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# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

**SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND WRITTEN JOURNALISTIC TRANSLATION: THE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH**
Dorjana Klosi 4

**A COMPARATIVE SURVEY ON INTROVERTED AND EXTROVERTED ADOLESCENCE IN THAILAND BUILDING FRIENDSHIP BONDS**
Mingkwan Leejin 10

**THE RIGHTS OF THE DEFENCE IN THE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE**
Dominika Becková 13

**A COMPARATIVE PAPER BETWEEN DIFFERENT METHODS OF TREATING PHOBIA AND ITS NEUROBIOLOGY COMPLEXITY**
Chanikanda Oupetch, Pathiya Nithipathrat, Praewwaree Kanjanavilai, Vichada Pankaew 20

**(UN)OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, CZECHOSLOVAK YOUTH UNION AT PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY IN OLOMOUC BETWEEN THE YEARS 1946–1956**
Monika Suková 32

**FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN SLOVENIA – QUESTIONS AND DILEMMAS**
Lara Oprešnik 41
Sociolinguistics and Written Journalistic Translation: the interdisciplinary approach

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Abstract

In recent years, interest in Translation Studies has grown exponentially, and language translators, linguists, scholars, educators, and different institutes are paying attention to various discourses, particularly in the contexts of Journalistic Translation Studies. Numerous researches have been conducted, some of have examined objectivity and devotion of translation and the relation between Journalistic Translation Studies and Sociolinguistics. Despite the immense contribution of the actors as mentioned earlier, there is much to be done concerning the contribution of context and culture transmission of Journalistic Translation Studies from the source language into the target language.

Journalistic and translation studies assume an essential place in the era of technology and information. The Media and Journalistic Translation, A Sociolinguistic Approach study emphasizes greatly journalistic translation and linguistic dimensions, including Sociolinguistics, Communication Studies and culture as well. Translation Studies perspective employs language use in interpersonal relations and the engagement of social variables with personal usage of linguistic elements. Sociolinguistics reveals the relationship between language and society independently of translation. It provides scientifically based descriptions of the relationship between the source language and the source language society, and the target language and the target language society, and thus contributes to exploring the objective rules behind translators’ decisions.

Keywords: media and journalistic translation, print news, Sociolinguistics, cultural transfer.

1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics encompasses a very broad field of research which, as Meyerhoff (2006) states, “can be confusing if you are new to the field”. Therefore, it is important to start by clarifying what can be considered sociolinguistic research.

In stark contrast to other linguistic approaches (such as psycholinguistics), the focus of sociolinguistics is the use of language, i.e. what can be said in a given language, by someone, someone, in the presence of someone, when and where, in what way and in what social circumstances. For sociolinguists, the process of acquiring a language is not only a cognitive process that involves the activation of a predisposition in the brain, but also a social process. Therefore, only a set of linguistic elements is not enough to know the language. The focus is on understanding the uses of language within a company. This implies the possible study of the relationships between objects and linguistic concepts such as identity, class, power, status, solidarity and gender1.

Within sociolinguistics, a distinction has sometimes been made between essential sociolinguistics and linguistic sociology. Although the distinction is not always clear, sociolinguistics is primarily concerned with studying the possible correlations between certain social attributes (e.g., class, sex, age) and certain linguistic varieties or patterns of use to understand how social structures influence the way we talk about people2.

2. Sociolinguistics

Sociology of language, on the other hand, focuses on issues such as how these social groups can best be understood through language, the attitudes behind the use and dissemination of forms of speech in society, protection, substitution or change in language and the interaction of different speaking communities. There is also a methodological gap between authors who believe that sociolinguistic research should be limited to correlation studies and authors who argue that the purpose of sociolinguistics should not be just to ensure how language is used in a given community, but also to investigate the causes of this use3. The latter, in perspective, shows a fundamental presupposition of the use of language as a creative practice of identity, thus stimulating studies on how power relations in society limit linguistic expression and interpretation. He sees language as a system and focuses on the

rules that govern that system. Since sociolinguistic variation is considered to be related to contextual rather than random elements, there are social and cultural dimensions in language choices to consider\(^4\). Thus, the dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. He sees language as a system and focuses on the rules that govern that system. Since sociolinguistic variation is considered to be related to contextual rather than random elements, there are social and cultural dimensions in language choices to consider\(^5\). Thus, the dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. He sees language as a system and focuses on the rules that govern that system. Since sociolinguistic variation is considered to be related to contextual rather than random elements, there are social and cultural dimensions in language choices to consider\(^6\). Thus, the dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. The dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. The dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. The dynamics of discourse can be analyzed to expose individual conventions and strategies, relationships of power and solidarity, status and stigmatization, or conflict and consensus. In this article, sociolinguistics will be taken in the broadest sense which includes both areas. We saw that sociolinguistics is defined as contact linguistics. Partly inherited from dialectology, she has been interested in multilingual situations in which speakers are required to switch from one language to another depending on the context or alternative languages within the same discourse. This also applies in the case of changes within the same language. We saw that translation studies pay the same attention to language contact, even if, in the case of translation, this contact is made by an intermediary called a translator. What sociolinguists observe in elements such as interventions, borrowings, innovations, transformations, etc., is found in the same way in translation, sometimes stigmatized as mistakes or inability of the translator, sometimes praised as good work for the language, discoveries, etc. Whatever the value judgment one makes, translation studies are truly a contact discipline, just as sociolinguistics and translations testify in their own way to this meeting of languages and their interlocutors. From this point of view, the translation specialist is a mediation sociolinguist. Sociolinguistics is thus a broad field, operating as a tent for studies focusing on the use of language. Other areas of study within sociolinguistics are language change, multilingualism, language interaction, language contact, and language planning/policy. Regarding language change, sociolinguists focus on change over time, but also through linguistic contact with other languages. Another area of study, multilingualism, deals with language change and use in communities with two or more languages. Another aspect of interest to sociolinguists is linguistic interaction and the way language forms are used, the communicative effect in particular cultural contexts. Finally, another area that has attracted attention within sociolinguistics since the 1960s is language planning, which deals with all conscious efforts aimed at language change in a given community, such as the role of minority languages in education, the process of selecting an official language, etc. Along with language planning we can find the concept of language policy, which has to do with more general linguistic, political and social goals. The development of these concepts has been possible only because sociolinguistics has been open to knowledge from other disciplines such as pragmatics, sociology and ethnography. In our paper we are interested in looking at sociolinguistics in relation to another discipline, that of translation.

3. Translation

Translation was considered a purely linguistic phenomenon until the 1960s. From the 1970s the study of translation began to adopt a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on concepts from sociolinguistics, cultural and pragmatic studies. As a result, the text with its communicative purpose shifted to the center of attention. Further, the emergence of skopo theory shifted the study of translation from the traditional approach of source text in favor of the function of a text, defining translation as intentional activity. The study of descriptive translation that followed brought a new socio-cultural perspective with translation being perceived as an

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activity influenced by socio-historical conditions and ideological conditions which in turn determined translation behavior. The real turning point in the study of translation9.

Cultural upheavals raised important questions about choice, about the circumstances under which translations can be transformative, and about the impact of translation on a particular culture at a particular point in time.

Since translation no longer deals with a simple linguistic transfer that follows a fidelity to a source text, but with a wide range of political, cultural, and historical changes, it involves a greater or lesser degree of mediation, i.e., the degree to which translators intervene in the transfer process10.

4. Sociolinguistics and translation

The theoretical positioning of sociolinguistics is not easy, for two reasons. On the one hand, its proponents argue that sociolinguistics is linguistics or intended to be. On the other hand, sociolinguistics affirms very strong links with sociology, anthropology, ethnology, social psychology, etc. It is placed in an interdisciplinary where it can be conceived sometimes as a separate discipline in the social sciences, sometimes as a sub-domain of one of the disciplines mentioned. However, this epistemological uncertainty does not stop the sociolinguistics / sociology of language from defining a certain number of phenomena of interest for translation.

What we can say about sociolinguistics is that the study of language is a common denominator11.

The development of Translation Studies (TP) as a discipline has, at times, been marked by a tension between linguistic and cultural approaches to translation. Fortunately, it is now widely accepted that both disciplines have a lot to offer each other. Regarding the special case of sociolinguistics, it is important to first contextualize the attention given by translation scholars within a broader functional and communicative approach to the text along with the shift from structural to functional linguistics. The connection between these two disciplines is a very natural issue, as sociolinguists deal mainly with language as it is used by society in communication as well as with the different ways that societies use language in interpersonal relationships. And these are essential for anyone who deals with translation.

Since the cultural turn in translation studies in the late 1980s, translation can no longer be perceived as a purely linguistic activity. Growing diversification within the translation industry and academic research on the nature of translation has highlighted the fact that translation has always been embedded in a cultural context. And the translator not only translates the language, but he also transmits the culture that this language carries12.

Many translation scholars have constructed sociolinguistic concepts to examine translation and the contextual elements that condition it. The points of contact between the two disciplines have actually multiplied with the rise of Translation Studies as a discipline and with the diversification of its study areas.

Let’s take a closer look at the points where the paths of these two disciplines intersect.

- **Translation and dialectology:**
  Gone are the days when most articles that focused on translating some form of linguistics began with the impossibility of translating specific elements of culture. Studies on regional and social dialectology have been clear on this issue. They have allowed scholars and translators to better identify which varieties are being used as their communicative meaning in the source text. This, in turn, has helped translators make informed decisions about how to better recreate language varieties in the target text, while helping students to better interpret translation options13.

  Similar relationships are known on a more macro level, and such concepts of standardization (i.e., the use of the standard variety in the target text when regional or social variety is used in the source text) have come into discussion along with the contextual aspects that lead to them. Factors promoting standardization include censorship, institutional pressure, translation status, and notions of linguistic correctness. However, the opposite movement has also been identified (that of using the regional or social variety of the target text while the standard variety was being used in the source text) along with the promotion of contextual elements14.

- **Language change and translation.**
  Another field of sociolinguistics that has influenced Translation Studies is the change of language field. This is an evolving research field not only because translation can be a promotional element for language change, but also because natural changes in a language promote the activity of translation. In this context, it is important to consider the phenomenon of translation, re-translation, production of new translations of works, updating and modernization of those that have

previously been translated into a particular language, focusing on the aesthetic aspect, linguistic, ideological and commercial motivating the production of those new translations.

• Linguistic contact, multilingualism and translation
  Taking a more synchronous view of language change through translation, some scholars turned their attention to aspects of language contact. The question of which language should be used necessarily means: which language should be translated, by whom, in what way, in which geo-temporal, institutional, etc. framework. This is why translation seems highly institutionalized in multilingual societies.
  Multilingualism has traditionally been considered one of the most insurmountable translation problems. Recently, however, liberated from the label of "untranslatable", it is perceived in a new light that has shaken the foundations of the "traditional dichotomy of the intended source text vs. target text, as well as many other structural notions such as fidelity and equivalence."

• Language planning / policies and translation.
  Language planning and language policy has been an evolving field of study since the 1960s, and as these tend to include translation policies, more attention is paid to translation in this context. Numerous studies have been promoted in the interpretation community in order to explore the links between interpretation policies and interpretation services. Nevertheless, the field still lacks a systematic study of translation policies and the link between them and translation services.

5. Where does sociolinguistics help translation?

It is sociolinguistic knowledge that helps the translator in his mission to:

5.1. Irreversibility.

The socio-linguistic approach is particularly important in investigating the problem of translatability and untranslatability. The emptiness of the arguments presented to support the idea of untranslatability is best shown by the tremendous amount of translations produced worldwide, dismissing the untranslatable thesis day by day, and yet every book on translation theory contains a part devoted to this problem.

The other untranslatable argument is the translation or impossibility of translating the "reality" mentioned above (names for objects used only by a certain group of people), as these, in fact, cannot be translated into the language of the community which does not know him. If reality is simply translated into the target language, then the translation will not make sense without the footnotes. If the translator tries to find some real-life target language with a similar function and uses it instead, then the informative and enriching function of the translation culture is compromised.

When translating realities, translators consciously or intuitively take into account the activity of accumulating and evaluating the knowledge of society in the target language. Thus, the existence of reality does not support the untranslatable theory.

5.2. Vocabulary translation without equivalence.

One area where translation theory can benefit greatly from sociolinguistics is the translation of what is commonly referred to as "lexicon without equivalence", or, to use another term, "reality". How can we translate the names of typical objects characteristic of a particular language community (meals, clothes, dishes, dances, etc.) into another language in which these objects do not exist? This question can be investigated on the surface as a vocabulary change, but can also be viewed from a broader perspective, based on sociolinguistic research into language contacts.

5.3. Reproduction of individual speaking styles.

In the case of translating literary pieces, it is an important problem to give the characters the individual (social or regional) speaking style. This particular problem of translation has to do with the problem of vertical and horizontal stratification of languages studied by sociolinguistics19.

5.4. Reproductions of regional dialects.

The presence of dialects is absolute in all languages. Their translation is a big problem for the translator or interpreter but not impossible, as sociolinguistics comes to the rescue again20.

5.5. Reproductions of social dialects.

Social dialects, which are so numerous in number, are successfully translated thanks to the sociolinguistic knowledge of the translator21.

We saw translation as an activity which encompasses a cultural, social and political diversity. It deals with language with its components and this brings it closer to sociolinguistics which in turn studies language for its interest and based on other criteria. Both of these disciplines come together to help each other in the field of reproduction of social dialects, regional dialects, individual speaking styles, lexicon without equivalence, etc22.

6. Conclusions

An essential point for sociolinguistics and which conditions the fact that we translate or not is that of the existence of languages and their definition. It is accepted by sociolinguists of all kinds that languages are characterized by variation and heterogeneity and not by homogeneity and the logical consequence would be to stop talking about plurilingualism among speakers, but about managing a more or less heterogeneous / homogeneous repertoire. For translation, this poses a rather psychological question of what the translator does when moving from one original text to another. Does he change language or switch from one variety of his repertoire to another23?

The rapprochement between translation and sociolinguistics, promoted mainly by the former, was motivated by the need to include contextual elements surrounding the production, circulation and receipt of translated texts in the SP analysis. Context can be considered both the micro sub-level of the text and the macro level of the translation context, and the theoretical models and concepts developed in sociolinguistics have proven to be important at both levels24. At the micro level, it has allowed for a better understanding of communication acts and specific contextual situations, while at the macro level, it has stimulated a new approach to translation as a product of a communicative act itself, a promotor of change or a secure supporter of communities’ word specific.

However, context can be a disturbing concept for translators and scholars as well as many other factors that need to be considered. In a world that is paradoxically becoming more global and local, the context is simultaneously becoming larger and more diverse, as well as smaller and more specific. Drawing its analytical tools from both the social sciences and linguistics, sociolinguistics seems to be a natural and fruitful friend of translation, whose knowledge can have important implications both methodologically and theoretically.

