bija pārbaudīt statistiski nozīmīgu saistību starp pieprasījuma–spēju piemērotību un vajadzību–piedāvājumu piemērotību un iespējamību atkārtoti izvēlēties militāro dienestu kā darba devēju. Tas norāda, ka saskaņotība starp karavīru un viņa darbu kalpo kā militārā dienesta izvēles prognozētājs. Empīriskais pētījums tika veikts 2023. Gada beigās, izmantojot diagnostisko aptaujas   actor, aptaujājot 250 Polijas karavīrus. Pētījumā tika analizēti desmit mainīgie, kas tika sadalīti divos piemērotības veidos: pieprasījuma–spēju un vajadzību–piedāvājumu. Rezultāti apstiprināja sešas statistiski nozīmīgas saistības no desmit izpētītajām, parādot, ka vajadzību–piedāvājumu piemērotībai ir būtiskāka loma nekā pieprasījuma–spēju piemērotībai atkārtotas darba devēja izvēles kontekstā – šajā gadījumā militārajā dienestā. Secinājumi liecina, ka saskaņotība vajadzību–piedāvājumu aspektā, t.i., karavīru vajadzību apmierināšana caur darba vides kvalitāti, ir galvenais   actors militārā dienesta pievilcībā kā darba devēja. Šī saskaņotība kalpo kā prognozētājs lēmumam turpināt militāro dienestu.

Atslēgvārdi: personāla un darba atbilstība, darba devējs, pakalpojums, militārais.

***Murman Kvaratskhelia** (Georgia)*

“THE NEW POOR” IN GEORGIA

The article discusses the processes of the genesis of the “new poor” – a new social stratum that emerged in the process of global transformation and how this category emerged in the wake of the socio-economic crisis in European countries.
It is also noteworthy that even in the conditions of today’s scientific and technological revolution, such categories of people in developing countries represent a significant portion of society. With the transition to a new economic system, this layer found it difficult to adapt to it, which has not yet been eliminated. Such processes left part of the country’s intellectual capital behind and faced great economic losses. As a result, two opposing social groups emerged, the “new rich” and the “new poor.”

Keywords: new rich, new poor, market relations, new economic system.

Introduction

Modern global processes have further accelerated and fundamentally changed the everyday state of human existence. This has led to the emergence of different types of social strata of people. A completely new term, the “new poor,” has emerged with its multidimensional categories. This concept, is a designation of a certain stratum of society. It was first used in scientific literature in the 1970s in the wake of the socio-economic crisis that developed in European countries. Later, this term was given a new interpretation when the necessity of the collapse of the Soviet Union became apparent. The post-Soviet countries and among them, Georgia began the painful process of transitioning from socialist to market economic relations. The main reason for this was the incompatibility with the new economic system, the absence of its historical analogue. The main prerequisite for the transition to a market economy. The process of denationalization, or privatization, of State property was carried out in a distorted manner and was devoid of any future prosperity and prospects. Part of the country’s intellectual capital was left behind in these processes and suffered great economic losses, which led to their impoverishment. As a result, two opposing social groups were formed –” The New Rich” and “The New Poor”.

In the 1970s, developed Western countries were experiencing permanent socio-economic crises, which led to the concept of the “new poor”, which included the two categories:

1. People who, before losing their jobs, were well-paid, highly qualified specialists in the past;

2. People from relatively wealthy families who, after graduating from school or higher education institutions, cannot find a job and has to live at someone else’s expense.

Namely, in relation to these processes and to designate a newly formed social stratum that the term “new poor” appears in scientific literature, with a changed target group and its new interpretation.

Academician Nodar Chitanava speaks about this very phenomenon in his scientific work “Social Economy”. He considers the new poor to be the segment of society that has fallen into poverty as a result of the transition to a new economic system, and at the same time explains their role in the country’s economy (Chitanava.., 2008).

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world have fundamentally changed the need to understand the “new poor.” It has presented people’s agenda in a completely different context, mostly in a negative light. This led to the loss of jobs and impoverishment of many people, in fact reaching a peak in the situation of crisis. This revealed in a new way the importance of reassessing the previously existing category of the “new poor”. Obviously, this infection has become a new source of poverty for the world’s population, including the employed. The poverty of the employed has been called Working Poverty or In-Work Poverty.

The emergence of the "new poor" was, on the one hand, caused by the ongoing economic, political, and social processes in today’s world and in Georgia, and on the other hand, by the legal relations that it presents itself to us in the form of socio-economic inequality among people. A new understanding of this issue as a problem has great practical and scientific value.

The issue of socio-economic inequality, which has always accompanied the development of society, is also relevant to the category of the “new poor”.

It is important to understand why people who receive income in the form of wages or other cash remain poor? Why does in-work poverty exist? How have various factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war, affected poverty? When discussing the causes of in-work poverty, it is important to consider labor market policies, the experience of developed countries, the impact of the globalization process on poverty categories, and structural changes in national economies. Also important is the low salary of an employed person, which is caused by personal characteristics, such as their human capital, i.e. education and qualifications, and the ability to use their skills and knowledge.

Increasing employment in relation to poverty is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for overcoming in-work poverty. Therefore, in order to overcome poverty, along with the increase of the number of jobs, is equally necessary to improve working conditions. We strongly believe, that effective economic policies can positively change in-work poverty.

It is clear that poverty eradication depends on addressing the causes of poverty. This, in turn, requires identifying the cause-and-effect relationships that prevent countries from achieving economic growth. This could be governance failures, cultural barriers, trade barriers, etc.

Based on various theories of poverty, the causes of poverty can be divided into two criteria: according to the scale of poverty occurrence, which can be considered at the individual or micro level and according to the nature of poverty manifestation, which can be divided into subjective and objective factors.

Objective means causes that are not dependent on human will, that is, when poverty is caused by external factors. Subjective means poverty, which is caused by reasons that mainly depend on the persons and their decision-making.

The terms “new poverty” and “new poor” are the subject of extensive discussion in socio-economic science. The characteristics of “new poverty” differ from the traditional characteristics of poverty and manifests itself in different countries with its own characteristics. These terms appeared in Western Europe in the late 1980s as an interest in the “new social issue”, which was associated with the growth of unemployment and poverty.

The groups that w”re mainly affected by these processes were those who previously thought that their jobs were not in danger and considered themselves fully integrated into society. The situation turned out differently: in parallel with the processes, dependence on social services and other types of assistance increased sharply, however, these aids, by their very nature, could not ensure escape from poverty. Accordingly, qualitative changes occurred among the recipients of assistance – in the income and expenditure structure. Other phenomena have also emerged, such as new types of informal economic activity, homelessness, and various types of criminal activity.

Throughout the historical periods of society’s development, various types of poverty have been studied, among which one of the most important is working poverty, or in-work poverty.

As a phenomenon, working poverty has always existed, which the founders of classical political economy, William Petty, Adam Smith, and David Ricardo, spoke about as early as two hundred years ago. However, as an economic concept, the study of in-work poverty began several decades ago. It should be noted that in the 21st century, interest in this problem has grown even more.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) considers in-work poverty as poverty in households where one or more people are unemployed (Marx, 1847).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the working poor as individuals who were in the labor force for 27 weeks or more during a calendar year, but their income was below the official poverty line. According to the International Labor Organization, the working poor are employed people who live below the poverty line. (Misturelli, 2010).

Therefore, it can be said that the “new poor” are people who are employed, have education, income, but still, they have not enough financial sources to meet the needs. They have their own characteristics. These can be: Due to insufficient wages, having a job that is not relevant to their profession, unmotivated work, illiquid loans, and lack of savings, their income cannot keep up with the rising costs of living.

Until recently, economic research viewed employment as a tool for earning income and, naturally, an opportunity to avoid poverty. This view was popular until recently. Employment growth was seen as a way to overcome poverty. However, reality shows that participation in the labor market, employment status, and receiving a salary do not guarantee that a person will not fall into poverty. The reasons for the existence of working poverty are very broad, and different authors focus on different aspects of this phenomenon.

The social groups of the "new poor" are quite diverse, uniting four classes. These are the lower class, which includes the lower strata of society, the social group characterized by poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. Rapid technological changes have led to the elimination of certain jobs, the main negative manifestation of which is low pay.

Accordingly, a certain part of the employed, regardless of their income, found themselves in the ranks of representatives of the lower class. Next is the working class, where there are minimally educated people with lower pay and less career advancement. They often fall into the category of “working poor,” unable to respond to the challenges of the modern world. At the same time, they have minimal living conditions without meeting minimum standards (Schoukens, 2017).

Next is the middle class, they have more money than those below them on the “social ladder”, but less than those above them. They are divided into two levels based on wealth, education, and prestige. The lower middle class is often made up of less educated people. This level is considered quite stable and highly paid, where a large part of the population is represented. The upper middle classes are made up of high-income professionals.

French economist Esther Duflo (born October 25, 1972, Paris) and American economist Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee (born February 21, 1961) in their study entitled “What Is Middle Class about the Middle Classes around the World?” covering thirteen developing countries, gave to the middle class the definition of a household whose daily per capita expenditure is between $2 and $10, based on purchasing power parity. As a result, they compare their consumption and conclude: “Nothing looks better than the middle class having a stable, well-paid job. They run a business, but mostly just because they are still relatively poor.” (Population.., 2025). The upper class is divided into two groups: the lower-upper and the upper-upper. The lower-upper class includes those who have “new money” from investments, business ventures. These extremely wealthy people live off their inherited income. They are exceptionally wealthy. They have more than enough money to pursue various interests (Mitchell.., 2025); (Blumer,1928); (Flemmen, 2012); (International.., 1962).

The economic consequences of poverty are acute and serious. The consensus on poverty is represented in the definition adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1984: “The poor are individuals, families, and groups of people whose resources are so limited that they are not allowed to live a minimum acceptable standard of living.” This formulation reveals the most important social and economic group of theoretical approaches to poverty: on the one hand, the formulation clearly shows the economic content as limited resources. On the other hand, there is a sociological aspect that is clearly visible behind the concept of “minimum”.

Poverty and its modern manifestation in the form of the “new poor” are one of the most acute problems, the elimination of which is the main goal of effective social policy. It is interesting to see how specialists in the field explain this phenomenon and what definition they give to the issue of poverty as a social or economic group.

It is important to identify the social group of the “new poor,” which refers not to the existence of resources, but to access to them, which includes both: available resources and unrealized opportunities. The concept is based on the consideration of the social group of the “new poor” as those who are unable to maintain normal living conditions due to lack of money.

The "new poor” in its essence represents a socio-economic category, where it is important to understand what the existence of this concept is connected with. Existing definitions of poverty have certain shortcomings. First of all, it should be noted that scientists cannot agree on the composition of the minimum consumer basket, which is the main determining factor of absolute poverty. When talking about the “new poor”, it is necessary to correctly define its social and economic characteristics, as well as the relationship of this category to the availability of basic resources and opportunities to participate in public life.

Since all of this is determined by the possession of financial resources, their lack is associated with a low standard of living. In the wake of all this, the “new poor” are emerging as a social and economic group. However, what is significant are the factors related to the origin or compositional characteristics of poverty. For example, the initial emergence of the “new poor” is directly related to the lack of satisfaction of basic needs such as health, education, and access to information. These are factors that are caused not only by lack of income, but also by lack of access to social services.

It is a w”ll-known fact that poverty is a global problem and its scale is constantly increasing. Today, the above- discussed problem affects millions of people, which have recently manifested itself in the form of the “new poor”. If this group represents a modern manifestation of poverty, after extreme poverty, occupies the second most critically important place in public life. In every country, there is a minimum standard, below which people fall into the category of “poor” or, at best, “the new poor.”

Unfortunately, when a person or family’s income fails to provide a normal standard of living, the person or individual becomes prone to poverty from which he may not escape for decades.

Conclusion

Poverty is a very complex and multidimensional socio-economic category, the existence of which is determined by subjective and objective factors. It is defined as the lack of resources and opportunities necessary to meet basic human needs, such as food and clean water, shelter, healthcare, and education.

Poverty is a multidimensional issue and is influenced by various circumstances. These factors are social exclusion, social security, and limited opportunities for economic mobility, which provoke poverty.

Despite the growing GDP in Georgia, a large part of the population still lives in poverty, as the involvement of these families in economic activity is very weak.

Accordingly, the connection between the improvement of macroeconomic indicators and the improvement of the situation of each household is weak. If the economy grows at the expense of one sector, a person who is not involved in these sectors will not feel this economic growth.

The results of our research have demonstrated the subjective nature of poverty and people's skepticism that poverty is primarily caused by low incomes. However, low income is not the main factor. These factors can be classified as cultural, value-based, financial, income-based, or expenditure-based. Each of them has its place in people's everyday lives as a determinant of economic behavior. Accordingly, in determining poverty, priority is given equally to both financial and material poverty, as well as forms of poverty expressed through individual, subjective assessments. The role and importance of the reforms having been implemented in Georgia in relation to poverty are characterized by certain economic results in terms of economic development. There are successes on a local scale, but the country has not yet reached the average level of the World Development. As this requires greater involvement of State agencies and the development of targeted projects.

