

KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION,
AND INNOVATION:
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES
FROM AND ABOUT THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

BALÁZS FAJT
ESZTER CSÁNYI
CSABA JÁKI
(eds.)

APOSZTRÓF

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Edited by
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Peer-reviewer: László Bodolay, Balázs Ferkelt, Erika Huszár,
Szilvia Malaczkov, Judit Török

ISBN 978-963-625-064-5

Published by © Aposztróf Kiadó, 2024

Nagy és Heteyi Kft.

www.aposztrof.hu

Cover photo: © Bendix Mahner, Dreamstime.com

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INTRODUCTION

This edited volume assembles a diverse range of studies that explore the intersections between knowledge, society, and innovation. Spanning themes such as economic strategies, education, communication, and media safety, the volume reflects on shared challenges and unique solutions across disciplines and regions. The chapters, presented in both English and German, highlight global perspectives while addressing region-specific dynamics, offering valuable insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike.

Part I: Knowledge and innovation in economic contexts

Ayman Sadik Al Najjar: *Unveiling the top five factors impacting startups' success: A comprehensive systematic review*

Building on the theme of knowledge and innovation, this chapter identifies the critical factors influencing startup success. It presents actionable insights for fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems, emphasizing the importance of financial resources, strategic management, marketing, experience, and networking.

Balázs Tóth: *Public debt management strategies in Central-European countries*

Shifting focus to financial governance, this chapter explores the evolution of debt portfolios in the Visegrad countries and Slovenia. By analyzing the impact of various crises, it offers lessons on resilience and strategic financial management in post-socialist economies.

Part II: Branding and communication

Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry: *A comparative analysis of Anholt's country brand indices with a focus on the current positions of the Visegrad countries*

This chapter examines how countries position themselves globally through branding indices. It compares methodologies and evaluates the image of the Visegrad countries, offering insights into the strategic use of country branding for international competitiveness.

Pozsgai Éva Juliánna: *Comparative analysis of health communication preferences and attitudes in the Visegrad countries*

Focusing on communication within healthcare systems, this chapter explores patient preferences and professional attitudes in the Visegrad countries. It emphasizes the role of effective communication in improving health outcomes and offers recommendations for addressing existing barriers.

Zhanara Nurusheva: *The safety of journalists in Kazakhstan: Legal frameworks, threats, and international comparisons*

Expanding the scope to media and safety, this chapter investigates the challenges journalists face in Kazakhstan. It assesses legal frameworks and real-world threats, providing actionable recommendations to improve press freedom and safety standards.

Part III: Education, language, and diplomacy

Baloghné Petkevics Olga and Nagyné Csák Éva Klára: *„Transferbrücken“ als Hilfsmittel beim Lernen einer neuen Fremdsprache*

Written in German, this chapter examines how cross-linguistic connections can accelerate foreign language learning. It explores the potential of positive transfer between German and Russian, offering practical insights for linguists and educators.

Balázs Puskás, Máté Kerepesi-Kovács and András Kétyi: *Theorie und Praxis in der diplomatischen Bildung – Ein Beispiel für ein praxisorientiertes Bildungsangebot*

Written in German, this chapter highlights the innovative blend of theory and practice in diplomatic education. It showcases the role of language learning, internships, and networking in preparing future diplomats, offering a model for practice-oriented education.

This volume showcases the richness of interdisciplinary perspectives on knowledge, society, and innovation. By addressing themes such as economic strategies, communication, and education, the chapters illuminate critical pathways for fostering progress and collaboration in a rapidly evolving world. The insights presented here aim to inspire further research and practical applications, contributing to the ongoing dialogue on building a more connected and informed global society.

The editors

PART I
KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION
IN ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

UNVEILING THE TOP FIVE FACTORS IMPACTING STARTUPS SUCCESS: A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Ayman Sadik Al Najjar

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INTRODUCTION

It's common knowledge that entrepreneurs play critical roles in a growing economy. The function of entrepreneurs in the well-known process of "creative destruction" or innovation was theoretically revealed more than a century ago by Schumpeter (1912).

Startups are organizations in their early stage of establishment, and they often have small employee teams and few resources at their disposal. They are unique in that they experience rapid expansion (Graham, 2012). The primary goal of most those new businesses is to produce and launch a groundbreaking service or product that will shake up the market. Motivated by a desire to make a difference and armed with what they see as a novel strategy or cutting-edge technology, many startup founders set out to change the world (Luger – Koo, 2005). They could be inspired to take the plunge by the prospect of monetary gain and the thrill of striking out on their own to create something from scratch. Technology, healthcare, finance, and retail are just few of the different sectors where we might find startups. Many startups aim to fill a gap in the market by creating something completely new, but others may seek to improve upon an existing solution or disrupt an existing industry. Obtaining fund, establishing a consumer base, and creating a profitable business model are the main challenges that startups encounter because of their infancy. Many, however, have gone on to become industry leaders, rewarding their founders, investors, and staff handsomely for their initial investments. In addition to fueling innovation and growth across many different industries and giving aspiring business owners a chance to realize their full potential, startups play an essential role in the modern

business ecosystems (Kane, 2010). Understanding the major factors of success becomes essential as these companies negotiate the hurdles of their initial years. This study will conduct a systematic comprehensive review of the literature in order to answer the research question about the main factors determining startup success, with the goal of providing valuable insights to policymakers, stakeholders, and entrepreneurs alike.

Research question: What are the top five core characteristics significantly determining startup success?

This essential issue serves as the foundation of our inquiry, directing our systematic literature analysis toward identifying patterns, trends, and insights within the existing scholarly environment. The ultimate goal is to provide a concise understanding of the primary pillars that influence the success track of businesses. Our goal in condensing this information is to provide a simple and accessible resource for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and academics, offering clarity on the most critical success determinants in the startup survival and continuity.

Methodology

The search equation was designed to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to identify relevant literature for the systematic literature review. The use of “startup*” and “start-up*” allows for variations in spelling and hyphenation commonly encountered in academic literature. This flexibility ensures that the search captures a broad spectrum of articles that discuss startups.

Additionally, the inclusion of “success factors” narrows down the search focus to specifically target articles addressing the critical factors contributing to the success of startups. By combining these terms with the logical operator “And” the search aims to find articles that concurrently discuss both startups and success factors, creating a refined set of literature directly related to the research objective. This algorithm was chosen to strike a balance between inclusivity and specificity, enabling the identification of a diverse range of articles

while maintaining relevance to the central theme of startup success factors. Given these inputs, the following was the research algorithm created for the systematic literature review: (*startup* Or start-up**) And “*success factors*” in article’s title or author keywords or abstract.

The approach utilized to search for papers focusing on startup success characteristics in the ISI Web of Science database was based on the title, abstract, and keywords of publications without identifying a time range. It’s worth noting that all of the results from this search were for publications published between 2001 and 2023. This is not surprising given that the interest in startups began following the internet revolution in the late 1990s.

The author follows the “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis” (PRISMA) recommendations (Moher et al., 1996) to promote transparency and replicability in the process, as indicated in Figure 1. The results of the Web of Science search included 155 documents. The study conducted a second step of filtration and only included English-language papers from peer-reviewed journals. Besides, business and management journals were included in the categories of web of science. Furthermore, articles only are chosen in the option of document type. This step decreased the number of articles to 47. After that, the author skimmed the abstracts and titles to determine whether or not they belonged in the full text reading phase. In this phase, articles that did not focus on startup success factors or did not explore startup survival determinants were excluded. The sample was reduced to 17 articles in the third phase, which were read in full text.

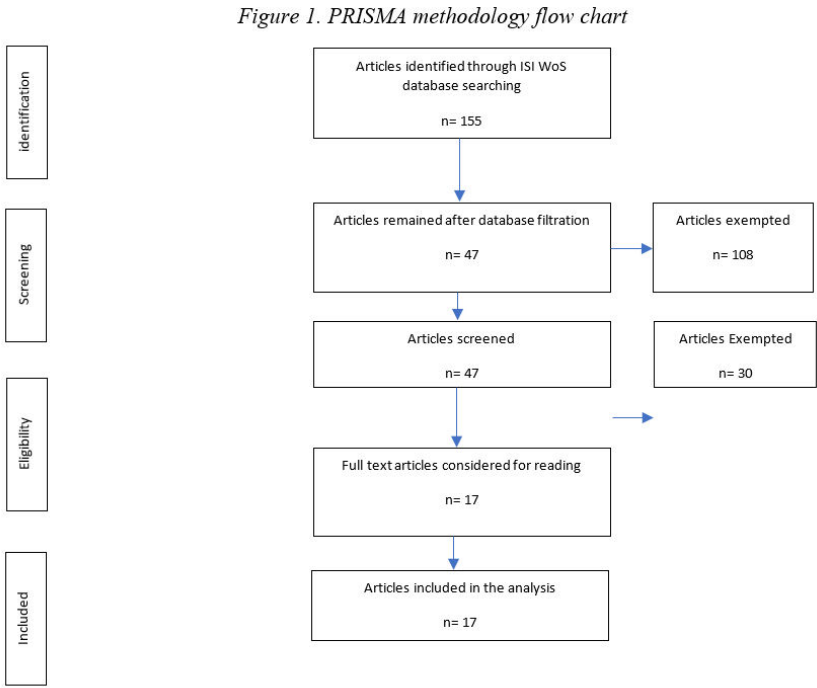
LITERATURE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Background

Startups are short-term companies that aim to create a successful, repeatable, and scalable business plan. These are human institutions built to innovate in the face of significant uncertainty, producing new goods or services. They often have little experience, work with few

resources, and are impacted by rivals, consumers, investors, and new product advancements in technology (Tripathi et al., 2019). Moreover, these new businesses arise to fill a market demand or gap by offering something unique. Businesses like these are often distinguished by their bold in the face of risk and uncertainty (Giardino et al., 2014). Startups are recognized for disrupting well-established markets and opening up enormous opportunities for growth. According to Bednar et al. (2018), these firms are rapidly expanding; everything else in the startup context was brought about by the necessity for rapid expansion. As a result, a startup is a company that strives for uniqueness, innovation, and unusual thinking. Oliveira and Zotes (2018) define the startup by a group of people functioning in highly uncertain environments in quest of a repeatable and scalable business plan.

Figure 1. PRISMA methodology flow chart



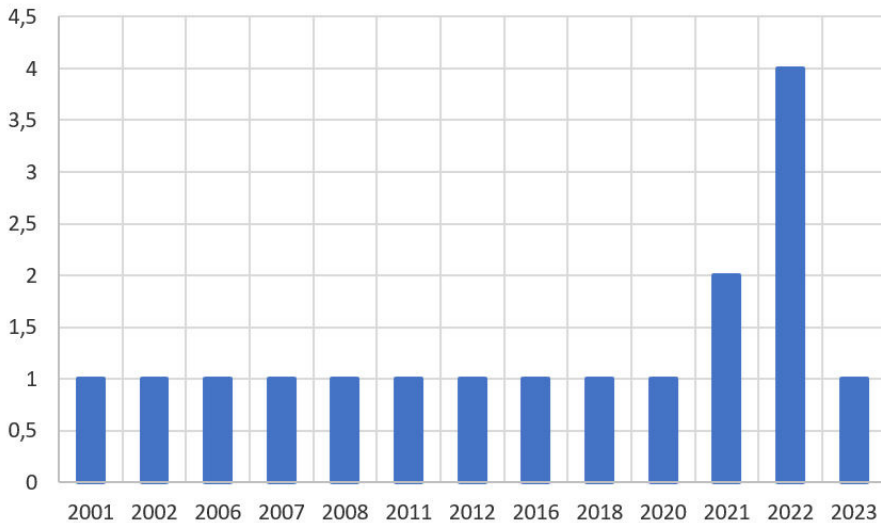
On other hand, the high incidence of failure for businesses in their early stages is a driving force for this intriguing study. As explained by Cantamessa et al. (2018), considerable ratio (58%) of startups fail during the first three years of operation, with only 14% surviving after five years.

Given the significant risk and unpredictability in the startup environment, this study is critical in highlighting the major elements influencing the survival and performance of startup enterprises in this constantly dynamic and changing world.

FOCUS AND CONTENT OF THE ARTICLES

The papers that remained after filtration and focused on the primary factors that play critical roles in startup success revealed that there has been an increase in research on this subject in recent years, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Papers published over time about startups success



Following that, a thorough thematic analysis of the publications was carried out, with Table 1 summarizing the main academic orientation, significant aspects under examination, and principal emphasis of the studies. This classification technique revealed that all omnichannel studies in our sample recommended a wide range of success characteristics and key pillar adoption; the papers could then be summarized into 17 various points of view.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE ARTICLES

The exploration of startup success factors through an in-depth content analysis of 17 diverse scholarly articles spanning from 2001 to 2023 unveils a rich tapestry of insights into the dynamic startups landscape. Each article contributes a unique perspective, adding depth to our understanding of the critical determinants that steer the trajectory of startups.

The interest of startups success came first in the beginning of this century. Gundry and Welsch (2001) highlighted key success factors, emphasizing the significance of firm reputation, product or service quality, available cash, and effective leadership. This early insight laid the groundwork for understanding the foundational elements crucial for startups to thrive. Feindt et al. (2002) investigated aspects such as commitment, content, price sensitivity, convenience, control, interaction, and brand image. These characteristics emphasized the need of a strategy that includes both product qualities and market positioning. Nosella et al. (2006) underline the importance of quality, the effective creation and management of connection networks, and the need for strong technical and managerial abilities in deciding startup success. Quality goes beyond goods to incorporate operational excellence, and excellent networking is critical for resource access. Technical expertise and management knowledgeable are emphasized as necessary for managing the complexities of the changing startup ecosystem. Collectively, these characteristics provide a comprehensive framework for startup success, deepening our knowledge of the complex dynamics that drive entrepreneurial achievement. Kessler's

(2007) views centered on startup process features and the entrepreneur's personal environment. Character traits and startup resources identified as essential components, highlighting the significance of individual features in the entrepreneurial process. However, Song et al. (2008) implement a comprehensive analysis in 2008, linking many parameters with venture performance uniformly. The main factors that contribute to a startup's success are supply chain integration, market breadth, company age, the size of the founding team, financial resources, and founder experience.

Hormiga et al. (2011) examined the startup scene in 2011, underlining the importance of trade fairs, business events, location to build a strong relationship with many parties. Building a reputation in the early years, as well as connections with suppliers and consumers, are seen as critical for new enterprises. Furthermore, Kirchberger and Pohl (2016) present a multifaceted array of factors influencing startup success. Industry closeness underscores the importance of aligning with the prevailing business environment. Promoting an innovation culture is identified as crucial, emphasizing the role of creativity in driving startup viability. Effective management techniques, encompassing strategic planning and organizational flexibility, emerge as base for success. Networking is highlighted for resource acquisition and collaboration. Property rights and resource availability are recognized as foundational, while team structure and technology-related considerations further contribute to startup survival. The findings collectively emphasize the holistic nature of success factors, providing clear insights for entrepreneurs and policymakers alike.

Sarja (2018) identifies important success elements for startup technology firms, including product, management, organization, and market-related aspects. In terms of products, the research focuses on technical benefits, life cycle considerations, and adoption difficulties. Management considerations include the importance of support, financing levels, visibility, and timeliness. Organizational success is dependent on project team capabilities and successful networking. Market-related factors include methodologies, consumer demands, market development, alternative research, adoption time, and technophobia. Sarja's (2018) results give a comprehensive framework,

shedding light on the several factors critical to the success of technology new ventures. Muneeb et al. (2020) identified a wide range of success determinants, spanning from company promotion and partnership formation to environmental image, governmental variables, and technology and infrastructural issues.

However, Santisteban et al. (2021) contributed to the discussion by emphasizing several success aspects such as customer satisfaction, early stage funding, innovation ecosystem growth, and the importance of entrepreneurial leadership. It highlighted the dynamic and ever-changing nature of success factors. Sethi et al. (2021) made significant contributions by identifying key success factors such as liquidity, value creation, appropriate revenue model, first-mover advantage, transparency, service suite, technology adoption, strategic partnerships, operational efficiency, and internal communication. The findings of this study emphasized the significance of adaptation and strategic alignment.

The recent year 2022 brought insights from Oliva et al. (2022), they emphasized pivotal success factors for startups, underscoring the significance of founders' prior experience, a robust network facilitating company development, entrepreneurial team experience, government support, and strategic business partnerships. Complementing these insights, Silva et al. (2022) highlighted the significance of variables such as employee dedication and satisfaction, educational attainment, distinctive founder attributes, management expertise, and the entrepreneur's financial investment. Together, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of versatile elements important for startup success, ranging from leadership and network dynamics to human and financial capital. On the other hand, Sevilla-Bernardo et al. (2022) defined important success characteristics such as the innovative idea, founder leadership, business plan, marketing strategy, entrepreneurial team, capital, and timing. Concurrently, Asgari et al. (2022) also stressed the need of startup innovation, flexibility to climatic change, effective product marketing, business growth, strategic management, guaranteeing client satisfaction, and proficient software development. These combined observations highlight the critical roles of visionary leadership, well-defined business plans,

powerful marketing tactics, and inventive product development, all of which contribute to the overall success and durability of startups.

Barz et al. (2023) identified a thorough set of success factors essential for startups. These encompass funding, networks, responsiveness to market dynamics, effective organizational governance, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, building a cohesive team, ensuring robust internal communication, making compliance easier, and continuing to have a customer-focused perspective.

The exploration of these studies unveils an evolving narrative of startup success factors. From foundational elements to the complex interplay of innovation, leadership, and adaptability, these insights provide a holistic view for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and researchers navigating the dynamic startup ventures.