References


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A comparative survey on Introverted and Extroverted Adolescence in Thailand building friendship bonds

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Abstract

Friendship has become a strong bond between each person, especially for the adolescence. During high school life, a teenager has explored various kinds of friends. Everyone has their personality and style which leads to a different building friend. Introvert and extrovert is a two type of personality traits distributed in every society including school. This study explored introverted and extroverted students’ perception building friendship towards five factors: gender, age, nationality, personality trait (introvert and extrovert), and relationship (old friend and new friend). Introverts are referred to as people who are most comfortable interacting in small groups with one or two people. They are energized by focusing on their inner thoughts rather than the other external thing. Their personality type is characterized by traits such as thoughtfulness, self-awareness, and partiality to have a few friends but is very strong bonds. On the opposite side are extroverts, they described as extroverted people. They love being surrounded by people. It makes them feel energized. Their personality type characterized by sociability, enthusiasm, and avoided to be alone.

A survey, collecting information from 120 students with a sample of 60 boys and 60 girls portioned in half introvert and extrovert for each, revealed that 100% of introvert are comfortable being a friend with others introvert and also the same result as an extrovert. This might connect to the “Birds of the feather flock together” theory. Most introverted boys and girls are more likely to make a friend who in the same age, gender, nationality, and relationship. Also the same result for the extrovert, but the gap difference is closer. In age factor, 90% of introverted boys and 93.3% of introverted girls preferred knowing friends in the same generation. Meanwhile, 53.3% of extroverted boys and 56.7% of extroverted girls preferred knowing friends in the same generation. This goes in the same tendency with gender, nationality, and relationship factors. In conclusion, the result shows that, under this circumstance, introverts’ decisions seem to be leaned in the same way while extroverts’ be divided in half. In contrast, respondents’ gender has less effect and almost ineffective.

Keywords: Friendship, introvert, extrovert, adolescence, Birds of the feather flock together

1. Introduction

Friendship is referred to a state of enduring affection, intimacy, and trust between two people which is the important relationships throughout a person's life. It has made up from two people or above. This relationship is mostly occurred before noticing. As a human, we cannot live in this long life journey alone. So, friend has taken this and unblock the solitude out. Especially for an adolescence, anyone who is in between 10-21 years old which can deeply divide in to 3 stage: early, middle, and late. In this duration of life, we can find out a variety of friend and it can be said that friend has become one of the most important parts for us.

Everyone will be really unique in their own lifestyles, depending on the personality, perspective, and point of view. To clarify this, human is mainly separate into two types of personality traits: introvert and extrovert. The first one is introverts, can be defined as a person who remains isolated, or enjoys the company of few closed ones. Whereas this doesn’t mean they don’t need friends, they’re still do but might a small group of 2-3 people. They love to spend time with themselves which is what make they feel more energized. Their personality can be identified as quiet, thoughtful, reserved, shy, and calm. And the second one is extroverts, the completely different from introverts or can be defined as an outgoing and outspoken person who enjoys being around and talking to people. They love being with people, surrounding by others make them have more energy. Their personality can be identified as outgoing talkative, sociable, friendly, and out-going, active.

With the different personality traits (introvert and extrovert) along to general outer factors: gender, age, and nationality, also the previous bond (old and new friend) create different perspectives and thoughts also include how this two types will make friendship. From that, this survey research compared how different between introverted and extroverted adolescence building their friendship bonds.
2. Body of Manuscript

The study was collected from 120 adolescences (grade 7-12) from Thailand: 60 girls and 60 boys, with a half introvert and extrovert each.

![Picture 1. Data collection]

By comparing towards five factors: gender, age, nationality, personality trait (introvert and extrovert), and relationship (old friend and new friend). Use a google form as a collecting data material.

3. Table Figures and Equations

A survey revealed that 100% of introvert are comfortable being a friend with others introvert and also the same result as an extrovert which is connect to the “Birds of the feather flock together” theory, similar interests or of the same kind tend to form groups. Most introverted boys and girls are more likely to make a friend who in the same age, gender, nationality, and relationship. Also the same result for the extrovert, but the gap difference is closer.

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| Girls                                     |
| Preferred the same | Preferred the different |
| No. | %  | No. | %  |
| Age | 28 | 96.7 | 2 | 6.7 |
| Gender | 29 | 96.7 | 3 | 3.3 |
| Nationality | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Personality Trait | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Relationship | 29 | 96.7 | 1 | 3.3 |

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| **4. Conclusions**

In conclusion, the result shows that, under this circumstance, revealed that 100% of introvert are comfortable being a friend with others introvert and also the same result as an extrovert. This might connect to the “Birds of the feather flock together” theory. Introverts’ decisions seem to be leaned in the certain way while extroverts’ be divided in half. This goes in the same tendency in every factors except personality trait. In contrast, respondents’ gender has less effect and almost ineffective.

**Nomenclature**

No. Number of people ()
% Percentage (number of cases divided by a total number and multiple by 100)

**References**


The Rights of the Defence in the Criminal Proceedings of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office*

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Abstract

The establishment of the EPPO as a new body of the EU responsible for the investigation, prosecuting and bringing to judgement the perpetrators of and accomplices to criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the Union significantly changed the concept of the EU criminal law and opened a very sensitive issue of the rights of the defence of the suspects and accused person and their procedural safeguards in the criminal proceedings of the EPPO. EPPO Regulation defines three levels of protection of the rights of the suspects and accused persons: the general framework of rights set out in the EU Charter, the minimum scope of procedural rights set out in EU law and procedural rights under applicable national law. This procedural safeguard clause plays an important role in all activities of the EPPO. It is obvious that the legal regulation of the rights of the defence is fragmented, whereas the rights of the defence are regulated by both, EU law and national laws, where the scope of procedural rights can be different among the Member States. The aim of this article was to analyse the legal framework of the rights of the defence of suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings of the EPPO and to answer the questions of whether this legal regulation is sufficient and provide a certain degree of coherence and equal treatment with all suspects and accused persons in the criminal proceedings of the EPPO.

Keywords: EPPO, rights of the defence, procedural safeguards, art. 41 EPPO Regulation, national law

1. Introduction

The creation of the single European Prosecution Office has been a hot topic for a long time, accompanied by many challenges, difficulties and questions and closely linked to the development of criminal law of the European Union. The new framework of EU criminal law, both procedural and substantive, was brought by the Lisbon Treaty. The changes brought by the Lisbon Treaty to an area of freedom, security and justice transferred criminal law to the supranational level and opened a door for the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (“the EPPO”) and the harmonisation and approximation of criminal laws and regulations of the Member States in selected areas, e.g. the rights of individuals in criminal procedure, the rights of victims of crimes, the definition of criminal offences and sanctions.

The European Public Prosecutor’s Office was established under enhanced cooperation by Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 (“the EPPO Regulation”). The main task of the EPPO is to combat crimes affecting the financial interests of the Union (art. 86 (1) TFEU). To fulfil its main task, the EPPO is responsible for investigating, prosecuting and bringing to judgement the perpetrators of, and accomplices to, criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the Union (art. 4 EPPO Regulation). The material competence of the EPPO is limited to criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the Union which are provided for in Directive (EU) 2017/1371 (“the PIF Directive”). As the EPPO undertakes its investigations, carries out acts of prosecution and exercise the functions of prosecutor in the competent courts, the issues of the rights of suspects and accused persons come to the fore. The legal framework of the rights of suspects and accused persons and their protection are essential to ensure the fairness of the EPPO’s activities and the EPPO have to ensure coherent legal protection for suspects and accused persons in its proceedings (Wahl, 2020).

The protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EPPO proceedings is inextricably linked to the more general issue of the rights of individuals in criminal procedures in the EU. For more than twenty years the European Union has been trying to harmonize the area of the rights of suspects and accused persons in the Member States. These attempts were more or less successful and legal harmonization was achieved by way of minimum harmonization (Schroeder, 2020). Nowadays, the EU does not have a uniform legal framework of rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings, which is the result of the EU’s limits of competence. Defence rights are covered by national laws, which are partly harmonized with EU Directives. The multilevel legal framework and protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons is still a problematic issue and the EPPO has to cope with it. The EPPO is an indivisible body of the EU operating as one single Office with a decentralized structure.
(art. 8(1) EPPO Regulation) and will have to cope with differences in the criminal systems of the 22 participating Member States. Although the EPPO is a body of the EU, the procedural rules for investigations and prosecutions of the EPPO are largely based on the national laws of the participating Member States. Due to this fact and due to the lack of uniform legislation of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EU law, the legislator of the EPPO Regulation had to found a solution to ensure sufficiently effective and comprehensive protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons.

The solution for the protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EPPO proceedings was found in article 41 of the EPPO Regulation, which is the key provision for this paper and analysis. Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation which regulates the scope of the rights of the suspects and accused persons together with article 42 which regulates the judicial review of procedural acts of the EPPO are only provisions of the EPPO Regulation dealing with procedural guarantees of suspects and accused persons. Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation is steaming from and follows the general legal framework and protection of defence rights in the EU procedures. To ensure the most effective and comprehensive protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EPPO proceedings, article 41 of the EPPO Regulation lays down three levels of protection of these rights. The first level of protection is the level based on the Charter and provides that “all activities of the EPPO shall be carried out in full compliance with the rights of suspects and accused persons enshrined in the Charter” (art. 41 (1) EPPO Regulation). The second level is based on EU secondary law, mainly directives, and provides that “any suspected or accused person in criminal proceedings of the EPPO shall, at a minimum, have the procedural rights provided for in Union law, including directives, as implemented by national law” (art. 41 (2) EPPO Regulation). The third level is based on applicable national law and provides that “without prejudice to the rights referred to in this Chapter, suspects and accused persons as well as other persons involved in the proceedings of the EPPO shall have all the procedural rights available to them under applicable national law” (art. 41 (3) EPPO Regulation).

The following chapter of this paper will provide an analysis of three levels of protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO, their importance and development, as well as their relation with other provisions of the EPPO Regulation and EU law. After this analysis, the third chapter of this paper will focus on problems arising from this multilevel protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO, which may lead to an unequal standard of defence rights and their protection in EPPO proceedings and provide some ideas for improving defence rights.

2. Right of the Defence of suspects and accused persons in EPPO criminal proceedings: multilevel legal framework

2.1 Protection by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU

The first level of protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings is provided by the Charter. Article 41 (1) of the EPPO Regulation provides that “all the activities of the EPPO shall be carried out in full compliance with the rights of suspects and accused persons enshrined in the Charter, including the rights to a fair trial and the rights of defence.” Art. 41(1) of the EPPO Regulation clarifies and underlines one of the basic principles of the EPPO activities to ensure that EPPOs activities respect the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter (art. 5(1) EPPO Regulation). Article 5 (1) of the EPPO Regulation symbolically recalls that the EPPO is fully bound by the Charter and the Charter applies to all kinds of conduct of the EPPO, not only to the investigations and prosecutions of the EPPO (Burchard, 2021). Article 41 (1) of the EPPO Regulation can be marked as a general framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO, as it sets an objective standard of their rights.

Article 41(1) of the EPPO Regulation explicitly refers to the fundamental rights enshrined in Chapter VI of the Charter, the right to a fair trial (art. 47 Charter) and the rights of the defence (Article 48 Charter). Although article 41 (1) of the EPPO Regulation refers to all fundamental rights and freedoms provided to suspects and accused persons by the Charter, from the point of the view of the suspects and the accused person who has become the subject of the activities of the EPPO, fundamental rights and freedoms under the Justice Chapter are the most important. The EPPO is specifically bound by listed provisions of the Charter: Article 47 “Right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial”, Article 48 “Presumption of innocence and right of defence”, Article 49 “Principles of legality and proportionality of criminal offences and penalties”, and Article 50 “Right not to be tried or punished twice in criminal proceedings for the same criminal offence”. A reference to fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Justice Chapter of the Charter can also be found in the preamble of the EPPO Regulation, according to which the EPOO is required to respect mentioned rights and exercise its activities in full compliance with those rights (recital 83).

For suspects and accused persons the key role plays article 48 (2) of the Charter which guarantees “respect for the rights of the defence of anyone who has been charged”. Article 48(2) of the Charter establishes a minimum set of defence rights for everyone facing the proceeding of the EPPO. The explanations to the Charter clarify that the meaning and scope of defence rights guaranteed by the Charter is the same as the meaning and scope of defence rights guaranteed by Article 6(3) of the European Convention on Human Rights (Explanations on Article 48). Article 6(3) of the ECHR establishes five specific rights which constitutes a non-exhaustive list of the minimum rights to be afforded a defendant (Sayers, 2014). Those defence rights are the right to be informed promptly, to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of the defence, to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing, to examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance of witnesses on his behalf, and to have the free assistance of an interpreter (article 6(3) ECHR). Defence rights are deemed to constitute the rudimentary level of protection required to ensure the effective conduct of the defence and to guarantee the principle of equality of arms and the right to an adversarial court (Sayers, 2014). Article 48 (2) of the Charter provides a general legal framework of defence rights, as well as it is a cornerstone for their further development and clarification. The general nature of the provision of Article 48
(2) of the Charter means, that this provision does not articulate specifically the defence rights and their use in practice is getting harder. For defence rights to be easier, real and more effective for suspects and accused persons, they have to be articulated more specifically in other sources of the EU law. Recent years have shown that directives could be an appropriate tool for the more specific articulation of defence rights.

2.2 Protection of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons by Directives: a minimum standard

In the second place, the EPPO Regulation provides the protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons through its article 41 (2) which states that “any suspected or accused person in the criminal proceedings of the EPPO shall, at a minimum, have the procedural rights provided for in Union law, including directives concerning the rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures, as implemented by national law” and explicitly refers to the Directives that are harmonising selected rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures. Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation sets a minimum package of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO under EU law and refers to Directives that articulate more specifically defence rights.

The formulation, meaning and scope of Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation is closely linked to the competence of the EU in the area of judicial cooperation in criminal matters which had changed after the Lisbon Treaty. Issue of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures have come to the top of to-do list after entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty confirmed that judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the EU is based on the principle of mutual recognition of judgements and judicial decisions (art. 82 (1) TFEU). To make judicial cooperation in criminal matters more effective it has become necessary to approximate the laws and regulations of the Member States in selected areas. One of the selected areas where the EU acquired competence to establish minimum rules has become the area of the rights of individuals in criminal procedure. Based on article 82 (2) (b) of the TFEU the EU has the competence to establish more specifically certain aspects of the rights of the defence in order to facilitate mutual recognition of judgments and judicial decisions and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters. The existence of the competence to establish common minimum rules in area of defence rights should lead to the creation of equal protection of suspects and accused persons through the EU law.

Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation explicitly refers to Directives adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of Article 82 (2) (b) TFEU which harmonise a specific group of defence rights in criminal proceedings. Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation explicitly refers to the Directives on (a) the right to interpretation and translation, (b) the right to information and access to case materials, (c) the right of access to a lawyer and the rights to communicate with and have third persons informed in the event of detention, (d) the right to remain silent and the right to be presumed innocent, and (e) the right to legal aid. The adoption of the Directives was part of the Roadmap for strengthening procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings. The mentioned Directives largely take up the acquis achieved by the case law of the European Court of Human Rights interpreting judicial and procedural rights listed in Article 6 (2) and (3) of the ECHR, because of what the Member States easily agreed with their adoption as their national laws had been aligned in this field (Wahl, 2020). From this point of view, the adoption of the Directives does not bring something extremely new to the area of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons, as the Directives only regulated the procedural rights which had already been regulated also by national laws of the Member States.