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"JAUNIE BĀRDI" GRUZIJĀ

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā tiek apskatīti procesi, kas saistīti ar "jauno bārdību" – jauna sociālā slāņa – rašanos, kas izveidojās globālās transformācijas procesā, kā arī tas, kā šī kategorija veidojās pēc sociāli-ekonomiskās krīzes Eiropas valstīs.

Ir vērts atzīmēt, ka pat mūsdienu zinātnes un tehnoloģiju revolūcijas apstākļos šādas cilvēku kategorijas attīstības valstīs veido nozīmīgu sabiedrības daļu. Pārejot uz jaunu ekonomisko sistēmu, šim slānim bija grūti tajā pielāgoties, un šī problēma joprojām nav pilnībā novērsta. Šādi procesi atstāja daļu valsts intelektuālā kapitāla novārtā un radīja lielus ekonomiskos zaudējumus. Rezultātā radās divas pretējas sociālās grupas – "jaunie bagātie" un "jaunie bārdie".

Atslēgvārdi: jaunie bagātie, jaunie bārdie, tirgus attiecības, jaunā ekonomiskā sistēma.

Maryna Navalna (Ukraine)

RESEARCHES OF «DETECTOR MEDIA» DURING RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

The article analyzes contemporary media research conducted during the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, based on materials from the well-known Ukrainian online publication «Detector Media».
During the study of the information resource materials, methods such as observation and classification were used, and documentary information was analyzed.

The main tasks of «Detector Media» are to create Ukrainian media criticism; record the history of Ukrainian media; control the quality of content; support public broadcasting; develop online courses for journalists and the general public; improve relations between the media and politicians; promote reforms in the media sphere; participate in the self-regulation of the media environment; study media consumption in society; study the quality of journalism education.

The objects of the study were studies exposing Russian propaganda. «Detector Media» has developed the Kremlin Information Influence Index, which makes it possible to assess the level of influence of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian media. We constantly monitor Kremlin propaganda messages in Russian and Ukrainian media. In 2018, DM experts prepared a concept for monitoring propaganda, which will be used in Belarus. It was concluded that during the full-scale Russian-

Ukrainian war, the online publication "Detector Media" conducts media research, the content of which is mainly related to the study of Russian propaganda manipulations, which allows Ukrainian consumers of information to understand.

Keywords: mass media, «Detector Media», research, vulnerable categories of the population, Russian-Ukrainian war, conflict, sociology.

Introduction

Media research usually concerns the mass media. Its main task is to obtain certain information about the mass media, the audience, and the advertising placed in them, as well as to determine the preferences of television viewers, radio listeners, readers, etc. Media reearch is divided into different areas and types of monitoring. The results of such studies provide the information necessary for effective advertising campaign planning, reducing advertising and publishing costs in general, and, based on the ratings of channels or publications among the target audience, determining the most effective ways to reach that audience. Television companies use the results of media research to set prices for airtime and to convince potential advertisers of the effectiveness of placing advertisements on their channel.

Media research is particularly interesting during periods of various changes in society (economic, political, social, etc.). If we analyze contemporary Ukrainian society, its current state is particularly in need of study, due to the full-scale Russian war (2022-2024).

Due to the war on the territory of Ukraine, media teams have undergone changes: some journalists have joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine or the Territorial Defense Forces; the media market has changed; Ukrainian media need to survive and look for new sources of funding; the topics of publications have changed; a number of fake and propaganda materials from the enemy have appeared on various information resources, etc. Therefore, there was a need to analyze contemporary media research. The material for the study was provided by the results published in the online edition «Detector Media» (Detector Media 2022-2025).

Analysis of recent studies and publications. The mass media in general have been studied in various aspects by the following domestic scholars: V. Shkliar (Shkliar 2002), V. Zdoroveha (Zdoroveha 2001), V. Rizun (2008), S. Kvit (2008), A. Moskalenko (2003), I. Mykhailin (2011), I. Slisarenko (2001), B. Potiatynyk (2010), D. Korytnik (2020), A. Kvasko (2021), I. Makukh-Fedorova (2023), S. Zare (2018), and others.

Detector Media is a non-governmental organization established by Ukrainian journalists in January 2004. From 2004 to April 2016, the NGO was called «Telekrytyka», as was the website of the same name, which existed since September 2001. The team leader was Natalia Lyhachova, who ran the website and the organization.

In April 2016, the NGO underwent a rebranding, changing its name to «Detector Media». At the same time, in February 2016, the team of the «Telekrytyka» website created a new portal: «Detector Media». Natalia Lyhachova was in charge of the website and the organization.

The «Detector Media» portal is a unique multifunctional platform for Eastern and Central Europe that combines media content creation, diverse research of the media space, market and product, moderating professional discussions in the journalistic community, advocating for legislative and social changes related to media, and media education aimed at a wide audience. Three main components of our mission are to improve the quality of Ukrainian media, increase media literacy of Ukrainian society, and counteract disinformation and propaganda.

The main tasks of «Detector Media» are: to create Ukrainian media criticism. The goal is to improve the quality of content and the professional level of the people who produce it. To record the history of Ukrainian media. Every event, every change, every important trend in the life of the Ukrainian media since 2001 is in the «Detector Media» archive.

To control the quality of content. The Monitoring and Analytics Center conducts a number of permanent and periodic monitoring studies.
To support Public Broadcasting. Since 2005, the organization's experts have participated in the development of concepts and regulations for the transformation of state media into public media. They contributed to the adoption of laws in 2014 and 2015 that made it possible to create Public Broadcasting. To expose Russian propaganda. «Detector Media» has developed the Kremlin's Information Influence Index, which allows us to assess the level of influence of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian media. We constantly monitor the messages of Kremlin propaganda in Russian and Ukrainian media. In 2018, «Detector Media» experts prepared a concept for monitoring propaganda that will be used by our partners from Belarus.

To develop online courses for journalists and the general public. There are already three ready: «Investigative Journalism: The Basics» (about the main professional and ethical principles and rules of work of investigative journalists, methods and tools that journalists can use in their work, as well as ways to protect the information they collect).

To improve relations between the media and politicians. «Elections and Media» is a thematic resource dedicated to the media's compliance with electoral legislation and the quality of election coverage. «Detector Media» monitors the coverage of the election campaign and elections in the format of constant monitoring and analytical special projects, and offers solutions that will reduce the amount of hidden campaigning and PR in the media before the elections. To promote reforms in the media sector. Denationalization of print media, adoption of the long-awaited law «On Audiovisual Services» , adequate language policy on television and radio, transparency of media ownership, motivated distribution of state subsidies for film production, and other changes that the Ukrainian media market is waiting for.

To participate in the self-regulation of the media environment. They promote the idea of institutionalizing journalistic self-regulatory bodies at the level of the law «On Audiovisual Services».To study media consumption in society. The NGO «Detector Media», together with the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology and other research organizations, has conducted a number of sociological studies. To research the quality of journalism education. In 2016 and 2018, «Detector Media» conducted two large-scale studies of the quality of education in universities that train journalists and prepared recommendations for reform and correction of shortcomings.

«Detector Media» research is of particular importance, and it requires detailed analysis in sociology.

Research methods

General scientific and special methods were used to study and implement the research, in particular: analytical-synthetic and comparative methods to identify contemporary components in journalism studies based on the collected material; inductive method to generalize and systematize conclusions. The typological analysis method was used to differentiate media resources, and the content analysis method was used to study certain discursive materials.

Exposing Russian propaganda

«Detector Media» has developed the Kremlin Information Influence Index, which makes it possible to assess the level of influence of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian media. We constantly monitor Kremlin propaganda messages in Russian and Ukrainian media. In 2018, DM experts prepared a concept for monitoring propaganda.

Russian aggression has led to the destruction of the education system, and schools in the occupied territories are being used to instill Russian ideology. According to the Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Commissioner Dmytro Lubinets, quoted by «Radio Svoboda», as of February this year, there are 600,000 children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, of whom only 7% are studying in Ukrainian schools online. History in Russian schools is no longer a science, but has become a tool of manipulation that justifies the regime's crimes and shapes children's distorted perceptions of the past and present (Like Russia 2025).

In the occupied territories of Ukraine, some of which have been under Russian control since 2014, Moscow has used a combination of persuasion and manipulation to leave Ukrainians with little choice but to fight on Russia's side.
In these regions, the local occupation authorities are the main executors of Russian orders to mobilize the population into the occupation army – and, according to information from the Ukrainian military administration of the Luhansk region, they probably have recruitment quotas that they are trying to meet using aggressive methods.

CIR and Detector Media analyzed Russian military mobilization in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Methods include passportization, youth initiatives, and more subtle information campaigns that avoid direct references to mobilization. To ensure a thorough and detailed study of mobilization strategies and tactics in the occupied territories both before and after the full-scale invasion of 2022, extensive data analysis, open source investigation methods, thematic research, and content analysis were used.
Pavlo Lysianskyi, director of the Institute for Strategic Studies and Security, estimated that by 2022, Russia had forcibly mobilized more than 100,000 men from the occupied territories, many of whom were sent to the front lines (How Russia 2025).

Ukrainians remain highly sensitive to distorted content, and audiences are becoming more adept at tracking fake news, a trend that has continued since the start of the war. These are the conclusions reached by experts at «Detector Media» in their study «Index of Media Literacy among Ukrainians: 2020–2024». While in 2021 only 55% of Ukrainians had a high or above-average level of sensitivity to disinformation, manipulative content, and commissioned materials, in 2024 this share was 68%.

The significance of the problem of disinformation in the media is emphasized by 62% of the audience (compared to 64% in 2023 – an insignificant difference). Of these, 37% of respondents said they consider this problem to be relevant because fake news creates false perceptions among citizens, and 25% said they cannot always distinguish fake news. Only 17% of respondents said they do not consider the problem of disinformation in the media to be relevant, as they can always distinguish fake news and simply ignore it. The problem of manipulation in the media is also relevant for more than half of the Ukrainian audience, according to 60% of respondents. The opposite opinion is held by 16% of respondents, as they can distinguish such content, 15% are hearing about manipulation in the media for the first time, and 3% were unable to decide. There have been no significant changes over the past year.

Manipulations of Russian propaganda on Telegram channels

From May 1 to December 8, 12,900 unique messages were processed on Ukrainian, Polish, and Moldovan pro-Russian Telegram channels, as well as on a number of Russian propaganda Telegram channels. The sample of Telegram channels that we regularly monitored was formed based on previous studies of Russian propaganda on Telegram, in particular Russia's informational influence on Ukraine's neighboring states, and studies of manipulative messages in the information spaces of Moldova and Poland. The purpose of the analysis was to track changes in the narratives and rhetoric of propaganda regarding Russian aggression in Ukraine and how they are presented to Ukrainian, Russian, and Ukrainian neighbors' audiences.

Topics about the war and hostilities manipulated by Russian propaganda:

1. The Kursk adventure makes peace talks impossible.
2. Untrained conscripts are being thrown into the front lines.
3. Moscow and its allies are not afraid of the West.
4. NATO is dragging neighboring states into a war against Russia.
5. The victorious offensive in Donetsk Oblast continues.

Among Russian Telegram channels, the following were analyzed: «WarGonzo», «Voenkor Kotenok», «Operation Z: Voenkory Russkoy Vesny», «Dva Mayora», «Readovka», «Fighterbomber», «Voevoda Veshchayet», «Alex Parker Returns», «DShRG Rusich», and «Na Zzzzzapadnom Fronte bez Peremen». The segment of Russian Telegram channels, also known as the «z-segment», has become an alternative source of information for the Russian audience, offering a «different perspective» on the hostilities than that broadcast by the official media.

Research on propaganda in the Ukrainian segment of TikTok

«Detector Media», together with other public and government organizations, is researching TikTok, taking into account trends in the spread of disinformation and propaganda on this platform during Russia's full-scale invasion. According to a survey conducted by the Ilko Kucheriva Democratic Initiatives Foundation in early March 2024, various social networks are the main source of daily news for more than 40% of Ukrainians surveyed. Among them, 30% responded that, along with other social networks, TikTok is their primary platform. Russia's war against Ukraine was one of the leading topics discussed from November 2023 to February 2024. Malicious actors used this topic to spread demoralizing narratives, criticizing the Ukrainian leadership and the social consequences of the war. In contrast, more productive actors sought to preserve Ukrainian cultural identity, although they expressed skepticism about the motives and effectiveness of foreign support. An analysis of 104 accounts that directly covered Russia's war against Ukraine revealed the following distribution: 18% create productive content, while 47% spread pro-Russian messages.