Table 1. The analysis of 17 papers about their classifications for startups success factors

No	Authors	Publication Year	Startup Success Factors
1	Gundry, LK; Welsch, HP	2001	Key success factors: firm reputation, product or service quality, available cash, and effective leadership.
2	Feindta, S; Jeffcoate, J; Chappell, C	2002	dedication, sensitivity to pricing, content, ease of use, control, engagement, and brand image
3	Nosella, A; Petroni, G; Verbano, C	2006	the superior quality, the capacity to establish and maintain relationships, and the technical and managerial abilities
4	Kessler, A	2007	Startup process features and the entrepreneur's personal surroundings. Personality characteristics and startup resources.
5	Song, M; Podoyntsyna, K; van der Bij, H; Halman, JIM	2008	The following variables are homogeneously connected with venture performance: (1) supply chain integration; (2) market scope; (3) company age; (4) founding team size; (5) financial resources; (6) founders' marketing experience; (7) founders' industry experience; and (8) patent protection. One success element represented market and opportunity, five success factors represented resources, and two success factors were derived from the entrepreneurial team category.

6	Hormiga, E; Batista-Canino, RM; Sánchez-Medina, A	2011	Several factors might impact a startup's success, including attendance at trade fairs and business events, location, assistance from close relationships, and reputation in the early years of operation. The relationships built with future suppliers and customers may add tremendous value to a new firm.
7	Fernández-Guerrero, R; Revuelto-Taboada, L; Simón-Moya, V	2012	entrepreneurial education, training, experience, motivation, and new venture size.
8	Kirchberger, MA; Pohl, L	2016	Industry proximity, innovation culture, management methods, networking, property rights, resource availability, team construction, application of technology value, technological compatibility, and transfer of technologies strategy.
9	Sarja	2018	Product-related success factors (TP for difficult adoption, life cycle, and technological advantages). Management related (management support, level of money, visibility, timeliness); Organization-related (teamwork skills, networking); Market-related (MP methodologies employed, emphasis on consumer demands, market development, alternative research, adoption time, and aversion to technology).
10	Muneeb, FM; Yazdi, AK; Wanke, P; Cao, YY; Chughtai, M	2020	Promoting business. Creating a relationship, developing a new product Competence and business stability, Environmental picture, Monopoly power Price, information, Governmental regulations, societal, and market-related elements. Factors that affect technology and infrastructure, management skills, risks, and resources.
11	Santisteban, J; Inche, J; Mauricio, D	2021	The following are success factors: customer satisfaction; phase financing; support from a business incubator; established innovation ecosystem; flexible capacity; creativity and entrepreneurial culture; business experience; prior startup experience; academic training; technology business capacities; R&D knowledge; business management expertise; entrepreneurial leadership; entrepreneur's age and gender; motivation; government support; and venture capital, market competitor, organizational size, business age, product innovation, location, environment dynamism, science & technology policies, clustering, partners.

12	Sethi, K; Biswas, B; Balodi, KC	2021	This study identified the following key success factors: liquidity, value creation and communication, capturing value through an appropriate revenue approach, first mover advantage, neutrality and transparency, fit of services, reliable technology, strategic alliances, efficiency in operations, and organizational internal communication and interdependence.
13	Oliva, FL; Teberga, PMF; Testi, LIO; Kotabe, M; Del Giudice, M; Kelle, P; Cunha, MP	2022	Success factors include: (1) the founders' prior expertise; (2) a strong network of connections that helps the firm expand and flourish; (3) the founding team's entrepreneurial background; (4) government backing; and (5) business partners.
14	Silva, CR; Siluk, JCM; Neuenfeldt, A; Francescatto, M; Michelin, C	2022	Employee dedication and contentment, as well as the degree of education, founder personality traits, management experience, and cash contributed by the entrepreneur.
15	Sevilla-Bernardo, J; Sanchez-Robles, B; Herrador-Alcaide, TC	2022	Success aspects include the idea, the founder's leadership, the business model, the marketing plans, the entrepreneurial team, capital, and timing.
16	Asgari, T; Daneshvar, A; Chobar, AP; Ebrahimi, M; Abrahamyan, S	2022	Startup creativity, climate change, product marketing, management skills, business plan, customer fulfillment, and software development.
17	Barz, L; Lindeque, S; Hedman, J	2023	It highlights nine success characteristics, including funding, connections, adaptability, organizational governance, creative culture, team, interpersonal interaction, simplicity of compliance, and customer focus.

The research dig into an in-depth examination of 17 articles exploring critical success factors for startups. The outcomes of this detailed analysis are indicated in Table 2, providing a visual representation of the commonalities and shared elements among these papers. The table effectively illustrates the convergence towards the identification of the top five predominant success factors. Through

this detailed tabulation, the table not only serves as a visual representation but also serves as a condensed yet comprehensive synthesis of the convergent insights, ultimately revealing the major pillars influencing new ventures identified across the examined literature.

*Table 2. The top five success factors for startups,
as augmented per authors' perspectives*

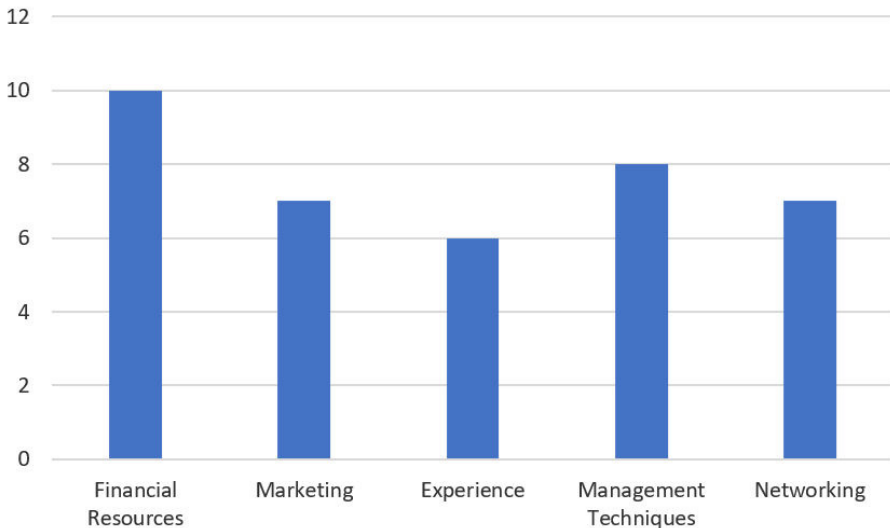
Financial Resources	Management	Marketing	Networking	Experience
Song et al. 2008	Gundry & Welsch 2001	Song et al. 2008	Hormiga et al. 2011	Song et al. 2008
Gundry & Welsch 2001	Kirchberger & Pohl 2016	Muneeb et al. 2020	Kirchberger & Pohl 2016	Fernández-Guerrero et al. 2012
Kirchberger & Pohl 2016	Muneeb et al. 2020	Santisteban et al. 2021	Feindta et al. 2002	Oliva et al. 2022
Kessler 2007	Nosella et al. 2006	Sevilla-Bernardo et al. 2022	Oliva et al. 2022	Silva et al. 2022
Muneeb et al. 2020	Santisteban et al. 2021	Asgari et al. 2022	Nosella et al. 2006	Santisteban et al. 2021
Silva et al. 2022	Sevilla-Bernardo et al. 2022	Sethi et al. 2021	Sarja 2018	Sarja 2018
Santisteban et al. 2021	Asgari et al. 2022	Sarja 2018	Barz et al. 2023	
Sevilla-Bernardo et al. 2022	Sarja 2018			
Sethi et al. 2021				
Barz et al. 2023				

These shared success factors emerge as critical components across various studies, indicating their significance in influencing the success of startups. It's worth noting that the identification of these factors is a result of the collective insights provided by different re-

searchers in distinct contexts and timeframes. The articles also showcase diversity as they feature contributions from different locations around the world.

Examining the insights presented in Figure 3 unravels a compelling narrative about the preeminent factors shaping startup success. Notably, financial resources emerge as the primary catalyst, resonating with the perspectives of ten articles. Following closely, management skills and techniques claim the second position, garnering acknowledgment in eight articles. Remarkably, marketing and networking factors jointly occupy the third spot, each endorsed by seven articles. Finally, the entrepreneurial experience and team expertise secure the fifth rank, with six articles underscoring their significance. Figure 3 effectively communicates this detailed analysis by visually representing the success factors based on the number of authors aligning with each respective consideration.

Figure 3. Distribution of success factors/ Number of authors



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is critical to identify the top five factors influencing the startup firm's success and continuity. These criteria may guide startup founders, policymakers, and researchers to consider it if they expect the new firm to survive. The outcomes of the systematic literature study highlight noteworthy findings, as financial resources were ranked first on these parameters, with the founder's managerial skills ranking second. It also rated marketing resources and networking on the same level after management, with the experience and expertise of the startup's founder and staff rounding out the top five factors. This section will go over these factors in depth.

Financial resources: it is not strange that this factor comes at first interest, since the founder(s) of the new venture need funds to cover the cost of their different operations and need it for expanding of their works through investors. Song et al. (2008) reveal that financial resources are critical for startups success. Access to capital allows these firms to invest in marketing and production, which are vital for developing innovative products and building brand awareness. It also allows startups to adapt to changing market conditions and seize opportunities during the early stages of a company's lifecycle. Additionally, adequate financial resources attract and retain talented personnel. On other occasions, the venture capitals are considered that main funding source for startups. Baum – Silverman (2015) explain that financial intermediaries, such as venture capital firms (VCs), are likely the most important source of selection in the entrepreneurial setting, creating the climate in which new businesses emerge. Nofsinger – Wang (2011) argue that startup financing in its initial stage depends on investor type. It highlights knowledge gaps and moral hazard issues in funding. To prevent moral hazard, institutional investors rely on entrepreneurs' experience and investor protection, whereas informal investors are drawn to the firm's product type and social networks. This indicates that there is a correlation between financing of the startup and the founders' experience and networking.

Management: This factor is the second important one, and it includes different aspects of management techniques and skills for

both, the founders and managing team. It highlights the importance of strategic planning, team dynamics and organizational flexibility, in driving the success of startups. Strategic planning helps startups establish clear goals, identify target markets, and develop financial projections. Strong team dynamics and leadership are vital for startups to navigate challenges and achieve their goals. Organizational flexibility is essential for startups to adapt to changing market conditions and emerging opportunities. By cultivating these skills, startups can position themselves for long-term sustainability and growth (Kirchberger – Pohl, 2016). On the other hand, and according to Zaech & Baldegger (2017), leadership behavior is just as crucial as context for startups and their performance. Most entrepreneurs overlook leadership and do not consider it a motivator for starting a business. The founders should place a greater emphasis on leadership behavior. In the same context, Ensley et al. (2006) explained two types of leadership vertical and shared leadership for a startup. Vertical leadership, which comes from a formal leader, and shared leadership, which comes from a distributed leader. Both leadership styles significantly influenced new venture performance, while shared leadership also has a major impact on performance variance. This demonstrates the importance of shared leadership over traditional vertical leadership in improving startup performance.

Marketing: It is ranked on the third level of interest for startup success factors. Startups should navigate the competitive market, achieve sustainable growth, and build a strong brand reputation. To overcome marketing challenges, startups should focus on niche markets and specific customer segments, use data-driven marketing tools, collaborate with influencers and industry experts, embrace content marketing, and use marketing automation and personalization tools (Santisteban et al., 2021; Sethi et al., 2021). Product performance and launch timing are directly influenced by marketing resources. To succeed in their first product development, new ventures should efficiently manage their existing resources (Zhao et al., 2014).

Networking: This factor is oriented on the same level with marketing factor. It requires the leaders and founders of the startups to develop their skills in communications and connections. Witt (2004)

explains that startup founders can obtain resources more cheaply through their network contacts than through market transactions, and they can even obtain resources from the network that would not be available through market transactions at all. In addition, firms relying on cooperation need more networking. While founders with limited resources or economic difficulties may feel more pressure to pursue networking (Witt, 2004). Furthermore, Banerji – Reimer (2019), investigate the impact of professional social media on efficient networking, they find that several factors in social media profiles were found to be positively associated to the amount of funding received by startup companies, indicating a link between social media and entrepreneurial success. However, partnership in business and government can support networking. Based on Butler & Hansen (2006), large-scale social networks as well as interorganizational strategic partnerships are vital for a successful launch and continuous competitive advantage. Public policy can serve in this regard by promoting this kind of network activity as opposed to the conventional means of promoting the establishment of new businesses.

Experience: Entrepreneurs experience and expertise plays significant role in success of startups. Securing funds for the startup firms is essential to its continuity, prior startup founder's experience enhances the possibility of direct VC funding as well as venture valuation (Hsu, 2007). Furthermore, the entrepreneur's human capital, including education, business experience, and motivation, is positively related with venture performance (Peña, 2002). Employees at the startup must also have prior experience. One of the key conditions for 'Take-off' is the variety of knowledge among teams. Staff with multi-skills are better equipped to avoid company failure from the start, adapt internal resources to new market trends, and overcome resource constraints. Moreover, previous collaboration experience has a positive influence on the chance of future venture success only when complex skills are available (Marullo et al., 2018). In a similar way, entrepreneurs' ability to effectively launch their businesses into the market by mobilizing team resources is regarded to be affected by their industry and startup knowledge. Muñoz-Bullon et al. (2015) found that the team's experience in the new company's industry en-

hances the positive impact. In addition, (Zhao et al., 2014) suggest that startup knowledge on the founding team reduces the influence of marketing and technical resources on building a good product positioning strategy.

It is necessary to highlight that the technology component is not among the top five factors that lead to startup success. Only four publications deemed technology to be relevant, according to our analysis. This means that, while technology is vital for innovation, there are other factors that affect the continuity and sustainability of the startup companies. When we look at the top five factors, we can see that they are mostly related to resources (financial and marketing) and human capital skills and abilities (management, networking and experience).

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCHES

Ultimately, the integration of 17 major research on startup success variables revealed a varied and dynamic story in the startups scene. As we progress through the timeline of these studies, certain commonalities emerge, creating an illustration of diverse processes that propel businesses to success. Financial resources are a cornerstone that has been identified in several studies as a key for expansion, production, and talent acquisition. Management emerges as an orchestrator, harmonizing strategic planning, innovation, and effective communication to navigate the complexities of the startup journey.

Human capital, as represented by the experience of founders and their teams, takes center stage, emphasizing the importance of past entrepreneurial adventures, education, and different skill sets. Networking appears as a critical thread in its different manifestations, whether through relational networks, industrial partnerships, or social media platforms, highlighting the necessity of interconnection in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The narrative also emphasizes the changing nature of success factors. From the initial focus on concrete resources and market-oriented initiatives, the discourse changes to the intangibles like founder leadership, employees expertise, and the

formation of strong connections. The current scene, characterized by debates over innovation, climate change, and technology advances, represents the continual evolution of startup dynamics.

As we consider these facts, it becomes clear that startup success is not a one-size-fits-all concept. Rather, it is a complicated tapestry weaved from several threads, each of which contributes a distinct tint to the entrepreneurial journey. However, the noteworthy absence of technology among the top factors challenges conventional assumptions, emphasizing that while technology is recognized for its critical function, it is linked with the larger fabric of human and financial factors. These findings not only provide insights into the characteristics that drive startup success, but also call for ongoing research, empirical validation, and adaptation to the ever-changing contours of the entrepreneurial environment. The narrative formed by these combined observations serves as a guidepost, lighting the road for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners going into the volatile world of startups.

It is worth to mention that the constraints of this study lie in its reliance on augmented perspectives from the reviewed articles without empirical validation. It is essential for future researches to bridge this gap by conducting a thorough investigation into the identified top five success factors for startups, employing empirical analysis to validate and enhance our comprehension of their impact. Such an approach will not only authenticate the significance of these factors but will also provide a comprehensive exploration of their intricate interactions and relative importance in shaping startup success. The adoption of rigorous empirical methodologies by researchers holds the potential to yield robust, evidence-based findings that can significantly contribute to the knowledge base for both academic scholars and practitioners within the startups ecosystem.

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PUBLIC DEBT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN CENTRAL-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

As one of the most important actors in the economy, the state is in contact with the majority of economic actors (practically everyone) through multiple channels (Kiss et al., 2022), therefore its sustainable operation and financing are essential, which highlights the importance of the public debt management. Public debt is any debt-based payment obligation of a sub-system of the general government (Sávai, 2024). A government's debt portfolio is typically the largest and most complex portfolio in a given economy, and its proper management is a crucial task. During and after the subprime crisis the importance of the analyses of the public debt has increased (Sávai-Kiss, 2017).

The study presents the evolution of the public debt management targets and changes in the characteristics of the debt portfolios of five post-socialist countries that joined the European Union in 2004: Hungary, Czechia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The aim this paper is to examine how sovereign debt management agencies responded to the subprime crisis of 2007-2009 and the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The study provides a descriptive overview, based on the strategies, quarterly and annual reports of public debt management agencies and departments.

The structure of the study is as follows: we first outline the main aspects of public debt management, and then we present the changes in strategies. This is done as changes in the characteristics of the portfolios are then described. Finally, the paper concludes by drawing conclusions and raising further research questions.

PUBLIC DEBT PORTFOLIO RISKS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

Public debt management is the activity of creating and implementing a strategy that helps to meet the financing needs of the public sector at the lowest possible medium- to long-term cost, without excessive risk-taking. There is an inverse relationship between the cost and risk of funding sources, with a reduction in the cost of the public debt portfolio being achieved while increasing its riskiness. In managing sovereign debt, these two factors should be combined to optimize the portfolio of assets used for financing (IMF, 2014).

The cost of public debt is made up of two factors, one is the expected cost, typically identified with debt service over the medium to long term. The other is the potential real economic costs, which may arise from situations in which the government is unable to meet its obligations under the debt (Tóth, 2020). The most significant risks for sovereign debt portfolios are related to market risk, which includes interest rate, foreign exchange, and refinancing risks, which are linked to market conditions, while liquidity, settlement, and operational risks are more likely to be considered transaction-level or technical risks.

Market risk arises from changes in market conditions, which may increase the cost of public debt. The most significant are interest rate and foreign exchange risks. Interest rate risk is the risk arising from changes in market interest rates. This applies to both domestic and foreign currency liabilities. For floating-rate debt items, the cost of servicing the debt changes immediately, while for fixed-rate items, the effect of changes in interest rates is observed at renewal. This risk is typically quantified in terms of duration, the weighted average time to refixing (ATR), and the proportion of floating rate debt (IMF, 2014). Foreign exchange risk is the risk arising from fluctuations in foreign exchange rates. Debt elements denominated in or indexed to foreign currencies increase the volatility of debt service. Indicators used to measure risk may include the ratio of foreign currency-denominated debt to total debt and the ratio of short-term external debt to foreign currency reserves (IMF, 2014). The refinancing risk arises when debt is renewed and involves the risk that renewal of debt is only possible

at a higher cost or, in extreme cases, not at all. Relevant indicators may be the ratios of debt with 12, 24, and 36 months remaining maturity (IMF, 2014).