The list of the Directives to which Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation refers is not closed, but it is based on the EU legislation at the time of the adoption of the EPPO Regulation. The wording of this article is open to include further existing or future EU laws concerning the rights of suspects and accused persons (Brodowski, 2021). Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation relates only to procedural rights provided by EU law and does not extend the range of defence rights under the Charter and does not provide any additional procedural rights under EU law. The next important notice is that Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation sets only a minimum standard and scope of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO. The minimum standard and scope means that the Member States are allowed to adopt national laws which will go beyond this minimum standard of procedural rights provided by the EU law.

2.3 Applicable national law on procedural rights: necessary safeguard?

Last, but definitely not least level of protection of defence rights of suspects and accused person in the EPPO proceedings is provided by applicable national laws of the participating Member States. Based on article 41(3) of the EPPO Regulation “suspects and accused persons as well as other persons involved in the proceedings of the EPPO shall have all the procedural rights available to them under the applicable national law, including the possibility to present evidence, to request the appointment of experts or expert examination and hearing of witnesses, and to request the EPPO to obtain such measures on behalf of the defence.” Article 41 (3) of the EPPO Regulation systematically complements the legal framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO. The applicable national law on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons should apply to the activities of the EPPO when those procedural rights are not covered by the EU law or in situations when national laws go beyond the minimum standard of procedural rights provided by the EU law.

From the structure of Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation, it may seem that applicable national law only complements the legal framework of defence rights and procedural safeguards at the Unions level. However, this is true only at the first sight. The fact is, that national laws have to respect the primacy of the EU law and national legal framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings cannot be weaker as the scope and meaning of their defence rights enshrined in EU law, mainly...
in the Charter, the EPPO Regulation and Directives on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons. On the other hand, the legal framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings at the Union level is not extensive, specifically articulated and complete, as the Charter represents a general legal framework of defence rights and the Directives cover only selected procedural rights of suspects and accused persons and they are not formulated as specific as national criminal laws. As an example, article 41 (3) of the EPPO Regulation explicitly mentions few procedural rights which are not governed by the EU law, but they are important to guarantee the suspects and accused persons their defence rights, e.g. possibility to present evidence or to request the appointment of experts. In such cases, where the concrete procedural rights which are part of defence rights of suspects and accused persons are not governed by EU law, the EPPO Regulation relies on national laws of the participating Member States. The scope and application of applicable national law regulating the procedural rights of suspects and accused persons are then just up to the participating Member State and may vary among the Member States, as there are 22 participating Member States with 22 different criminal systems and laws. The procedural right under applicable national law applies only in the EPPO proceeding in concrete participating Member State and not throughout all proceedings of the EPPO.

From the above mentioned and due to the lack of harmonisation of defence rights and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons in EU law, applicable national criminal laws will have a key position in the proceedings of the EPPO.

3. The need for strengthening the EU legal framework

The analyses of the current legal framework of the rights of the defence of suspects and accused persons showed, that the EU is trying to improve defence rights and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures. Even when the legislative harmonisation of defence rights in criminal procedure is not at the end, it has to rated be rated as functionally in selected areas (Schroeder, 2020). The legal framework of defence rights in the EPPO proceedings is based on three levels, which follow and complement each other. The lack of a uniform legal framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO, fragmentation of defence rights and only general wording of Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation evoke question whether is the protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings sufficient and effective.

Doubts about the sufficiency of the protection of defence rights are linked to the position, activities and structure of the EPPO. Through the EPPO, the EU will be the first time in its history, competent to conduct criminal investigations through one of its bodies. The EPPO as an indivisible body of the EU is operating as one single Office with a decentralised structure (article 8(1) of the EPPO Regulation). The responsibility for conducting investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators of criminal offences affecting the financial interests of the EU shifted from the participating Member States to the EPPPO (Inghelram, 2015). The decentralised level of the EPPO consists of European Delegated Prosecutors located in the participating Member States, who act on behalf of the EPPO in their Member States and who are responsible for investigations and prosecutions of criminal offences affecting the financial interest of the EU. Although the EPPO is a body of the EU, the majority of its activities is concentrated in participating Member States and in hands of European Delegated Prosecutors who are handling cases in their Member States. As the EPPO is conducting investigations and prosecutions in the 22 participating Member States with different criminal systems and criminal laws, the protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons have to be coherent, strong and effective. Is Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation granting to suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings throughout the participating Member States strong, effective and coherent protection?

3.1 Defence rights in the proceedings of the EPPO and issues in dispute

In connection to guarantee suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings their procedural rights the first question is: who are suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO? Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation does not give an answer for this question, as it is using only the term “suspects and accused persons” without its further clarification. Either there is no answer to this question in Article 2 of the EPPO Regulation, which governs the definitions of terms used in the EPPO Regulation, Article 2(2) of the EPPO Regulation contain only the definition of “person”, which for the purposes of the EPPO Regulation means “any natural or legal person”. The definition of the suspect or the accused person can be found in EU secondary law, according to which the person becomes a suspect or an accused “from the moment when a person is suspected or accused of having committed a criminal offence, or an alleged criminal offence, until the decision on the final determination of whether that person has committed the criminal offence concerned has become definitive” (Article 2 Directive (EU) 2016/343). In the context of the EPPO, a person becomes suspect or accused when a European Delegated Prosecutor in a participating Member State or the EPPO initiate the investigation (article 26 (1) and (3) EPPO Regulation) or accused a person of having committed a criminal offence affecting the financial interests of the EU. The exact definition of “suspect or accused person” for the purposes of the EPPO should be a part of Article 2 of the EPPO Regulation.

After clarification of the term “suspect or accused person”, our attention is focusing on the defence rights of these persons in the EPPO proceedings. The first level of protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings provided by the Charter (Article 41 (1) of the EPPPO) does not evoke any serious questions. The issues to discuss and problematic areas of defence rights are connected with the second and third level of their protection, thus with minimum procedural rights under EU law and procedural rights under applicable national law. Besides applying the Regulation itself, the EPPO will apply the national criminal procedures of the participating Member States where it conducts its investigations and prosecutions. The consequences of
applying national criminal procedures may be a risk of breach of equality for suspects and accused persons if their procedural rights granted in the participating Member States are not the same (Falletti, 2017).

To ensure the common minimum standard of defence rights and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons, the EU adopted the Directives which harmonise a specific group of defence rights in criminal proceedings. These Directives do not take away problems in interstate cooperation, those of the systematic flaw, the fragmentation of legal protection of defence rights as a direct consequence of the principle of mutual trust, and inequivalent standard of defence rights and their protection in national laws of the Member States (Ramos et al, 2020). The Directives harmonising a specific group of defence rights in criminal proceedings represents only a compromise among the Member States, while the content of defence rights of suspects and accused persons depends on national implementation measures and may vary among different Member States (Tzortzi, 2018). As directives are binding to the result to be achieved, they are leaving the choice of form and methods to the Member States and their national authorities. Directives leave by nature discretion to the Member States as to how their provisions are to be implemented. Generally, Directives are less specific than regulations, often include vaguely defined terms, their scope is limited by a variety of exceptions and derogations and their material and personal scope also entails limiting effects (Wahl, 2020). At the end not the provisions of the Directives, but the national laws implementing these Directives are applied in the EPPO proceedings and they may be different also because of differences in implementation of directives into national legal orders and that can lead also to a different application in practice. From this point of the view, the directives do not represent an ideal tool for harmonization of defence rights of suspects and accused persons and it could not be said that the legal framework of Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation, as a provision guarantying to suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings a minimum standard of procedural rights under EU law, is sufficient.

Article 41 (3) of the EPPO refers to procedural rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings under applicable national law. The reference to applicable national law limits the scope of procedural rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceeding twofold: (i) it is a question of the national law governing the proceeding whether a procedural right exists in a given situation, and (ii) the procedural right generally applies in the specific context of this proceeding and not Union-wide (Brodowski, 2021). The range and scope of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceeding under applicable national law have to be the same as the range and scope of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in national criminal proceedings conducted by national authorities. Applicable national law has to respect the EU law and cannot be in conflict with it. The EU law obligates the Member States to apply and interpret national law in accordance with EU law, in our case specifically to the EPPO Regulation (Laptops, 2021).

The scope and the protection of defence rights and procedural safeguards largely depend on applicable national laws of the participating Member States. As the EPPO is conducting investigations and prosecutions in 22 different Member States with different criminal laws and legal frameworks of defence rights, scope and protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings can heavily be uniform and without differences. The legal framework of defence rights and procedural safeguards vary among the Member States and as a result, in one Member State suspects or accused persons in the EPPO proceeding enjoy a wider range of their defence rights compared to a range of defence rights under EU law, but on the other hand in another Member State, the range of defence rights is corresponding to minimum rules established by the EU Law.

The applicable national law is dependent on a location of a concrete case of the EPPO. Under Article 5 (3) of the EPPO Regulation, “the applicable national law is the law of the Member State whose European Delegated Prosecutor is handling the case”. The investigations and prosecutions conduct by the European Delegated Prosecutors in their Member States are governed by the EPPO Regulation and national law applies only to matters which are not regulated by the EPPO Regulation. When a European Delegated Prosecutor applies a national law during the EPPO proceeding, the EPPO is bound as a whole and not merely the European Delegated Prosecutor handling the case. The situation also applies to the defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings under applicable national law. The EPPO as whole will be bound with many different national laws of defence rights in its proceedings which are not coherent.

As the EPPO is operating in 22 participating Member States and applies not only EU law, but also applicable national law several problems connected to defence rights and their protection may arise. The first one was already mentioned and it is an existence of different standards of defence rights and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings in national laws of individual Member States. Another problem may raise when a case is handled by a European Delegated Prosecutor in a Member State other than the Member State of residence or habitual residence of a suspect or accused person. In such a situation, the suspect or accused person will be granted defence rights and procedural safeguards under the applicable national law of the Member State whose European Delegated Prosecutor is handling the case. The position of the suspect or accused person may be more difficult, as this person will not know its defence rights and procedural safeguards under applicable national law or applicable national law will provide this person weaker protection than a national law of the Member State in which a person has a habitual residence. To avoid this situation Article 26 (4) of the EPPO Regulation knows the exception from the general rule, that a case shall be initiated and handled by a European Delegated Prosecutor from the Member State where the focus of criminal activity is. On the basis of this exception, a case may be initiate by a European Delegated Prosecutor of a different Member State that has jurisdiction for the case, if it is duly justified by one of the following criteria: the place of the suspect’s or accused person’s habitual residence, the nationality of the suspect or accused person, or the place where the main financial damages have occurred (Article 26 (4) EPPO Regulation). Application of this exception may help the suspect or accused person to exercise its defence rights and procedural safeguards under applicable national law known to this person.
3.2 Improving defence rights

The measures on the protection of the financial interests of the EU by means of criminal law are of fundamental importance for all harmonising activities in the field of substantive and procedural criminal law (Ambos, 2018). An effective Unions prosecution body cannot exist without a precise and effective legal framework of defence rights and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons against whom it conducts investigations or carry out acts of prosecution. The ongoing harmonization of specific rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures shows, that Member States are not very opened to the idea of the adoption of uniform rules on defence rights of suspects and accused persons in criminal procedures, neither in the case of the EPPO and its proceedings. The establishment and the functioning of the EPPO are making the problem of the lack of common procedural rules and legal fragmentation of defence rights in criminal procedures more visible and more urgent. The rights of the defence and procedural safeguards are already regulated in a very different manner among the Member States, and these differences among national laws of Member States may become deeper in the future and bring much more problems (Ramos et al, 2020).

As adoption of a uniform legal framework of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EU criminal proceedings nowadays seems more like an illusion than as a reality, the only possible way is to continue in the harmonisation of minimum rules on specific defence rights of suspects and accused persons. The EU could focus on setting some minimum standards of the rights of defence and procedural safeguards at both stages, pre-trial and trial, as well as the admissibility and exclusion of evidence (Brodowski, 2021). Although the EU will adopt other directives on the defence rights or procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons, Member States will have to implement them into their national legal orders. As mentioned above, the implementing measures may differ from one Member State to another and may not bring the expected result.

One of the possible solutions could be a change of the wording of Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation. Currently, Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation regulates the rights of the defence and procedural safeguards of suspects and accused persons very general, without further definition, or just with references to selected directives or procedural safeguards. The more coherent and comprehensive protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO Regulation could be reached by adding explicitly references to the specific defence rights and procedural safeguards in the wording of Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation. The explicit references to defence rights and procedural safeguards could make them more visible and could lead to the uniform scope and meaning of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceeding throughout all the participating Member States.

4. Conclusions

The protection of the rights of the defence of suspects and accused person is essential to ensure the fairness of activities of the EPPO. The necessity to ensure effective defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EPPO proceedings arises from provisions of EU law setting out explicit requirements – the Charter and Roadmap Directives, as well as from provisions that give rise to a range of implicit requirements for the same (Ramos et al, 2020). The central and only explicit reference to the rights of the suspects and accused persons is enshrined in Article 41 of the EPPO Regulation, which identifies three different levels of the protection of rights of suspects and accused persons. Article 41 (1) of the EPPO Regulation obligates the EPPO to carry out its activities in full compliance with the rights of suspects and accused persons enshrined in the Charter. Moreover, this paragraph explicitly refers to the right to a fair trial and the rights of defence and by highlighting these rights is setting up which rights have to be guaranteed for the fair EPPO criminal proceeding (Brodowski, 2021). The second level of the protection regulated by Article 41 (2) of the EPPO Regulation refers to a minimum standard of procedural rights provided for Union Law and explicitly refers to the Directives partly harmonising some specific procedural rights. The implementation of the Directives and the content of procedural rights provided by them may vary among the Member States and will depend on national implementation measures. These Directives do not take away problems of the fragmentation of legal protection of defence rights as a direct consequence of the principle of mutual trust, and inequivalent standard of defence rights and their protection in national laws of the Member States (Ramos et al, 2020). Although the EPPO Regulations refers to these Directives on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons, Directives were not drafted with the EPPO in mind and that is the reason why they do not cover the situation related to the functioning of the supranational prosecution body of the EU. The reference to the Charter and to the Directives on procedural rights of suspects and accused persons already adopted, do not constitute themselves an indicator of the European nature of the EPPO and its actions, given that the rights of defence established by the Charter and by the Directives on specific procedural rights already represent a standard to be guaranteed in national criminal proceedings in the Member States (Rafaraci, 2019). The third level of protection of rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings is provided by national law, which guarantees to suspects and accused persons in the proceedings of the EPPO all the procedural rights available under applicable national law (law (Article 41 (3) EPPO Regulation).