«Detector Media» supports the efforts of Ukrainian authorities, civil society, and third sector organizations to create adequate regulations and legislation regarding the dissemination of various types of dangerous content and the fight against disinformation and harmful Russian propaganda. Popular accounts on various social networks may mimic the media, but in fact are not subject to any regulations and rarely adhere to standards for the dissemination of sensitive information (Behind the Scenes 2024).

War and inclusivity: hostile propaganda

People with disabilities are a vulnerable group that is targeted by Russian propaganda: the Kremlin not only instrumentalizes or stigmatizes these people, but also speculates on the very concepts of «disability» and «loss of functionality» for its own selfish needs.

In its disinformation messages, Russia deliberately spreads stereotypes that poison Ukraine's public space: it demonstrates only visible disabilities. This is when a person may be in a wheelchair if they are missing a limb or have significant hearing or vision impairments. However, disability can take many forms: intellectual, psychosocial, sensory. It is important to understand this because Russian propaganda is simply trying to intimidate Ukrainians by stigmatizing people with disabilities, explaining that Ukraine will allegedly be unable to help people with disabilities, that they will be abandoned and left to fend for themselves.

Propagandists often speculate on serious injuries and lump them together under one umbrella – as if the «fate» of Ukrainians, if they remain in the country, is to «end up in a wheelchair». Please note that the following statements will mainly contain information about visible disabilities, given our sample and the frequency or massiveness of propaganda posts. The wording in the quotes is preserved in the original, and for the most part, they lack correct vocabulary. For example, it is correct to say «a person with a disability» rather than «a disabled person», «a handicapped person», «a person with limited abilities», or «a person with special needs». Or it is more appropriate to use the phrase «have a disability» rather than «suffer from», «confined to a wheelchair», or «victim of something». And there are no «normal and healthy people» – there are simply people who do not have disabilities.

Russian propaganda narrative: «Consider this 'one more' truth about people with disabilities»:

1. The healthy part of society is disappearing, so the Armed Forces of Ukraine now consist of HIV-infected people, amputees, and lunatics.

2. Soldiers with disabilities are not demobilized so as not to upset people with their appearance and so as not to pay compensation.

3. With the updated Armed Forces of Ukraine consisting of «disabled people», it will be easier to fight (Behind the Scenes 2024).

How Russian propaganda justifies the deportation of children to Russia and accuses Ukraine of crimes against them Russian propaganda brands Ukrainian children as «young neo-Nazis», «descendants of Bandera's followers», «poorly educated», «unwanted, and therefore abandoned». Therefore, propagandists consider it right to either physically destroy «ideologically incorrect» Ukrainian children or deport them to Russia and «re-educate» them. Let's take a look at how propaganda against Ukrainian children works.

Ukraine can confirm 20,000 cases of deportation of Ukrainian children, but the actual number is higher, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyi. The abducted Ukrainian children were scattered throughout Russia. Some of them were transferred to Russian families under the so-called accelerated adoption program. The Russian child abduction machine covers territories from annexed Crimea to the eastern coast of Russia. In February 2023, the Yale School of Public Health published a report identifying 43 institutions dealing with abducted children throughout Russia; there are even camps in Siberia and in the Magadan region near the Pacific Ocean – thousands of kilometers from the Ukrainian border. Overall, the system of abduction and re-education is deeply entrenched at all levels of Russian government. It is centrally coordinated, and dozens of federal and local officials are directly involved in these processes and publicly justify the deportation practices (Stolen Childhood 2023).

Conclusions

«Detector Media» works to identify various types of dangerous content and combat disinformation and harmful Russian propaganda, including the following Russian propaganda narratives: «Mobilization in the Armed Forces of Ukraine means either death or disability» and «NATO is going to 'bury' Ukrainians according to its own schedule».

«Detector Media» has developed the Kremlin's Information Influence Index, which allows assessing the level of influence of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian media. We constantly monitor Kremlin propaganda messages in Russian and Ukrainian media. In 2018, DM experts prepared a concept for monitoring propaganda.

It was concluded that during the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war, the internet «Detector Media» conducted media research, the content of which was largely related to the study of Russian propaganda manipulations, enabling Ukrainian consumers of information to understand fake news and trust verified sources of information.

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“DETECTOR MEDIA” PĒTĪJUMI KRIEVIJAS–UKRAINAS KARA LAIKĀ

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā analizēti mūsdienu mediju pētījumi, kas veikti pilna mēroga Krievijas–Ukrainas kara laikā, balstoties uz plaši pazīstamā Ukrainas tiešsaistes izdevuma «Detector Media» materiāliem.

Informācijas resursa materiālu izpētes laikā tika izmantotas tādas metodes kā novērošana un klasifikācija, kā arī tika analizēta dokumentārā informācija.

Galvenie «Detector Media» uzdevumi ir: veidot Ukrainas mediju kritiku; dokumentēt Ukrainas mediju vēsturi; kontrolēt satura kvalitāti; atbalstīt sabiedrisko apraidi; izstrādāt tiešsaistes kursus žurnālistiem un plašākai sabiedrībai; uzlabot attiecības starp medijiem un politiķiem; veicināt reformas mediju jomā; piedalīties mediju vides pašregulācijā; pētīt mediju patēriņu sabiedrībā; analizēt žurnālistikas izglītības kvalitāti. Pētījuma objekts bija pētījumi, kas atmasko Krievijas propagandu. «Detector Media» ir izstrādājis Kremļa informatīvās ietekmes indeksu, kas ļauj novērtēt Krievijas propagandas ietekmes līmeni Ukrainas medijos. Tiek pastāvīgi uzraudzīti Kremļa propagandas vēstījumi Krievijas un Ukrainas medijos. 2018. gadā DM eksperti izstrādāja propagandas monitoringa koncepciju, kuru paredzēts izmantot Baltkrievijā. Tika secināts, ka pilna mēroga Krievijas–Ukrainas kara laikā tiešsaistes izdevums «Detector Media» veic mediju pētījumus, kuru saturs galvenokārt ir saistīts ar Krievijas propagandas manipulāciju izpēti, kas palīdz Ukrainas informācijas patērētājiem labāk izprast informatīvo vidi.

Atslēgas vārdi: masu mediji, «Detector Media», pētījumi, ievainojamās iedzīvotāju grupas, Krievijas–Ukrainas karš, konflikts, socioloģija.

Māris Pavlovs (Latvija)

INTEREŠU IZGLĪTĪBAS LOMA SOCIĀLĀ KAPITĀLA UN VĒRTĪBU SISTĒMAS ATTĪSTĪBĀ REĢIONĀLAJĀ KONTEKSTĀ

Anotācija

Šis pētījums analizē interešu izglītības ietekmi uz pusaudžu sociālā kapitāla un vērtību sistēmas attīstību, īpašu uzmanību pievēršot reģionālajām atšķirībām Latvijā. Pētījuma mērķis ir izprast, kā interešu izglītības vide veicina sociālās kompetences, līdzdalību un prosociālas vērtības un kā šī ietekme atšķiras starp Rīgu un reģioniem. Metodoloģija balstās uz daudzlīmeņu datu analīzi, kas iegūta no audzēkņu (N=2556), skolotāju (N=310) un interešu izglītības iestāžu vadītāju (N=178) aptaujām. Galvenie rezultāti atklāj, ka dalība interešu izglītībā kopumā pozitīvi ietekmē bērnu un jauniešu prosociālās vērtības (universālismu, tradīcijas) un sociālo kapitālu, taču šis efekts ir reģionāli neviendabīgs. Visspēcīgākā ietekme novērojama Kurzemē un Latgalē, kur identificēts „kopienā balstīts" sociālā kapitāla veidošanas modelis. Rīgā un Pierīgā dominē „ģimenē centrēts" modelis, un interešu izglītības ietekme ir vājāka. Secinājumos uzsvērts, ka interešu izglītība ir nozīmīgs, bet papildinošs socializācijas aģents, kas reģionos pilda sabiedrības saliedētības funkciju.

Atslēgas vārdi: interešu izglītība, sociālais kapitāls, vērtību sistēma, reģionālās atšķirības, kopienā balstīts modelis

Ievads

Mūsdienu sabiedrībā interešu izglītība kā neformālās izglītības forma ieņem nozīmīgu lomu bērnu un jauniešu attīstībā, piedāvājot alternatīvu pieeju, kas risina tradicionālās izglītības sistēmas izaicinājumus, piemēram, stresu, ierobežotu radošuma potenciālu un paaugstinātu kognitīvo slodzi. Pētījumi par bērnu labsajūtu Baltijas valstīs norāda uz negatīvu mācību vidi skolās, kas kavē pašizpausmi un rada nepieciešamību mācīties novērtējuma, nevis zināšanu dēļ (LCWN et al. 2017). Šajā kontekstā interešu izglītība nodrošina vidi, kur pusaudži var brīvprātīgi un ar interesi attīstīt savas spējas, mācīties sadarboties un veidot vērtības, kas stiprina viņu piederību sabiedrībai. Ņemot vērā, ka pusaudžu vecumā turpinās smadzeņu attīstība, kas ietekmē impulsu kontroli un lēmumu pieņemšanu, interešu izglītības videi ir kritiski svarīgi nodrošināt stabilu emocionālo atbalstu un pieaugušo klātbūtni (Sebre, Miltuze 2023).

Tomēr, neskatoties uz interešu izglītības vispāratzīto nozīmi, Latvijā joprojām ir nepietiekami izpētītas tās ietekmes reģionālās atšķirības. Nav skaidrs, vai vide pilsētā un laukos veicina atšķirīgas vērtības un sociālā kapitāla formas un kādi faktori nosaka šīs atšķirības. Pētījuma problēma ir nepilnīgā izpratne par interešu izglītības ietekmi uz pusaudžu sociālā kapitāla un vērtību sistēmas attīstību dažādos Latvijas reģionos. Līdz ar to pētījuma mērķis ir novērtēt interešu izglītības potenciālu reģionālās attīstības un sabiedrības saliedētības veicināšanā.

Lai nodrošinātu vienotu izpratni, pētījumā tiek izmantoti šādi pamata jēdzieni:

- Interešu izglītība ir ārpus formālās izglītības organizēta, brīvprātīga un interesēm atbilstoša izglītojoša darbība, kas nodrošina cilvēka individuālo izglītības vajadzību un vēlmju īstenošanu neatkarīgi no vecuma un iepriekš iegūtās izglītības (Saeima 1998).
- Sociālais kapitāls ir pusaudžu uzticēšanās, sadarbības un līdzdalības spēja, kas veidojas interešu izglītības vidē un stiprina viņu piederību sabiedrībai.
- Vērtības ir relatīvi stabili, ilgtermiņa mērķi, kas nosaka cilvēku uztveri, attieksmi un uzvedību, kalpojot par pamatprincipiem viņu dzīvē (Bardi et al. 2008; Schwartz 1992).

Šis raksts iekļauj teorētisko ietvaru, kurā aplūkota interešu izglītības būtība un pētījuma pamatā esošā Šaloma Švarca vērtību teorija. Tiek aprakstīta pētījuma metodoloģija, kas balstās uz daudzlīmeņu datu ieguvi, tiek prezentēti un analizēti iegūtie rezultāti, īpašu uzmanību pievēršot reģionālajām atšķirībām. Rezultāti tiek interpretēti plašākā sociālpedagoģiskajā kontekstā.

Interešu izglītības būtība un mērķi

Neformālā izglītība, kuras daļa Latvijā ir interešu izglītība, ieņem nozīmīgu vietu personības attīstībā, papildinot un bagātinot formālās izglītības sistēmu. Latvijas Izglītības likums definē interešu izglītību kā brīvprātīgu, uz cilvēka individuālajām vajadzībām un vēlmēm orientētu darbību (Saeima 1998). Starptautiskā prakse apstiprina, ka šāda veida izglītība sniedz pusaudžiem iespējas attīstīt prasmes un kompetences, kas ir grūtāk apgūstamas tradicionālajā mācību procesā (OECD 2013; OECD 2016; Pallag 2016; Hillman 2013).

Interešu izglītība izglītības sistēmā aizpilda to personības attīstības un sociālās integrācijas aspektu plaisu, kas bieži vien paliek ārpus formālās izglītības iespēju loka (Lafraya 2011). Tā nodrošina alternatīvas mācību iespējas un vidi, kas veicina aktīvas pilsoniskās līdzdalības attīstību pusaudžiem. Tās mērķi ir saskaņā ar Latvijas ilgtspējīgas attīstības stratēģiju līdz 2030. gadam, kas uzsver nepieciešamību veicināt mūžizglītības kultūru un radošumu, lai bērni un jaunieši spētu pielāgoties mainīgajām darba tirgus prasībām un rūpēties par sabiedrību (Saeima 2010). Praktiķi formulē interešu izglītības uzdevumus, kas ietver (Kalniņa u. c. 2012):

- bērnu un jauniešu spēju un talantu attīstīšanu;
- radošas pašizpausmes un individualitātes izkopšanu;
- saturīgas brīvā laika pavadīšanas iespēju nodrošināšanu;
- pilsoniskās un nacionālās identitātes veicināšanu;
- preventīvo darbu negatīvu tendenču novēršanai.