CHANGES IN FUNDING STRATEGIES

The strategies and portfolio target indicators of the public debt management agencies are aggregated on the basis of the agencies' strategies, quarterly and annual reports. Data describing the characteristics of the debt portfolios have also been collected from the mentioned documents. In the case of the Hungarian public sector, reflecting previous vulnerabilities, the focus has been on internal financing and strengthening retail financing (Kolozs – Hoffmann, 2016; Gór-Holecz et al., 2016; ÁKK, 2016). Since 2011, the objectives have included increasing the role of households and non-profit organisations in public debt financing in the Czechia, which has led to the creation of specific schemes more attractive to this segment and the launch of a new electronic trading platform to facilitate this (MoF CZ, 2010). In the case of Poland, in addition to short-term cost minimisation, the Ministry of Finance has had to consider long-term objectives (such as possible accession to the Eurozone) in managing the debt portfolio, and diversification of the investor base has been important (MoF PL, 2015). Diversification of the investor base (and even opening up to the public) can reduce refinancing risk. As Slovakia has joined the Euro-Zone, therefore they did not face significant currency risk. However, the proper positioning of the government bonds in the market was a priority goal of the debt management (ARDAL, 2007). In the case of Slovenia there was no targets declared during the examined period. The two crises had a very differential impact on public debt management strategies. While the subprime crisis has led to a shift in targeting towards riskier financing, the COVID crisis has not had such an impact and in many cases, there has been a shift towards more stringent conditionality. This may be a consequence of the fact that the 2007-2009 crisis hit these states in a much more vulnerable condition and that availability of the financial sources were less constrained by the COVID epidemic (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Table 1. Targets related to currency risk (%)

	Hungary		Czechia	Poland		Slovakia
Applied indicator	Proportion of debt in foreign currency	Structure of debt in foreign currency: share of euro (after swap operations)	Proportion of debt in foreign currency	Proportion of debt in foreign currency	Share of euro in the debt denominated in foreign currency	Hedged foreign currency liabilities ratio
2007	25-32	100%	--	25-27	min. 70	--
2008	max. 50	min. 95%	--	25-27	min. 70	--
2009	max. 50	min. 95%	--	20-25	min. 70	--
2010	max. 50	min. 95%	--	20-30	min. 70	--
2011	max. 50	min. 95%	--	20-30	min. 70	min. 95
2012	max. 50	min. 95%	15(+2)	20-30	min. 70	min. 95
2013	max. 45	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	min. 95
2014	max. 45	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	min. 97
2015	max. 40	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	min. 97
2016	max. 35	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	min. 97
2017	15-25	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	min. 97
2018	15-25	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	n.a.
2019	10-20	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 30	min. 70	n.a.
2020	10-20	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 25	min. 70	n.a.
2021	10-20	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 25	min. 70	n.a.
2022	10-20	min. 95%	15(+2)	max. 25	min. 70	n.a.
2023	max. 30	min. 95%	10(+2)	max. 25	min. 70	n.a.

Source: Own editing based on the strategies of the national government debt agencies¹

1 Hungary: <https://www.akk.hu/content/path=eves-jelentesek> [2024.05.05.]Czechia: <https://www.mfcr.cz/en/fiscal-policy/state-debt/publications-and-presentations/funding-and-debt-management-strategy/2024> [2024.06.05.]Poland: <https://www.gov.pl/web/finance/outstanding-debt> [2024.06.05.]Slovakia: <https://www.ardal.sk/en/about-us/debt-management-strategy> [2024.05.20]

Table 2. Targets related to refinancing risk

	Hungary			Czechia			Poland		Slovakia	
				ATM (years)						
Applied indicator	Duration (years)	ATR (years)	ATM	Proportion of short-term liabilities (%)	ATM (years)	Proportion of liabilities due in 5 years (%)	average domestic	foreign	Proportion of short-term liabilities (%)	Proportion of liabilities due in 5 years (%)
2007	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	6.5+/-0.5	---	4.5	---	22.5	60
2008	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	6.5+/-0.5	---	5	---	22.5	60
2009	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	6.5+/-0.5	---	5	---	22.5	60
2010	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	5.5-7	---	4.5	---	22.5	60
2011	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	5.25-6.25	---	4.5	---	22.5	60
2012	2.5+/-0.5			max 25	5.5+/-0.5	max 70	4.5	5	20	60
2013	2.5+/-0.5			max 25	5.5+/-0.5	max 70	4.5	5	20	60
2014	2.5+/-0.5			max 20	5.5+/-0.5	max 70	5	4.5	20	60
2015	3+/-0.5			max 20	5.5+/-0.5	max 70	5	4.5	20	60
2016	3+/-0.5			max 20	6+/-0.25	max 70	5	4	20	60
2017	3+/-0.5			max 20	6+/-0.25	max 70	5	4	20	60
2018	3+/-0.5			max 20	6+/-0.25	max 70	5	4	n.a.	n.a.
2019	2.75-3.75			max 20	5+/-0.25	max 70	5	4.5	n.a.	n.a.
2020		min. 3.5	min 4.	max 20	6.25 +/- 0.25	max 70	5	4.5	n.a.	n.a.
2021		min. 4.5	min. 4.5	max 20	6.25 +/- 0.25	max 70	5	4.5	n.a.	n.a.
2022		min. 4.5	min. 4.5	max 20	6.25 +/- 0.25	max 70	5	4.5	n.a.	n.a.
2023		min. 4.	min. 5.5	max 20	6.5 +/- 0.25	max 70.	5	4.5	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Own editing based on the strategies of the national government debt agencies

Table 3. Targets related to interest rate risk

Applied indicators	Hungary		Czechia		Poland		Slovakia	
	Proportion of fixed-rate debt (%)	Proportion of fixed-rate debt in forint-denominated debt (%)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 1 year (%)	ATR (years)	Duration (years)	ATR (years)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 1 year (%)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 5 years (%)
2007			30-40	---	3+/-0.5	---	25	65
2008	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	---	2.5-4	---	25	65
2009	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	---	2.5-4	---	25	65
2010	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	---	2.5-4	---	25	65
2011	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	2.5-4	---	25	65
2012	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	2.5-4	---	25	65
2013	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	3+/-0.5	2.8-4.2	25	65
2014	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	---	2.8-3.8	25	60
2015	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	---	2.8-3.8	25	60
2016	66+/-5	61-83	30-40	4-5	---	2.8-3.8	25	60
2017	66+/-5	56-66	30-40	5+/-0.25	---	2.8-3.8	25	60
2018	60-70	56-66	30-40	4	---	2.8-3.8	n.a.	n.a.
2019	60-80	60-80	30-40	5+/-0.25	---	2.8-3.8	n.a.	n.a.
2020	65-85	60-80	max. 40	6+/-0.25	---	2.8-3.8	n.a.	n.a.
2021	70-90	70-90	max. 40	6+/-0.25	---	2.8-3.6	n.a.	n.a.
2022	70-90	70-90	max. 40	5-6	---	2.8-3.6	n.a.	n.a.
2023	60-80	---	max. 40	5-6	---	2.8-3.6	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Own editing based on the strategies of the national government debt agencies

CHANGES IN DEBT PORTFOLIOS

Looking at the situation of each state separately, we can see in the case of Hungary, the debt management has consistently met its repeatedly adjusted targets. Czechia had stricter rules on debt management, but for the most part, it was able to comply with them. The ATM indicator was outside the target range in 2 years, while the ATR indicator pointed to higher than desirable risk in 2017. The proportion of debt elements repricing within a year moved out of the target range in 2019 (Table 4, 5, 6). Currency risk exceeded the target in 2013 but on the one hand. This is still considered low at the regional level, and on the other hand, during this period the exchange rate of the Czech koruna was pegged to the euro, so essentially the debt portfolio did not run real currency risk.

The image is less homogeneous for Poland. The degree of foreign exchange risk was typically higher than desired, although the share of foreign currency debt did not exceed 35.5%. However, for renewal (ATM) and interest rate (ATR) risks, the debt portfolio characteristics were close to the safer half of the target range, sometimes exceeding it. There was a marked deviation in the average time to maturity of foreign debt, with the indicator ranging between 6 and 8.5 years instead of the target of 4.5-5 years. In terms of the structure of debt portfolios, the COVID crisis had a much smaller impact than the subprime crisis. So not only were there minor adjustments in targeting systems (despite the more rigorous indicator systems used by national debt management agencies) but also the increase in debt risks was only moderate. Currency risk and refinancing risk have increased slightly in all three countries, while interest rate risk is mixed, with an improving trend in Hungary, for example.

Slovakia was able to meet its targets, however, the availability of the targets and the data related to the public debt portfolio was limited. In the case of Slovenia, there were no targets published, however, positive trends can be observed (despite the increasing level of public debt). Thus, it can be argued that the two crises have had different effects on public debt management, which may be due to different market conditions and more stable states.

Table 4. The development of the currency risk

	Hungary	Czechia	Poland*	Slovakia	Slovenia
Applied indicator	Proportion of debt in foreign currency (%)	Structure of debt in foreign currency: share of euro (after swap operations) (%)	Proportion of debt in foreign currency (%)	Hedged foreign currency liabilities ratio (%)	Proportion of debt in foreign currency(%)
2007	28.4	100	24.15	72.05	n.a.
2008	30.6	100	26.73	71.81	0.40
2009	38.6	99.1	27.76	70.59	0.20
2010	43.4	99.76	31.96	71.48	0.20
2011	49.6	99.6	31.60	66.88	0.20
2012	40.6	100	30.28	69.37	10.30
2013	40.3	100	35.50	70.92	20.20
2014	38.1	99.2	34.90	70.78	26.90
2015	32.0	100	34.40	74.17	25.70
2016	25.3	100	30.58	73.46	18.50
2017	22.3	100	29.32	76.68	12.3
2018	20.0	100	26.39	76.76	8.3
2019	17.7	100	24.24	80.12	4.6
2020	19.4	100	23.32	80.88	3.9
2021	20.9	100	21.99	83.12	3.7
2022	25.2	100	24.20	83.47	1.8
2023	26.2	100	22.9	83.90	3.8
			5.5* (2024.03)		

Source: Own editing based on the reports of national public debt management agencies²

² Hungary: <https://www.akk.hu/akk-kiadvanyok> [2024.05.05.] Czechia: <https://csu.gov.cz/government-finance-statistics?počet=10&start=0&podskupiny=055&razeni=-datumVydani#annual-data> [2024.06.06.] Poland: <https://www.gov.pl/web/finance/public-debt-outstanding-debt> and <https://www.gov.pl/web/finance/Historical-data> [2024.06.07.] Slovakia: <https://>

Table 5. The development of the refinancing risk

	Hungary	Czechia ATM (years)		Poland*		SVK	SVN				
Applied Indicator	Duration (years)	ATR (years)	Proportion of short- term liabilities (%)	ATM (years)	Proportion of liabilities due in 5 years (%)	average range	domes- tic	fore- ign	Propor- tion of short-term liabilities (%)	Proportion of liabilities due in 5 years (%)	ATM term liabilities (%)
2007	2.81		19.00	6.4	48.00	5.3	4.33	8.28	18.65	59.3	7.96
2008	2.56		17.70	6.6	46.10	5.27	4.23	8.11	19.10	57.9	2.01
2009	2.1		14.70	6.5	46.10	5.22	4.08	8.27	24.60	62.9	5.9
2010	2.65		16.10	6.3	48.30	5.38	4.30	8.14	18.00	58.2	6.2
2011	2.58		19.30	5.8	52.60	5.40	4.25	7.77	17.30	59.6	6.6
2012	2.49		17.90	5.7	52.70	5.49	4.47	7.63	13.30	59.3	6.2
2013	2.47		15.80	5.6	55.00	5.33	4.49	7.19	9.60	47.7	5.7
2014	2.88		14.90	5.5	55.70	5.24	4.19	7.08	11.10	44.4	5.7
2015	3.1		16.40	5.1	59.40	5.22	4.27	6.88	16.10	42.0	6.4
2016	3.0		14.30	5.1	60.30	5.27	4.36	6.92	22.40	45.7	8
2017	2.95		18.50	5.0	62.00	5.12	4.49	6.46	12.81	34.2	9.3
2018	2.75		17.80	5.4	57.30	4.97	4.49	6.05	13.74	35.0	9.2
2019		3.7	12.70	6.2	48.50	4.97	4.53	6.06	n.a.	n.a.	9
2020		4.6	10.90	6.2	47.40	4.63	4.23	5.72	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2021		4.5	10.80	6.4	42.60	4.75	4.16	6.43	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2022		4.0	12.1	6.2	47.0	4.84	4.11	6.81	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2023		4.9	11.1*	6.5	45.4	5.11	4.12	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Own editing based on the reports of national public debt management agencies

www.mfmr.sk/en/finance/national-reporting/general-government-debt/ and <https://www.ardal.sk/en/about-us/annual-reports> [2024.05.20] Slovenia: <https://www.stat.si/statweb/en/Field/Index/1/86> [2024.06.10]

Table 6. The development of the interest rate risk

	Hungary		Czechia		Poland*		SVK		SVN	
Applied indicators	Proportion of fixed-rate debt (%)	Proportion of forint denominated debt (%)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 1 year (%)	ATR (years)	Duration (years)	ATR (years)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 1 year (%)	Proportion of debt to be refinanced up to 5 years (%)	Modified Duration	Proportion of fixed-rate debt
2007	65.40	73.00	26.00	5.5	3.62	4.53	33.40	61.58	n.a.	n.a.
2008	65.00	75.20	28.40	5.4	3.58	4.60	29.50	59.90	n.a.	n.a.
2009	65.40	68.00	30.50	5.2	3.56	4.54	34.70	67.70	5	n.a.
2010	65.70	70.20	31.70	5	3.69	4.46	25.40	58.30	4.9	n.a.
2011	64.70	70.50	34.50	4.5	3.52	4.33	27.70	59.60	5.1	n.a.
2012	66.20	67.60	37.50	4.4	3.78	4.29	20.30	59.30	5.1	n.a.
2013	63.60	65.20	35.40	4.3	3.67	4.03	16.60	47.70	4.5	96.9
2014	63.80	61.80	35.50	4.2	3.71	3.97	16.80	44.40	4.7	97.6
2015	66.90	62.60	33.70	4	3.61	3.87	19.50	42.00	5.2	98.1
2016	66.10	61.80	29.60	4	3.70	4.02	22.40	45.70	6.7	98.7
2017	67.60	58.90	33.50	4.1	3.54	3.84	12.81	34.21	7.9	98.6
2018	68.90	59.70	33.60	4.7	3.45	3.71	13.74	35.00	7.9	99
2019	71.80	68.80	24.60	5.6	3.58	3.64	n.a.	n.a.	8	99.1
2020	80.60	78.40	21.20	5.7	3.55	3.57	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	99.3
2021	87.00	80.20	22.90	5.9	3.55	3.66	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	99.3
2022	86.9	68.7	23.3	5.6	3.18	3.8	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	98.4
2023	68.5	n.a.	22.8	5.5	3.54	4.04	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	98.5

Source: Own editing based on the reports of national public debt management agencies

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

During the period of 2007-2023, the public debt management institutions have made minor and major changes to their strategies. The main objective of the activity, the cost-risk optimization, remained unchanged, but had to be adapted to changing market conditions. This was also reflected in changes in the value of the target indicators, especially in the case of Hungary. Hungarian debt management had the highest risk tolerance among the sovereign debt management institutions, while Poland and Czechia were able to finance their sovereign debt even under stricter rules than the other countries. Of course, these targets were also influenced by the fact that the countries studied had different starting positions and different levels of indebtedness.

In most cases, the debt management agencies met the targets set, although there were some minor deviations from the desired level for some indicators. A persistent deviation was observed in the case of Poland, where the share of foreign currency liabilities was higher than the declared target range between 2011 and 2017. There were also deviations from the targets for interest rate and renewal risk, but the debt portfolio characteristics were above the target from a safer direction. In addition to the general objectives, there are also specific objectives, such as the possibility of joining the Eurozone in the case of Poland or the increase the role of households in financing in the case of Hungary.

During the subprime crisis and in the years that followed, debt portfolios were typically financed only with more risky sources by national public debt management institutions. However, which risks increased and to what extent is not a consistent picture. Nowadays, risk measures have been adjusted to pre-crisis levels and for example in the case of Hungary debt portfolios are safer than before the 2008 crisis. In terms of the structure of debt portfolios, the COVID crisis had a much smaller impact than the subprime crisis. So not only were their minor adjustments in targets (despite the more rigorous indicator systems used by national debt management agencies), but also the increase in debt risks was only moderate. Currency risk and refinanc-

ing risk have increased slightly in all three countries, while interest rate risk is mixed, with an improving trend in Hungary, for example.

Thus, it can be argued that the two crises have had different effects on public debt management, which may be due to different market conditions and more stable states. One interesting experience of conducting the research was the limited information that could be retrieved. The lack of disclosure and late communication of targets raises the possibility of several scenarios: firstly, market participants may not be interested in this information and thus disclosure may not be given significant emphasis. But it is also possible that market participants do not rely on this information because it is not available at the right time. However, it is also possible that other aspects than the debt portfolio characteristics are considered more valuable by market participants, which strengthens the existence of the other two hypotheses. In any case, further research could be carried out to investigate these hypotheses.