As the criminal laws and criminal system of the participating member states are different, the scope and range of defence rights and procedural safeguards will vary among the Member States and may result in extremely different and unequal protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceeding throughout participating Member States. The actual protection of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in the EPPO proceedings is not sufficient and coherent, what is the consequence of the legal framework in the EPPO Regulation. The EPPO Regulation, explicitly Article 41, that not bring anything new to the area of defence rights of suspects and accused persons in EU criminal proceedings, and did not found the solution to ensure coherent protection of defence rights throughout the EU and its Member States, even though the new supranational criminal prosecution body was established.
Nomenclature

ECHCR  European Convention on Human Rights
EPPO  European Public Prosecutor’s Office
Charter  Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
TFEU  Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

References


A Comparative Paper Between Different Methods of Treating Phobia and its Neurobiology Complexity

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Abstract

Phobias are prevalent, yet excruciating to mental and cognitive well-being. In the United States, based on the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately 10% of people in the United States have been diagnosed with specific phobias, where 7.1% experienced social phobias, and 0.9% had agoraphobia. Therefore, patients will try to avoid the anxiety-provoking stimuli to any extent possible. As psychology is actively involved in resolving relevant public mental health issues, our objectives for this phobia research mainly focus on alternative procedures on the treatment and remedies, by means of the effectiveness of psychological treatments, involving pills intake and mind therapy. In addition, the advent of technology is linked prominently to the clinical approach towards cognitive misinterpretations. Virtual Reality, for instance, becomes an unconventional option for patients, in which, patients will experience computer-generated simulation. Up to the present moment, the most effective method of treating phobia is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), followed by pharmaceutical medication. The effectiveness of the newly-developed method of treating phobias, Virtual Reality, is said to be equally effective as CBT. Our research heavily relies on psychoeducation and supportive secondary therapeutic sources. Thus, a full set of investigations will come along with the concise analysis in this topic. In conclusion, this research paper will discuss and scrutinize the chemical and psychological mechanism of each treatment, along with an inference of effectiveness of each treatment.

Keywords: phobia, treatments, symptoms, antidepressants, beta-blocker, tranquiliser, psychotherapy, diagnosis, causes

FINDINGS AND EXPLANATION:

A phobia is an excessive and irrational fear reaction and the cause of phobia could both come from genetic and environmental factors. Environmental factors that cause phobias usually are past incidents or trauma that might have a lasting effect on how individuals feel about their fear[2]. As well as, people with ongoing medical conditions such as traumatic brain injuries and substance abuse. Moreover, a person with a phobia may develop fear from the factors in their childhood environment[3]. On the other hand, due to genetic factors children who have close relatives or parents with an anxiety disorder are more vulnerable to developing a phobia than others.

The cause of phobias is differentiated into two types which are complex phobia and simple phobia or going by the name of a specific phobia. Simple phobias are unreasonable fears caused by the presence of a particular situation or object. In general, simple phobias develop in early childhood between four to eight years old and can become less severe when individuals get older[4]. Common types of simple phobias are animal phobia, environmental phobia, situation phobias such as fear of visiting a doctor and bodily phobia which are the fear that arises due to medical procedures or injuries.

In contrast, a complex phobia can be complicated since it can come from genetics, brain chemistry and life experiences. The phobias usually develop in adolescence or are created by traces of early childhood experiences. To give an instance, types of complex phobias are social phobia, an extreme worry about social situations and agoraphobia which is a fear of open spaces or also known as a fear of places or situations that a person can not escape from[5].

People with phobias often purposely avoid coming into contact with the thing that causes the depression and fear. Sometimes they do not have to be in a situation where they are fearful to experience the symptoms of panic, but the person's brain is able to create a reaction to fearsome situations even when they are not actually in the situation.
A person is likely to experience feelings of panic and intense anxiety when exposed to the object or situation of their phobia which can cause physical symptoms such as sweating, difficulty breathing, accelerated heart rate or nausea. In severe cases, some people may also experience psychological symptoms, for instance, a fear of dread, feeling out of touch with reality. If the symptoms are very intense, the person could trigger a panic attack\(^6\). The symptoms of complex phobia like agoraphobia and social phobia can often make a person feel very apprehensive and anxious if they have to leave their home to go somewhere else. Also, the thought of being seen in public or at social events can make them feel frightened\(^7\).

The step of diagnosing a phobia contains many methods which the process is undertaken by the health care provider. The diagnosis of simple phobia includes questions like the presence of marked and persistent fear that is excessive or unreasonable, then there should be an immediately intense fear or anxiety reaction, in order for a phobia to be diagnosed. Furthermore, the agoraphobia diagnosis contains a set of questions to ask the patients whether a panic attack has been triggered when going away or out of their homes or being in crowded places. If the patients will do anything to avoid the situations it means they are diagnosed with agoraphobia\(^8\).

In closing, social phobia diagnosis also includes a list of questions to help people identify their fear. The patients will be asked if they are scared of public speaking, eating or writing in front of other people. If a person has been avoiding any such situations consistently for the past six months, a social phobia may be diagnosed\(^9\).

**Treatment by Medications**

**Antidepressants**

By all counts, the two main types of antidepressants involve the uses of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) and MAO Inhibitors (MAOIs). SSRIs especially focus on the treatment of social phobia which their major subordinate variety include Citalopram (Celexa), Escitalopram (Lexapro), Fluoxetine (Prozac), Paroxetine (Paxil) and Sertraline (Zoloft). Overall, SSRIs particularly works on the increase of serotonin level whereas MAOIs clearly inhibits the enzyme reactions from destroying most neurotransmitters\(^10\)\(^12\).

Certainly, the evolution of medications started for the side-effects reduction. In fact, SSRIs simply have a lower weight towards health issues compared to MAOIs. However, some may encounter mild to severe symptoms after SSRIs intake. Mild allergies are sickness, diarrhoea, constipation, insomnia, headaches and loss of appetite. Nonetheless, severe health concerns such as Serotonin Syndrome and Hyponatremia become the major impact. Firstly, Serotonin Syndrome, an overloading level of serotonin, essentially leads to confusion, agitation, continuous shivering and sweating. In some serious cases, seizures and Arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) are demonstrated. Secondly, Hypothermia is initially caused by SSRIs blockage in to the hormonal effects that regulate sodium level and body fluid, affecting the sudden fall of sodium level in the elderly. Adverse impacts such as disorientation and psychosis result in coma cases once patients stop breathing\(^11\)\(^13\)\(^14\).

Generally speaking, MAOIs may have lower drawbacks in case the patients strongly restrict their daily meals. To illustrate, moderate side-effects are nausea, low blood pressure, the difficulty of starting a urine flow, involuntary muscle jerks, hypertensive crisis and persistent hypotension. Although these seemly show fewer disadvantages than the former antidepressants, the incautious food intake severely leads to the problems. Tyramine pressor response, for example, comes from the drug interaction with fermented dairy products. In short, the non-metabolising steps are inhibited by MAOIs in the gut, pass into the systemic circulation, blood-brain barrier and finally, displace noradrenaline. Peripheral and Central Nervous System are critically affected\(^17\).

The antidepressants’ mechanisms of SSRIs and MAOIs become the foremost considerate topics as they exclusively have different inhibiting procedures and involve chemicals.
Mechanisms of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs): serotonin inhibition and the role of 5HT1A receptors

The main receptors that serotonin acts on involve 5HT2A, 5HT2C, 5HT3 and 5HT1A autoreceptors. Serotonergic neurons stimulate the postsynaptic neuron, followed by 5HT1A. It is one of the 14 subtypes of serotonin receptors. After the stimulation, it becomes the autoreceptor that inhibits the serotonergic activity. Serotonin transporter, shortly known as SERT, is a monoamine transporter protein. Its protein-membrane acts as the transport of serotonin from synaptic spaces to presynaptic neurons. After these total procedures, the blockage of the SERT transporter by SSRIs and other antidepressants results in the inclination of serotonin concentration in the synaptic space. This implies the regulating methods of 5HT1A receptors.

The key point for the comprehensive mechanism indicated the effects of increased serotonin availability. Downregulation of 5HT1A receptors shows the explicit responses after the serotonin stimulation which has a major effect on the serotonergic neuron. These downregulated 5HT1A receptors are mediated by genomic methods, though, this decrease of 5HT1A is continual, not a sudden declination. Thus, it is shown that antidepressants’ delay in therapeutic effects originally comes from this incidence.

On the whole, the focus is on the entire neuron, not the serotonergic neuron alone. Once there are fewer numbers of 5HT1A receptors on the somatodendritic region, the neuron is disinhibited. From this particular section, the rise in serotonin releases to the synaptic space for postsynaptic serotonin receptors restoration.

During some chronic doses, the fluctuation in the level of serotonin leads to the downregulation of postsynaptic serotonin receptors. Together with the other indirect issues such as increased norepinephrine output, increased nerve cyclic AMP levels and increased levels of regulatory factors (BDNF and CREB), the flaw of the comprehensive theory of mood-elevating and anti-anxiety effects of SSRIs implicitly indicates the uncertainty in its effectiveness.
Mechanisms of MAO Inhibitors (MAOIs): 

In general, the functions of this antidepressant aim for the improper work of the Monoamine Oxidase enzyme from removing the neurotransmitters which are norepinephrine, serotonin and dopamine by oxidative deamination on the mitochondrial membrane’s outer surface. This inhibiting step increases the levels of the neurotransmitters for the consistent influence on human cells. When considering the enzyme Monoamine Oxidase, the two components “MAO-A isoenzyme” and “MAO-B isoenzyme” independently operate. MAO-A isoenzyme specifically metabolises serotonin, noradrenaline and dopamine for the distribution throughout the placenta, gut and liver. Meanwhile, the MAO-B isoenzyme works on benzylamine, dopamine, phenylethylamine around the brain area. This latter enzyme expresses particularly in neuroglia and serotonergic neurons to break down serotonin at very high concentrations.

Tranquilizers

Tranquilisers are also used as an alternative method in treating phobia. By focusing on reducing the level of anxiety associated, tranquilisers induce a sense of well-being which releases the person from stress and tension. The tranquilizers used in the treatment of phobia are minor tranquilizers. Barbiturates and benzodiazepines are commonly used. Barbiturates were the most commonly used anti-anxiety agent until recently, they were replaced by benzodiazepines. The change in the frequency of prescription of barbiturates was due to clinical evidence that proved benzodiazepines to be more effective. They were safer in overdose, accidental and deliberate, and were less likely to induce dependence. Examples of benzodiazepines include Valium (diazepam), Xanax (alprazolam), Klonopin (clonazepam) and Ativan (lorazepam). Barbiturates, on the other hand, were significantly more dangerous as the toxic dose was not much higher than the therapeutic dose. Toxicity caused by barbiturates can lead to coma or death due to respiratory depression. Barbiturates can also cause life-threatening withdrawal symptoms and are proved to be addictive. Examples of barbiturates include Pentobarbital, Phenobarbital and Secobarbital. Both benzodiazepines and barbiturates induce similar side effects. These side effects range from mild muscle relaxation (drowsiness, dizziness, lightheadedness, etc.) to memory and attention impairments.

Introduction to neurotransmitter, GABA:

Overall, both types of minor tranquilizers affect the body similarly. They work by increasing the influx of chloride ions which inhibits action potentials in neurons. However, the way they increase the influx is different. Before the mechanisms of both anti-anxiety medications can be understood, information on the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid must be covered. Gamma-aminobutyric acid, GABA for short, is the major inhibitory neurotransmitter that binds to specific receptors in the neuron. This binding of GABA reduces the activity level of that neuron which decreases the chance of an action potential firing. GABA is recognised by the ligand-gated GABA receptor (GABA-A), which is where the anxiolytics bind to, and the G-protein GABA receptor. This paper will mainly focus on GABA-A receptors as they are directly related to the mechanisms of benzodiazepines and barbiturates. The GABA-A receptors consist of five subunit proteins which are arranged to form a central pore. The function of each GABA-A receptor depends on which subunit it contains. Most GABA-A receptors in the brain consist of two alpha, two beta and one gamma or delta subunit. GABA-A receptors are present in high concentration at the amygdala, where basic emotions are controlled. The binding of GABA to GABA-A receptors induces a conformational change of the receptors which leads to the opening of the central pore, therefore causing an influx of chloride ions. The influx of chloride ions increases the negative charge on the postsynaptic cell which makes it significantly more difficult to induce an action potential. The release of GABA inhibits signals that cause anxiety and fear and is regulated by the inhibitory interneurons in the amygdala which lowers the anxiety level and raises the feeling of calm of the person.
Mechanisms of Barbiturates and Benzodiazepines:

As mentioned above, both benzodiazepines and barbiturates work similarly, by increasing the influx of chloride ions, but the method is different. Barbiturates bind to the GABA-A receptor at either the alpha or beta subunit. This increases the duration in which the chloride ion channel (central pore) is opened, decreasing the activity of excitatory transmitters (acetylcholine, glutamate, etc.). Benzodiazepines, on the other hand, bind to the region between alpha and gamma subunits of the This increases the affinity of GABA for GABA binding sites, increasing the frequency of the ion channel opening. Both anxiolytics enhance the effect of GABA on the GABA-A receptors.[22]

Beta Blockers

Generally, Beta blockers work by reduction of oxygen consumption of the myocardium by lowering the heart rate, blood pressure, and myocardial contractility. In other words, they are medications that reduce your blood pressure, by causing the heart to beat more slowly and with less force. In fact, symptoms of phobias are greatly related to the aforementioned data on the purpose of Beta Blocker usage. As a brief explanation, it works by blocking the effects of the hormone epinephrine, also known as adrenaline. Moreover, it also opens up veins and arteries to improve blood flow and assuage constrictions. As a result, its specific work on phobia relies on short term phobia relief because they slow the heart rate and decrease blood pressure.

Examples of Beta Blockers include Acabutolol, Atenolol, Bisoprolol, Metoprolol, Neebivolol and Propranolol, where the latest will be mentioned again during the comparison of treatment effectiveness. Although, these are reliant on side effects such as cold hands and feet, fatigue, weight gain, depression, shortness of breath, trouble sleeping, etc.[22] This paper, as mentioned, will take mechanisms of treatment as the paramount ideology. The brief mechanism of Beta Blockers is as follows.

However, not as easy as thought, there are 3 generations of Beta Blockers we have to consider. Firstly, the 1st generation was non-selective, it blocks both Beta-1 and Beta-2 adrenoceptors. In the reign of the 2nd generation, they are more cardioselective, it is relatively selective for beta-1 adrenoceptors and its selectivity decreases at a higher dosage. Lastly, the 3rd generation possesses vasodilator actions through blockade of vascular alpha adrenoceptors or alpha blockers. These 3rd generations are responsible for blocking sympathetic nerves on blood vessels binding to alpha adrenoceptors located on the smooth muscle.