Šaloma Švarca vērtību teorija

Šis pētījums balstās uz Šaloma Švarca (*Shalom H. Schwartz*) vērtību teoriju, kas piedāvā universālu ietvaru cilvēka vērtību izpratnei. Saskaņā ar Švarca pieeju, vērtības ir vēlami, ārpus situāciju mērķi, kas atšķiras pēc svarīguma un kalpo par cilvēka dzīves pamatprincipiem (Schwartz 1992). Teorija identificē desmit motivējošus vērtību tipus, kas ir atzīti daudzās kultūrās: pašnoteikšanās (*self-direction*), stimulācija (*stimulation)*, hēdonisms (*hedonism*), sasniegumi (*achievement*), vara (*power*), drošība (*security*), konformitāte (*conformity*), tradīcijas (*tradition*), labvēlība (*benevolence*), universālisms (*universalism*). Švarca teorija arī postulē, ka pastāv divas bipolārās dimensijas:

1. Atvērtība pārmaiņām pret konservatīvismu: šī dimensija pretstata vērtības, kas uzsver neatkarīgu domu un rīcību (pašnoteikšanās, stimulācija), tām vērtībām, kas uzsver sevis ierobežošanu, tradīciju saglabāšanu un stabilitāti (konformitāte, tradīcijas, drošība).
2. Pašpilnveidošanās pret savu panākumu vairošanu: šī dimensija pretstata vērtības, kas uzsver citu labklājību un attīstību pār egoistiskām interesēm (universālisms, labvēlība), tām vērtībām, kas uzsver personīgo panākumu un dominanci pār citiem (vara, sasniegumi).

Balstoties uz šo teorētisko ietvaru, tika izstrādāta pētījuma metodoloģija, kas ļāva empīriski pārbaudīt interešu izglītības ietekmi uz pusaudžu vērtību sistēmu aplūkotajos reģionos.

Pētījuma metodoloģija

Lai iegūtu visaptverošu un daudzpusīgu ainu par interešu izglītības ietekmi, pētījumā tika izmantota daudzlīmeņu datu ieguves stratēģija. Šī pieeja bija stratēģiski svarīga, jo tā ļāva apvienot audzēkņu personīgo pieredzi ar skolotāju pedagoģisko skatījumu un iestāžu vadītāju institucionālo perspektīvu. Datu sintēze no trim avotu grupām ļāva ne tikai novērtēt statistiskās sakarības, bet arī padziļināti analizēt pedagoģiskās vides un sociālā kapitāla veidošanās modeļu atšķirības reģionālajā kontekstā.

Pētījuma empīrisko bāzi veido dati, kas iegūti trīs dažādās aptaujās, aptverot interešu izglītības procesā iesaistītās puses:

- audzēkņi: N=2 556;
- skolotāji: N=310;
- iestāžu vadītāji: N=178.

Pētījumā piedalījās 2556 audzēkņi no visas Latvijas. 1. tabulā apkopota vispārīgā informācija par respondentu demogrāfisko sadalījumu, kas nodrošina izlases reprezentativitāti.

1.tabula.

Vispārīgā informācija par respondentiem pusaudžiem, interešu izglītības iestāžu audzēkņiem

Kategorija	*Sadalījums*	*Procenti*
Dzimums	Meitenes (1551), Zēni (1005)	60,7% / 39,3%
Valoda ģimenē	Latviešu (1940), Krievu (585), Cita (31)	75,9% / 22,9% / 1,2%
Reģions	Kurzeme (412), Latgale (536), Rīga un Pierīga (880), Vidzeme (416), Zemgale (312)	16,1% / 21,0% / 34,5% / 16,3% / 12,2%
Urbanizācijas tips	Rīga (306), Lielās pilsētas (315), Mazās pilsētas (845), Lauki (1090)	12,0% / 12,3% / 33,1% / 42,6%

Avots: autora sastadīta tabula

Audzēkņu atbildes par personīgajām vērtībām tika analizētas, izmantojot Šaloma Švarca teorētisko ietvaru. Katra respondenta atbildes tika saistītas ar desmit motivējošiem vērtību tipiem, lai novērtētu, kuras vērtību orientācijas dominē un kā tās ietekmē dalība interešu izglītībā. Šī pieeja ļāva ne tikai aprakstīt vērtību prioritātes, bet arī analizēt to dinamiskās attiecības reģionālā kontekstā.

Šāda pieeja, papildināta ar interešu izglītības skolotāju un iestāžu vadītāju aptauju, nodrošināja spēcīgu datu bāzi, kas kalpoja par pamatu turpmākai analīzei un rezultātu interpretācijai.

Rezultāti un to analīze

Pētījuma galvenais novērojums ir tāds, ka interešu izglītība pozitīvi ietekmē pusaudžu vērtību attīstību un sociālā kapitāla veidošanos, taču šī ietekme ir reģionāli neviendabīga. Lai gan kopumā dalība interešu izglītībā ir saistīta ar prosociālu vērtību nostiprināšanos un lielāku uzticēšanos, tās efektivitāte un specifiskie ieguvumi būtiski atšķiras starp Rīgu un pārējiem Latvijas reģioniem.

Datu analīze rāda, ka dalība interešu izglītībā saistīta ar prosociālo vērtību nostiprināšanos. Īpaši vērojama universālisma (iecietība, izpratne un rūpes par cilvēkiem, dabu) un tradīciju (cieņa pret kultūras mantojumu) vērtību palielināšanās (vidējais pieaugums +0,11 punktiem skalā). Tāpat novērojams arī sociālā kapitāla rādītāju pieaugums par +0,08 punktiem, kas norāda uz stiprāku uzticēšanos un sadarbības spēju attīstību. Var atzīmēt, ka interešu izglītība neveicina dominanci vai varas tieksmi, jo varas orientācijā statistiski nozīmīgas izmaiņas netika konstatētas visā izlasē. Tomēr atsevišķi pēc reģioniem varas vērtīborientācija statistiski nozīmīgi ir augstākā audzēkņiem no Vidzemes, Zemgales un Kurzemes, salīdzinot ar Rīgu, Pierīgu un Latgali, kur tā ir zemāka (sk. 2. tabulu).

Analizējot iesaistes intensitāti, tika atklāts, ka lielāks interešu izglītībā pavadīto stundu skaits korelē ar augstākiem vērtību rādītājiem. Lai gan korelācijas ir nelielas, tās ir konsekventas un norāda uz stabilu tendenci: ilgstošāka iesaiste veicina pozitīvāku vērtību attīstību. Šī tendence ir īpaši izteikta reģionos, proti, Kurzemē un Latgalē.

Cits pētījuma novērojums ir interešu izglītības ietekmes reģionālā nevienlīdzība. Spēcīgākais pozitīvais efekts novērojams reģionos, kur ir ciešāka saikne starp izglītības iestādēm un vietējo kopienu, kamēr Rīgā efekts ir vājāks, ko var skaidrot ar lielpilsētas individualizētāko vidi (sk. 2. tabulu).

2.tabula.

Reģionu līmeņa svarīgākie rādītāji

Reģions	*Svarīgākie ieguvumi un rādītāji*
Kurzeme	+0,30 visos rādītājos
Latgale	+0,15 universālisma un tradīciju orientācijās
Zemgale, Vidzeme	Pašnoteikšanās pieaugums (↑)
Rīga, Pierīga	Varas vērtīborientācija zemākā (↓)

Avots: autora sastadīta tabula

Kurzemē novērojams visspēcīgākais un visaptverošākais efekts, kur dalība interešu izglītībā uzlabo visus vērtību un sociālā kapitāla rādītājus vidēji par 0,30 punktiem. Latgalē ieguvumi ir specifiskāki, koncentrējoties uz prosociālām vērtībām. Savukārt Zemgalē un Vidzemē interešu izglītība visvairāk veicina pašnoteikšanos (vērtība, kas saistīta ar neatkarīgu domāšanu un rīcību).

Skolotāju aptaujas liecina, ka interešu izglītības pedagoģiskā vide lielākoties ir orientēta uz drošības (vēlme pēc stabilitātes un drošas vides) un sasniegumu (vēlme gūt panākumus un atzinību) vērtībām, nodrošinot pusaudžiem drošu un motivējošu vidi. Turklāt profesionālie līderības pētījumi norāda, ka iestādes vadītāju rīcību un ētiskos lēmumus tieši nosaka viņu personīgās vērtības, kas kalpo kā pamats profesionālajai identitātei (Sugrue & O'Sullivan 2023). Interesants novērojums ir grupas lieluma ietekme uz vērtību attīstību: lielas grupas vairāk veicina autonomiju un iniciatīvu, savukārt mazas grupas – konformitāti un noteikumu ievērošanu.

Iestāžu vadītāju dati ļāva identificēt divus atšķirīgus sociālā kapitāla veidošanas modeļus:

1. Kopienā balstītais modelis: šis modelis dominē Kurzemē un Vidzemē, kur iestādes aktīvi sadarbojas ar vietējo sabiedrību, organizācijām un uzņēmumiem, veidojot plašāku atbalsta tīklu.
2. Ģimenē centrētais modelis: raksturīgs Rīgai un Pierīgai, kur nozīmīgākais sadarbības partneris ir vecāki, un iestādes darbība ir vairāk vērsta uz individuālu pakalpojumu sniegšanu ģimenei.

Analīze apstiprina ciešu saikni starp noteiktām vērtību orientācijām un sociālā kapitāla elementiem. Iestādēs, kurās tiek uzsvērta sadarbība un atvērtība, veidojas spēcīgāks sociālais kapitāls.

- Universālisms ir cieši saistīts ar iesaisti kopienas aktivitātēs (r=0,32).
- Labvēlība (vēlme rūpēties par tuviem cilvēkiem) korelē ar audzinātību un pozitīvu uzvedību (r=0,29).
- Savukārt varas un sasniegumu orientācijas negatīvi korelē ar kopienas līdzdalību, norādot, ka konkurence un hierarhija vājina kopienas saiknes.

Latgales reģions izceļas ar unikālu vērtību profilu. Šeit pusaudžiem ir augstāki universālisma (+0,15) un hedonisma (tieksme izbaudīt dzīvi un meklēt patīkamas pieredzes, +0,11) rādītāji, kas liecina par atvērtību, iecietību un emocionālu piesaisti pieredzei. Vienlaikus novērojama zemāka konformitātes (tieksme ievērot sabiedrības normas, –0,13) un pašnoteikšanās (–0,14) orientācija. Šī uz kolektīvu orientētā vērtību sistēma, kurā uzsvars likts uz kopienas labklājību, nevis individuālo autonomiju, varētu būt viens no izskaidrojumiem, kāpēc interešu izglītība tieši Latgalē atstāj īpaši pozitīvu ietekmi uz prosociālajām vērtībām.

Reģionālo modeļu atšķirību interpretācija

Pētījuma rezultāti sniedz padziļinātu ieskatu interešu izglītības lomā pusaudžu attīstībā, atklājot reģionālas atšķirības. Šī nodaļa aicina kritiski izvērtēt iegūtos datus plašākā sociālpedagoģiskā kontekstā, īpaši fokusējoties uz divu identificēto sociālā kapitāla veidošanas modeļu – „kopienā balstītā" un „ģimenē centrētā" – nozīmi un to ietekmi uz pusaudžu attīstību.

Identificētais „kopienā balstītais" modelis tādās iestādēs, kas sadarbojas ar vietējo sabiedrību, saskan ar atziņām par „kopienā balstītas" izglītības pozitīvo ietekmi uz sociālās un kritiskās domāšanas prasmju attīstību (Baldridge 2023). „Kopienā balstītais" modelis (Kurzemē, Vidzemē) un „ģimenē centrētais" modelis (Rīgā, Pierīgā) ilustrē atšķirības interešu izglītības darbības mehānismos un to ietekmē uz tādiem sociālā kapitāla komponentiem kā uzticēšanās, sadarbība un līdzdalība. „Kopienā balstītais" modelis veido plašāku un daudzveidīgāku sociālo kapitālu, savienojot pusaudžus ar dažādiem vietējās sabiedrības dalībniekiem – organizācijām, uzņēmumiem un citām iestādēm. Šo modeli, visticamāk, nosaka zemāks urbanizācijas līmenis, vēsturiskās sadarbības tradīcijas un nepieciešamība apvienot resursus, padarot interešu izglītības iestādes par nozīmīgiem vietējās sabiedrības centriem.