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PART II

BRANDING AND COMMUNICATION

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ANHOLT'S COUNTRY BRAND INDICES WITH A FOCUS ON THE CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION:

THE COMPETITION OF COUNTRIES IN OUR MINDS

Let us face it: we often compare our own country to others. Some countries occupy a lower rung on the imaginary ladder in our minds, while others are above us. This could be related to our own feelings of superiority or inferiority, but there is also a marketing-based explanation. The position of a country – or its “country brand” – on this ladder essentially depends on the values we associate with it and the thoughts and emotions that arise when we hear the country's name. As Kotler and Keller (2012) point out, brands exist in the minds of consumers. The strength of a brand depends on what customers have seen, read, heard, learned, thought, and felt about it over time. In other words, a brand's strength exists in the minds of existing or potential customers, shaped by their direct or indirect experiences with the brand.

The question is whether this value can be quantified and scientifically validated. Even for traditional products and services, this is not straightforward, but brand rankings such as Interbrand's Best Global Brands and Kantar BrandZ's The Most Valuable Global Brands attempt to do so. According to Interbrand's 2023 list, the top five brands are Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Google, and Samsung (Interbrand.com, 2024). Likewise, the Kantar BrandZ 2024 ranking lists the top five most valuable brands as Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and McDonald's (Kantar.com, 2024). Similar rankings for country brands are also published periodically. While some of these rankings can be debated, others have gained acceptance in recent years, to the extent

that foreign ministers and prime ministers make decisions based on the results.

These rankings include examples that are not specifically about country brands but about countries in general and are noteworthy due to their frequent citations, such as the IMD Competitiveness Report and the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report. As Péter Ákos Bod (2009: 32) notes in his article, “In a professional sense, we can consider these lists as beauty contest rankings with which we do not have to agree, and – as it often happens in beauty contests – a high ranking does not always reflect real values. However, a significant drop in these rankings negatively affects the global perception of the country.” Other rankings are regularly published by renowned journals such as *The Economist*, *Forbes*, or *Euromoney*. Rankings by credit rating agencies like Moody’s Investors Service, Standard & Poor’s, Fitch-IBCA, or the Japan Credit Rating Agency can be also considered thematic rankings of countries.

However, this article aims to stay focused on country brand rankings specifically, not the aforementioned lists. It is important to note that nearly every year, a new ranking is introduced and then updated annually. These include the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, Anholt Good Country Index, FutureBrand Country Brand Index, Bloom Consulting Country Brand Ranking (Tourism Edition and Trade Edition), Young&Rubicam Best Countries, Reputation Institute Country RepTrak, and Global Soft Power Index (Papp-Váry, 2019). It is impossible to cover all these rankings in a single article, and not all of them provide recent rankings for 2023 and 2024. Therefore, this study focuses only on the first two: the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index and the Anholt Good Country Index.

The comparison focuses on these two indexes because they represent two fundamentally different approaches to evaluating country brands. The Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index assesses countries based on public opinion surveys, while the Good Country Index relies exclusively on hard data from international organizations. This dual focus offers a unique opportunity to explore how perception and reality intersect in country branding. Other indexes, such as the FutureBrand Country Brand Index, were excluded because they either lack recent updates or do not provide data for the Visegrad countries,

which are the primary focus of this study. Additionally, due to word and character count limitations, it was not feasible to include and thoroughly analyze more than two indexes in this article.

The article will describe the methodologies, dimensions, and factors/attributes of these indices. Besides the comparative analysis, it will examine the positions of Hungary and the other three Visegrad countries (Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic) in these lists. This will help determine whether the country brands (or general country image, country reputation) of these countries are similar and identify which one has the best country brand according to these rankings.

THE ANHOLT-IPSOS NATION BRANDS INDEX

The Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index was the first attempt to rank countries as brands. Launched almost twenty years ago, in 2005, it has since evolved into one of the world's largest social science research projects. Over the years, the index has had several names: initially called Simon Anholt's Nation Brands Index, it later became known as the Anholt-GMI Nation Brands Index. From 2008, it was referred to as the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, and in 2017, it was renamed to its current title, the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index.

All these names include "Anholt", referencing Simon Anholt, the creator of the concepts of nation brand and country brand, and a leading international authority in the field. Anholt has authored several books on the subject (Anholt 2005, 2009, 2020), and many governments have invited him as an advisor to help polish their country's reputation, solidifying his influence and expertise.

Regarding the research methodology, the index is based on surveys conducted in 20 countries, using a representative sample from these countries to assess the influence and attractiveness of 60 countries. This methodology has been a common point of criticism: on one hand, only 60 countries are evaluated, even though the United Nations has 193 member countries. Additionally, some of the 60 are not independent countries. For example, the images of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are measured separately;

however, England is not included. On the other hand, the survey is conducted exclusively in 20 major advanced and emerging economies. This means the ranking is based on the opinions of people living in these 20 countries. However, as we cited Bod (2009) earlier, if a study maintains consistent parameters over time, the changes observed can still be meaningful and comparable. Additionally, the sample size is relatively large, with a total of 60,000 participants now. The most recent survey was conducted from June 27th through August 3rd (Ipsos.com, 2023). The measurement framework is based on six dimensions, or competence fields, known as the Nation Brands Hexagon. These six dimensions encompass a total of 23 attributes, which are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. The Six Dimensions of the Anholt Nation Brands Hexagon and Their 23 Attributes

Dimension	Attributes of the specific dimension
Tourism	Visited Website: I have visited a website or social networking site from or about this country. Natural Beauty: This country is rich in natural beauty. Historical Buildings: This country is rich in historic buildings and monuments. Vibrant City Life: This country has a vibrant city life and urban attractions.
Exports	Science and Technology: This country makes a major contribution to innovation in science and technology. Buy Products: Buying products made in this country. Creative Place: This country is a creative place with cutting-edge ideas and new ways of thinking.
Governance	Competent & Honest: This country is competently and honestly governed. Rights & Fairness: This country respects the rights of its citizens and treats them with fairness. Peace & Security: This country behaves responsibly in the areas of international peace and security. Environment: This country behaves responsibly to protect the environment. Poverty: This country behaves responsibly to help reduce world poverty.

Investment and immigration	Work & Live: Willing to live and work for a substantial period in this country. Quality of Life: This country is a place with a high quality of life. Education: This country is a good place to study for educational qualifications. Purchased Product/Service: I have purchased a product or service from this country. Equality in Society: This country cares about equality in society.
Culture	Sports: This country excels at sport. Cultural Heritage: This country has a rich cultural heritage. Contemporary Culture: This country is an interesting and exciting place. for contemporary culture such as music, films, art and literature.
People	Welcoming: If I visited this country, the people would make me feel very welcome. Close Friend: I would like to have a person from this country as a close friend. Employability: How willing would you be to consider a well-qualified person from the following country?

Source: Papp-Váry (2019) and Ipsos.com (2023)

It is important to mention that starting in 2023, there are 11 new attributes being measured that are not yet included in the final index. These new attributes are listed in Table 2. Five of the new common interest attributes focus on sustainability, measuring perceptions of a country's efforts to combat climate change or support affordable and clean energy. The other six attributes cover a range of topics, including global economic leadership and feelings of safety in the country. For example, the latter aspect can be very important when deciding (or at least having the desire) to visit a country. Natural beauty is the top driver of the desire to visit a country, while "Work and Live" and "Close Friend" are the second and third most important factors, respectively, with "Safe" being the fourth.

Table 2. Newly added attributes in the Anholt Nation Brands Index

Dimension	Attributes of the specific dimension
Sustainability	Combat Climate Change: This country is taking action to combat climate change.
	Affordable & Clean Energy: This country is working hard towards affordable and clean energy.
	Protecting Wildlife: This country is focused on protecting wildlife and restoring habitats.
	Clean Water & Nutrition: This country is focused on access to clean water and nutrition for all.
	Responsible Industries: This country encourages more responsible industries that do not damage the environment.
Other new (mixed) topics	Trust Products: I trust the products that are made in this country.
	Global Economic Leader: I think of this country as a global economic leader.
	Food: This country's food is good.
	Honest About Past: This country is honest about its past.
	Safe: I would feel safe in this country.
	Unlike Anywhere Else: This place is unlike anywhere else.

Source: Ipsos.com (2023)

It is crucial to highlight again that these 11 new attributes are not yet included in the final index. Therefore, the following results are based on the original 23 attributes. According to the 2023 survey results, Japan ranked as the top country brand for the first time. This marks a significant shift, as Germany, which had held the top position for six consecutive years, moved to second place. The top 10 continues to be dominated by European countries: Germany (2), the United Kingdom (4), Italy (5), Switzerland (7), France (8), and Sweden (10). However, the list also includes Japan (1), Canada (3), the United States (6), and Australia (9). Although some countries changed positions within the top 10 from 2022 to 2023, the same countries re-

mained in the top 10. If we look at the 60 countries examined, nearly half – 27 in total – are European. The survey covers the following countries in alphabetical order:

- North America: Canada, the United States
- Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Wales
- Central/Eastern Europe: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Turkey/Türkiye, Ukraine
- Asia-Pacific: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru
- Middle East/Africa: Botswana, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates

The predominance of European countries can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, Simon Anholt, after whom the research is named and who leads the surveys, is European himself (a Brit with an Italian wife) and therefore might favor these countries. Secondly, as we have seen, European countries dominate the top 10, even though the first place is not currently held by a European country. Thirdly, in previous studies, there have occasionally been “guest appearances” by countries or broader regions whose image or brand was not regularly measured but was included on a one-off basis. For example, in the second quarter of 2006, the European Union was one such “guest”. It was revealed that the respondents perceived the “EU brand” to be stronger than that of any individual country worldwide (Anholt, 2007). It is important to note that respondents living outside Europe likely understood the term “European Union” to mean Europe in general when filling out the questionnaire. In contrast, those living in Europe perceived it as the Union itself, with its institutional system, operations, and all its pros and cons. Regarding the positions of the four Visegrad countries on the list of 60, the results show that all of

them are in the mid-range. Poland is ranked 28th, the Czech Republic 30th, Hungary 33rd, and Slovakia 35th. It is interesting to note which countries have similar positions on the list: Singapore (26th), Brazil (27th), Argentina (29th), China (31st), Taiwan (32nd), Mexico (34th), Egypt (36th), and Turkey/Türkiye (37th). It is also important to note that all four Visegrad countries are included in the list of 60. This inclusion alone indicates a certain level of reputation, as many countries from the Central-Eastern European region are not part of the 60 countries examined.

THE ANHOLT GOOD COUNTRY INDEX

Simon Anholt introduced a new ranking in 2014: the Good Country Index. The main difference between this index and the Nation Brands Index is that it ranks countries not based on public opinion (or at least the opinions of people in 20 countries), but rather on hard data from the United Nations. This makes it more reflective of reality than perception.

For the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, the overall rank is determined using a weighted scoring system, where each of the six dimensions of the Nation Brands Hexagon contributes equally to the final score. Within each dimension, individual attributes are aggregated using an arithmetic mean. Conversely, the Good Country Index calculates rankings using a simple arithmetic mean of scores across the seven categories, with each indicator normalized and adjusted relative to GDP to ensure fairness.

Additionally, the Anholt Good Country Index focuses on how much good countries contribute to the world. This represents a significant philosophical shift for Anholt, who had been emphasizing the importance of brand image since the late 1990s.

Initially, Anholt's work focused on the concept of nation brand and nation branding, but his attention shifted to evaluating what actions by governments could be considered good or bad – not just for the countries themselves, but for the world as a whole. The challenges that individual countries face are, in fact, global issues such as cli-

mate change, migration, terrorism, deep poverty, inequality, war, and the enforcement of human rights. Anholt also highlighted another global issue – pandemic and biosafety – during his first major speeches on the topic in 2014, several years before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. He emphasized that these global problems can only be tackled through collective action, stating, “We’ve got to start collaborating a bit more and competing a bit less” (TEDx Talks, 2014).

Thus, it is not enough for countries to simply be attractive and have a good image; they must also strive to do good for other countries and the world as a whole. This is why Anholt’s latest book, published in 2020, is titled “The Good Country Equation: How We Can Repair the World in One Generation”. Interestingly, several years earlier, British comedian Danny Wallace, known for his book and film “Yes Man”, reached a similar conclusion. In 2005, Wallace produced a six-episode documentary comedy for the BBC titled “How to Start Your Own Country”. In the series, he researched the topic extensively, interviewed various EU officials and leaders of small states, and then declared his own country within his apartment. He designed a flag, composed a national anthem, and recruited citizens. At an event in London that drew thousands of people, he announced the name of his micronation: the “Kingdom of Lovely.” More relevant to our discussion, however, is the fact that he summarized the constitution of his country in just two words: “Be good.”

As a British citizen, Anholt was likely aware of Wallace’s series “How to Start Your Own Country”, but even if he was not, the Good Country Index is fundamentally based on the principle of “Be good.” It measures what each country does for the global community. Anholt explained the essence of the Good Country Index in his TED talk in 2014, which has since become the most viewed TED talk on governance, with over 12 million views (Ipsos.com, 2023). In this presentation, he stated that the idea of the Good Country Index is straightforward: it measures how countries contribute to the common good of humanity and what they take away from it. A wide range of data from the UN and other international organizations is used for this purpose, allowing us to see whether a country is a net contributor to humanity or, conversely, a burden on the planet, or somewhere in between.

Unlike the Nation Brands Index, the Good Country Index does not have a dimension for country image (country brand), nor does it use opinion polls to assess a country's reputation. Instead, it relies on 'hard numbers': complex statistics derived from 35 data points, many of which are provided by the UN. It is worth noting, however, that when the Good Country Index for a specific year is published, the available statistics used for analysis are often a few years old. These 35 data points are divided into seven categories, as shown in Table 3. It is important to note that, in the final analysis, the absolute numbers are not used directly; instead, they are expressed in relation to each country's GDP. This approach ensures a fairer comparison by accounting for differences in economic size, allowing smaller or less economically developed countries to be evaluated on an equal footing with larger ones.

Table 3. The Seven Categories of the Anholt Good Country Index and Their 35 Indicators

Category	Indicators
Science & Technology	- The number of international students - The export of scientific journals - The number of international publications - The number of Nobel Prizes (cumulated value) - The number of patents
Culture	- Creative goods exports - Creative services exports - UNESCO dues in arrears as % of contribution (negative indicator) - Freedom of movement, i.e. visa restrictions - Freedom of the press (based on mean score for Reporters without Borders and Freedom House index as a negative indicator)
International Peace & Security	- Number of peacekeeping troops sent overseas for UN missions - Dues in arrears to financial contribution to UN peacekeeping missions as percentage of contribution (negative indicator) - International violent conflicts: Attributed number of casualties of international organised violence (negative indicator) - Exports of weapons and ammunition (negative indicator) - Internet security: Global Cybersecurity Index score

World Order	Percentage of population that gives to charity Number of refugees hosted Number of refugees overseas (negative indicator) Population birth rate (negative indicator) Number of UN treaties signed
Planet & Climate	National ecological footprint (negative indicator) Environmental agreements compliance Hazardous pesticides exports (negative indicator) Renewable energy share in total energy consumption Ozone: consumption of ozone-depleting substances (negative indicator)
Prosperity & Equality	Open trading: The situation of trading across borders UN volunteers abroad Remittance cost (negative indicator) Foreign direct investment (FDI outflow) Development assistance: Development cooperation contributions
Health & Wellbeing	Food aid Pharmaceutical exports Voluntary excess donations to the WHO Humanitarian aid donations International Health Regulations Compliance

Source: Papp-Váry (2021)

The latest version of the Good Country Index, known as version 1.5, examined 169 countries based on various global contributions. Nations are ranked in each category, and an overall winner is announced. However, Anholt emphasized in his 2014 TED presentation on this topic that the ranking is not about “good,” “better,” and “best” countries but rather about “good”, “gooder”, and “goodest” countries. More importantly, it is advisable to avoid interpreting the rankings as identifying “bad”, “worse”, and “worst” countries; these countries are not bad but rather more self-interested, focusing mainly on themselves and not on the global community’s welfare.

Based on the latest rankings from 2023, Sweden continues to hold first place overall, performing well across all dimensions. Sweden ranks in the top 10 out of 169 countries in five categories, making it a net contributor to humanity by doing much more good for the

planet than harm, according to Anholt. One category where Sweden lags behind is International Peace & Security, where it is ranked 39th. This lower ranking is likely due to Sweden's involvement in arms exports: Swedish weapons, aircraft, and other military vehicles are used in conflicts around the world.

It is also notable that the top 10 countries in the overall ranking are all European, except for Canada. The top ten countries are, in order: Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Canada, Belgium, Ireland, France, and Austria. According to Anholt, this is because these countries are genuinely doing a lot of good for other countries, especially within Europe and within the European Union as well. Anholt frequently emphasizes in his speeches that one of the most remarkable initiatives to make the world a better place is, in fact, the European Union itself.

What happens if we examine the top 10 countries in each category? Looking at Table 4, some interesting findings immediately stand out. One of these is that the United States only makes it into the top 10 in a single category: it is ranked 10th in Health and Wellbeing. Additionally, in the Prosperity & Equality category, the top 10 is dominated by European countries. In the International Peace & Security category, many smaller and lesser-known countries make it into the top 10. One possible reason for this is that the ranking is adjusted for GDP per capita rather than being an absolute measure.

However, the most interesting category for Hungarians is likely Science & Technology, where Hungary finished in 2nd place out of 169 countries. The reason behind this is that, relative to its GDP and population, Hungary performs very well in attracting foreign students, producing international publications, and contributing Nobel laureates to the world. This ranking considers not only the country where the Nobel laureate lived and worked when receiving the award but also where the laureate was born. It's exciting to think that Hungary might just clinch 1st place in this category in the next updated version (1.6) of the Good Country Index, especially because, in 2023, we saw the announcement of two new Hungarian Nobel laureates: Katalin Karikó and Ferenc Krausz.