Types of sympathetic or adrenergic receptors are alpha, beta-1 and beta-2. Primarily, in Alpha-receptors, they are located on the arteries. When it is stimulated by epinephrine or norepinephrine, the arteries constrict which increases the blood pressure and blood flow turning to the heart. Perhaps, in skeletal muscles’ blood vessels, there are no alpha-receptors. The rationale behind this comes from the fact that they need to stay open to utilize the increased blood pumped by the heart. According to the reputable Flight-Or-Flight response, it is absurd to bring blood from other parts to the muscles, when running away. This is because blood vessels are constricted and cannot benefit from the increased blood circulation providing extra oxygen and nutrients. Thus, if it is blocked, the arteries dilate and alpha-blocker medication causes vasodilation and can be used to treat phobia, fundamentally. Moving on to Beta receptors, in Beta-1 receptors, they are located in the heart, when stimulated, an increase in heart rate and heart strength of contraction or contractility. Beta-2 receptors are located in bronchioles and arteries of skeletal muscles. The bronchioles’ diameter increases to let more air in and out for breathing, as well as dilating the vessels of skeletal muscles so they can receive the increased blood flow produced by stimulating alpha and beta 1 receptors.

Mechanisms of Beta Blockers[23]:

Firstly, Beta-Blockers bind to Beta-adrenoceptors and therefore hinder and block the binding of norepinephrine and epinephrine to these receptors. Since norepinephrine inhibits normal sympathetic effects that act through these receptors, therefore, Beta-Blockers are considered as sympathetic drugs. To elaborate, sympathetic drugs are substances that copies the responses due to stimulation of sympathetic nerves. These substances directly activate them by increasing the norepinephrine and epinephrine. Secondly, some Beta Blocker will bind to beta-adrenoceptor and partially activate the receptor while preventing norepinephrine from binding. Specifically, these partial agonists, or are called intrinsic sympathomimetic activity (ISA), provide sympathetic activity as a background and prevent normal and enhanced sympathetic activity. Where some beta blocker may possess membrane
stabilizing activity (MSA). As MSA is similar to the activity on membrane stabilizing of Sodium Channels Blockers that represent Class 1 Antiarrhythmics.

Particularly, there are 2 locations where Beta Blocker plays a significant role, the heart and in the blood vessels. In the heart, beta blockers bind to Beta-adrenoceptors located in cardiac nodal tissue, the conducting system and contracting myocytes. Predominantly, the heart contains Beta-1 and followed by Beta-2 adrenoceptors. Beta Blockers prevent normal ligands from binding to Beta-adrenoceptors by competing for its binding site; occasionally, it binds to norepinephrine and epinephrine that circulate in the blood. The receptors, then are coupled to Gs-Protein, which then activates adenyl cyclase to form cAMP from ATP. As the amount of cAMP has increased, it then activates a cAMP dependent protein kinase (PK-A). As a result, more Ca²⁺ enters the cell which during the action potentials, leads to enhanced release of calcium by sarcoplasmic reticulum in the heart, and increases inotropy (contractility). Gs-Protein activation increases heart rate (chronotropy).

PK-A also phosphorylates sites on the sarcoplasmic reticulum, releasing calcium through ryanodine receptors related to the sarcoplasmic reticulum (ryanodine-sensitive, calcium-release channels). Therefore, it provides more calcium for binding troponin-C, which enhances inotropy or mechanisms of changing the force of the heart’s contraction. Furthermore, PK-A can phosphorylate myosin light chains, which may be involved in the positive inotropic effects of beta-adrenoceptor stimulation. Thus, Beta Blockers reduce sympathetic influences that normally stimulate chronotropy, inotropy, dromotropy (electrical conduction) and lusitropy (relaxation), as it has an even greater effect with elevated sympathetic.

In Blood vessels, vascular smooth muscle has beta-2 adrenoceptors activated by norepinephrine released from sympathetic nerves of circulating epinephrine. These receptors work in a similar way as the heart up until the formation of cAMP. The increased cAMP increases cardiac myocyte contraction; in smooth muscles, it leads to smooth muscle relaxation. The inhibition of myosin light chain kinase by cAMP, for phosphorylation smooth muscle myosin, therefore there is less contractile force and promotes relaxation.

Nevertheless, Beta Blockers have a relatively little vascular effect because beta-2 adrenoceptors have only a small modulatory role of basal vascular tone. Beta Blockers remove a small beta-2 adrenoceptor vasodilator influence that is normally opposing the more dominant alpha-adrenoceptor mediated vasoconstrictor influence.

**Treatment by Psychotherapy**

**In vivo exposure**

Psychotherapy is to guide the patient in building up their own relaxation skills to calm the patient’s anxiety. One of the treatments by psychotherapy is in vivo exposure, the patients will directly experience anxiety-provoking situations or stimuli in real world conditions. The method of therapy is to let the patient look at the picture of the things they fear, touching it and reading a story about it. Furthermore, the intention of in vivo exposure therapy is to train the patient’s brain into a more accurate train of thought, so their anxiety system ceases to give misinformation. Normally the treatment usually lasts an hour and can be administered in one very long session. There is evidence that either adding cognitive therapy to an in vivo exposure or administering cognitive alone can be helpful for claustrophobia, and it may also be useful for dental phobia. However, it is still not clear that adding cognitive therapy to exposure therapy for other phobia types can improve outcomes .

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*Abbreviations: SR, sarcoplasmic reticulum; Gq, Gs-protein; MLC, myosin light chain; MLCK, myosin light chain kinase; PI, myosin phosphorylation.*

Picture taken from Cardiovascular Pharmacology, on Beta-Adrenoceptor Antagonists

Picture taken from Cardiovascular Pharmacology, on Beta-Adrenoceptor Antagonists
During the therapy session, the patient is guided by the therapist into a situation where they will face their fears and anxieties, without performing any rituals or the avoidance tactics they might normally use. The therapist will actively model each step of the exposure and teach the phobic individual how to interact with the feared stimulus which this type of exposure therapy can also be called participant modelling or guided mastery. For instance, for flying phobia, the therapist might first read a story about a plane crash. Later on, they will accompany the patient to the airport to simulate boarding a plane or work up to taking an actual flight while practising anxiety-decreasing techniques, such as a focus on deep breathing.[25]

Over the course of treatment, the patient then becomes conditioned to the situation they have feared and will no longer provoke their anxiety. Furthermore, treatments gain tend to be well maintained up to a year following the end of treatment, particularly for animal phobia. In spite of that, there are some weaknesses that have to be considered. There are whole, living organisms used for the session of an animal phobia which can prove to be unethical if harm or distress is caused. As well as, it is difficult to control every variable which can make the results may not be reliable or applicable to a wider population.[26], nevertheless, the effectiveness of in vivo exposure still demonstrated a significantly greater improvement in feeling fear of an object or the situation.

Applied Muscle tension[27]

This is the sub-section of in vivo method specifically for blood-injection injury phobia. Muscle tension exercises to deal with blood pressure sudden changes in addition to exposure therapy.

Fainting is the main problem toward the phobia of injection. Primarily, anxiety causes the instantaneous drop in heart rate and blood pressure, called “Vasovagal response”. With this incidence, needle fears are known as a contributor to vaccine hesitancy and pressing public health concern worldwide. The resolution for this scenario focuses on the following training methods. Firstly, patients encounter in the hierarchical manner of ascending fear from seeing the syringe without needle to culminating in the receipt of an injection. This solely involves the exposure techniques from the aforementioned descriptions. Secondly, physical muscle training including tensing arms and legs can raise blood pressure and combat the vasovagal response, especially to avoid fainting.

According to the study of Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials and Quasi-Randomized Controlled Trials 2015, the guidance on the management is provided on the high-level needle fear. The study used the GRADE process, clinical questions and rating importance of outcomes based on team-based voting approach by Taddio et al. Each specific phobia was measured using the multi-item questionnaires which rate the fear during both imagined and actual engagement with the stimuli. The outcomes from the Edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Flatt and King showed that 6/43 of the participants had fear injections; Ost et al. concluded that 12/60 of the total participants had injection phobia, 2 participants had blood phobia whilst the remainings had other specific phobias, especially, the fear of animal.

Evaluation between the limitations and benefits illustrated the following points. Overall, there were limited trials of blood-injection-injury phobia in adults and no trials were examined in children. Without the use of randomized or quasi-randomized controlled techniques on the individuals with serious needle fears, the reliance on the regular testing procedures of other specific phobias (spider and darkness phobias) could somehow threaten the generalizability of the findings. In short, individuals with phobias are not a homogenous group and have variable responses towards different catastrophic cognition according to their fears. Although the weaknesses majorly dominate the study, some strengths of fear-management knowledge plays an important role for the future ease in phobia deals.

Desensitization

It involves revealing patients or individuals to their fear images and thoughts, or actual phobic stimuli while pairing with revealing of relaxation to decrease the normal fear response, an example of the technique used involves imaginal exposure. Though it takes longer than vivo-exposure and is more effective at changing subjective anxiety than at reducing avoidance. In terms of reducing avoidance, it means overcoming avoidance behaviours to slowly face what you’re afraid of, until it no longer has a grip on the patient. However, this is not recommended as the first treatment if a client is willing to try in vivo or other forms of exposure therapy.[28]

As familiar as it sounds, this theory is based on the principle of classical conditioning.[29] Since it removes the fear response to conditional stimulus gradually. Where, the patient is counterconditioned, and has learned a new association from classical conditioning. An implementation of the new response is now applied, where it goes along the relaxation where fear has been eliminated since fear and relaxation cannot coexist (reciprocal inhibition). Therefore, the patient works through by visualizing each anxiety-provoking event and must engage in a relaxation response.

The sessions and practice vary up on how severe the phobia is, as well as the condition of the patient must also be considered. Typically, it takes up to 4-6 sessions, and up to 12 for a severe phobia. Later on, it is marked as completed once the
therapeutic goals are achieved, which does not always necessarily remove their fear permanently. There are 3 phases of treatment involved. First and foremost, starting off with deep muscle relaxation technique and breathing schemes must be employed on the patient. This includes control over breathing, muscle detensioning and meditation. The significance of this step is reciprocal inhibition, where once the response is inhibited, the fear is then eliminated. Secondly, patients have to create a fear hierarchy arranged from the least provoking stimuli to the most provoking stimuli images (most fearful). In the final and repetition step, the patients must work their way up the hierarchy arranged from the least scored and practise using their relaxation technique up as they proceed. The next stage will be achieved, if they’re comfortable with the recent stage they’re on. However, if they’re upset, they can return to their previous stage, to regain a relaxed stage.

There are countless advantages across using this technique, for instance it has a progressive structure as it allows the patient to control the steps they make until fear is overcome. Therefore, they are less likely to provoke abandonment of therapy and it is highly effective where the problem is a learned anxiety of specific objects or situations. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses and issues involved that must be considered before applying this technique on phobias. It is a slow process, taking on average 6-8 sessions. Even if, researches show that the longer the technique takes, the more effective it is. Furthermore, this method is not effective when treating serious mental disorders like depression. Moreover, there is evidence suggesting it is neither relaxation nor hierarchies are necessary, as the important factor is exposure to feared objects. Based on the idea that abnormal behaviour is learned, the biological approach would disagree as a behaviour innate must be treated medically. Majorly, this method only keeps upon the improvement of symptoms rather than the cause of the phobia. By all means, this means to say that it treats observable and measurable symptoms of a phobia and it is considered a weakness because the cognitions and emotions are often the motivators of behavior. Thus, it only manipulates the symptoms, not the underlying causes.

VR Therapy

VR therapy is a modern technique that is based on exposure therapy, where patients are flooded with the stimulus that causes them to stress, but in a significantly safer and more affordable way. VR therapy allows patients to get close to real life without having to experience real-life stimuli that might be dangerous and out of the therapist’s control.[30]

During VR therapy sessions, the patient is fitted with a headset that communicates via Bluetooth with the app that the therapist controls with a tablet. Speakers are also included in the headset for an immersive experience so that the patient can experience surroundings that are similar to real life. The main idea is to gradually expose the patient to the stimulus that triggers phobic reactions. The intensity of exposure can be adjusted, which can be convenient in treating the symptoms without going overboard. Overtime, fear gets less intense and eventually goes away, increasing the tolerance to anxiety-provoking situations.

VR can be easily implemented in 45-60 minutes therapy sessions. Most of the time spent is assigned to evidence-based therapy intervention, processing VR experience and for patients to provide feedback to the therapist, including adjusting exposure and skill training exercises. The number of sessions is purely based on the severity of the phobia.[31]

VR therapy allows patients to learn to feel safe without leaving the therapist’s office.[32] Although it is a simulation, the learning gained from VR experience can be applied to real-life situations. The effectiveness of VR therapy is verified in the treatment of acrophobia, arachnophobia, panic disorder and agoraphobia, body image disturbances and aviophobia. Results from Mayo Clinic also showed that children prefer VR experience over traditional exposure, this makes it more convenient to treat children. VR therapy is developed to help ensure that people are able to access treatment since it is relatively affordable. People with mild phobias will be able to treat themselves successfully at home, reducing the cost of treatment with a therapist.[33]

VR exposure therapy might be an advanced step into treating phobia, however, there are some drawbacks. VR experience can cause VR-induced sickness, which includes dizziness, nausea, headaches and eye strain. It can also give rise to reduced limb control and reduced postural control. Not only that, it can lead to development of inappropriate responses to the real world and decreased sense of presence. Patients who develop seizures when watching television or playing video games should not be exposed to VR, which is a limitation for VR exposure therapy.[33]

In Vitro

It is a technique that is utilized in behaviour therapy, usually to reduce or eliminate phobias, in which the client can be exposed to stimuli that induce anxiety. [34] Specifically, this involves a multi-modal approach combining imaginal exposure and in-vivo exposure therapy. It involves imagining the exposure of the phobic stimulus, where there is no specific method involved or conducted. However, a case study on treatment of mouse phobia has only mentioned, but did not conduct any In Vitro related.[35]

The issues involved are, there is evidence of a better result shown with in vivo than in vitro or by controlled procedure. Though, desensitization of in vitro did increase the effectiveness of subsequent in vivo.
**Relaxation Techniques for Phobias**[36]

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is simply relaxation techniques that help ease anxiety in the short term since the treatment can take time to become successful. Meditation and yoga are relatively similar in terms of effect, they both lower overall stress level to make the symptoms less severe, although the person may still experience phobic reactions.

Another technique for relaxation is progressive muscle relaxation (PMR). This technique requires rhythmic contraction and relaxation of each muscle group starting from the lower part of the body working towards the upper parts. This technique is used to reduce disturbing or disruptive emotional symptoms by counteracting the flight-or-fight response. However, this technique takes practice to master.

Visualization technique is a technique that takes your mind through soothing images. Autogenic relaxation is a type of visualization technique with purposeful breathing and repetitive physical mood. This technique works through self-statements about heaviness and warmth in different parts of the body which has a positive effect on the autonomic nervous system.

**DISCUSSION**[37]:

In long term exposure and 1 year follow up, data proposed by Soeter and Kindt, 2015 in the curing of Arachnophobia. As expected, Beta blocker (propranolol) in higher quantity and exposure, had a significant improvement over placebo with the medication (beta blocker) alone. However, a proposed study from a session of Spider phobia therapy by Raeder et al. 2019, ‘placebo and exposure’ is more effective than ‘beta blocker (hydrocortisone) and exposure’. It is plausible to conclude that beta blocker works better with longer time range and exposure combined. Though, some might argue that this treatment will only benefit Arachnophobia.