Savukārt Rīgas un Pierīgas „ģimenē centrētais" modelis veido dziļāku, bet šaurāku sociālo kapitālu, kas primāri stiprina ģimenes un vienaudžu saites. Šis modelis atspoguļo lielpilsētas individualizēto un fragmentēto vidi, kur interešu izglītība biežāk tiek uztverta kā pakalpojums, ko ģimene iegādājas, lai papildinātu bērna attīstību. Šeit sadarbība ar plašāku kopienu ir retāka, kas ierobežo daudzveidīgu sociālo tīklu veidošanos. Jāatzīmē arī citas reģionālās īpatnības, piemēram, Zemgalē un Pierīgā iestāžu vadītāji īpaši uzsver uzvedības normu un disciplīnas nozīmi, kas norāda uz vēl specifiskākiem audzināšanas mērķiem šajos reģionos.

Pētījuma rezultāti liecina, ka reģionos interešu izglītība pilda nozīmīgu sociālās integrācijas un sabiedrības saliedētības funkciju, kas pārsniedz individuālo prasmju apguvi. Tā kļūst par vidi, kur satiekas dažādu sociālo slāņu pusaudži, veidojot uzticēšanos un sadarbības prasmes. Šī funkcija ir īpaši svarīga reģionos ar ierobežotiem resursiem, kur interešu izglītība var būt vienīgā pieejamā vide socializācijai ārpus skolas.

Rīgā interešu izglītības loma ir atšķirīga. Tā vairāk darbojas kā papildinājums ģimenes resursiem un bieži vien segmentē pusaudžus pēc sociālekonomiskā statusa, nevis veicina plašāku sociālo integrāciju. Lai gan tā joprojām sniedz attīstības iespējas, tās potenciāls sabiedrības saliedētības veicināšanā lielpilsētas vidē netiek pilnībā izmantots.

Empīriskie dati piedāvā papildinājumu Švarca vērtību teorijai. Latgales vērtību profils, kurā augsts universālisms apvienojas ar zemu pašnoteikšanos, apstiprina teorētisko atziņu par vērtību apļveida struktūru, kurā kolektīvistiskas un individuālistiskas vērtības atrodas pretējos polos (Schwartz 1992). Pētījums parāda, kā šī reģionālā vērtību specifika ir saistīta ar sociālo uzvedību un interešu izglītības efektivitāti. Reģionos, kur dominē uz kopienu orientētas vērtības (piemēram, labvēlība, tradīcijas), interešu izglītība spēcīgāk veicina sociālo kapitālu. Tas liecina, ka interešu izglītības efektivitāte ir atkarīga no tās atbilstības vietējās kopienas vērtību sistēmai.

Jāatzīst, ka šis pētījums nosaka korelācijas, nevis cēloņsakarības. Lai gan dati pārliecinoši norāda uz saikni starp dalību interešu izglītībā un pozitīvu attīstību, nav iespējams pilnībā izslēgt citu faktoru ietekmi. Turpmākajos pētījumos būtu vērtīgi veikt longitudinālu pētījumu, kas ļautu izsekot pusaudžu attīstībai ilgtermiņā un precīzāk noteikt interešu izglītības cēlonisko ietekmi. Tāpat būtu lietderīgi padziļināti analizēt konkrētu interešu izglītības programmu (piemēram, sports, māksla, tehniskā jaunrade) specifisko ietekmi uz dažādiem vērtību tipiem. Šajā kontekstā pētniecībai jāpievērš uzmanība dialoga veidošanai un kritiskās domāšanas attīstībai interešu izglītībā, jo šīs prasmes ir izšķirošas pusaudžu spējai izvērtēt morālus jautājumus un veicināt iecietību (Kūle 2016; Lafraya 2011).

Secinājumi

Pamatojoties uz veikto pētījumu, var izdarīt vairākus secinājumus par interešu izglītības lomu pusaudžu sociālā kapitāla un vērtību sistēmas attīstībā Latvijā.

Interešu izglītības ietekme uz vērtību un sociālā kapitāla attīstību ir ievērojami spēcīgāka reģionos ārpus Rīgas. Reģionos tā kalpo kā nozīmīgs sabiedrības saliedētības avots, kamēr galvaspilsētā tās ietekme ir vājāka un vairāk individualizēta.

Latvijā ir identificēti divi atšķirīgi modeļi, kas nosaka interešu izglītības darbības veidu un ietekmi. Reģionos (īpaši Kurzemē un Vidzemē) dominē „kopienā balstīts“ modelis, kur vērojama cieša sadarbība ar vietējo sabiedrību. Rīgā un Pierīgā ir izplatītāks „ģimenē centrēts“ modelis, kur galvenais interešu izglītības iestāžu sadarbības partneris ir vecāki.

Interešu izglītība ir nozīmīgs, tomēr papildinošs faktors pusaudžu attīstībā, kas nodrošina drošu un atbalstošu vidi. Tās ietekme ir jāanalizē sasaistē ar citiem socializācijas aģentiem, piemēram, ģimeni un skolu. Tās loma ir īpaši nozīmīga reģionos ar ierobežotiem resursiem, kur tā var kļūt par vienu no pozitīvas socializācijas avotiem.

Lai stiprinātu interešu izglītības lomu reģionos un veicinātu sabiedrības saliedētību, ir nepieciešams mērķtiecīgi atbalstīt „kopienā balstītā“ modeļa attīstību reģionos, veicinot sadarbību starp interešu izglītības iestādēm, pašvaldībām, nevalstiskajām organizācijām un vietējiem uzņēmējiem.

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THE ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VALUE SYSTEMS IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT

Summary

This study analyses the impact of non-formal education on the development of adolescents' social capital and value systems, with particular attention to regional differences in Latvia. The aim of the research is to understand how the non-formal education environment fosters social competence, participation, and prosocial values, and how this impact differs between Riga and other regions. The methodology is based on multilevel data analysis derived from surveys of students (N=2556), teachers (N=310), and heads of non-formal education institutions (N=178).The main findings reveal that participation in non-formal education generally has a positive effect on children's and young people's prosocial values (universalism, tradition) and social capital; however, this effect is regionally heterogeneous. The strongest impact is observed in Kurzeme and Latgale, where a "community-based" model of social capital formation has been identified. In Riga and the Pierīga region, a "family-centred" model predominates, and the impact of non-formal education is weaker.
The conclusions emphasise that non-formal education is an important but complementary agent of socialisation, fulfilling a function of social cohesion in the regions.

Keywords: non-formal education, social capital, value system, regional differences, community-based model.

Shuyun Wang (China)

FORMATION LOGIC AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION PATHWAYS FOR CORPORATE DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGIES OF SMEs UNDER CHINA–EU TRADE AND INVESTMENT INTEGRATION: A MULTI-CASE COMPARATIVE STUDY

This article examines how small and medium-size firms from Latvia build diversification toward China-EU markets by managing the order in which resources are mobilized. Firms gain resilience when people, systems, finance, and partnerships move in a deliberate sequence that converts pilots into repeatable routines. The study relies on two real-world Latvian companies. STENDERS, a cosmetics producer with China as its largest export destination, advances through a people-first trajectory. Roles, training, and compliance procedures are established first, then digital connections stabilize service and inventory, and only after that the company expands channels and unlocks funding tied to observed performance. JOOM, a cross-border platform founded in Riga, grows through a

systems-first trajectory. Data visibility, integrations, and logistics are implemented first, followed by the redesign of roles and budgeting, after which channels expand. Misordered steps create losses, while correct sequencing converts exploration into durable positions. Comparative analysis yields three strategies defined by the order of resource movement. People-first is appropriate when the constraint is front-line capability and regulatory compliance. Systems-first fits when traceability and reliability of execution are primary constraints. Finance-gated is relevant when investment should open only after auditable milestones are achieved and pilots are translated into standard procedures. Across the two companies, diversification coherence improves when the shift from exploration to consolidation is synchronized with partner calendars and checkpoints, and when digital links reduce service variance and shorten handoffs. The contribution is practical: diagnose the first constraint, define a verifiable marker, and standardize a routine immediately after each step. A compact table summarizes these choices and helps design short, verifiable transitions from pilots to routines. The approach is light on terminology and can be replicated by any firm that documents a few milestones, tracks the order in which people, systems, finance, and partnerships move, and releases funding only after markers are met.

Keywords: corporate diversification strategy, resource sequencing, China-EU, SME internationalization, digital integration, regulatory compliance, platform logistics, managerial routines.

Introduction

The deepening of China-EU trade and investment integration is reshaping competitive logics and value-chain architectures, placing new demands on the tempo and sequencing of strategic decisions by small and medium-sized enterprises. In this setting, diversification is not merely an expansion of scope but a process in which a managerial formation logic co-evolves with concrete resource-allocation pathways across units, geographies, and chain nodes. The alignment of these two dimensions, how decisions are formed and how resources are subsequently redeployed, determines whether firms sustain advantage while avoiding costly errors of sequencing (Johanson, Vahlne 2009; Peng 2003). As anchors we use the company STENDERS, a Latvian cosmetics producer expanding its presence in China (Stenders 2025). The second anchor is the company Joom, a cross-border platform founded in Riga that enables Asian sellers to reach EU consumers (Joom 2025).

Entrepreneurship research shows that decisions under uncertainty rest on two foundational logics: causation and effectuation. Causation emphasizes predictive planning and staged commitment, while effectuation emphasizes opportunity creation with available means, networks, and acceptable loss (Sarasvathy 2001; Fisher 2012). Along China-EU linkages, firms typically hybridize these approaches: effectual episodes probe niches, test channels, and co-create value with partners, while causal consolidation formalizes successful combinations through process standardization, budgeting, and KPIs during scaling (Smolka et al. 2018; Tolstoy et al. 2021).

In parallel, the resource-orchestration view reframes performance differences around how managers structure, bundle, and leverage resource packages over time. What counts is not asset possession but the design of sequences that mobilize human capital and roles, ICT architectures and data, partner networks, and finance for specific strategic moves (Sirmon et al. 2007; Sirmon et al. 2011). In China-EU value chains, waves of relocation and backshoring, localization and co-production, compel rapid reallocation among production, logistics, digital channels, and compliance routines, making who or what goes first a high-stakes choice where timing errors are costlier than tool errors (Ancarani et al. 2024).

Despite advances in understanding hybrid decision-making and orchestration practices, we know less about how a formation logic is translated into specific resource-allocation pathways that yield durable diversification portfolios in a bilateral China-EU environment. The author approachs diversification as the co-evolution of two interlinked mechanisms: configurations of decision logics from early effectual probing to causal consolidation and sequences of structuring → bundling → leveraging resource packages across chain nodes and organizational units (Teece 2007; Helfat, Peteraf 2015). To assess pathway quality, we use diversification coherence as the alignment between resource redeployment, objectives, and market indicators over time, visible in the coincidence of reallocation moments with demand and regulatory milestones, increasing ICT compatibility, reproducibility of routines with cumulative learning, and the reduction of channel bottlenecks as the portfolio expands (Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023).

The bilaterally embedded China-EU institutional context heightens sensitivity to order and timing. Divergent standards and practices in procurement, data protection, certification, and contract enforcement make the internal translation of regulatory requirements into routines and role allocations decisive, from compliance and localization to co-development and after-sales service (Johanson, Vahlne 2009; Peng 2003). Meanwhile, cross-border e-commerce and digital platforms open windows for pre-commitment market creation and hypothesis testing, reshaping the timing of diversification bets and demanding fine-grained tuning of resource flows (Ancarani et al. 2021). The goal is to show, through the companies STENDERS and Joom, how the order of movement in people, systems, finance, and partnerships converts exploration into repeatable routines and more resilient positions in China-EU chains (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

Literature Review

Research on decision logics under uncertainty distinguishes causation and effectuation. Causation focuses on predictive planning and staged commitment, while effectuation emphasizes acting with available means, networks, and acceptable loss to create opportunities rather than only predict them (Sarasvathy 2001; Fisher 2012). In international expansion, firms rarely rely on a single logic. They combine effectual probing with causal consolidation as initiatives move from exploration to standardization and scaling (Smolka et al. 2018; Tolstoy et al. 2021).

The resource orchestration view explains performance by how managers structure, bundle, and leverage resources over time, rather than by ownership alone (Sirmon et al. 2007; Sirmon et al. 2011). This perspective highlights human roles and routines, ICT architectures and data, partner networks, and finance as coordinated packages that must move in a workable order to support strategy execution (Teece 2007; Helfat, Peteraf 2015). Misordered steps increase coordination costs and create stranded investments even when total resources are sufficient (Sirmon et al. 2011).

Within China–EU value chains, diversification is shaped by dual embeddedness in divergent regulatory and market regimes. Differences in certification, data protection, procurement, and contract enforcement require careful translation of external rules into internal routines and role boundaries, which elevates the importance of timing and order in resource redeployment (Johanson, Vahlne 2009; Peng 2003). Cross-border e-commerce and platforms create early windows for learning and demand formation, but they also shift the burden toward reliable integrations and traceability before broad channel expansion (Ancarani et al. 2021).

To evaluate the quality of sequencing, recent work points to measurable alignment between redeployment steps, strategic objectives, and market indicators. We use the notion of diversification coherence to capture whether reallocation moments coincide with regulatory and demand milestones, whether ICT compatibility rises across domains, whether key routines become reproducible with cumulative learning, and whether channel bottlenecks shrink as scope expands (Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023). In this framing, resilience comes not from resource volume but from the order of movement that converts exploration into repeatable routines and durable positions.