Table 4. The Seven Categories of the Anholt Good Country Index
and the Top 10 Countries in Each Category

Position	Overall Ranking	Science & Technology	Culture	International Peace & Security	World Order	Planet & Climate	Prosperity & Equality	Health & Wellbeing
1	Sweden	Ukraine	Belgium	Morocco	Australia	Finland	Sweden	Germany
2	Denmark	Hungary	Estonia	Republic of Moldova	Chile	Sweden	Norway	Sweden
3	Germany	United Kingdom	Switzerland	Kazakhstan	Luxembourg	Switzerland	Denmark	United Kingdom
4	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Austria	Kyrgyzstan	Norway	Slovenia	Belgium	Denmark
5	Finland	Latvia	Portugal	Malaysia	Netherlands	Canada	Finland	Norway
6	Canada	Palestine	Republic of Korea	Malta	Austria	Norway	Montenegro	Canada
7	Belgium	Austria	Netherlands	Egypt	Bulgaria	Denmark	Luxembourg	Netherlands
8	Ireland	Denmark	Latvia	Mongolia	Denmark	Cyprus	France	Switzerland
9	France	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Denmark	Uruguay	Sweden	Estonia	Netherlands	Luxembourg
10	Austria	Australia	Slovenia	Singapore	Germany	Ireland	Spain	United States of America

Source: The Good Country Index 1.5 (2024)

Regarding the positions of the Visegrad countries, the Good Country Index, like the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, shows that their rankings are similar to each other. The good news is that all the Visegrad countries are among the top 32 out of the 169 countries, placing them in the best 20% overall. However, it is important to remember that there are no “good”, “better”, and “best” countries in this index, only “good”, “gooder”, and “goodest” countries. Still, these results indicate that the Visegrad countries, like other European nations, contribute significantly to the world and are net contributors.

Looking at Table 5, it is interesting to note that, according to the ranking, the Visegrad countries perform best in the Science & Technology category, with Hungary ranked 2nd, the Czech Republic 4th, Poland 16th, and Slovakia 52nd out of 169 countries. On the other hand, the area that seems to need the most improvement is Health & Wellbeing, where the Czech Republic is ranked 45th, Slovakia 60th, Hungary 72nd, and Poland 97th.

Overall, these results suggest that the performances of the four countries are quite similar, which is why their positions on the Good Country Index are also close to each other. As observed in the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, the overall image and rankings of the Visegrad countries are also quite similar. However, one important distinction should be noted: in the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index, the Visegrad countries are in the mid-range, ranked between 27th and 33rd out of 60 countries. In contrast, in the Good Country Index, the Visegrad countries are ranked between 25th and 32nd out of 169 countries. This latter result suggests that reality may be better than perception, as the Good Country Index is based on hard data, while the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index is based on public opinion. This suggests that the Visegrad countries should do a better job of promoting their attributes, performance, results, and values to the world.

Table 5. The Positions of the Four Visegrad Countries in the Anholt Good Country Index

Country	Overall Ranking	Science & Technology	Culture	International Peace & Security	World Order	Planet & Climate	Prosperity & Equality	Health & Wellbeing
Hungary	25	2	34	21	67	21	30	72
Poland	27	16	36	20	21	37	49	97
Czech Republic	28	4	14	119	48	32	19	45
Slovakia	32	52	24	18	64	17	61	60

Source: The Good Country Index 1.5 (2024)

CONCLUSION: “ONE THING IS IMPORTANT: TO BE GOOD NOW”

It may sound strange at first that the lyrics of Napoleon Boulevard, a Hungarian pop band, offer one of the most important pieces of advice in country branding, but the Good Country Index presented in this study proves that it is indeed true. Moreover, if we examine the original version of the lyrics, we may discover another interesting connection. The music is from the Italian film “State buoni se potete” (“Be Good If You Can”), which was released in 1984 but only presented in Hungary in 1989. In the film, a child (later an adult) is frequently tempted by the Devil, while his patron, St. Philip Neri, tries to guide him onto the right path – much as the saint did with street children and criminals in the 16th century. The main message of St. Philip Neri is not only “Be good if you can”, but also “Stay good if you can”, another translation of the original Italian title, which is also suggested by the film itself.

This advice is more important now than ever, as we live in an increasingly interconnected world (Parrag, 2016; Orbán, 2023) where global perception and international contributions significantly influence a country’s brand. As we have seen, the Visegrad countries are in the top 20% in terms of their contributions to making the world a better place. However, these contributions must be better communicated to strengthen the country brands of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia – both individually and collectively as the Visegrad countries.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HEALTH COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES AND ATTITUDES IN THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

Health communication covers communication between health professionals and patients, communication within the health team and communication between health service actors and health authorities. The aim of present study is to explore, in the context of a general literature review, the results of empirical research among residents and health professionals in the Visegrad countries on patient preferences for health communication and health professionals' attitudes towards communication skills development.

IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT OF DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION

In its "Healthy People 2010" strategy, the US Department of Health and Human Services for the first time dedicated a specific chapter to health communication, stating that the role of health communication has become paramount because of its importance for health and well-being in all its aspects, including disease prevention, health promotion and quality of life improvement. Important developments have taken place, with a focus on behaviour and the study of environmental, social and psychological influences in health. In the face of global health communication challenges, scientists and practitioners have increasingly recognised the importance of prevention and the need to study human behaviour within a theoretical framework. The role of risk perceptions, social norms, emotions and uncertainty in health

behaviour has received more attention in theoretical research. At the heart of being a human is communication, the exchange of information, which has a mediating and transmitting function, but also influences behaviour. Health professionals have a unique opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to improving health and saving lives (Parrott, 2004).

The World Health Organisation (1946) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease. Health is influenced by many factors, which are grouped into five main categories: clinical health care, genetic vulnerability, socioeconomic characteristics, environmental and physical influences, and individual health behaviours (Adler et al., 2016). Socio-economic and environmental factors are often cited as social determinants of health, which have a greater impact on health than clinical care and genetics. Social determinants and individual behaviours are the main influences on health status, while health care and genetics contribute only 10-20% (Adler et al., 2016). Modern medicine is moving away from the biomedical model towards a biopsychosocial model, which emphasises an integrated approach to biological, psychological and social factors. This model aims at a holistic understanding of the patient and the development of patient-centred care. The essence of patient-centred care is to involve patients and their families in decision-making, taking into account their needs and preferences, not just the treatment of the illness (CQHCA, 2001). There are three key elements of patient-centred communication: understanding the patient's perspectives, understanding the patient's psychosocial and cultural context, and sharing an understanding of the patient's problems and treatment options (Epstein & Street, 2007).

Health care providers recognise that patients should play an active role in their own care, but there are many barriers, such as lack of time. Professionals often feel they do not have enough time to listen fully to patients and make shared decisions. However, studies have shown for several decades that patients rarely require more than 2-3 minutes to tell their story if they are not interrupted (Beckman & Frankel, 1984).

Adopting evidence-based treatment plans is also a challenge, as patients do not always understand the importance of laboratory values and other indicators. And patient-centred evidence tends to emphasise outcomes that are important to patients, such as symptoms, daily functioning and quality of life. Evidence-based medicine reflects population data and does not always meet the needs of individual patients. Therefore, evidence should be used as a guide, taking into account the patient's goals and values (De Oliveira et al., 2006).

Many national and international research and studies have been conducted in recent decades on the role of health communication in different aspects. They have explored the wide-ranging consequences of inappropriate communication, covering patient outcomes, health status, diagnosis, collaboration between professionals, and expenditure by health care providers, to name but a few. Research confirms that doctor-patient communication is the most important interaction and relationship-building tool in healthcare, the basis for successful collaboration, and a prerequisite for patient safety (Langberg et al., 2019). Attention and empathy play an important role in doctor-patient communication; they are essential elements of the doctor-patient relationship, which is of significant value to patients, providing a sense of listening and support, and leading to a feeling of satisfaction (Derksen et al., 2017). Physician empathy is a cognitive quality that involves an understanding of the patient's experiences, concerns and perspectives, coupled with the ability to communicate this understanding and the intention to help (Hojat, 2016). Patients' preferences determine their relationship with the physician, through this, their satisfaction and adherence to treatment, which influences clinical outcomes (Langberg et al., 2019).

The DEPRESS study working group was established to facilitate data collection for the DEPRESS study (DEPRESSION and anxiety in family memberS of ICU patientS in the Czech and Slovak Republics). The study included 22 ICUs, spanning 13 university centers and 9 community hospitals. Participants included patients and their family members, with the patients being hospitalized in an ICU for over 48 hours between May and September 2007. The results of the study showed that limited communication between family members and

staff in intensive care units in the Czech and Slovak Republics significantly increases patients' relatives' anxiety (Rusinova et al., 2014).

With all this in mind, myths and misconceptions, as well as negative attitudes associated with them persist in everyday medical practice, hindering the development of patient-centred care.

Survey of medical students showed that respondents gave an average score of 4.44 on a 5-point scale to the importance of good communication skills in becoming a good doctor but rated the importance of teaching communication as only 3.47, while their own communication skills were considered to be high and excellent (Toth et al., 2011). Other misconceptions included that professional knowledge dominates over communication, that medical communication is subjective and there is insufficient evidence, and that doctors do not have time to communicate (Sandor & Pilling, 2016). In the Czech Republic few doctors, psychologists or linguists were working on the phenomenon of doctor-patient interaction, and the number of related studies and scientific publications was limited. Czech medical schools and medical educators lacked reliable resources and were reluctant to develop programmes aimed at improving students' communication skills. This is worrying, as the Czech Medical Chamber handles more than a thousand patient complaints every year, which are attributed to inadequate communication between doctors and patients (Černý, 2008). The biggest problem seems to be that Czech doctors do not know how to manage interactions with patients properly, how to engage patients in conversation or how to communicate bad news to them. Nevertheless, the majority of health professionals did not consider the situation critical. Although the Czech Medical Chamber, in cooperation with linguists and psychologists, organises courses on communication skills, patient complaints and problems continue to appear in medical journals and the topic remains neglected (Černý, 2008). The research was conducted at different levels of care, not covering the whole country, but similar problems were found in other Visegrad countries.

PATIENT PREFERENCES FOR MEDICAL COMMUNICATION IN THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

The most comprehensive research and related study on this topic was carried out in 2021 as a result of the research work of Bányai et al., who examined and compared the preferences of citizens in the four Visegrad countries regarding patient-provider communication. The research used the patient-physician orientation scale, consisting of the sharing and caring subscales, and assessed the patient-centred or physician-centred orientation of communication. Statistical analysis was performed on a general population of 4,000 respondents of Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian nationality, comparing different demographics and V4s with each other by performing univariate and multivariate logistic regressions (Bányai et al., 2021).

The main findings of the research relevant for the present study are: Citizens in the Visegrad countries expressed similar views about the communication style of the practitioner, they do not want to be too involved in decision making, but they would prefer to receive more information from the practitioner about their health status and slightly more care. Patients valued patience and a friendly attitude more than involvement in the decision-making process and taking this into account was a key finding when evaluating and designing communication tools and guidelines. Higher educational attainment significantly increased interest and preference for both the sharing and caring components. In the Visegrad countries, public preference for sharing and caring is lower compared to citizens in other developed countries.

Since no further comparative studies between Visegrad countries have been conducted, I examined the results of studies conducted in Hungary and in other European countries, and these were in line with the findings of Bányai et al. (2021).

Fernandes et al. (2019) investigated patients' experiences of out-patient care in Hungary through the results of an online population survey and compared them with results from OECD countries. In relation to communication, they found that respondents over 65 years of age and older reported a higher proportion of positive ex-

periences when they received easy-to-understand explanations than younger respondents (18-24 years). A lower proportion reported positive experiences when consulting health professionals, especially in private institutions, while the highest proportion of positive experiences were registered with specialists working in private practices. Those who consulted a health professional instead of a GP reported significantly fewer positive experiences. Those aged 65 and over reported more positive experiences when they had the opportunity to ask questions than younger age groups. Specialists in private practices also reported a higher proportion of positive experiences when consulting specialists than general practitioners. Respondents with secondary or higher education were more likely to feel they had the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns. Younger respondents and those with paid work reported fewer positive experiences. Those with a private practice specialist were more likely to have been given the opportunity to ask questions, but this difference was not significant. Overall, there were statistically significant differences in patients' positive experiences by age, education and type of care. In terms of involvement in decision-making about treatment, women felt less involved in decision-making than men. Younger age groups had fewer positive experiences of involvement in decision-making than older age groups. People living in urban areas and in Western Hungary were less likely to feel involved in decision-making. Those with secondary education and men were more likely to feel involved in decisions. Younger respondents and those with higher incomes reported fewer positive experiences, although these associations were not always significant (Fernandes et al., 2019).

Women tended to want to be actively involved in the patient-physician relationship and paid more attention to information, leading to better patient-centred communication. Overall, older women reported more positive experiences because they used health services regularly, allowing them to develop long-term relationships with their doctors. Doctors had more frequent patient-centred consultations with older patients who had more complex care needs. Respondents with lower levels of education reported fewer positive experiences, which contradicts other studies. This may be partly explained by the

fact that those with lower education are less able to understand and apply health information, and thus have a more limited ability to engage in communication and decision-making. Compared to the OECD average, Hungary had a higher proportion of respondents who considered the time allocated to medical consultations to be adequate. However, the proportion of positive experiences was below the OECD average, particularly in the areas of patient-doctor communication and patient involvement in decision-making. Compared to other Central and Eastern European countries, the proportion of positive experiences in Hungary was lower than in the Czech Republic but higher than in Poland. It is important to note that the OECD data refer in part only to GP care, while the Fernandes et al. (2019) study included consultations with health professionals.

Similar results were obtained in the study by Mazzi et al. (2018). The authors carried out a multicentre study in 31 European countries with a sample of 6,049 people. Their aggregated results showed that patients attributed greater responsibility to physicians in making decisions about their treatment, in treating patients as partners and persons, and in continuity of care than to patient factor. Gender, age, education, the presence of chronic illness, and Hofstede's two cultural dimensions, individualism and indulgence, revealed varying ratings among patients. Women attached greater importance to communication aspects, older patients to preparation for the consultation, and patients with lower education to treating the patient as a person and to thoughtful planning. Treating the patient as a person and ensuring continuity of care emerged as universal values.

COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE HEALTHCARE TEAM IN HUNGARY

János Kollár set out to identify the factors that hindered proper communication between doctors and health professionals in order to eliminate communication breakdowns. To analyse the phenomenon, he applied a research method in medical databases using general search systems (Kollár, 2016). According to his main results, he

grouped the factors hindering the effectiveness of doctor-professional communication in Hungary as follows:

- factors beyond the control of practitioners;
- individual barriers: lack of clarity of individual roles, responsibilities and competences, lack of trust, perceived or real hierarchical roles and lack of respect for each other;
- professional constraints: indecisive, immature management with unclear rules and decision-making; too large or too small group size; unagreed reward and remuneration systems; administrative problems; inappropriate decision-making methods) and constraints requiring intervention from subordinates (such as: inadequate formal and informal communication; role confusion; burn-out; prejudice against members of the organisation).
- systemic barriers: due to the lack of team building and communication development-, financial and moral support-, and the lack of an adequate appraisal and feedback system (Kollár, 2016).

HEALTH COMMUNICATION AND PATIENT SATISFACTION

The quality of health communication is closely related to patient satisfaction. The results of a study in the Czech Republic showed that the factor that had a direct impact on patient satisfaction with in-patient care was satisfaction with healthcare professionals, namely doctors, nurses and other staff, a factor that was derived from the patient's trust in the doctor, the patient's trust in the nurse, the adequate number of nurses providing care to the patient, and the communication between the doctor and the nurse in front of the patient (Gavurova et al., 2021).

- Strzelecka et al. (2021) conducted a study in Poland on a sample of 901 patients visiting primary health care facilities, with the main findings being:
- communication is crucial for improving patient safety and ensuring continuity of medical care;

- patients expect the following when seeking medical services: clear information about their health status, and commitment and understanding from the doctor;
- patient satisfaction is linked to: a concrete assessment of the service provided as a whole, the quality of the doctor-patient relationship and the interpersonal aspects of care, which have a significant impact on patient confidence in the health system.

RELEVANT RESULTS OF THE COURAGE IN EUROPE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

The European Commission considers ageing to be one of the most important policy issues of the 21st century. As Europeans are living longer and the number of people with disabilities in the population is increasing, it is essential to collect valid and comparable longitudinal data for evidence-based policy making. However, this requires better measurement tools and methods for longitudinal and cross-population comparative analyses. The COURAGE in Europe project aims to develop and validate a tool for measuring health and health-related outcomes for ageing populations in three countries, following a thorough critique of existing ageing studies. COURAGE in Europe does not simply propose new ageing studies but has developed a tool that provides objective and evidence-based prevalence trends, linking them to quality of life and well-being outcomes, and the role of determinants of health, such as the built environment and social networks (Zawisza, 2020).

The research assessed satisfaction with hospital care, outpatient care and the health care system. Indicators related to the psychosocial dimension of the patient-doctor relationship and access to hospital/outpatient care were developed based on patients' experiences, such as the possibility to discuss private matters, clarity of explanations, involvement in the decision-making process, respectful treatment, waiting time and easy access to a preferred doctor or other health professional. Probit regression models were used in the analysis. For Poland, the psychosocial dimension of patient-physician relation-

ships was associated with satisfaction with hospital and outpatient care. Respectful treatment and the opportunity to discuss private matters during a recent hospital stay contributed to higher satisfaction with the health care system. Conversely, patient involvement in the decision-making process and access to outpatient care were found to be significant factors in satisfaction with the healthcare system in Poland (Zawisza, 2020).

It would be useful to extend this research to Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the negative consequences of communication failures on patient well-being, healthcare providers and the expenditure of the national economy, comparative studies based on empirical evidence on this topic are scarce in the Visegrad countries. Available information on patient and professional attitudes in the Visegrad countries is limited. Several studies have assessed the relationship between communication and patient satisfaction, but there is a lack of uniform representative surveys based on validated questionnaires. The implementation of a service-oriented healthcare system requires the development of effective human resources programmes, which are based on survey-based situation mapping as a prerequisite. In the Visegrad countries, it is crucial to identify barriers to good communication between doctors and professionals, and a patient-centred communication (PCC) scale, psychometric analysis and health survey validation are needed in all four countries under study.