In comparison between the effectiveness of the antidepressants and placebo, the results inclusively demonstrated that antidepressants are significantly more efficient. Although Stein et al. 1996 illustrated the contradicting evidence that 11-week open-label and 12-week double-blind treatment had the greater relapse rate for patients taking placebo, this low generalization of only 36 participants became the weaknesses that could not outweigh the other studies. Accordingly, Stein et al. 1998, 12-week treatment Paroxetine explicitly showed better outcomes when compared to placebo. Furthermore, the supported study of Van Amering et al. 2001 had similar findings. However, this study included the use of Sertraline and a longer treatment duration of 20-week.[38]

Placebo-controlled trials showed that both benzodiazepines and antidepressants are effective in treating anxiety disorders. However, there was a progressive shift in the prescribing pattern from benzodiazepines to newer antidepressants. This led to an investigation in which tricyclic antidepressants were tested along with benzodiazepines to determine the effectiveness of the medication on anxiety disorders. A systematic review of controlled trials was performed on anxiety disorder treatments. There were 23 comparisons between antidepressants and benzodiazepines. According to the systematic review, results showed that there was no supporting evidence showing the advantage of using tricyclic antidepressants over benzodiazepines in treating generalized anxiety disorders, complex phobia and mixed anxiety-depressive disorders. The results also showed that benzodiazepines show fewer treatment withdrawals and were better tolerated.[39]

On the whole, the total calculations on these pharmacologic treatments vary between different types of anxiety disorders. Benzodiazepines and Beta-adrenergic blockers had the most effective measure exclusively for anxiety neurosis, including general anxiety disorder and panic disorder. Nonetheless, these are less likely suited to agoraphobia and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Contrastingly, the characteristics of antidepressants showed the least anti-panic and anti-obsessional effects while they are often used for the other two former symptoms.[40]

According to Riddle-Walker et al., 2016 shows that CBT with exposure was significantly more efficacious than the waitlist control on the specific phobia of vomiting inventory between the two groups after 12 sessions in over 18 weeks. There are overall 24 participants randomly allocated to either 12 sessions of CBT or waitlist control. The results of the study are more than 50% of the participants about 6 people receiving CBT achieved clinically significantly changed compared to 2 participants which are about 16% in the waitlist group. Moreover, eight (58.3%) participants receiving CBT achieved reliable improvement compared to 2 (16%) participants in the waitlist control group.

Data based on Miloff et al, 2019, comparing the effectiveness of VR exposure and In Vivo exposure of spiders (Arachnophobia), where In Vivo has shown a greater impact of effectiveness in the post-study session. Later on within the 12 weeks and a year later on, the former and latter depicted equal success in treating patients. Although, an age range of 18 couldn’t generalise the population as a whole, along with treating only a specific phobia. It is inconclusive whether it is an accurate measure.
As a solid proof to justify whether VR exposure is the genuine treatment. A study devised by Minns et al in 2019 had concluded that during the post-treatment, VR exposure did show an impact of efficacy over waitlist. Although there’s an incomplete cover of the whole population, only 38-39 participants were involved with only one particular phobia proven, which was again Arachnophobia.

A study was conducted to compare the effectiveness of treatment by focusing on the order against the fear of needles. Applied muscle tension (AMT) and respiratory intervention (RI) were the treatments used in this investigation. A group of 95 people was divided into 3 equal groups. One group was used as a control group. The second group received applied-muscle tension first, then respiratory intervention. The last group received the opposite. Results showed that the group that received applied-muscle tension before respiratory interventions had shown greater improvements while the other group had similar results in impact.

From the total amount of research accumulated, CBT techniques represent the most frequent implementation. Exposure methods are particularly considered as the first priority of treatment for various anxiety disorders, but not specifically for certain types of phobia. However, despite some research showing the superior benefits of these overall exposure techniques compared with no treatment. Conspicuously, approximately 60-90% of people have a significant reduction in their original symptoms. While there is no clear evidence relatively demonstrating that exposure therapies are prominently better than CBT. Each type of psychotherapy is solely reliant on the offer from psychiatrists and psychologists. PTSD, OCD and panic disorder, for instance, are essentially suited by exposure features. If exposure treatment and CBT tap into separate but equally efficacious therapeutic mechanisms, therefore, their combination might be expected to show superior outcomes.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, psychotherapy and drugs have been proven to help people with emotional and behavioral problems. Researchers have verified that a treatment that includes psychotherapy such as cognitive behavioral therapy tends to be more effective than medication, yet some evidence combining psychotherapy and medications may be more effective than either treatment alone. Although, different kinds of phobias and diagnosis will respond differently depending on the treatments. For patients, choosing the right treatments can be complicated, however, the choice of treatment should be based on the best scientific evidence. Essentially, this varies with their own willingness to try the treatments, as well as, their physical and mental response and stability towards the treatment given, which in this case conquers and becomes the predominant premise behind the reasoning.
REFERENCE:


(Un)Official Activities of University Students. Czechoslovak Youth Union at Palacký University in Olomouc Between the Years 1946–1956.

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Abstract

The study focuses on extracurricular activities of students of Palacký University which were held under the patronage of the Czechoslovak Youth Union and were closely linked to the politics and ideology of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Communists perceived the danger of uncontrolled spending of free time by university students, so they monitored their actions and eventually censored and restricted them. In the 1950s, students were offered activities supporting mainly socialist cohesion and Marxist-Leninist perception of the world, such as part time jobs, party trainings, competitions at faculty dormitories, thematic professional lectures, etc. Nevertheless, an active group of students gradually formed within the Czechoslovak Youth Union in Olomouc. This group promoted the gradual lifting of bans and supported a wider range of cultural activities that were closer to their real interests. These activities culminated in the years 1967 and 1968.

The aim of this work is showing activities of students from Olomouc, which was often referred to as the cultural periphery of Czechoslovakia.

Keywords: University students, Czechoslovak Youth Union, Communist regime, Palacký University in Olomouc, 1946–1956.

1. Introduction

The paper presents a pilot study dealing with the topic of the Czechoslovak Youth Union and its activities in a university environment on the example of Palacký University in Olomouc (the Czech Republic) as a part of the research project Indoctrination of Educational System in the Period of Oppression.

The content of the paper is divided into five chapters, which proceed from the general development of youth movements, through the establishment of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (hereinafter referred as the Union) and a description of its cultural and ideological activities to an overview of the specific events organized at the national level and in the region of Central Moravia. The aim of the work is to present some of the social and cultural activities of the university students between 1946–1956 with a detailed look at the period of the late forties and early fifties, to outline the local activities of students and to present other possible directions of research.

In our research, we first focused on heuristics, that created a basis for selection of the archival materials and other historical sources according to the time period associated with the establishment of the communist regime between 1946-1956 and primarily the sources were gained from the Czechoslovak Youth Union (archival materials are now stored in the Archives of Palacký University in Olomouc) and provenance of students (today witnesses). The geographical limit narrowed the used archival materials to the region of Central Moravia with overlaps to the surrounding areas due to the extensive student activities (connected especially to their remote work trips for their part-time jobs) and the supra-regional nature of some archival materials (such as communist party decrees or the official Youth Union documents), which we cannot omit.

Related to the geographical horizon of the work, it is also necessary to follow the specifics of the historical regional studies (Vorel, 2005, p. 9). We must therefore refrain from dogmatic obedience of general history, because it may be in some respects divergent or directly opposed in comparison with the history of a particular region. Here we deal with the irreplaceable personal correspondents, archives of local provenance and the method of oral history, which are to be taken into account in our research. For these reasons, we built the work using the method of "three-dimensional" research into the history of J. Polišenský (Polišenský, 1970). In the broadest dimension, the mentioned author talks about the development of the Czechoslovak youth
movement, then in a narrower perspective we present the establishment of the Czechoslovak Youth Union and at the end we will present specific activities of the university students at Palacký University in Olomouc. Subsequently, we compared the source basis according to the recommendations of academic scientists Daunhauer and Pellauer (2020), who advise on how to select credible and useful information, which we used to reconstruct the past and create our own interpretation of events. Following the example of Riceur (Hubálek, 2014, p. 30), we compared the findings to other interpretations of the theses of other historians for achieving higher objectivity of the work.

2. Formation of youth movements and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Student Union

Youth and students played an important role in the Czech lands during the mobilization of the society in the second half of the nineteenth century. For a long time, however, the movement existed only as a part of the political party. It was not until February 1921 that the first independent youth organization, the Union of Communist Youth of Czechoslovakia - Komsomol, was founded for older pupils and students. The persistent scepticism of the political representatives of the Czechoslovak Republic towards the Communists was passed on to the organizations administered by them, so after the significant activation of right-wing and left-wing movements in the early 1930s, the entire Komsomol youth movement was abolished by the Ministry of the Interior. Although the organisation immediately went underground, the interest in it gradually waned until it actually disappeared. (Hříbek, 1979, p. 5–9; Otáhal, 2003, p. 10-11)

The empty space was replaced by new youth movements in 1936, which emerged in very short time period. They were mostly based on nationality without connection to a specific political party. Due to the strong approach of these organizations against Nazism, they were abolished in October 1936, and a similar fate befall other youth (pro-communist) organizations during the Protectorate. An exception was the Union of Carpathian Youth, founded in January 1945 and existing even after the war. Thanks to their war activities, the Communists gained many supporters not only among the Czechoslovak youth, but also in the exiled political sphere, so they could more easily influence the creation of the youth organizations. In this way, in February and March 1945, they supported the re-emerging Union of Slovak Youth and the Union of Czech Youth founded immediately after liberation. Opposition parties entering the elections (1946) too late recognized the key influence of the youth leisure organizations in shaping the electoral opinion of the young generation and focused more on the older voters, which the Communist Party took advantage of and enforced a reduction in voting rights from 21 to 18, which caused the expansion of their electoral base. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia won the election and on 8th July 1946 formed a new government headed by Klement Gottwald (Hříbek, 1979, p. 9–107; Belan, 2015, p. 28–36; Pavelčíková, Weber, 2019, p. 595-597; Rákosník, 2019, s. 139–140).

The rivalry between political parties through affiliated youth movements lasted until 20th February 1948, when the ministers of the National Socialist, People's and Democratic parties resigned, which resulted in the new elections and the removal of Communists from their key positions in the government. However, the Communist Party mobilized people's militias and, through a general strike involving two and a half million people, forced President Edvard Beneš to resign and subsequently established pro-communist policies on vacant positions in the government. One of the first steps of the new Communist government, led by Klement Gottwald, was the abolition of all political youth organizations except the Communist-controlled Youth Union (Hříbek, 1979, p. 108–133; Devátá, 2011, p. 105, Belan, 2015, p. 28–48; Pavelčíková, Weber, 2019, p. 595-597).

On 29th February 1948, a proposal was made to create a unified organization uniting four still existing organizations: the Union of Czech Youth, the Union of Slovak Youth, the Union of Carpathian Youth and the Union of Polish Youth, which took place at the Merger Conference held on 23rd -24th April 1949 in Radiopálc (Prague). This event created the Czechoslovak Youth Union, which was a component of the National Front and directly subordinate to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. (Hříbek, 1979, p. 108–133; Belan, 2015, p. 28–48; Pavelčíková, Weber, 2019, p. 595-597)

3. Cultural-ideological education

From the beginning of its existence, the Czechoslovak Youth Union primarily served the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to effectively control and influence the young generation. They obscured their goal with education for higher moral values, as education for patriotism, love for the USSR, and in the spirit of internationalism. They encouraged young people to love their neighbour, but they were to love only certain role models and only some states. On the contrary, the Union purposefully led them to fear and intolerance to the Western bloc represented by the United States. This political education was based on the Marxist-Leninist teachings, which were adapted to the Stalinist leadership. For its activities, the Czechoslovak Youth Union found a model in the Soviet youth organization Komsomol, which was established in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. It primarily referred to the education according to Lenin, who promoted the acquisition of all the knowledge that humanity accumulated so far and to be able to use the given theoretical formulas effectively in practice. Education was to be conducted together with the education for Communism and its full understanding and acceptance, which would reject society's old habits of struggle.

Participation in the Czechoslovak Youth Union was one of the conditions for admission to a university and the subsequent smooth acquisition of a job (Kocián, 2019, p. 595). The individual was to be ideologically educated from the childhood through a system of political courses that varied according to the age and social classification of the participants. (The Czechoslovak Youth Union again took over the structure and method of the work from the Soviet Komsomol). These trainings began in the school and academic year 1949/1950. In October 1949, the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Youth Union ordered a regular organization of readers’ and political clubs in the basic organizational groups of the Union, which were to meet every fortnight. The main difference between these two clubs was in the content. Readers’ clubs focused on reading and understanding of the selected political books and watching some propaganda Czechoslovak and Soviet movies. Through them, students were to gain a basic overview of the content and meaning of Marxist-Leninist teaching and, ideally, to accept it as fully correct and to live in accordance with this ideology. The participation in these courses was motivated by the effort to win competitions for the Fučík badge (in Czech lands) and the Jilemnický badge (in Slovakia), announced in November 1949 by the presidency of the Czechoslovak Youth Union Central Committee and these badges were awarded for knowledge of selected political books and movies (Šindelář, 2017, p. 27-30; Kocián, 2019, p. 597–601; Devátá, 2011, p. 102-153).

However, it would be a mistake to assume that reading courses took place only in primary and secondary schools. There were also regular meetings at universities within the study club. The lists of books read and analysed also included professional and specific literature for the given field of study (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947-49. Pokyny k zakládání fakultních skupin ČSM a k náboru).

On the other hand, political clubs served as an advanced course for older pupils and students who voluntarily wanted to extend their knowledge of socialism. They often enrolled in the course because they wanted to improve their “cadre reports” by reporting activities for the benefit of the Communist Party or they were interested in joining this party. After completing the course, they could act as conscious members of the party who could pass on its ideology and respond effectively in discussions on topics related to the Czechoslovak history, the history of the Communist movement in Czechoslovakia, the history of the Soviet Union, (official) party and government policies and understand the mission of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (Uzavřeli jsme pracovní rok politického kroužku, MF, 1950, p. 5; Šindelář, 2017, p. 30-34).

After their eventual admission to university, course absolvents were offered participation in recruitment events (convincing other students of the benefits of joining the Czechoslovak Youth Union) and they were often subsequently privileged in the choice to lead positions in the Czechoslovak Youth Union. As an example we mention the occupying of the Preparatory District Committee positions. Here, the central management of the Czechoslovak Youth Union strongly discouraged the appointment of lower-grade students because they were inexperienced, young and had many study responsibilities, and rather advocated “(...) to include older university comrades who, for example, have already passed one of the summer university school organised by Communist Party or the Czechoslovak Youth Union. ” (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Od 7. 11. do 13.11. Členové ČSM z jednotlivých univerzitních měst dávají podněty k nápravě nedostatků).

4. Mass events

If the previous events were applied rather at lower levels of education, the whole the Czechoslovak Youth Union was involved in mass events. The key events were for example For a Million Organization or Labour Day.