For small and medium-sized firms, the literature thus motivates three practical sequencing strategies. A people-first path fits when front-line capability and compliance are the main constraints, so roles and routines must stabilize before digital and financial scaling. A systems-first path fits when visibility, integrations, and reliability of execution are binding, so data flows and ICT come first. A finance-gated path fits when investment should open only after auditable milestones confirm that pilots have been translated into standard procedures (Sirmon et al. 2011; Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023). These strategies organize the subsequent analysis of observable sequences in two Latvian companies operating along the China–EU corridor (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

Methods

Design and setting. The study uses a two-company comparative design in the China–EU context. We analyze the company STENDERS, a Latvian cosmetics producer expanding in China, and the company Joom, a Riga-founded cross-border platform that connects Asian sellers with EU consumers (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

Materials. Only publicly available and verifiable sources were used. These include company webpages, public announcements, store and product pages, and basic registry summaries. No interviews or surveys were conducted (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

Unit of observation. An observation is a decision episode with an auditable public marker. Examples include a new or updated procedure, an integration go-live, an opening of a storefront, a partnership announcement, or a published service rule change.

Inclusion and exclusion. Episodes were included only if the timing and content could be verified by a public marker. Episodes with ambiguous dates or without a marker were excluded.

Constructs. We track four resource packages: people roles and compliance routines, systems for digital integration and data visibility, finance in the form of budget releases and gates, and channels and partnerships for distribution and logistics. Decision formation is read through effectuation and causation as complementary logics for exploration and consolidation respectively (Sarasvathy 2001; Fisher 2012). Resource orchestration informs how packages are structured, bundled, and leveraged over time (Sirmon et al. 2007; Sirmon et al. 2011; Teece 2007).

Identification and coding. For each company we built a short timeline. Each episode was coded for the leading package that moved first, for the mode as exploratory or consolidating, and for the readiness marker that makes the step auditable. Overlaps were removed and near-duplicates were merged.

Analytical procedure. We compared the order of movement across the four packages and summarized three strategies defined by sequencing choices: people-first, systems-first, and finance-gated. Pathway quality was assessed with diversification coherence defined as alignment between redeployment steps, stated objectives, and market indicators over time. Indicators include coincidence with demand and regulatory milestones, rising ICT compatibility, reproducible routines with cumulative learning, and shrinking bottlenecks as scope expands (Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023).

Outputs and limitations. Results include a schematic three-box figure with short definitions of the strategies and a narrative comparison of the two companies. The design favors observable and auditable steps and may understate internal preparations that leave no public marker.

Results

The company STENDERS. The dominant trajectory is people-first. The sequence begins with front-line roles, training, and compliance routines that make service reproducible and aligned with local expectations. Once these routines stabilize, digital connections are added to improve visibility of inventory and orders, which reduces execution variance and enables repeatable performance across new locations. Channel expansion then proceeds stepwise, but only where pilot configurations have shown stability. Funding is released against auditable markers such as documented procedures, confirmed openings, or verified operating cycles. This order limits stranded investments and supports steady scaling in China (Stenders 2025 2025).

The company Joom. The dominant trajectory is systems-first. The sequence starts with data visibility, platform integrations, and logistics arrangements that make cross-border transactions traceable and reliable. When the platform layer brings variance down, roles and responsibilities are realigned to the stabilized process and budgeting is assigned to reinforce the observed service metrics. Channel growth follows within the envelope set by traceability and compliance, which keeps coordination costs predictable as volume rises (Joom 2025).

Both companies improve diversification coherence when exploratory steps are translated quickly into standard routines with clear readiness markers. STENDERS does this by moving people and compliance first, then tying system upgrades and channel growth to what the front line can reproduce. Joom does this by moving systems and integrations first, then aligning roles and budgeting to the stabilized process. A third option, finance-gated, appears where investment is intentionally held back until auditable milestones confirm that pilots have become routines. Misordered sequences — for example, channel launches before compliance or financing before systems readiness — disperse effort and raise coordination costs (Stenders 2025 2025; Joom 2025).

The observed trajectories can be summarized as a practical typology defined by the order of movement across four resource packages: people, systems, finance, and channels or partnerships. The typology is designed for managers and does not require heavy terminology. Table 1 brings the three strategies together and provides brief definitions so that a firm can match its binding constraint to the appropriate first move..

Table 1

SMEs corporate diversification strategies by sequencing

Strategy	First move	Fits when	Next steps	Typical risks if misordered
People-first	Roles, training, compliance routines	Front-line capability & regulatory conformity are binding	Add ICT visibility; then expand channels with budget gates tied to markers	Channel launch before compliance; reputational/regulatory setbacks
Systems-first	ICT/integrations, data visibility, logistics	Reliability & traceability are binding	Redesign roles; then budget and channel growth within traceability envelope	Funding/channels before integrations → coordination cost spikes
Finance-gated	Open budgets only after auditable milestones	High uncertainty; pilots are easy to audit	Standardize routine right after each marker; then scale	Starving viable pilots if markers are vague; bureaucratic delays

Source: the author's elaboration based on auditable markers and public materials of STENDERS and JOOM (2017–2024)**.**

Table 1 organises the pathways as constraint–first-move matches that translate pilots into reproducible routines. In a people-first sequence, the binding constraint is service reproducibility and conformity, therefore the initial investment is managerial attention to roles, training, and compliance routines. Coherence rises when ICT connections are added only after routines hold in day-to-day work, and when channels open in step with verified readiness. In a systems-first sequence, the binding constraint is reliability and traceability, therefore integrations, data visibility, and logistics come first; only once variance drops are roles and budgeting redesigned to reinforce the stabilised process. The finance-gated variant functions as governance: budgets open only when auditable markers are met, which disciplines handoffs and shields the firm from premature scaling in uncertain settings.

Cross-case reading. STENDERS exemplifies the people-first logic: front-line routines lead, ICT follows to make performance portable across sites, channels expand once the routine is proven, and funding ratchets up against markers that are easy to audit in operations (Stenders 2025). JOOM exemplifies the systems-first logic: platform integrations and data visibility reduce execution variance, role redesign and budgeting follow the stabilised flow, and channel growth stays inside the envelope set by traceability and compliance (Joom 2025). Both pathways raise diversification coherence, yet for different reasons: in STENDERS, coherence is gained by reducing human-process ambiguity before scaling; in JOOM, coherence is gained by reducing informational and logistical ambiguity before reorganising people.

Markers and measurement. The pathways are testable with observable signals that do not require confidential data. For people-first, training completion and compliance approvals should reach a defined threshold before channel openings, and rework on front-line tasks should trend down after routines are documented. For systems-first, exception handling and manual overrides should decline after integrations go live, and on-time fulfilment and traceability confirmations should improve before headcount or budget expands. For finance-gated, marker definitions must be specific, dated, and auditable, otherwise budgets remain closed and viable pilots risk being starved. These signals allow managers to audit whether movement order is respected, and to detect misordering when channel launches precede compliance readiness or funding precedes systems readiness (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

Boundary conditions. People-first underperforms when compliance is trivial and the real bottleneck is information flow; systems-first underperforms when regulatory calendars dominate outcomes and front-line behaviour is the true constraint. Finance-gated becomes counterproductive when markers are vague or infrequent, since decision latency accumulates and pilots stall. Selecting a pathway therefore requires diagnosing which constraint actually binds and defining markers that are observable at the cadence of operations and partner or regulator calendars.

Chapter takeaway. Read through the table, both cases show that diversification performance depends less on resource volume and more on order and timing of movement. When first moves align with the binding constraint and each step is locked with an auditable marker, exploration accumulates into routines that travel across channels and geographies. Where order is violated, effort disperses and coordination costs rise, which explains the observed divergence between successful and stalled initiatives in the two firms (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025). This sets up the conclusions, where we generalise the comparative insights into a compact template for managers and outline limits and avenues for further testing.

Discussion

The findings show that diversification performance depends on the order in which resource packages move rather than on their total volume. Firms do not choose between causation and effectuation once and for all. They hybridize both logics: effectual probing to create options with available means, followed by causal consolidation that standardizes what worked at scale (Sarasvathy 2001; Fisher 2012; Smolka et al. 2018). This pattern is visible across the two companies without restating their operational details. The important point is timing and order: translating exploratory steps into reproducible routines at the right moment matters more than declaring a preferred logic.

From the resource orchestration view, the advantage comes from structuring, bundling, and leveraging resources in a feasible sequence with rising compatibility across domains (Sirmon et al. 2007; Sirmon et al. 2011; Teece 2007; Helfat, Peteraf 2015). In China–EU settings, sequencing quality is tested by institutional duality. Regulatory calendars, certification, and data protection rules create windows in which internal routines and role boundaries must be adapted if expansion is to hold together operationally (Johanson, Vahlne 2009; Peng 2003). We use diversification coherence as a practical lens: quality rises when reallocation steps coincide with regulatory or demand milestones, when ICT compatibility increases across domains, and when channel bottlenecks shrink as scope expands (Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023).

The two companies illustrate how constraint–strategy fit works in practice. Where the binding constraint is front line capability and compliance, a people-first pathway stabilizes service before digital upgrades and channel growth. Where reliability and traceability are binding, a systems-first pathway that builds data visibility and integrations prior to role redesign keeps coordination costs predictable as volume rises. Under high uncertainty, a finance-gated pathway that opens budgets only after auditable milestones serves as a governance device that converts pilots into routines without premature spending. In all three strategies the design variable is order of movement and the control variable is the auditable marker that locks each step before the next one opens (Stenders 2025; Joom 2025).

For managers the implication is straightforward. First, diagnose the binding constraint before moving any package. Second, define a clear, externally auditable marker for each step such as a documented procedure, an integration go-live, or a verified storefront opening. Third, standardize the routine immediately after the marker and only then unlock the next budget. Misordered steps such as launching channels before compliance or releasing funding before systems readiness disperse effort and create stranded investments. Figure 1 is a compact template for mapping the constraint to the first move and for checking that markers enforce discipline between steps (Sirmon et al. 2011; Partanen et al. 2020; Vuorio, Torkkeli 2023).

Conclusions

This study reframes SME diversification in China–EU value chains as a problem of sequencing. The author connects hybrid decision making to resource orchestration through the idea of diversification coherence and demonstrates three workable strategies: people-first, systems-first, and finance-gated. The contribution is a simple and replicable way to turn pilots into routines by aligning the first move with the binding constraint and by locking each step with an auditable marker.

Comparative takeaway. The two Latvian cases reach higher diversification coherence through different orders of movement. STENDERS succeeds with a people-first sequence that stabilizes roles, training, and compliance before ICT and channel expansion. JOOM scales with a systems-first sequence that builds integrations, data visibility, and logistics before role redesign and budgeting. A finance-gated variant fits settings with high uncertainty by opening budgets only after auditable milestones. Constraint–strategy fit explains the divergence: where compliance and service reproducibility bind, people move first; where reliability and traceability bind, systems move first.

For practice the template is actionable. Managers start by identifying the dominant constraint, select the matching pathway, and define markers that must be achieved before budgets open. Synchronizing steps with regulatory and partner calendars raises the odds that exploration becomes a reproducible routine rather than a string of isolated attempts. The approach is compatible with lightweight documentation and can be used in quarterly reviews without heavy analytical overhead.

The design has limits. Evidence comes from public and auditable markers in two companies and may miss internal preparations. Future research can extend the sample across sectors and firm sizes, operationalize coherence as a quantitative index, and test timing thresholds and non-linear effects under different institutional conditions.