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THE SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS IN KAZAKHSTAN: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, THREATS, AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

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INTRODUCTION

Journalism is a cornerstone of democracy, acting as a check on power and a vital source of information for the public. A free press enables citizens to make informed decisions and hold authorities accountable. However, in many regions, including Kazakhstan, journalists face significant threats that undermine their ability to operate freely and effectively. This study seeks to examine the intricate relationship between the legal frameworks governing journalism in Kazakhstan, the multifaceted threats faced by journalists, and how these factors compare to international standards. By identifying the key issues at play, this research aims to propose measures that could enhance the safety and effectiveness of journalists in Kazakhstan, ultimately contributing to a more informed society.

BACKGROUND

The role of journalism in fostering transparency and accountability is well documented, with numerous studies illustrating its impact on democratic processes. According to the United Nations, free and independent media are essential for the realization of human rights and the promotion of democratic governance. Journalism serves not only as a conduit for information but also as a platform for public debate and discussion, essential for a vibrant civil society. This has led to a global recognition of the need to protect journalists, particularly in countries where freedom of expression is under threat (Aalberg & Curran, 2012). The increasing prevalence of disinformation and

state-sponsored suppression of dissent further amplifies the urgency for robust protections for journalists.

Journalists face a myriad of threats globally, including legal persecution, physical violence, and cyberattacks, creating a challenging landscape for those dedicated to the pursuit of truth. In Kazakhstan, these threats are exacerbated by restrictive legislation, lack of institutional support, and societal stigmas surrounding critical reporting. Additionally, the rise of digital media has introduced new vulnerabilities, as journalists are often targeted through cyber harassment and intimidation tactics. These multifaceted challenges necessitate a comprehensive examination of the underlying factors that contribute to the hostile environment for journalists in Kazakhstan and the urgent need for effective protective measures.

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan's legal framework for media is ostensibly supportive of press freedom; however, several laws impose severe restrictions that inhibit journalistic activity. The current defamation laws, for example, allow for criminal penalties that include imprisonment for journalists who report critically on public figures or governmental actions (Frolova, 2009). This creates a chilling effect, where journalists may refrain from covering important stories out of fear of legal repercussions. Furthermore, laws governing media registration and operation introduce additional hurdles for independent journalists, often resulting in arbitrary closures of media outlets deemed unfavourable by the state. The existing legal landscape thus raises significant concerns regarding the protection of journalists and the overall freedom of the press in Kazakhstan.

Despite the existence of laws aimed at safeguarding journalists, significant gaps remain in the practical enforcement of these laws. The lack of specific legal protections for journalists, as well as the absence of measures to combat impunity for crimes against them, creates a precarious environment where journalists are left vulnerable to harassment and violence. Moreover, the legal framework does not

adequately recognize the unique challenges faced by journalists in performing their duties, often resulting in inadequate support when they encounter threats. This situation is exacerbated by a judiciary that is often influenced by political considerations, leading to further erosion of trust in legal protections intended to safeguard media professionals.

Bureaucratic barriers hinder journalists' access to vital information, limiting their ability to report on issues of public interest and holding authorities accountable. Recent laws aimed at classifying certain information as official further exacerbate this issue, reinforcing a culture of secrecy that pervades governmental institutions. Journalists often encounter significant challenges when seeking public records or information that should be accessible under existing laws. This lack of transparency not only undermines the role of the press as a watchdog but also diminishes public trust in media institutions. Ensuring that journalists can obtain necessary information is crucial for fostering an informed citizenry and promoting transparency in governance.

THREATS TO JOURNALISTS

Before delving into the specific threats faced by journalists in Kazakhstan, it's essential to understand the broader context in which these challenges arise. The landscape for journalists is increasingly perilous, as they navigate a complex interplay of legal, political, and societal pressures that inhibit their ability to operate freely. Despite the existence of laws that ostensibly protect freedom of the press, the reality is that journalists often find themselves in hostile environments where their safety, integrity, and ability to report on critical issues are severely compromised.

The combination of restrictive legal frameworks, societal stigma towards dissent, and a lack of institutional support creates a climate of fear that impacts not only the journalists themselves but also the broader public's right to information (Horsley, 2013). This environment is further exacerbated by the rapid digital transformation,

which introduces new vulnerabilities and threats. Understanding these dynamics is crucial to grasping the magnitude of the threats faced by journalists in Kazakhstan.

Cyberattacks

Cyberattacks have become a significant concern for journalists in Kazakhstan, reflecting broader trends in the digital age where information security is paramount. The International Foundation for the Protection of Freedom of Speech reported a notable increase in cyberattacks on media outlets, with 52 recorded incidents in 2023, highlighting the vulnerabilities faced by journalists in the digital realm. These attacks often aim to disrupt operations, intimidate journalists, or undermine their credibility. The lack of governmental response to such threats, coupled with the refusal to recognize media information systems as critical infrastructure, leaves journalists without adequate protection. As a result, media professionals face increasing anxiety about their online safety and the security of their communications.

Legal Harassment

Legal harassment continues to be a prevalent threat, with numerous cases of journalists facing lawsuits and legal repercussions for their reporting. The recent case involving Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty-Kazakhstan illustrates the legal challenges faced by independent media outlets when attempting to operate freely. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' refusal to accredit journalists due to previous fines demonstrates how legal mechanisms can be weaponized against the press. Such incidents create a hostile environment where journalists are dissuaded from pursuing investigative stories, knowing that they could face legal repercussions for their work. This culture of fear diminishes journalistic integrity and limits the public's access to critical information.

Physical Violence and Intimidation

Reports of physical violence against journalists underline the severity of the threats they encounter in Kazakhstan. Journalists face intimidation, harassment, and even violent attacks, particularly when covering sensitive issues such as corruption or government malfeasance. The lack of legal protections and the culture of impunity contribute to an environment where violence against journalists is often unpunished, leading to self-censorship among media professionals. The fear of retribution can significantly affect journalists' willingness to report on critical issues, further entrenching the barriers to a free and independent press. Addressing these threats is essential for creating a safer environment for media professionals and fostering an atmosphere conducive to open dialogue.

Comparative Analysis

Kazakhstan's position in international rankings on press freedom serves as a critical indicator of the challenges faced by journalists. According to the Freedom House 2024 report, Kazakhstan scored 85 points, ranking 184th out of 210 countries, categorizing it as having "Not Free Media". Similarly, the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders ranked Kazakhstan 162nd out of 180 nations, indicating a dire situation for press freedom. These rankings reflect the significant legal and systemic barriers that impede journalists' ability to operate freely. By comparing Kazakhstan's press freedom situation to that of countries with more supportive media environments, it becomes clear that urgent reforms are necessary to align Kazakhstan with international standards and promote a more vibrant media landscape.

Comparing the media reforms and legal frameworks across different jurisdictions, particularly in the European Union (EU) and Kazakhstan, reveals significant contrasts in approaches to press freedom, journalist protection, and media regulation. In the EU, strong legal protections for journalists are enshrined in the Charter of Fun-

damental Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression and information, allowing journalists to operate without undue interference (Richter, 2011). Recent proposals under the European Media Freedom Act aim to further enhance these protections by establishing mechanisms for reporting harassment and threats while ensuring media outlet independence. Additionally, many EU member states have established independent judicial systems that uphold the rule of law, enabling recourse against violations of press freedom. Conversely, Kazakhstan's legal framework presents a restrictive environment, where laws criminalizing defamation and insult pose significant risks for journalists and contribute to a culture of self-censorship due to the lack of specific protections. While there have been discussions about reforming media laws, the actual legal protections remain limited, and new laws often reinforce existing restrictions. Furthermore, the judiciary in Kazakhstan is frequently influenced by political pressures, undermining journalists' ability to seek justice for rights violations. In terms of responses to threats against journalists, the EU actively monitors these threats and has established rigorous mechanisms for accountability, such as the Annual Rule of Law Report that evaluates media freedom and safety. The EU also collaborates with international organizations like the OSCE and UNESCO to promote best practices for protecting journalists. In contrast, journalists in Kazakhstan face a culture of impunity for violence and intimidation, with little recourse for justice and ineffective mechanisms to protect them from threats. Thus, while the EU has established a framework that supports journalist safety and media freedom, Kazakhstan struggles with significant challenges that hinder the protection of its media professionals.

The legal frameworks surrounding press freedom and the safety of journalists in Kazakhstan are closely related to those of its neighboring countries, notably Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. This chapter delves into how these countries regulate the media, specifically through defamation laws, media licensing, censorship practices, and the overall environment for press freedom. A comparison across these nations, grounded in international indices such as the Freedom House and World Press Freedom Index, will provide insight

into Kazakhstan's standing in the broader regional and global context. By examining these comparative elements, we can better understand the challenges facing Kazakhstani journalists and identify potential reforms that could enhance press freedom and journalistic safety.

Defamation laws in Central Asia and Russia play a central role in shaping the legal environment for journalists. In Kazakhstan, defamation is still a criminal offense under Article 130 of the Criminal Code, carrying penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment. The law is often employed to silence critics, with journalists facing the risk of legal action for reporting on political figures, government corruption, or other sensitive topics. A notable case in 2018 saw *Azattyq*, a prominent Kazakh newspaper, sued for defamation after publishing a critical piece about a political figure, forcing the outlet to retract the story. In comparison, Uzbekistan has historically maintained similar defamation laws, but recent reforms indicate a shift. In 2020, Uzbekistan decriminalized defamation, reducing the threat of imprisonment or other severe penalties for journalists. This change marked a significant departure from Kazakhstan, where criminal defamation remains a significant obstacle to press freedom. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, stands out in Central Asia for its relatively progressive stance on defamation. In 2018, the country abolished criminal defamation, creating a legal environment that is more favorable to journalists. As a result, Kyrgyzstan enjoys a relatively freer press compared to Kazakhstan, where defamation laws still serve as a tool for government control and suppression of critical media. Russia also retains criminal defamation laws, although the penalties tend to be less severe than in Kazakhstan. However, Russia's media landscape is characterized by heavy state control and government-driven censorship. Despite the existence of defamation laws, Russia's legal infrastructure has not offered much protection for journalists, especially those who investigate government corruption or political matters. Thus, while Kazakhstan shares similarities with Uzbekistan and Russia in its defamation laws, it lags behind Kyrgyzstan in terms of legal reform. The continued use of criminal defamation laws in Kazakhstan contrasts with the more progressive approaches seen in Uzbeki-

stan and Kyrgyzstan, which have decriminalized defamation or reduced its legal consequences.

Censorship is a major concern for journalists in Kazakhstan. The government has been known to employ both direct and indirect censorship mechanisms, including blocking websites, pressuring media outlets, and using legal threats to silence critical reporting. In addition to traditional forms of censorship, Kazakhstan has also employed digital censorship techniques, including blocking access to independent news sources and critical websites. These actions are part of a broader strategy to control public discourse and prevent the spread of information that challenges the government's narrative. Uzbekistan has historically had a similarly restrictive approach to censorship. However, recent reforms have led to the easing of censorship on certain topics, although state control remains extensive. The government in Uzbekistan has taken steps to open up the media to more diverse perspectives, even if challenges remain. Kyrgyzstan offers a somewhat more open media landscape in terms of censorship, although journalists still face occasional harassment and pressure from authorities. The country is seen as having a relatively independent press compared to Kazakhstan, where censorship is more deeply ingrained in the state's strategy to suppress dissent. Russia has some of the most extensive censorship practices in the region, with the government employing a variety of methods to suppress opposition media and independent journalism. The state has used legislation such as the "foreign agent" law to target independent outlets and restrict their activities. This environment is similar to Kazakhstan, where government censorship is pervasive, although Russia's state control of the media is often more entrenched.

The comparison of Kazakhstan with its neighbors reveals several key insights. While the country shares some similarities with Russia and Uzbekistan in terms of restrictive media laws, it lags behind Kyrgyzstan in terms of legal reforms that protect journalists and foster a freer media environment. Kazakhstan's reliance on criminal defamation laws, strict media licensing, and pervasive censorship significantly hinders press freedom and the safety of journalists. However, by drawing on the positive legal changes in neighboring countries,

particularly Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan has the potential to reform its legal and regulatory frameworks. Key reforms, such as decriminalizing defamation, easing media licensing requirements, and reducing government censorship, would significantly improve the media landscape and the safety of journalists. In addition, Kazakhstan could benefit from adopting international best practices for protecting press freedom, taking into account regional experiences and international indices as benchmarks for progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

To address the challenges faced by journalists in Kazakhstan, the following reforms are proposed:

1. **Decriminalization of Defamation:** Transition defamation cases to civil courts to reduce risks for journalists and encourage critical reporting.
2. **Legal Protection for Journalists:** Establish protections against violence and intimidation, ensuring a safer environment for press freedom.
3. **Improved Access to Information:** Revise laws to enhance journalists' access to government-held information, promoting transparency and accountability.
4. **Support for Media Independence:** Protect financial independence for media outlets to reduce political and economic pressures, fostering a diverse media landscape.
5. **Creation of Independent Regulatory Bodies:** Implement independent oversight bodies to enhance media accountability and safeguard journalistic rights.

The implementation of these proposed reforms could significantly enhance the safety and freedom of journalists in Kazakhstan, representing a crucial step toward the realization of a more vibrant and resilient media landscape. Aligning media laws with international standards would not only empower journalists by providing them with the necessary legal protections but would also foster a climate of trust and credibility within the media sector. An independent and

robust media is vital for democratic accountability and transparency, serving as a watchdog that informs the public, holds authorities accountable, and contributes to informed decision-making at all levels of society (Kalathil, 2011). Addressing the systemic challenges faced by media professionals is not merely a matter of policy adjustment; it is an essential prerequisite for the future of democracy in Kazakhstan. Without the ability to report freely, journalists are unable to uncover injustices, highlight governmental shortcomings, or provide critical analysis of social issues. This inability stifles public discourse and limits the flow of information necessary for a well-functioning democracy. By fostering an environment where journalists can operate freely and without fear, the country can cultivate a more informed and engaged citizenry, which is fundamental for a thriving democratic society. Furthermore, an empowered press plays a critical role in advancing human rights by shining a light on abuses and advocating for the marginalized. When journalists are protected and their rights are respected, they can more effectively challenge narratives that perpetuate oppression or injustice. In this context, enhancing journalist safety and press freedom is intrinsically linked to broader human rights initiatives in Kazakhstan.

CONCLUSION

As Kazakhstan continues its journey toward modernization and reform, the media must be viewed as a partner in this process rather than an adversary. The government's commitment to reforming media laws and safeguarding journalists can send a strong message to the international community, demonstrating its dedication to upholding human rights and democratic principles. This commitment would enhance Kazakhstan's global standing and inspire confidence among its citizens, fostering a culture of openness and engagement.

Despite facing challenges, Kazakhstan holds significant potential for reform in the realm of press freedom and journalist safety. While the country is currently hindered by government control, legal restrictions, and threats to journalists, international comparisons

provide valuable insights. Countries like Kyrgyzstan and Georgia show that, even in post-Soviet contexts, meaningful progress in media freedom can be achieved through legal reforms, decriminalization of defamation, and the creation of independent regulatory bodies. With sustained political will and commitment to international standards, Kazakhstan has the opportunity to lead in Central Asia, creating a safer and freer media landscape for its journalists.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of these reforms is crucial for fostering a media environment that supports democracy, encourages civic participation, and upholds the rule of law. By prioritizing journalist safety and freedom, Kazakhstan can lay the foundation for a more dynamic, accountable governance structure that respects and promotes human rights. These efforts will contribute to the long-term stability and prosperity of the nation, as informed citizens are better equipped to engage in meaningful dialogue and participate in the democratic process. The reform of media laws and the protection of journalists should, therefore, be regarded not only as a legal necessity but also as a cornerstone of Kazakhstan's future as a democratic state, committed to freedom, justice, and equality for all its citizens.

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PART III
EDUCATION, LANGUAGE,
AND DIPLOMACY

„TRANSFERBRÜCKEN“ ALS HILFSMITTEL BEIM LERNEN EINER NEUEN FREMDSPRACHE

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EINFÜHRUNG

Die kontrastive Linguistik (KL) ist ein Forschungszweig, der in der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts durch die Arbeiten von Fries (1945) und Lado (1957) begründet wurde. Charles C. Fries und Robert Lado vertraten die Ansicht, dass ein systematischer linguistischer Vergleich von Mutter- und Fremdsprachen ein wirksames Mittel ist, um den Prozess des Fremdsprachenerwerbs zu unterstützen und mögliche Störungen zu vermeiden. Die kontrastive Linguistik hatte daher von Anfang an eine pragmatische Ausrichtung. Später sind zahlreiche Publikationen erschienen, in denen sprachpaarspezifische Phänomene beschrieben und verglichen werden. Die Bedeutung der KL ist unbestritten, denn sie leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Fremdsprachendidaktik und -methodik. Ihre Ergebnisse können sowohl in der Lernpsychologie als auch im Bereich des Übersetzens und Dolmetschens genutzt werden. Im Folgenden soll ein kurzer Überblick über die Rolle der kontrastiven Linguistik in der Geschichte des Sprachunterrichts gegeben werden.

DIE ROLLE DER KONTRASTIVEN LINGUISTIK IM SPRACHUNTERRICHT DER LETZTEN JAHRZEHNTE

In den 70-er Jahren beschäftigten sich auch ungarische Fachleute mit kontrastiven linguistischen Studien. Es erschien der von Horváth und Temesi herausgegebene Band unter dem Titel „Összevető nyelvvizsgálat, nyelvvoktatás” (Die kontrastive Sprachanalyse und der Sprachunterricht), der auf Beiträgen über theoretische und praktische Fragen zu vergleichenden Grammatiken lebender Sprachen beruhte (Horváth – Temesi, 1972). Die Befürworter des kontrastiven Ansatzes waren der Meinung, dass sprachliche Kontraste eine wesentliche Rolle im Spracherwerbsprozess spielen. Nur durch den Rückgriff auf die Muttersprache können Lernende das Sprachbewusstsein in einer Fremdsprache erlangen, mit dem sie beim Fremdsprachenlernen angemessen vorankommen können. Nach der Annahme der kontrastiven Fehleranalyse begehen Sprachlernende aufgrund der Interferenz zwischen Muttersprache und Zielsprache die meisten Fehler (Budai, 2006).