4.1 For the Organization of Millions

As the name of the event For the Organization of Millions suggests, the goal was to make the union a mass organization, i.e. to recruit as many young people as possible through a massive recruitment campaign. The task was given to the Czechoslovak Youth Union by the Central Committee of the Communist Party at a Merger Conference and was subsequently repeated before the first congress of the Czechoslovak Youth Union by its Central Committee under the slogan "A million members of the Czechoslovak Youth Union - a million young builders of socialism". The event took place from 1st November 1949 to 17th May 1950, and never later did the Czechoslovak Youth Union carry out a larger event (Nábor nových členů na prvé místo, 1949, p. 4). In order to gain a broad base, it was necessary to set very low conditions for entry (especially the age limit of 14–26 years, to agree with the mission of the Czechoslovak Youth Union, to pay membership fees). “Every university student who is not a reactionary (there are fewer and fewer reactionaries at the faculties) and who volunteers for the Czechoslovak Youth Union, will become a member. (...) However, we will also use illustrative agitation and decorations to obtain it. The Vanguard will be our great helper and advisor. We will also turn to teachers (professors and assistants) to help us with their influence in recruitment.” (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Pokyny k zakládání fakultních skupin ČSM a k náboru).
In order to achieve a high level of commitment, the Czechoslovak Youth Union management conceived recruitment for their members as a competition. The best groups received the shield of the Central Committee and the best recruiter an honorary badge (Brány naši organizace jsou otevřeny – čekáme na vás. 1949, p. 1). In addition, instructors from the regional committee were sent to some regions on the so-called recruitment Sundays and they trained local agitators, handed them additional materials to improve their work and, above all, conducted direct recruitment with them. Julius Fučík's recruitment discussions were also led, which clarified the mission of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (Šindelář, 2017, p. 30-34). The Union’s promotion at the university and agitation for joining the organization took various forms, such as decorated, colourful notice boards, posters on the walls of dormitories and in the classrooms, short euphoric speeches on the radio, handing out leaflets and also the most effective - personal agitation (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápis z XV. schůze 8. 3. 1950). It should be noted that their efforts paid off, because by 1950 there were 1,026,000 members (Kocian, 2019, p. 595).

The youth received an indirect invitation to join the Czechoslovak Youth Union before entering university. Together with the school enrolment form, they also received an application to the Czechoslovak Youth Union in the relevant city (Devátá, 2011, p. 106).

At universities, agitation and recruitment to the Czechoslovak Youth Union were to be conducted through participation in the Youth Creativity Competition (see below) and also as an effective way to influence the creation of the officially recommended study plans, which included the course schedule and their time allocation for the academic year. Within the so-called democratization of the culture and ideological enlightenment, Marxist-Leninist disciplines were introduced into teaching (especially in the first year of study) and time allocations of specialized subjects were reduced (Devátá, 2011, p. 95–96)

At universities in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Youth Union struggled with lower interest in upper grades to join the organization and linked recruitment with educational campaigns and ideological trainings (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Plán práce z 10. 12. 1949 pro Sekretariát Ústeckého výboru ČSM). Recruitment actions were easier to carry out in the lower grades, which could be caused by the democratization of education and the emerging of workers' students, who were primarily in focus of the ideological promotion. However, we suppose that it was caused by the initial enthusiasm of the new students in the academic environment and the effort to get involved and help the faculty. The upper grades already had an experienced way of life, education and often solved practical, life problems (family, housing, extra income), so they were not interested in getting involved.

4.2 Labour Day

Every year, Labour Day was a recurring celebration of May Day (1st May), when the symbolic processions of many thousands represented zeal and faith in the Communist Party, the nation, the closeness of the working class and the celebration of proletarian internationalism (Franc, 2014, p. 82), the replacement of 19th century religious traditions (religious processions) and, last but not least, it worked as constant reminder of the liberation of Czechoslovakia, that was gradually attributed only to the credit of the Soviet Union. The parade, led by young people singing Czechoslovak and foreign-language celebratory songs, was to point out important communist leaders, promote communist ideology with slogans and posters, depict workers' life and relationship to nature and agriculture in allegorical cars, and pay homage to soldiers and police officers (Břešenský První měsíční medailon – nástup svazáků do akce Květen – měsíční mládež, MF, 1951, p. 3). The Olomouc University Youth Union supported its academic choir, that prepared their singing performances for the celebrations that included songs celebrating the Soviet Union, youth, work and friendly countries (for example Píseň brigády, Išao po Uralu Čapajev heroj, Avanti popolo, Elate ohiljadi mládeži, Hymna Elas, Kamarádi, Kařiška, Svažáci k dílu, Zpěv svobody, Svět patří nám, Svátá válka, Vpějízd tovaršiště v nogu, My se práce nebojíme, Pochod demokratické mládeže) (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápis z XV. schůze 8. 3. 1950).

Labour Day was also used as an opportunity for agitation. A pair of recruiters convinced the spectators of the parade and handed out promotional materials. Due to the comprehensive involvement of various organizations, the whole society was to participate in the event, which was supervised by the Czechoslovak Youth Union (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Nástín práce okresu do okresní konference do I. sjezdu ČSM). To monitor the participation, the Union decided to set up a cadre file, which recorded participation in clubs, courses and other student activities (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Záznamy spolku). Attendance on 1st May was determined to be mandatory for all the students of the faculty. The Czechoslovak Youth Union confidants found out the lists of students who belonged to their group and at the same time they insist on taking part in the event through a signature list: “I confirm with my signature that, as a conscious member of the Czechoslovak Youth Union, I will participate in the May Day celebrations in Olomouc with my faculty. In the parade I will go in a blue shirt or in a white shirt (blouse) with the Czechoslovak Youth Union badge.” Subsequently, they collected 15 CZK from all of the participants to buy canvass badges. Participation was therefore not only mandatory, but the participants also had to pay for it.

If the students knew that they could not attend the event, they had to submit an apology letter in advance. Those who did not attend and did not apologize were then asked to come for an explanation (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápis o XXV. schůzi z 9. 5. 1950). We can also find the threat to students in the posters that the Czechoslovak Youth Union made and hung over the front door of the dean's office: "Whoever does not go with us in the procession on 1st May, does not even study with us."
4.4.2

Such an open way of pressure, in which students feared the loss of the possibility to remain on campus, went against their voluntary decision (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápis o XXII. schůzi z 18. 4. 1950). However, a similar principle of “getting” people for parades worked in lower-degree schools, in companies and factories, but also in villages throughout Czechoslovakia.

4.3 Youth creativity competitions

From 1947, the Communists tried to attract pupils and students to join the Czechoslovak Youth Union through the Youth Creativity Competitions, that intended to engage large numbers of young people and develop people's democracy in culture, society and "...increase scientific and cultural creativity of their ranks." (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Od 7. 11. do 13. 11. členové ČSM z jednotlivých univerzitních měst dávají podněty k nápravě nedostatků)

It was a long-term program that was developed in several areas. It also included a competition with oneself, which means overcoming one's own limits, which took place at universities. Students reported what tasks they set in the field of study, educational work and cultural part-time jobs. They subsequently had to meet the commitments. The Union confidants supervised compliance with the obligations, as well as rewards within specific faculty groups (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zápis schůze z 25. 5. 1949).

At the same time, an official competition took place, in which successful competitors from the districts advanced to the regional rounds and then to the national finals. The youth competed in several disciplines (recitation, singing, dancing, playing a musical instrument, theatricals) with a compulsory and optional part. Individuals and entire ensembles could participate. The first year was attended by a total of over two hundred art ensembles (about six thousand people) and seven hundred and thirty-six individuals with a work of art, handicrafts or reproduction performances. The following year, it exceeded fifty thousand individuals. Many students took part in the competition for great publicity, which supported a healthy rivalry between faculties and universities (Knapík a Franc, 2012, p. 848-849).

From the autumn 1948, the number of competitors was given priority over the performances’ quality, because the main aim became to increase the work ethic of working-class youth. The competition was divided into two sections - work and cultural. The work section accepted participants from working-class youth from factories, local Czechoslovak Youth Union and school ensembles. This section exceeded the second, cultural group, where individuals applied. This problem was tried to be solved by the Olomouc Czechoslovak Youth Union during their meetings, but they could not find the explanation for "a failure of the Cultural Competition for Youth Creativity". The Union decided at least to increase agitation in the town (Knapík a Franc, 2012, p. 848-849).

4.4 Other events organized by students

4.4.1 Majáles (Students’ spring celebrations)

During the political liberation after XX. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, when some of the sins of the communist Stalinist administration from the 1950s came to light, students from various Czechoslovak towns decided to change into costumes and march through the streets in protest. They officially described the event as restored Majáles, which was forcibly interrupted by the communist government in 1948.

However, without the official organisation, Majáles could not take place, therefore the students asked the Czechoslovak Youth Union to participate in organizing of this event. Despite the disapproval of the Central Command of the Communist Party, the Union supported the students and enforced the restoration of Majáles. The first Majáles took place in a peaceful way on 12th May 1956 in Bratislava, but its consequences led to the protests next day, when the police forces in civilian clothes intervened by removing politically offensive banners. A similar event took place in Prague on 20th May 1956, but the parables that the students presented with the costumes, pictorial materials and texts, had a more pronounced anti-communist character. Nevertheless, the police were not instructed to arrest the protesters, as Interior Minister Barák was only tasked with monitoring the situation and trying not to aggravate the situation, which proved to be a prudent strategy because the subsequent examination period employed students and did not provide time for further protests (Pernes, 2019, p. 761–762).

Although Majáles actions drew attention to the shortcomings and mistakes of the Communist Party of the Czechoslovak Republic, they were unable to pull most of the citizens to demonstration, because it was a one-time event without further activation of the society and subsequent follow-up actions. Therefore, the event was perceived by the public only as a leisure activity of students, which helped them to meet and relax from studying in the form of jokes, pranks and youthful revolt. However, students could at least more easily point out everyday difficulties (after Majáles in 1956, the question of keeping military training at universities was opened as well as the question of renewing academic degrees or increasing scholarships).

4.4.2 Events related to the Olomouc group of the Czechoslovak Youth Union

The Czechoslovak Youth Union at Palacký University organized a number of events which, based on their impact, could be divided into three groups - university, local and those including national and transnational events. On the example of two academic years (1948 - 1949, 1949 - 1950) we present selected events, on the basis of which we assess the degree of
involvement of the university Czechoslovak Youth Union. The primary mission of the Union university group was to create posters on the events and pass on information to the students about their duties (for example, faculty-wide compulsory participation in research of vital capacities at the Faculty of Physical Education). (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Záznamy spolku).

Among the events related to the operation of the University was the Open Day held at the beginning of February, which was attended by ten selected students from various fields, who distributed high school students applications to the university Czechoslovak Youth Union and explained them benefits of the membership. (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Schůze SPF 1948/1949 – 5. 2. 1949.)

It was popular to organize celebrations of famous Czechoslovak and Soviet historical figures and their legacies. An example is the organization of money collection for the benefit of the writer Alois Jirásek in January 1949 or the Pushkin Celebrations in June of the same year. (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Záznamy spolku. X. výborová schůze – 31. 1. 1949). Students prepared these events during the spring by making ornaments, organising theatricals, learning Pushkin's poems and preparing musical performances (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Výborová schůze – 18. 5. 1949). In November 1949 students organised signature event for Stalin's birthday (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Výborová schůžka SPF – 4. 11. 1949) or participated in the organization of the centenary of the birth of President Tomas Garrigue Masaryk (March 1950) (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápíš z 15. schůze – 1. 3. 1950).

Great emphasis was placed on the annual November celebrations of the October Revolution, when the Union organized events on dormitories and subsequently officially at faculties (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Záznamy spolku). Very soon after the founding of the Czechoslovak Youth Union, it turned out that events without music were boring and had low attendance, therefore the establishment of an academic choir was supported (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zápíš schůže – 23. 3. 1949). Gradually, volunteers were added and a year later the group numbered 30 singers, for whom new songbooks were bought (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápíš z 17. schůže – 15. 3. 1950). After a thorough rehearsal of the songs, the choir was used at almost all official Union events. We can even find records on singing at a group meeting, where participants sang five songs for the May Day celebrations, and the chronicler sighed as he wrote the record: “…finally, a bit of singing at the committee meeting.” (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Zápíš o 20. schůži – 3. 4. 1950).

However, the university group also had to educate its students on political topics, increase their interest in social events and propagate the Soviet culture by the Soviet Film Days, a mass visit to the cinema called Moskva, where they watched a film about the new China. At the turn of May and June 1949, the Union cooperated with the management of the Faculty of Education to mediate the speeches by President Gottwald and speakers at IX. Congress of the Communist Party, where the participation was mandatory. (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zápíš výborové schůže – 25. 5. 1949).

Events of local significance showed a connection with the Haná region and with people from non-university environment (for example, organizing a summer camp for kids - hockey players) (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Schůze SPF 1948/1949) and an effort to support local post-war industry and agriculture (for example visiting a workers' course in Velké Losiny, where students observed work in a factory) (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Schůže SPF 1948/1949). We would also include in this group well-organized and, from the beginning, very popular summer part time jobs for students (especially in the late 1940s and early 1950s). It was one of the effective steps of the communist leadership to start the economy through planned work on large projects for young people. It could be the construction of industrial buildings, the cultivation of fields, or the well-known collection of hops. Often, according to the quantity or quality of work performed, temporary workers were given a salary that was, as a rule, significantly lower than that given to adult and experienced workers, which led to great popularity on the part of the host organization. Summer jobs could be mandatory or optional. Especially at the beginning, due to the already mentioned economic recovery, a compulsory completion of part-time jobs was approached as a condition for the successful completion of the school year and the conclusion of work cards. (AUP, ČSM, K1, 2. 1950–51. Záznamy spolku).

The Union also organized part time jobs at Palacký University, especially in nearby companies. In the monitored period, these were mainly jobs at the "probosťárna" (Olomouc provost's office) and planting trees in the forest. At the provost's office, all students were required to work at least eight hours of help (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Schůže výboru – 23. 2. 1949) (since February 1949, however, students who had already passed the state final exam and did not have to study for further exams had to work a whole week) (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Výborová schůze – 18. 5. 1949). The young people came to the part time jobs on the weekend to make it easier for the internal workers, and they placed them only in selected workplaces where no expertise was expected (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zápíš schůže – 30. 3. 1949). The fortnightly "Tree Planting" was organised in the surroundings of Hanušovice (North Moravia) and the students officially took over the patronage over this activity by committing themselves to the brigades for a long time, in which faculty staff also participated. These activities took place in Velké Losiny, Vejtiškov near Šumperk, in the already mentioned Hanušovice, Velká Morava (Dolní a Horní Morava near Králíky), Kolštejn (near Branná) and nearby Ostružná. It is necessary to point out the fact that even here the participants of the part time jobs were very carefully observed. The Czechoslovak Youth Union named shift leaders, who recorded the names of the participants and any those who did not attend
were invited to membership meetings for explanation or even disciplinary punishment (AUP, ČSM, K1, 3. 1951–52. Záznamy spolku). In Union's records we can read about a student named Divinová, who was not presented one day because “... she sabotaged her work at the provost's office. To invite her to a meeting. To punish her publicly... ” Strict punishment of disobedient students served to correct them and to warn others. (AUP, ČSM, K1, 3. 1951–52. Záznamy spolku). On the other hand, the Union insisted on ensuring the best possible conditions for students on their part time jobs, for example, to get quality shoes for part time workers, or fighting against unpaid part time jobs.