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Veidošanas loģika un resursu sadales trajektorijas MVU korporatīvās diversifikācijas stratēģijās Ķīnas-ES tirdzniecības un investīciju integrācijas kontekstā: dažu gadījumu salīdzinoša izpēte

Kopsavilkums

Šajā rakstā tiek pētīts, kā Latvijas mazie un vidējie uzņēmumi veido diversifikāciju uz Ķīnas–ES tirgiem, pārvaldot to, kādā kārtībā tiek mobilizēti resursi. Uzņēmumi kļūst noturīgāki, ja cilvēkresursi, sistēmas, finanses un partnerības pārvietojas apzinātā secībā, kas pārvērš pilotprojektus atkārtojamās rutīnās. Pētījums balstās uz diviem reāliem Latvijas uzņēmumiem. STENDERS, kosmētikas ražotājs, kam Ķīna ir lielākais eksporta galamērķis, virzās pa cilvēku-pirmais trajektoriju: vispirms tiek nostiprinātas lomas, apmācība un atbilstības procedūras, pēc tam digitālās saites stabilizē servisu un krājumus, un tikai tad paplašinās kanāli un tiek atvērta finansēšana, piesaistīta novērotajiem rezultātiem. JOOM, Rīgā dibināta pārrobežu platforma, aug pa sistēmu-pirmais trajektoriju: vispirms tiek nodrošināta datu pārredzamība, integrācijas un loģistika, pēc tam tiek pārveidotas lomas un budžetēšana, un pēc tam paplašinās kanāli. Nepareiza soļu secība rada zaudējumus, savukārt pareiza secība pārvērš izpēti noturīgās pozīcijās. Salīdzinošā analīze iezīmē trīs stratēģijas, ko nosaka resursu kustības kārtība. Cilvēku-pirmais ir piemērota, ja ierobežojums ir pirmās līnijas kapacitāte un regulatīvā atbilstība. Sistēmu-pirmais ir atbilstoša, ja galvenie ierobežojumi ir izsekojamība un izpildes uzticamība. Finansiāli ierobežota pieeja (*finance-gated*) ir piemērota, ja investīcijas jāatver tikai pēc auditējamu atskaites punktu sasniegšanas un pilotprojekti ir pārvērsti standarta procedūrās. Abos uzņēmumos diversifikācijas koherence uzlabojas, ja pāreja no izpētes uz konsolidāciju tiek sinhronizēta ar partneru kalendāriem un kontrolpunktiem, kā arī ja digitālās saites samazina servisa variāciju un saīsina nodošanas. Ieguldījums ir praktisks: vispirms diagnosticēt primāro ierobežojumu, definēt pārbaudāmu marķieri un tūlīt pēc katra soļa standartizēt rutīnu. Kompakta tabula apkopo šīs izvēles un palīdz veidot īsas, pārbaudāmas pārejas no pilotprojektiem uz rutīnām. Pieeja ir bez pārliekas terminoloģijas un ir atkārtojama jebkuram uzņēmumam, kas dokumentē dažus atskaites punktus, seko līdzi tam, kādā kārtībā kustas cilvēki, sistēmas, finanses un partnerības, un atbrīvo finansējumu tikai pēc marķieru izpildes.

Atslēgvārdi: korporatīvā diversifikācijas stratēģija, resursu secība, Ķīna–ES, MVU internacionalizācija, digitālā integrācija, regulatīvā atbilstība,platformu loģistika, vadības rutīnas.

Xianghua Zeng (China)

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS CLUBS AS SOCIAL SYSTEMS: A LUHMANNIAN ANALYSIS

This study analyzes FC Barcelona – as the case of professional sports clubs – through the theoretical lens of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, arguing that the club functions not merely as a sports organization but as a self-referential communicative system that produces and reproduces its own meaning structures. Rather than deriving institutional relevance from material success, managerial strategies, or external political pressures, FC Barcelona sustains its identity through recursive communicative operations that distinguish "Barça" from its environment. Drawing on historical, political, and cultural analyses, as well as existing scholarship on sports fandom and systems theory, the study demonstrates how the club selectively interprets global sport markets, Catalan political narratives, and transnational fan cultures as communicative irritations, transforming them into internal meaning that reinforces systemic autonomy. In doing so, FC Barcelona exemplifies the autopoietic dynamics of contemporary sports institutions, where identity and social significance emerge from ongoing communicative reproduction rather than individual actions or fixed ideological programs. The findings contribute to the sociology of sport by showing that professional clubs can be understood as active producers of social reality, capable of shaping collective identities, mobilizing symbolic capital, and intervening in wider cultural and political processes. At the same time, the study underscores the limitations of current research, noting the lack of empirical operationalization and methodological tools for measuring communicative autopoiesis in sports contexts, and highlights the need for future studies to develop interdisciplinary and empirical approaches to examine how these systems evolve under increasingly global and digital conditions.

Keywords: Niklas Luhmann, systems theory, autopoiesis, sports communication, identity construction, FC Barcelona, Catalan nationalism.

Introduction and justification of the study

Professional sports clubs constitute some of the most symbolically potent and socially visible institutions of the contemporary world. Their significance extends well beyond athletic performance, serving as focal points for identity construction, political expression, economic circulation, and global cultural exchange. Scholarship in sociology, sport studies, and media research has documented how sporting organizations mobilize fandom, generate affective attachment, and operate within transnational communication flows (Hirshon 2020; Matang et al. 2023; Cheng, Wu 2025). Yet, despite these advances, theoretical approaches often treat clubs primarily as organizational actors embedded within broader social structures rather than as systems capable of generating their own meanings and identities.

This conceptual limitation becomes especially evident in the case of FC Barcelona, arguably one of the most socially entangled and communicatively prolific football clubs in the world (McDonald, Denning 2005; García 2012; O'Brien et al. 2024). Barcelona's institutional reality cannot be adequately described through performance metrics, administrative decisions, or regional affiliations alone. The club functions as a node where political aspirations, cultural narratives, and global media practices intersect, making it an ideal case through which to reassess how professional sports organizations produce and sustain social relevance.

To address this gap, the present article adopts Niklas Luhmann's systems-theoretical perspective (Luhmann 1995, 1997, 2001, 2013), which offers tools for analyzing social formations in terms of the communicative operations that constitute them (Men'shikov 2020). Rather than asking what a sports club is, this approach asks how it continually becomes observable as a distinct entity, and through which communicative patterns it constructs boundaries, codes, and expectations that differentiate it from its environment. FC Barcelona provides a paradigmatic instance of such processes: its motto "Més que un club," its persistent entanglement with Catalan identity, and its global fan infrastructures illustrate how the club not only reflects but actively produces meanings that exceed athletic competition (Ranachan 2008; O'Brien et al. 2024).

By situating FC Barcelona within a Luhmannian analytical horizon, this study moves beyond interpretations that reduce sport to entertainment industries, political instruments, or commercial brands. Instead, it proposes to examine the club as a communicatively constituted social system whose continuity depends upon the recursive production of meaning. This perspective allows us to investigate how professional sports organizations contribute to the shaping of collective identities, mobilize cultural imaginaries, and intervene in wider political and economic processes – thereby functioning not merely as recipients of societal forces but as active participants in their articulation.

The case of FC Barcelona is therefore not simply illustrative but theoretically generative. Through it, we can observe how contemporary sports institutions acquire systemic autonomy, sustain recognizable identities, and produce forms of social reality that extend far beyond the confines of sport.

Theoretical background and conceptual framework

This study draws upon Niklas Luhmann's systems theory to conceptualize FC Barcelona as an autonomous, self-referential social system whose continued existence is grounded not in individual action or organizational structure, but in the recursive reproduction of communication. Luhmann's theoretical shift moves sociology away from subject-centered paradigms and towards an understanding of society as composed of communicative operations that generate and maintain systemic boundaries and identities (Luhmann 1995, 1997). As he states, the elements of social systems are not people or actions but communications, and these communications reproduce themselves by linking to further communications, thereby sustaining the system's autopoiesis (Luhmann 1995, 1997). This means that social systems do not rely on individual intentions for their coherence; rather, individuals appear within the system only as constructs of communication, not as its constitutive units (Luhmann 2013).

Autopoiesis, originally developed by Humberto Maturana in the context of biological systems, refers to a system's ability to produce and reproduce the elements that constitute it (Maturana 1981). Luhmann extends this concept beyond biology by redefining the operational components of the social system as communications, not living organisms, thereby making autopoiesis applicable to the sociological domain (Luhmann 1995, 1997). This redefinition enables the analysis of social phenomena such as FC Barcelona not as dependent on individual or material foundations, but as (Men'shikov). As Vanderstraeten notes, this conceptual move was not merely an extension of biological thinking into the social but a deliberate "conceptual revolution" that replaced action with communication as the constitutive element of social systems, making autopoiesis intelligible only when its components are understood as emergent from communication itself (Vanderstraeten 2014).

Communication, for Luhmann, is not a transfer of meaning from one subject to another but a synthesis of information, utterance, and understanding (Luhmann 1995). This triadic structure explains how systems generate continuity: each communicative event selects information from a horizon of possibilities, presents it in an utterance, and becomes communication only if it is understood as such by subsequent operations. If understanding occurs, regardless of whether meaning corresponds to the original intention, communication continues and system reproduction is achieved (Luhmann 2001). In this perspective, communication does not transmit pre-existing information but rather produces information as a difference that triggers further communicative acts, resonating with Menshikov's argument that information is not a stored entity but a momentary differentiation within communication (Men'shikov 2020). Vanderstraeten stresses that communication's recursive capacity to trigger further communication is precisely what enables the autopoietic reproduction of social systems, making communication – not action – the only viable candidate for the basic element of social autopoiesis (Vanderstraeten 2014).

The emergence and stability of systems depend on the differentiation between system and environment, a distinction that Luhmann identifies as foundational for understanding systemic identity (Luhmann 1995). Systems arise by drawing boundaries that separate internal operations from external events, and what appears as the system's environment is available only insofar as communication transforms external stimuli into information compatible with the system's codes. This operational closure does not imply isolation; rather, systems maintain structural couplings with their environments, enabling irritation and adaptation without surrendering autonomy (Luhmann 2013). FC Barcelona's engagements with global sport markets, Catalan political narratives, and transnational fan cultures exemplify such couplings: these environments influence the club only insofar as they are processed internally through communicative acts that reinterpret them within the club's systemic logic.

Within this communicative architecture, the identity of FC Barcelona is continuously regenerated through symbolic programs, media narratives, institutional messages, and collective rituals that reiterate and refine what “Barça” means. The club’s motto “Més que un club” functions as a condensation point of meaning through which communication organizes expectations and distinguishes the club from other institutions (Ranachan 2008; O’Brien et al. 2024). The system’s identity does not derive from historical origin or external validation but from its autopoietic capacity to reproduce communicative distinctions that demarcate inclusion and exclusion, belonging and otherness. Luhmann’s observation that systems explain stability not through consensus but through the ongoing production of meaning offers a particularly useful tool for understanding how FC Barcelona survives periods of crisis without dissolving its systemic identity (Luhmann 1997, 2001). Vanderstraeten reinforces this insight by arguing that communication’s emergent organization – not intentional action – is what enables social systems to sustain themselves over time, particularly in contexts marked by complex symbolic environments such as contemporary sport (Vanderstraeten 2014).

Seen in this light, professional sports clubs are not passive reflections of broader social forces but active producers of social reality. Their significance lies not in material performance or organizational design, but in their communicative capacity to generate and stabilize meanings that resonate across cultural, political, and economic domains. By interpreting FC Barcelona as a self-referential communicative system, this study foregrounds the processes through which the club constructs and perpetuates its own identity, demonstrating that its social relevance emerges not from individuals or infrastructures, but from the autopoietic operations of communication that make “Barça” observable and continually reproducible.

System/environment couplings of FC Barcelona. The autopoietic nature of FC Barcelona becomes most apparent when examining how the club selectively engages with its environments. In Luhmannian terms, no social system exists in isolation; rather, it maintains its autonomy through operational closure while simultaneously forming **structural couplings** with relevant external domains (Luhmann 1995, 2013). These couplings do not determine the system’s operations but provide irritations – events, expectations, or symbolic pressures – that the system translates into communicatively compatible forms. What enters from the outside is never imported directly; it only becomes meaningful once the system internalizes it as information processed according to its own codes.

For FC Barcelona, three environments are particularly salient (García 2012):

(1) global sport markets, which introduce commercial obligations, performance imperatives, media visibility, and branding expectations;
(2) Catalan political narratives, which infuse the club with historical and linguistic meaning, providing a horizon of cultural legitimacy and symbolic resistance;
(3) transnational fan cultures, whose digital and translocal practices expand Barcelona’s communicative network far beyond the territorial limits of Catalonia.

These environments do not impose identity upon Barcelona; instead, the club selectively interprets and transforms these stimuli into communicable distinctions that reinforce its systemic self-observation. For instance, political events surrounding Catalan independence do not automatically become club politics; they become relevant only when processed as system-internal messages – such as slogans, banners, institutional declarations, or curated silence – thereby reinforcing or recalibrating what counts as “Barça” in a given historical moment. This dynamic confirms García's argument that Barcelona's identity remains stable even when its political messaging shifts, because the system retains the power to frame external irritations according to its communicative logic (García 2012).