Zeitgleich mit dem kontrastiven Ansatz kamen neue Technologien im Sprachunterricht auf. Es wurden Sprachlabors eingerichtet, in denen das Tonbandgerät zu einem zentralen Instrument des Sprachunterrichts wurde, wodurch sich die Sprechzeit pro Sprachschüler deutlich erhöhte. In der Laborumgebung half der maschinell erzeugte Ton den Sprachlernenden, Satzstrukturen, Routineformeln und Muster zu wiederholen (Pattern Practice), so dass sie sich während der Übung weniger mit sprachlichen Kontrasten auseinandersetzen mussten. Übersetzungsübungen waren in den vorgegebenen Lerneinheiten überhaupt nicht enthalten (Heltai, 2016). Die audiovisuelle Methode, bei der versucht wurde, durch die Kombination von Ton und Bild die Situation und den Kontext der Sprachverwendung zu schaffen, begann mit dem Diaprojektor.

Die kontrastive Methode wurde später von kommunikativ orientierten Sprachunterrichtstendenzen verdrängt. Beim kommunikativen Sprachenlernen wurde der Entwicklung aller Fähigkeiten (rezeptives und produktives Verstehen und Textproduktion) die gleiche Bedeutung beigemessen. Statt repetitiver Übungen wurde der Schwerpunkt hierbei aber auf Interaktivität gelegt, und statt Sprachstrukturen zu

wiederholen, machten die Sprachlernenden Rollenspiele und Simulationen in Paaren oder Kleingruppen. Bei Auftauchen von grammatischen Fehlern fühlten die Sprachlehrenden nicht mehr das Bedürfnis, den Kommunikationsverlauf durch Korrektur der Fehler zu unterbrechen, sondern betrachteten es als Begleitphänomen des Lernprozesses. In Ungarn begann erst in den frühen 80-er Jahren ein Umdenken, um kommunikative Ideen in den Unterricht einzubringen (Bárdos, 2005).

Die in den 90-er Jahren vorgedrungene und bis heute aktuelle interkulturelle Methode, bei der das Verstehen der eigenen und der fremden Kultur im Mittelpunkt steht, hat es ermöglicht, den expliziten Sprachvergleich wieder in den Fremdsprachenunterricht einzuführen. Der Gedanke, dass wir Sprachstrukturen nur dann angemessen nutzen können, wenn wir wissen, wie die sprachlichen Elemente in die Gewohnheiten, die Denkweise und die Mentalität der Zielsprachengemeinschaft eingebettet wurden, ist in den Vordergrund gerückt. Dieser Paradigmenwechsel hat das Interesse an der vergleichenden Methode wieder geweckt. Die Auffassung wurde wiederum vertreten, dass Sprachlernende sich an eine bestimmte Sprachumgebung nur in dem Fall angemessen anpassen können, wenn sie die konzeptionellen Unterschiede zwischen ihrer Muttersprache und der Zielsprache verstehen und sprachliche und kulturelle Muster vergleichen können (Rózsavölgyi, 2017).

DIE TERTIÄRSPRACHENDIDAKTIK

In der Fachliteratur zum Sprachunterricht werden wir mit einer Vielzahl von Abkürzungen konfrontiert. Der gängigste Ansatz besteht darin, die Muttersprache als erste Sprache zu betrachten, und dementsprechend den Erwerb der Muttersprache als *language 1*, abgekürzt L1, zu bezeichnen, gefolgt von *language 2* (L2), der ersten Fremdsprache, und *language 3* (L3), der zweiten Fremdsprache, sowie weiteren Fremdsprachen (Lx). Um jedoch jegliche

Verwirrung zu vermeiden, werden wir in der vorliegenden Studie die vom Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmen vorgeschlagene Benennungen verwenden, wobei die erste Sprache tatsächlich

die Muttersprache 1 ist, gefolgt von der ersten Fremdsprache (*foreign language 1*, abgekürzt FL1), und der zweiten Fremdsprache (*foreign language 2*, abgekürzt FL2). Wir betrachten den Europäischen Referenzrahmen als Orientierungsrahmen auch aus dem Grund, zumal er nun ein einheitliches System zur Beschreibung der Leistungen von Fremdsprachenlernenden weltweit bietet. Sein Hauptziel ist es, eine für alle Sprachen gültige Methode für das Lernen, Lehren und Bewerten zu schaffen.

Der Schwerpunkt unserer Untersuchung liegt nicht auf dem Vergleich der Muttersprache mit der ersten Fremdsprache, sondern auf den Zusammenhängen zwischen dem Erwerb der ersten Fremdsprache (FL1) und der zweiten Fremdsprache (FL2). In den 90-er Jahren wurden immer mehr qualitative und quantitative Unterschiede zwischen dem Erwerb der ersten und der zweiten Fremdsprache entdeckt und aus verschiedenen Perspektiven analysiert und beschrieben. Als Ergebnis dieser Analysen wurden einige neue Modelle entwickelt, um die Lernprozesse mehrerer Fremdsprachen darzustellen, die sich unter anderem auf psycholinguistische und soziolinguistische Faktoren konzentrieren.

Der deutsche Begriff Tertiärsprachendidaktik bezeichnet die Vermittlung einer dritten Sprache unter Berücksichtigung der kognitiven und emotionalen Erfahrungen der ersten und der zweiten Sprache (Hufeisen, 2003; Manno, 2009). Bei dieser Methode sind keine perfekten Fremdsprachenkenntnisse in der ersten Fremdsprache zwingend erforderlich, da nicht die Sprachkenntnisse selbst aktiviert werden, sondern das Lernpotenzial, das beim Erlernen der FL1 entstanden ist. Das Faktorenmodell von Hufeisen (2003) behandelt stufenweise Lernphasen von Fremdsprache zu Fremdsprache. Beim Erwerb der jeweiligen neuen Fremdsprache werden sprachliche Faktoren in den Lernprozess hinzugefügt, die bislang noch nicht vorhanden waren. Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass in diesem systematisch-dynamischen System der größte Qualitätssprung zwischen dem Erlernen der ersten (FL1) und der zweiten Fremdsprache (FL2) erfolgt, da die Sprachlernenden bewusst oder unbewusst das vorhandene und das neue Wissen kombinieren bzw. verknüpfen. Dank ihrem Hintergrundwissen können sie dabei ihre eigenen Fremdsprachenstrategien einsetzen.

POSITIVER TRANSFER

Sprachlicher Transfer oder Übertragung von sprachlichen Besonderheiten einer Sprache auf die andere kann als eine Basis des Fremdsprachenlernprozesses betrachtet werden, weil diese sprachlichen Besonderheiten von den Lernenden gespeichert, verarbeitet, getestet, evaluiert und in das neue System übernommen werden (Roininen, 2012). Die Ergebnisse der Lernübertragung können sowohl positiv als auch negativ sein. Negativer Transfer ist immer sichtbar, positiver Transfer bleibt aber sehr oft versteckt und aus diesem Grund soll er genauer untersucht werden. Die vorliegende Arbeit behandelt die Frage der Transferfähigkeit und der Entdeckung von Transferbasen zwischen Deutsch und Russisch.

In diesem Teil der Studie wird dargestellt, welche Gemeinsamkeiten das Deutsche und das Russische im Bereich Morphologie und Syntax haben. Wenn man davon ausgeht, dass die zur indoeuropäischen Sprachfamilie gehörenden Deutsch und Russisch auf diesen Ebenen im Vergleich zum Ungarischen mehr ähnliche Elemente beinhalten, kann man vermuten, dass diejenigen, deren Muttersprache Ungarisch ist, beim Russischlernen eher aus dem Deutschen als aus dem Ungarischen transferieren können. Dadurch kann der Lernprozess wesentlich erleichtert bzw. beschleunigt werden. Nicht selten erlebt man dabei den vom deutschen Psychologen Karl Bühler (1918) geprägten Aha-Effekt, da im Gehirn der Lernenden neue Verknüpfungen zwischen vorhandenem Wissen entstehen, das in ihren Erinnerungen gespeichert ist.

Die Autorinnen beobachteten drei Semester lang den Lernprozess in drei Sprachkursen mit je 15 Personen. Der größte Teil der Sprachlernenden nahm an den deutschsprachigen Studiengängen teil und verfügte über Deutschkenntnisse der Niveaustufe B1-B2. Im Wirtschaftsrussischunterricht ging es ausschließlich um Anfängergruppen, die vier Stunden pro Woche hatten. Die Kursteilnehmenden erhielten innerhalb von drei Semestern 160 Sprachstunden und erreichten am Ende das Sprachniveau A2-B1.

Professorin Lokshtanova, die die Verwandtschaft der deutschen und der russischen Sprache untersucht, weist darauf hin, dass eben die

grammatikalische Struktur der standhafteste Bestandteil im System einer Sprache ist (Lokshtanova, 2004). Daher basierte die im Unterricht verwendete Methode der sprachlichen Analogie in erster Linie auf den Ähnlichkeiten im grammatischen Aufbau der deutschen und der russischen Sprache. Zwei Sprachen, die ähnliche grammatische Kategorien (wie z. B. Genus oder Kasus) haben, sind nämlich transferfähiger als voneinander weit entfernte Sprachen (Ringbom, 2006). Im Folgenden werden einige Beispiele dargestellt, die veranschaulichen, wie eine westgermanische Sprache den ungarischen Studierenden, deren Muttersprache nicht zur indoeuropäischen Sprachfamilie gehört, behilflich sein kann, eine ostslawische Sprache zu erlernen.

Bereits in der ersten Unterrichtsstunde werden sprachliche Gemeinsamkeiten deutlich. Bei der Vorstellung der Fragepronomen *кто? что?* können wir uns auf analoge *wer? was?* beziehen und betonen, dass sie auch im Russischen ausschließlich im Singular verwendet werden. Für die ungarische Zielgruppe bereitet dieses scheinbar unbedeutende Phänomen jedoch Schwierigkeiten, da diese Interrogativpronomen im Ungarischen auch Pluralform haben: *ki?/kik?, mi?/mik?* (s. Tabelle 1.).

Tabelle 1. Fragepronomen

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
Wer ist das?	Кто эмо?	Ki ő? Kik ők?
Was ist das?	Что эмо?	Mi ez? Mik ezek?

Nach dem undeklinierbaren Demonstrativpronomen *das* und seinem Äquivalent *эмо* in Subjektfunktion können sowohl belebte als auch unbelebte Substantive stehen. Das Ungarische macht dazwischen Unterschied und hat dafür vier Varianten, wo die richtige Form auch an den Numerus der Nomina, die danach folgen, angepasst wird (s. Tabelle 2.).

Tabelle 2. Demonstrativpronomen

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
Das ist mein Büro.	Это мой офис.	Ez az irodám.
Das sind meine Dokumente.	Это мои документы.	Ezek a papírjaim.
Das ist mein Kollege.	Это мой коллега.	Ő a kollégám.

In Russisch und Deutsch werden die Personalpronomen der dritten Person stellvertretend für Nomen verwendet, die sowohl Personen als auch Nicht-Personen bezeichnen. Im Ungarischen gibt es dafür zwei unterschiedliche Formen (s. Tabelle 3).

Tabelle 3. Personalpronomen

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
der Vertrag, der Kunde → er	договор, клиент → он	szerződés → ez , ügyfél → ő
die Werbung, die Chefin → sie	реклама, начальница → она	reklám → ez , főnöknő → ő
das Gebäude, das Kind → es	здание, дитя → оно	épület → ez , gyerek → ő

Beim Erlernen der deutschen oder der russischen Sprache werden die Lernenden mit der grammatischen Kategorie Genus konfrontiert. Die beiden Sprachen unterscheiden zwischen drei Genera, Ungarisch hingegen weist gar kein Genussystem auf. Wenn dieser Begriff den Studierenden dank ihren Deutschkenntnissen schon bekannt ist, kommen sie damit im Russischunterricht schneller zurecht. In methodischer Hinsicht ist es sehr wichtig, Schwierigkeiten im Lernprozess zu mildern und auch bei der schwierigsten Grammatik deren positive Seiten hervorzuheben. Es kann z. B. betont werden, dass das grammatische Geschlecht im Russischen, im Vergleich zum Deutschen in den meisten Fällen anhand der Endungen eindeutig erkennbar und leichter zu behandeln ist.

Ähnlichkeiten weisen beide Sprachen auch in der Deklination von Substantiven auf (s. Tabelle 4.). Im Falle der deutschen Sprache geht es zwar um Deklination von Artikeln oder anderen Determinanten, aber der Ansatz ist der Gleiche. Nehmen wir als Beispiel adverbiale

Bestimmungen des Ortes, die die Richtung des Geschehens anzeigen. Als Antwort auf die Frage *wohin?* werden am häufigsten Konstruktionen *in/auf* + *Akkusativ* im Deutschen und entsprechend *в/на* + *Akkusativ* im Russischen verwendet. Der wichtigste Faktor ist dabei die Deklination der Nomina im Akkusativ. Die in Deutsch erworbenen sprachlichen Kompetenzen sind auch hier transferierbar und können helfen. Das Ungarische funktioniert ganz anders. Statt Präpositionen benutzt es Postpositionen, die einfach den Nomina nachgestellt werden und keine Änderung in der Ausgangsform verursachen.

Tabelle 4. Deklinationen von Substantiven bei Antworten auf die Frage *wohin?*

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
in den Konferenzraum	в конференц-зал	<i>a konferenciaterem</i> be
auf den Markt	на рынок	<i>a piac</i> ra
in die Wirtschaft	в экономику	<i>a gazdaság</i> ba
auf die Ausstellung	на выставку	<i>a kiállítás</i> ra
in das Büro	в бюро	<i>az irodá</i> ba
auf das Konto	на счёт	<i>a számlá</i> ra

Auch Possessivkonstruktionen, in denen eine Besitzrelation durch Genitiv ausgedrückt wird, stimmen in beiden Sprachen überein. Deutsch und Russisch haben die gleiche Wortfolge: zuerst wird der Besitz angegeben, danach folgt der Besitzer. Im Ungarischen ist es umgekehrt (s. Tabelle 5.).

Tabelle 5. Possessivkonstruktionen

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
die Sehenswürdigkeiten der Stadt	достопримечатель- ности города	<i>a város</i> nevezetességei

Die Endungen der Possessivpronomen ändern sich in Deutsch und Russisch entsprechend dem Geschlecht des Nomens, dem Kasus und dem Numerus (s. Tabelle 6.).

Tabelle 6. Possessivpronomen

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
mein Beruf	моя профессия	a szakmá m
meine n Beruf	мою профессию	a szakmá mat
in meine m Beruf	в мое й профессии	a szakmá mban

Die Ähnlichkeit der beiden Sprachen lässt sich auch für die nächste Gruppe von Pronomen feststellen (s. Tabelle 7).

Tabelle 7. Pronomen jeder, jede, jedes; alle, alles

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
jeder	кажд ый	minden
jede	кажд ая	minden
jedes	кажд ое	minden
alles (+Verb im Singular) - alle (+Verb im Plural)	вс ё (+Verb im Singular) – вс е (+Verb im Plural)	minden (+Verb im Singular) – mindenki (+Verb im Singular)
alle (+ Substantiv im Plural)	вс е (+Substantiv im Plural)	minden (+Substantiv im Singular)

Die Liste der Gemeinsamkeiten kann mit Beispielen von Zeitangaben fortgesetzt werden, die mithilfe der oben erwähnten Pronomen gebildet und im Akkusativ ohne Präpositionen dekliniert werden (s. Tabelle 8.).

Tabelle 8. Zeitangaben

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
jeden Dienstag	кажд ый вторник	minden kedden
jede Woche	кажд ую неделю	minden héten
jedes Jahr	кажд ое лето	minden évben; minden nyáron

Im Ungarischen ist das attributive Adjektiv unveränderlich, deutsche und russische Adjektive hingegen werden abhängig vom Fall, Geschlecht und der Zahl des Nomens dekliniert (s. Tabelle 9.). Mithilfe von postpositiven Attributen kann deren Anpassung an Substantive (Kongruenz) vermieden werden. Die in beiden Sprachen sehr verbreiteten nichtkongruierenden (nachgestellten) Attribute stehen immer nach dem Bezugswort, ihre Form bleibt unverändert und ist dadurch einfacher im Gebrauch. Das sind vorwiegend Kombinationen von Präpositionen und Substantiven. Substantive merkt man sich schneller und verwendet mit mehr Sicherheit als andere Wortarten.

Tabelle 9. Nachgestellte Attribute

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
Reise nach Italien	поездка в Италию	olaszországi út
Partner aus Ungarn	партнёры из Венгрии	magyar partnerek
Tickets für Erwachsene	билеты для взрослых	felnőtt jegyek

Obwohl es auch in der ungarischen Sprache Verben gibt, die als reflexiv und nicht reflexiv genutzt werden können, bereitet den ungarischen Studenten oft Schwierigkeiten, dazwischen einen Unterschied zu machen, obwohl sie im Deutschen durch Reflexivpronomen und im Russischen durch reflexive Nachsilben eindeutig zu erkennen sind. Noch problematischer ist die Situation, wenn es für fremde reflexive Verben überhaupt kein ungarisches Äquivalent gibt. Die Tabelle 10. stellt einige Beispiele dafür dar.

Tabelle 10. Reflexive Verben

Deutsch	Russisch	Ungarisch
sich irren	ошибаться	tévedni
sich treffen	встречаться	találkozni
sich verlaufen	заблудиться	eltévedni

In seinem kurzen humoristisch-satirischen Essay *Die schreckliche deutsche Sprache* aus dem Jahre 1880 (englischer Titel *The Awful German Language*) beschreibt Mark Twain in amüsanter Weise alle Besonderheiten der deutschen Sprache. Auf seine große Kritik stoßen unter anderem auch zusammengesetzte Wörter im Deutschen, wie z. B. *Generalstaatsverordnetenversammlungen*, *Kinderbewahrungsanstalten*, *Waffenstillstandsverhandlungen*. Sie seien keine Wörter, sondern alphabetische Prozessionen (Twain, 1880). Nach solchen massiven Konstruktionen dürften russische zusammengesetzte Wörter nicht mehr zu kompliziert erscheinen, sie sind sogar etwas kürzer (s. Tabelle 11.).