The third group includes the national and supra-regional activities of university students. Here we should first mention the regular participation of students (mostly the Union members) in the World Festival of Youth and Students organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zázpis schůze – 16. 3. 1949) (1947 Prague, 1949 Budapest, 1951 East Berlin, 1953 Bucharest, 1955 Warsaw, 1957 Moscow, 1959 Vienna, 1962 Helsinki, 1968 Sofia). As part of international mobility, the university welcomed two foreign students from Italy and Portugal during the second half of the year and at the same time allowed two students to go abroad (to Bulgaria and England). In the summer months, the Union organised group trips in Czechoslovakia, which were mandatory for the first year of study (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zázpis schůze – 30. 3. 1949), but also organised trips abroad for recreation, which were of high interest (for example, to Poland, Bulgaria or Hungary). (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Výborové schůze SPF – 15. 6. 1949).

As part of establishing a friendly relationship with neighbours, the Union founded the Slavonic Club (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zázpis schůze – 2. 3. 1949), which supported cooperation mainly with Poland through letters (for example with students from the University of Warsaw), creating a bilingual, Czech-Polish board, organizing an annual meeting of Czech and Polish academics at the end of May 1949 and also by inviting Polish students for exchange stay in Olomouc (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zázpis schůze – 16. 3. 1949). Furthermore, in June 1949, the Union, in cooperation with the university management, hosted a Belgian theatre and provided it with publicity to gain spectators (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Zázpis schůze – 1. 6. 1949).

The Union also dealt with the humanitarian aid. At the end of the second half of the year, their members held regularly recurring food collections for poor children abroad. The Union confidants collected food stamps from the students in the clubs, which were then exchanged for food and the food packages were created. In 1949, 9 packages were collected, which was described as a great success at the committee meeting (AUP, ČSM, K1, 1. 1947–49. Výborové schůze SPF – 15. 6. 1949).

5. Conclusion

The goal of the Czechoslovak Youth Union, to be the largest possible organization, had an adverse effect on the passivity of its members, who felt "lost" in the crowd of millions and the actual involvement and the popularity of all mass events gradually declined (especially from the early 1960s) (Pavelčíková a Weber, 2019, p. 596). However, this trend was not obvious at first glance in the society, because the participation still seemed very high. The events were fun and brought a pleasant feeling of unwinding from everyday problems, however, the ubiquitous supervision, political slogans and agitation gave the events a bitter taste of lack of freedom and represented the symptoms of the communist disease that controlled public and private life in Czechoslovakia.

On the contrary, interest grew in individualized events of the local Union committees. For example, the events presented above organized by the Olomouc University Youth Union became very close to the university management, and therefore their frequency and membership representation steadily increased. The reason is, as mentioned above, the constant renewal of students, when each new generation set to work for the university with initial zeal and wanted to get involved in the organization of events. Therefore, there was no significant stagnation at the university as at other levels of the Union. The fact that the Union organized events that often directly affected the lives of students (for example, increasing scholarships or financial evaluation of part time jobs) made the Union an indispensable part of the university.

An important component of the Union's work at the university, as we have found out, was the control of participation in mandatory events, which aroused resentment among students. During the social liberation after 1956, the Union's interest was to get closer to the students which led to abandoning of this control and transferring the pro-communist actions to voluntary participation. In the 1960s, despite the disapproval of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Union even supported a number of cultural, ecological and leisure activities, e.g., promotion of tramping and advocating of students with a hairstyle of the British Beatles. (Pavelčíková a Weber, 2019, p. 599–601; Kural, 1993, 207 p.)

The influence of the West and political liberation had a significant impact on the Czechoslovak society, and students, despite their efforts to change the Czechoslovak Youth Union, no longer wanted to remain in the Communist organization and sought other movements and associations. In the end, 18 independent, apolitical children's and youth organizations were established (for example, the Union of University Students of Bohemia and Moravia, the Union of Youth Clubs, the Union of Working Youth, the Union of Military Youth, the Union of Polish Youth in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, JUVENA - Union of Czech-Moravian Rural Youth, Czechoslovak Pioneer and organization Junák) (Pavelčíková a Weber, 2019, p. 596).
The Czechoslovak Youth Union lost its influence. After the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops between the days 20th and 21st August 1968, the Union's activities were restored and the organisation was renamed the Socialist Youth Union, which existed in cooperation with the Communist Party of the Czechoslovak Republic until 1989. (Pernes, 2019, p. 597–598).

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Zápis schůze – 16. 3. 1949.
Zápis schůze – 16. 3. 1949.
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Záznamy spolku.
Záznamy spolku.
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Food Self-Sufficiency in Slovenia – Questions and Dilemmas

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Abstract

Food production and consumption have been revolutionized in recent decades, primarily driven by globalization. As a result, most of the world's populations today reside in countries dependent, at least in part, on imported food. In this paper, we discuss the level of food self-sufficiency in Slovenia, why it is important, the factors that influence the low levels of food self-sufficiency, and provide some examples of potential solutions on how to improve food self-sufficiency. In 1970, the level of self-sufficiency in Slovenia was over 70%, while in 2008 it was only around 50%, and it has further declined since the last decade. In 2020, there were particularly low levels of self-sufficiency with regard to fruit (36%), vegetables (48%), and honey (68%). On the other hand, Slovenia produces far more food of animal origin than its citizens consume. The highest levels of self-sufficiency are found in the production of meat (84%), eggs (95%), and milk (128%). Self-sufficiency in organic food is particularly low (5%), despite organic farming being the most sustainable agricultural practice. With local self-sufficiency, Slovenia would gain better food quality, the negative impact on the environment would be reduced, and the income of the local agricultural producers would increase. Furthermore, we note that technological development, decentralization of food production, and shifts in consumer and policymaker sentiments are crucial success factors to future-proofing the food system. We urge the food industry stakeholders around the world to participate in creating a much-needed shift towards making the food industry more resilient and sustainable.

Keywords: food self-sufficiency, agriculture, circular economy, sustainability, Slovenia.

1. Introduction

The industrialization of food production is one of the great achievements of modern history, and it has created a situation where most of us rarely need to think twice about how nutrients move from the earth all the way into our bodies. Global food systems are incredibly efficient at moving goods from every corner of the world to our dining room tables, which is nothing short of amazing. But are there two sides to every story. As has been exposed by recent events, there may be unforeseen negative consequences to a globalized food industry that is optimized to deliver just the right amount of food at just the right time.

The objective of this literature review is to discuss the level of food self-sufficiency in Slovenia and explain why it is important. The paper also addresses the factors that influence the low levels of food self-sufficiency and provides some examples of potential solutions on how to improve food self-sufficiency. Our work emphasizes the importance of ensuring food self-sufficiency in Slovenia and searching alternative solutions and new food production methods. As global food needs in the aggravated climate will undoubtedly increase, in addition to a further increase in food prices, we can also expect increasing geopolitical pressures to ensure food imports. Since Slovenia is not an important geopolitical force, it is all the more strategically and existentially important to produce enough food for its own needs.

2. Literature Review

Globalization has significantly transformed food production systems. Increasing trade linkages have enabled countries to rely on imports rather than producing commodities themselves, thereby overcoming their own production constraints while saving resources globally through more efficient production systems. Further, international food trade has the potential to increase nutritious and diverse food supply, and thus increase resilience to local shocks. At the same time, however, global trade has partly led to decreased diversity in local food production landscapes increased vulnerability to market shocks, and the decoupling of food production and consumption (Kinnunen, 2020). Food production and consumption have been revolutionized in recent
decades, primarily driven by globalization. More centralized food systems mean that cultivation is more efficient, diets are increasingly diversified, and food availability continues to rise in various regions across the world. As a result, most of the world's populations today reside in countries dependent, at least in part, on imported food.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its broadest terms “Food Self-Sufficiency” refers to a country’s capacity to meet its own food needs from domestic production. It is typically measured either by the proportion of a country’s food consumption that is met by domestic production, or by per capita food production per day at the level of an adequate diet (FAO, 2016). Food self-sufficiency is often presented as an extreme and isolationist concept by its critics, who see it as inefficient and trade distorting. In practice, however, many countries seeking to improve their food self-sufficiency do so in the context of international trade. The aim is not to produce 100 percent of their food on domestic soil, but rather to increase domestic capacity to produce food, even if the country engages in food imports and exports (Clapp, 2016).

A more practical way to think about food self-sufficiency is to express the percentage of foods consumed in terms of how much is produced domestically. This is known as the self-sufficiency ratio (SSR) and is defined as: (Production x 100) / (Production + Imports – Exports). It is possible to express production and consumption either in terms of monetary value or in terms of dietary needs. While the monetary argument is certainly important from an economic and policy point of view, we argue that the most important factor is the extent to which a country is self-sufficient with regards to calories and nutrients.

Self-sufficiency in local food is of great importance, as it ensures national security for the period of economic crises and reduces dependence on foreign trade, which is especially important in times of disrupted global supply (Plut, 2012). Moreover, the concept of food self-sufficiency has direct implications for a country’s or region’s ability to independently meet the dietary needs of its population, regardless of external circumstances. While it is certainly possible for countries with lower SSR to fully provide its inhabitants with the calories and nutrients it needs through high levels of import, distortions to trade can rapidly create large challenges for such countries. This is exactly why the current COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions to global flows of goods may create large negative consequences for countries with lower levels of food self-sufficiency (Johansson, 2021).

According to the FAO, today about 75% of the world's food is processed from only 12 plant and 5 animal species, making the global food system particularly vulnerable. Therefore, adapting agriculture to climate change will be one of the key factors in providing sufficient food for future generations.

Commercial agriculture is highly capital and energy intensive and employs few people (less than 5% in economically developed countries) and presents a heavy burden on the environment (Plut, 2012 after Stutz and Warf, 2005). Agriculture designed in this way is unsustainable, as it destroys natural resources from which it is existentially independent. Soil fertility declines due to erosion and soil poisoning, soil trampling, and the destruction of organic matter. Water supply is threatened by depletion of water resources and agricultural pollution. In mechanized agriculture, non-renewable fossil fuels are used, which represents a lasting economy of local communities, as agricultural products are usually sold in remote markets. Long transports of food also bring about the loss of nutritional value of food, which is also from the point of view of health of lower quality and often additional chemical treatment to withstand long transports (Perpar, Udovč, 2010).

### 3. Research Methods

The research was conducted by reviewing the work done so far and trends in the field of agriculture and self-sufficiency. We systematically searched the literature from the year 2010 to July 2021 in various databases (Medline - Pubmed, Google Scholar). We used the following keywords in English: food self-sufficiency, food security, agriculture, circular economy, sustainability, Slovenia. Among the summaries defined by these keywords, we selected publications that provided the information on levels of food self-sufficiency in Slovenia and presented them among Results and Key findings.

### 4. Results and Key findings

#### 4.1. Self-Sufficiency in Slovenia

In 1970, the level of self-sufficiency in Slovenia was over 70%, while in 2008 it was only around 50%, and it has further declined since the last decade. Today, Slovenia is not entirely self-sufficient, as shown below it is self-sufficient in only a few categories
of agrifood products. In 2020, there were particularly low levels of self-sufficiency with regard to fruit (36%), vegetables (48%), and honey (68%). On the other hand, Slovenia produces far more food of animal origin than its citizens consume. The highest levels of self-sufficiency are found in the production of meat (84%), eggs (95%), and milk (128%). Self-sufficiency in organic food is particularly low, with organic farming being the most sustainable agricultural practice. Last year, 5% of all Slovenian farms were engaged in organic production, producing a tenth of all Slovenian agricultural land.

Table 1: Calendar crop and animal supply balance sheets, Slovenia, 2020 (Source: SURS, 2021).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Domestic use</th>
<th>Self-sufficiency rate</th>
<th>Consumption per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000 t</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>kg/cap.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>749.2</td>
<td>838.9</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>116.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154.1</td>
<td>184.5</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137.2</td>
<td>284.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>119.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>149.4</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112.9</td>
<td>231.2</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, Slovenia has the least agricultural land per capita among European countries. The share of agricultural land in areas with limited factors for agricultural production exceeds 75%. In order to achieve at least 70-80% of Slovenia’s food self-sufficiency, agricultural land should be increased by about a third by 2030, and in the worst case by at least a quarter (Plut, 2012). With not the best natural resources at our disposal, we should also consider that for the production of one kilogram of beef we need 15 times more land than for the production of one kilogram of cereals and as much as 70 times more land than for one kilogram of vegetables. Nevertheless, we have enough red meat for export and we do not satisfy the need for fruit and vegetables even in 50 percent.

4.2. Possible solutions

To ensure that food self-sufficiency can be improved all over the world, a few things need to happen. First, we need to find new production methods that are less dependent on external factors such as climate and weather. The emergence of techniques such as vertical farming and aquaponics are highly promising in this regard, as it enables sturdy, localized production of a wide range of crops and seafood. Similarly, novel techniques such as meat culturing and fermentation-based production of microbial proteins are further alternatives whose development should be helped in every conceivable way. Second, food production needs to
become more decentralized so that a sustainable food supply can be maintained without great reliance on a small group of large producing countries. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the correct regulatory conditions and consumer sentiments that support localized production need to be in place. While lesser reliance on global supply chains definitely seems to garner a high degree of support among both industrialists and consumers, a lot of regulatory and policy obstacles still remain.

Where are the holdbacks in increasing self-sufficiency? The consumer is an important driving force that has a decisive influence on the development of the entire food industry and, with its shopping habits, directs the development of the market and consequently influences decisions about what products growers will grow (Johansson, 2021). It is important to share awareness of the importance of healthy and locally produced food and and distrust of the global chain. Therefore, the change in eating habits is also of a great importance. Meaning people would not eat as much processed things, but will prepare at least a meal or two for themselves and not just buy everything. According to SORS, last year every inhabitant of Slovenia discarded an average of 68 kg of food, of which 24 kilograms was still edible food. This is a huge holdback, since food loss and food waste is increasing, instead of decreasing. People should get more educated on sustainable agricultural practices and try to grow their own food. Municipalities, government and the other stakeholders should invest their resources into setting a network of community gardens. The reserve is also in the urgent need to reduce the share of meat consumption and increase the inclusion of vegetables in the diet. Umanotera stated, that a high level of food self-sufficiency in Slovenia can not be achieved without reducing livestock production. Localizing value chains may also decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation, although agricultural production is a larger contributor to total food-related GHG emissions (Kinnunen, 2020).

5. Conclusions

With local self-sufficiency, Slovenia would gain better food quality, the income of the local agricultural producers would increase, and the negative impact on the environment would be reduced. We argue that the current structure of agricultural crops is far from sustainable, as livestock farming has much larger environmental footprints than crop production. Furthermore, we note that technological development, decentralization of food production, and shifts in consumer and policymaker sentiments are crucial success factors to future-proofing the food system. We urge the food industry stakeholders around the world to participate in creating a much-needed shift towards making the food industry more resilient and sustainable.

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