The diagram below visualizes these couplings:

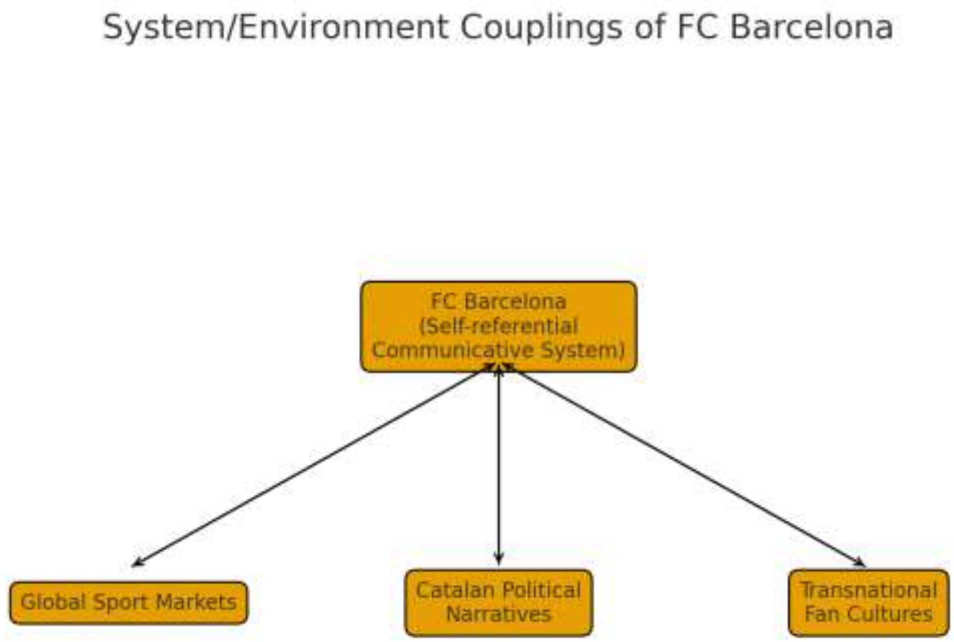

Figure 1. System/ Environment Couplings of FC Barcelona

Source: elaborated by the author based on García 2012.

In this representation, FC Barcelona occupies the systemic center, not as a passive container of external meanings, but as a communicatively active node that continuously reproduces itself through selections that distinguish system from environment. Each arrow signifies not causal determination but recursive communicative translation: external pressures become internal meaning only when the system renders them communicable. This operational circularity explains why Barcelona has remained observable across decades of political turbulence, shifting leadership, fluctuating athletic performance, and intensified global commercialization. It also clarifies how the club can simultaneously embody Catalan identity, participate in global football capitalism, and nurture a planetary fan community without collapsing into contradiction.

Seen through this theoretical configuration, FC Barcelona exemplifies a self-referential communicative system whose persistence derives from its capacity to convert environmental complexity into symbolic resources for identity-making. Its motto "Més que un club" does not merely describe a cultural surplus; it names the recursive communicative mechanism through which the system observes itself as distinct and thereby ensures its own continuation. The diagram, therefore, is not an illustration of external influences but a map of communicative interfaces through which the club maintains autonomy while remaining structurally open to the complexities of the contemporary world.

FC Barcelona as a self-referential communicative system

Understanding FC Barcelona through the lens of Luhmann's systems theory allows the club to be conceptualized not merely as a successful sports organization, but as a communicatively constituted social system that continuously reproduces itself through meaning-generating operations. Rather than deriving its identity from material infrastructures, organizational actors, or sporting success, FC Barcelona sustains itself through recursive communicative processes that differentiate "Barça" from its environment and render it observable as a distinct social reality.

Historical, political, and sociocultural studies consistently underscore that FC Barcelona's significance cannot be reduced to its athletic achievements (Ranachan 2008; O'Brien et al. 2024). As McDonald and Denning note, the club's transcendence lies precisely in the fact that "the existence of FC Barcelona – its social consequence, cannot be explained solely as a result of its sporting success", since a diverse set of motivations—familial, emotional, ideological, and cultural – structures participation in the club (McDonald, Denning 2005). Their analysis positions Barcelona as a social institution whose communicative practices accumulate forms of social capital by mobilizing shared meanings, solidarities, and expectations that extend beyond the football pitch. This aligns with the Luhmannian argument that systems reproduce themselves through communication rather than through individual intentions.

A central dimension of Barcelona's autopoietic identity is its articulation of Catalan nationhood and collective memory. Ranachan's detailed historical account demonstrates how the motto "Més que un club" emerged as a condensed communicative symbol through which the club differentiated itself from the Spanish state and articulated a culturally specific horizon of belonging (Ranachan 2008). The club's communicative infrastructure – chants, rituals, visual symbols, and media narratives – functioned as recursive operations that transformed external political repression into system-internal meaning. By doing so, FC Barcelona did not merely reflect Catalan identity but actively produced it, confirming the Luhmannian insight that identity is not a pre-given essence but a product of communicative reproduction.

In more recent scholarship, García argues that despite the radicalization of Barcelona's political messaging under Joan Laporta, the club's relationship with its fan base has not deteriorated, because the identities sustained within the communicative system of Barça outweigh potential ideological disagreement (García 2012). Fans continue to recognize themselves within the club's communicative universe even when political alignments diverge, illustrating that system continuity depends on the reproduction of meaning rather than the alignment of individual opinions. This is a paradigmatic instance of autopoiesis: the system accepts or rejects external events according to its internal communicative codes, transforming conflicts into new opportunities for identity reinforcement.

The systemic nature of FC Barcelona is further illuminated by O'Brien et al. (2024), who demonstrate that the club's communicative practices – its commemorative rituals, media partnerships, political statements, and global branding – operate as interconnected meaning-making devices that continually regenerate what Barcelona is understood to be. Their research shows that the club does not merely represent identity but actively constructs it through recursive communicative chains embedded across historical, political, and global contexts.

Taken together, these studies confirm that FC Barcelona functions as a self-referential communicative system in the Luhmannian sense. The club does not passively inherit identity; it produces it. Its continued relevance emerges from ongoing communicative selections – ranging from historical narratives and institutional messaging to fan practices – that reproduce the distinctions necessary for the system to observe and stabilize itself as "Barça". Through these operations, the club sustains an autopoietic dynamic that allows it to absorb crises, transform external challenges into communicative events, and persist as "more than a club" (McDonald, Denning 2005) – not because of what it materially possesses, but because of what it continually communicates.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that FC Barcelona can be fruitfully understood as an autonomous, self-referential communicative system whose identity, continuity, and societal impact emerge not from material assets, institutional design, or athletic performance, but from recursive communicative operations that distinguish the club from its environment. By applying Luhmann's theoretical framework, the study demonstrates that the club generates meaning through selections that stabilize internal distinctions such as "Barça" versus "not-Barça", "Catalonia" versus "Spain", and "identity" versus "commodity". These selections are continually reproduced via media narratives, symbolic rituals, institutional messaging, and fan engagement, confirming that FC Barcelona's institutional relevance derives from ongoing communicative autopoiesis rather than individual intentions or strategic decisions. The club's motto "Més que un club" is not merely a slogan but a condensation mechanism through which Barcelona observes itself and reaffirms its systemic boundaries, enabling it to persist across political shifts, economic pressures, and sporting fluctuations. This reinforces the central finding that professional sports clubs, when analyzed through Luhmannian theory, emerge as active producers of social reality rather than passive reflections of cultural or political forces.

Nevertheless, the research is not without limitations. First, the study remains primarily conceptual and theoretical; it does not empirically operationalize specific communicative mechanisms or analyze the measurable effects of Barcelona's communicative reproduction on audiences, institutions, or social networks. Second, the study focuses predominantly on FC Barcelona as an exceptional case. While this provides rich theoretical insight, it raises questions about generalizability: it is unclear whether other sports organizations without Barcelona's political entanglements, cultural heritage, or global fan infrastructures exhibit comparable systemic dynamics. Third, the study relies largely on secondary sources and does not incorporate ethnographic, digital trace, or interview-based data, which could reveal how communication circulates within and beyond the club's structures. Finally, as Zeng notes, the systems-theoretical approach is still largely underdeveloped in empirical sports research, and analytical tools for capturing autopoietic communication remain in early stages of methodological refinement. These factors delimit the scope of the present contribution and indicate the need for further methodological elaboration.

Future research could extend the findings of this study in several promising directions. One trajectory is empirical validation: ethnographic analyses of match-day rituals, social media discourse, or institutional communication strategies could illuminate how communicative operations are enacted in practice. Another avenue involves comparative analysis across different clubs, leagues, or national contexts to assess whether autopoietic systemic dynamics manifest similarly or whether Barcelona represents an anomalous case shaped by Catalan history, symbolic capital, and global branding. Further studies might incorporate quantitative network analysis to trace communicative selections across fan cultures or examine how digital infrastructures reshape systemic boundaries. Additionally, interdisciplinary work combining systems theory with political communication, media studies, or cultural sociology could refine the conceptual apparatus needed to address communication in environments characterized by platformization, commercialization, and algorithmic mediation. Ultimately, future research should explore whether sports clubs in the digital age continue to function as self-referential communicative systems, and if so, how their operations evolve in response to intensified global interdependencies and shifting regimes of visibility.

Taken together, the study confirms that FC Barcelona is not simply a football team but an autopoietic system whose durability rests upon its communicative capacity to reproduce itself across time. By elucidating this dynamic, the research contributes a novel theoretical perspective to the sociology of sport and opens a pathway for further inquiries into how contemporary sports organizations construct and maintain their identities within increasingly complex communicative environments.

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Profesionālie sporta klubi kā sociālās sistēmas: Lūmana analyze

Kopsavilkums

Šis pētījums analizē futbola klubu “FC Barcelona”, kā profeionālo sporta klubu piemēru, Niklasa Lūmana sistēmu teorijas ietvaros, argumentējot, ka klubs funkcionē ne tikai kā sporta organizācija, bet arī kā pašreferenciāla komunikatīva sistēma, kas rada un reproducē savas nozīmes struktūras. Tā vietā, lai institucionālo nozīmību balstītu materiālajos panākumos, vadības stratēģijās vai ārējā politiskajā spiedienā, “FC Barcelona” uztur savu identitāti, veicot atkārtotas komunikatīvās operācijas, kas atšķir “Barça” no tās vides. Balstoties uz vēsturisku, politisku un kultūras analīzi, kā arī uz līdzšinējiem pētījumiem par sporta fanu kultūru un sistēmu teoriju, pētījums parāda, kā klubs selektīvi interpretē globālos sporta tirgus, Katalonijas politiskos naratīvus un transnacionālās fanu kultūras kā komunikatīvus kairinājumus, pārvēršot tos iekšējā nozīmē, kas stiprina sistēmisko autonomiju. Šādā veidā “FC Barcelona” iemieso mūsdienu sporta institūciju autopoētisko dinamiku, kur identitāte un sociālā nozīme rodas no nepārtrauktas komunikatīvas reprodukcijas, nevis individuālām darbībām vai fiksētām ideoloģiskām programmām. Pētījuma rezultāti sniedz ieguldījumu sporta socioloģijā, parādot, ka profesionālie klubi ir izprotami kā aktīvi sociālās realitātes radītāji, spējīgi veidot kolektīvās identitātes, mobilizēt simbolisko kapitālu un ietekmēt plašākus kultūras un politiskos procesus. Vienlaikus pētījums uzsver pašreizējo pētījumu ierobežojumus, norādot uz empīrisku operacionalizācijas metožu un metodoloģisko rīku nepietiekamību komunikatīvās autopoēzes mērīšanai sporta kontekstos, kā arī iezīmē nepieciešamību turpmākajos pētījumos attīstīt starpdisciplināras un empīriskas pieejas, lai analizētu šo sistēmu attīstību arvien globalizētākos un digitalizētākos apstākļos.

Atslēgas vārdi: Niklass Lūmans, sistēmu teorija, autopoēze, sporta komunikācija, identitātes konstrukcija, FC Barcelona, Katalāņu nacionālisms.

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VISPĀRĪGĀS PRASĪBAS ZINĀTNISKAM RAKSTAM

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Turner, J. H. (1974) *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Homewood (Illinois): The Dorsey Press.

Mills Ch. R. (1998) Sociologicheskoje voobrazhenie. Moskva: Strategiya. (In Russian)

Rakstiem krājumos:

Turner, R. H. (1990) "A Comparative Content Analysis of Biographies." In: Øyen, E., ed. *Comparative Methodoloy: Theory and Practice in International Social Research*. London, etc.: Sage Publications. pp. 134–150.

Rakstiem žurnālos:

Bela B. (1997) Identitates daudzbalsiba Zviedrijas latviesu dzivesstastos. *Latvijas Zinatnu Akademijas Vestis, A, 51,* Nr. *5/6,* 112.-129. Lpp. (In Latvian)

Shmitt K. (1992) Ponyatie politicheskogo. *Voprosi sotsiologii,* № 1, str. 37-67. (In Russian)

Rakstiem laikrakstos:

Strazdins I. (1999) Matematiki pasaule un Latvija. *Zinatnes Vestnesis,* 8. marts. (In Latvian)

Materiāliem no interneta:

Soms H. *Vestures informatika: Saturs, struktura un datu baze Latgales dati.* (In Latvian) Pieejams: http://www.dpu.lv/LD/LDpublik.html (skat. 20.10.2002).

References sakārtojamas autoru uzvārdu vai nosaukumu (ja autors ir institūcija) latīņu alfabēta secībā.

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Collected articles:

Turner, R. H. (1990) "A Comparative Content Analysis of Biographies." In: Øyen, E., ed. *Comparative Methodoloy: Theory and Practice in International Social Research*. London, etc.: Sage Publications. pp. 134–150.

Articles in journals:

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