Tabelle 11. Komposita im Deutschen und Russischen

Deutsch	Russisch
Existenzgründungszuschüsse	самофинансирование
Immobilienfinanzierungskosten	неудовлетворительность
Kundenzufriedenheitsbefragung	переосвидетельствование
Unternehmenszusammenschlüsse	человеконенавистничество
Eigenkapitalbeschaffungsmöglichkeiten	клиентоориентированность
Körperschaftsteuer-	автоэлектростеклоподъёмники
Bemessungsgrundlage	

Ähnlichkeiten treten auch auf der Syntaxebene auf (s. Tabelle 12). Zwar ist die russische Reihenfolge der Satzglieder im Vergleich zum Deutschen viel flexibler, aber die Thema-Rhema-Struktur ist gleich. Die Grundannahme ist, dass ein Satz mit dem Thema begonnen und mit dem Rhema fortgesetzt wird. Dieses Modell besagt, dass der Informationsgehalt einer Äußerung graduell zunimmt, je weiter man an das Ende der Äußerung kommt. Die „Bewegung“ von bekannten zu neuen, kommunikativ relevanten Informationen erleichtert das Verständnis.

Tabelle 12. Thema-Rhema-Struktur

Wann besuchen Sie die Partnerfirma?	Wir besuchen die Partnerfirma im Oktober .
Когда вы посетите нашу фирму?	Мы посетим вашу фирму в октябре.
Was machen Sie nach der Besprechung?	Nach der Besprechung rufe ich unsere Kunden an .
Что вы делаете после совещания?	После совещания я позвоню нашим партнёрам.

ERGEBNISSE UND DISKUSSION

Die Ergebnisse der Forschung stützen die Annahme, dass die beim Erlernen der ersten Fremdsprache (FL1) gesammelten Erfahrungen einen wesentlichen Beitrag zum Lernprozess der zweiten Fremdsprache (FL2) leisten können, insbesondere wenn die beiden Sprachen typologisch nahe beieinanderliegen. Den Ergebnissen zufolge haben die im Deutschunterricht erworbenen Sprachkenntnisse und -strategien einen positiven Einfluss auf die Wirksamkeit des Erlernens der russischen Sprache (FL2). Die Ergebnisse der lexikalisch-grammatischen Tests während des Semesters und am Semesterende sowie Übersetzungs- und Aufsatzaufgaben deuten darauf hin, dass Studierende, die Deutsch bereits auf einem gewissen Niveau beherrschen, mit der russischen Sprache schneller vorankommen. Darüber hinaus haben wir festgestellt, dass man bei der Einführung von neuen grammatischen Einheiten durch die kontrastive Methode viel Zeit ersparen kann, da die morphologischen und syntaktischen Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Sprachen den Einsatz des positiven Transfers ermöglichten. Zudem zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass sich die beim Erlernen der deutschen Sprache entwickelten Lernstile und -strategien wie Beharrlichkeit und Geduld positiv auf das Erlernen der russischen Sprache auswirken. Durch den Einsatz der beschriebenen Methoden nutzten wir bewusst die Gemeinsamkeiten der beiden Sprachen aus, was nicht nur zur Beschleunigung des Lernprozesses führte, sondern auch zur Steigerung der Motivation der Lernenden.

FAZIT

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass Deutsch und Russisch, obwohl sie unterschiedlichen Sprachgruppen angehören, viele morphologische und syntaktische Ähnlichkeiten aufweisen, die die Übertragung der beim Erlernen einer Sprache gesammelten Erfahrungen (positiver Transfer) beim Erwerb einer anderen Sprache erheblich erleichtern können. In der vorliegenden Studie haben wir die positiven Auswirkungen deutscher Sprachkenntnisse auf den Lernprozess der russischen Sprache untersucht und gleichzeitig festgestellt, dass positiver Transfer auch rückwärts gilt, da er die Selbstreflexion fördert, indem die Sprachlernenden die bereits aus der ersten Sprache bekannten Phänomene neu interpretieren. Öfters konnten wir beim Erklären neuer grammatischer Strukturen die Erkenntnis hören: „Oh, jetzt verstehe ich, warum das im Deutschen so funktioniert!“ Besonders wichtig ist hervorzuheben, dass es sich dabei um positive Transferbrücken zwischen zwei Fremdsprachen handelt und nicht um die Wissensübertragung von der Muttersprache auf eine Fremdsprache. Wenn wir den Titel des bekannten Lehrbuchs „Ein Wort gibt das andere“ (Borbély et al., 1997) ein bisschen verändern und „ein Wort“ durch „eine Sprache“ ersetzen, bekommen wir den Satz „Eine Sprache gibt die andere“, was bedeutet, dass man das Lernen einer weiteren Fremdsprache bewusst steuern und durch einzelne Schritte über die zahlreichen Transferbrücken wesentlich erleichtern kann.

Die durchgeführte Untersuchung trägt zur wachsenden Wissensbasis bei, die sich mit der Didaktik der dritten Sprache beschäftigt, und bietet den Sprachlehrenden praktische Anleitungen, wie sie die beim Erlernen der ersten Fremdsprache gesammelten Erfahrungen effektiv in den Unterricht der zweiten Fremdsprache integrieren können. Es ist auf jeden Fall zu empfehlen, den Unterricht der zweiten Fremdsprache bewusst auf Sprachanalogien und positiven Transfer zu setzen und besondere Aufmerksamkeit dem Einsatz der schon vorhandenen Sprachlernstrategien zu widmen.

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Quelle

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THEORIE UND PRAXIS IN DER DIPLOMATISCHEN BILDUNG – EIN BEISPIEL FÜR EIN PRAXISORIENTIERTES BILDUNGSANGEBOT

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EINFÜHRUNG

In diesem Artikel wird die Bildung der Diplomatischen Akademie vorgestellt, die mit einer guten Mischung aus Theorie und Praxis für andere Bildungsprogramme als gutes Beispiel dienen kann. Die Ungarische Diplomatische Akademie wurde im Jahr 2020 mit dem Ziel gegründet, eine wettbewerbsfähige Ausbildung für künftige Diplomaten:innen anzubieten. Im Rahmen der Diplomatenausbildung, welche unter der Aufsicht des Ministeriums für Auswärtiges und Außenhandel steht, wurden bereits vier Jahrgänge von Diplomaten:innen ausgebildet. Den Studierenden wird die Möglichkeit gegeben, an anspruchsvollen Seminaren teilzunehmen, welche von erfahrenen und renommierten Dozierenden gehalten werden. Zusätzlich zu den obligatorischen Seminaren können die Stipendiat:innen an einer Reihe von fakultativen Veranstaltungen teilnehmen, wodurch sie ihre Kenntnisse erweitern und ihr Netzwerk ausbauen können.

Neben speziellen Fächern wird großer Wert auf die Sprachkenntnisse gelegt, denn die Akademie bietet etwa 20 Sprachen an. Den Studierenden wird empfohlen, zwei Fremdsprachen auf Oberstufenniveau (C1) zu beherrschen und viele von ihnen legen auch die diplo-

matistische Sprachprüfung ab, bei der sie nicht nur von Prüfer:innen, sondern auch von Diplomat:innen bewertet werden.

Neben Theorie ist Praxis genauso wichtig, weil die Studierenden sowohl im Ministerium für Auswärtiges und Außenwirtschaft als auch im Ausland in ausgewählten Botschaften und Auslandsvertretungen ein Praktikum machen müssen. Es ist wichtig zu betonen, dass die Stipendiat:innen nach dem Abschluss eine Festanstellung im Ministerium bekommen können. Das Programm bietet auch besondere Veranstaltungen mit prominenten Gästen an, die Theorie und Praxis vereinen. Die Stipendiat:innen werden von Anfang an motiviert, diplomatische Beziehungen zu knüpfen und ein eigenes Netzwerk aufzubauen, wodurch sie eine sichere Basis für ihre künftige diplomatische Karriere schaffen. Im Folgenden stellen wir einzeln Theorie, Praxis, und die speziellen Veranstaltungen des Programms dar und heben die besten Beispiele des Bildungsprogramms hervor, sowie formulieren Empfehlungen für die Budapest Business University (BBU), das Studienangebot noch praxisorientierter zu gestalten.

THEORIE

Bildungsangebot und spezielle Fächer der Bildung

Das Bildungsangebot des schon seit vier Jahren existierenden Programms enthält sowohl allgemeine als auch spezielle Fächer. Die Student:innen nehmen an vielen verschiedenen Kursen teil und schon während der theoretischen Bildung wird großer Wert auf die Überzeugungskraft und namhaften Lehrkräften gelegt. Die Student:innen bekommen vor dem Beginn der Bildung eine Literaturliste, mit deren Hilfe sie sich auf das Studium vorbereiten können. Von dieser Liste hat der aktuelle Jahrgang die Werke von Bába et al. (2016), Jordán (2007), Magyarics (2007), Nagy und Kutasi (2020) als besonders nützlich gefunden.

Die Diplomatische Akademie bietet den immatrikulierten Studierenden eine Vielzahl an Fachbereichen. Die einzelnen Fächer sind dabei in verschiedene Kategorien unterteilt. Ein wesentlicher Bestandteil

der Ausbildung an der Diplomatischen Akademie stellt die Wissensvermittlung über die ungarische nationale Politik und die nationalen Interessen dar. Darüber hinaus wird den Studierenden die Möglichkeit geboten, sich mit den Instrumenten der parlamentarischen Diplomatie zur Verteidigung der ungarischen nationalen Interessen vertraut zu machen. Die Hauptfächer sind Geopolitik und Regionalstudien. Die Studierenden werden im Rahmen ihres Studiums der Völkerrechts- und Diplomatenrechtslehre mit den rechtlichen Hintergründen internationaler Prozesse vertraut gemacht. Die Stipendiat:innen haben die Möglichkeit, ihr juristisches Allgemeinwissen zu vertiefen. Dazu werden sie von erfahrenen Professorinnen und Professoren, wie dem Präsidenten des Verfassungsgerichts und dem Kurienpräsidenten, in die Welt des Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsrechts eingeführt. Ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Diplomatie ist das multilaterale institutionelle System, welches von Katalin Bogyay, der ehemaligen Botschafterin Ungarns bei den Vereinten Nationen vorgestellt wurde. Botschafterin Katalin Bogyay verfügt über umfangreiche Erfahrungen in der multilateralen und kulturellen Diplomatie und hat dieses Wissen den Stipendiat:innen auf anschauliche und unterhaltsame Weise vermittelt.

Erfahrungen des aktuellen Jahrgangs in Bezug auf das Bildungsangebot und die speziellen Fächer der Bildung

Angeichts der aktuellen weltpolitischen Lage stand die Sicherheitspolitik im Fokus. Im Rahmen des Sicherheitspolitikurses haben die Teilnehmer:innen verschiedene Sicherheitstheorien analysiert und verglichen. Sie haben mit vielen eingeladenen Gästen und Gastprofessor:innen, unter anderem von der ungarischen Armee die Sicherheitsrisiken in der Welt identifiziert und analysiert. Dieser Kurs war angesichts der aktuellen Weltpolitik von großer Bedeutung.

Im Fach für Geschichte der Diplomatie haben die Student:innen verschiedene Regionen und Länder analysiert und einen historischen Rückblick erhalten. Die Stunden waren sehr interaktiv, was den Teilnehmenden eine praxis- und erlebnisorientierte Lernumgebung geschaffen hat. Die Akademie legt zudem Wert auf die Entwicklung

der Kommunikationsfähigkeiten der Studierenden. Im Rahmen des Kurses „Präsentationstechniken“ wurden erfolgreiche Präsentations- und Rhetorikfähigkeiten trainiert. Neben der Rückmeldung der Lehrer war auch die Rückmeldung der Gruppenmitglieder, das sogenannte Peer-Review wichtig, die fünfminütigen Präsentationen zu den beliebigen Themen wurden von den anderen Kursteilnehmer:innen bewertet, was die Student:innen besonders hilfreich fanden. Am Ende gab es auch einen intensiven Austausch zwischen den Präsentierenden und den Zuhörer:innen und jeder konnte etwas vom Kurs mitnehmen.

Während des Programms hatten alle Student:innen die Möglichkeit, an einem Sprachkurs mit 300 Lerneinheiten teilzunehmen, wo sie ihre Sprachkenntnisse effektiv entwickeln konnten. Die Sprachkenntnisse wurden mit einem Einstufungstest gemessen und so konnte jeder die entsprechende Gruppe finden. Im Angebot standen circa 20 Sprachen zur Auswahl, die Akademie ging äußerst flexibel mit der Sprachauswahl um und holte die gewünschten Sprachlehrer:innen. Im aktuellen Jahrgang waren Englisch, Deutsch, Französisch, Italienisch, Spanisch, Russisch und Serbisch die gewählten Sprachen.

Viele im Programm haben eine Sprachprüfung C1 (Oberstufe) als Ziel gehabt, aber es war keine Pflicht. Im Programm und im Ministerium wird jede Art der Sprachprüfungen akzeptiert, die Diplomatische Sprachprüfung ist nur eine Option von vielen, jedoch eine empfehlenswerte. Der Sprachkurs erwies sich dieses Jahr als außerordentlich nützlich, da es vielen Teilnehmern aus mehreren Sprachen gelungen ist, die Sprachprüfung C1 abzulegen. Die Diplomatische Sprachprüfung besteht aus einem schriftlichen und einem mündlichen Teil und es gibt auch Hörverstehen. Das Besondere an der Sprachprüfung ist, dass beim mündlichen Teil neben der Prüferin/dem Prüfer auch eine Diplomatin/ein Diplomat anwesend ist, die/der die hohe Professionalität und die Aktualität der Prüfungsthemen garantiert. Die Vorbereitung auf die Sprachprüfung machten die von den Lehrerinnen der Budapest Business University verfassten Bücher besonders effektiv (Fodorné – Hukné, 2020).

PRAXIS

Das Praktikum im Ministerium

Wie schon erwähnt, hat das Programm das Ziel, den Teilnehmenden eine Festanstellung im Ministerium zu bieten. Dabei spielen das Praktikum im Ministerium und die Zusammenarbeit mit den Mentor:innen eine wesentliche Rolle. Das Praktikum ist in zwei Phasen unterteilt, in eine Inlands-, beziehungsweise in eine Auslandsphase. Im Rahmen des Inlandspraktikums erhalten alle Studierenden die Möglichkeit, ihre Kenntnisse in einer Abteilung des Ministeriums für Auswärtiges und Außenhandel zu vertiefen. Während des Praktikums werden die Praktikant:innen von Mentor:innen bei der Ausführung ihrer Tätigkeiten begleitet, die tatsächlich große Aufmerksamkeit der beruflichen Entwicklung der Praktikant:innen widmen.

Bisherige Erfahrungen zeigen, dass die Atmosphäre im Ministerium laut Erfahrung der Stipendiat:innen ausgezeichnet ist. Die aktive Teilnahme der Praktikant:innen an verschiedenen Veranstaltungen außerhalb des Ministeriums, wie zum Beispiel an den Feierlichkeiten am 15. März in Großwardein bestätigen diese Erfahrung.

Während des Praktikums wurden nötige Fähigkeiten und Skills erfolgreich erworben, was die Zeugnisübergabe am Ende des Programmes beweist. Alle 19 Teilnehmer:innen haben das Programm erfolgreich abgeschlossen und eine Position im Ministerium erhalten.

Zweimonatiges Praktikum im Ausland

Die Studierenden der bisherigen vier Jahrgänge haben sich Kenntnisse angeeignet, die vom Generalkonsulat in New York über die auswärtige Vertretung in Brüssel bis zur Botschaft in Tokio reichen. Im Rahmen des zweimonatigen Auslandspraktikums gewinnen die Studierenden Einblicke in die Arbeitsweisen des Auswärtigen Dienstes und haben die Möglichkeit, an einer Reihe von Programmen teilzunehmen. Darüber hinaus besteht die Möglichkeit, sich mit der Kultur des Gastlandes vertraut zu machen und an Ausflügen teilzunehmen.

Das zweimonatige Praktikum im Ausland ist der absolute Höhepunkt im Programm, denn in dessen Rahmen können die Praktikant:innen wertvolle Erfahrungen im authentischen Arbeitsumfeld sammeln.

Im Folgenden schildern wir die wichtigsten und nützlichsten Erfahrungen der Teilnehmenden aus dem aktuellen Jahrgang.

Aktuelle Erfahrungen während des ausländischen Praktikums

Eine der nützlichsten Erfahrungen für die Praktikant:innen war die tägliche Arbeit an den Botschaften und Auslandsvertretungen hautnah zu erleben und daran aktiv teilzunehmen. Bei der Auswahl des Praktikumsortes halfen die Mentor:innen im Ministerium oder die ausgezeichneten Vorträge der Botschafter:innen in den Seminaren. Neben den tagesüblichen Arbeitsprozessen hatten die Teilnehmer die Möglichkeit, sich Wissen über Kulturen anzueignen, mit denen sie bisher nicht vertraut waren. Die Möglichkeit, zwei Monate in einem fremden Land zu verbringen, stellte für sie eine äußerst bereichernde Erfahrung dar. Im Rahmen eines zweimonatigen Praktikums war es möglich, an den Tätigkeiten der Botschaften oder internationalen Organisationen, wie bei der NATO, der EU oder bei dem IWF mitzuwirken. Im Rahmen ihrer Tätigkeit lernten sie hilfsbereite Kolleginnen und Kollegen kennen, die ihnen bei allen Fragen zur Seite standen und mit denen sie bis heute in Kontakt sind.

Alle Praktikantinnen haben schriftliche Berichte über ihre Arbeit und Erfahrungen verfasst, die Nützlichkeit des Praktikums dokumentierten. Ein Teilnehmer hatte die Möglichkeit, an einem Einbürgerungsprozess sowie an militärischen Veranstaltungen des Gastgeberlandes teilzunehmen, was er besonders interessant fand. Auch die Teilnahme am aktuellen Besuch des Außenministers in London und Tokio haben viele als eine interessante Erfahrung angesprochen. Ein anderer Praktikant betonte den intensiven Austausch mit den Kolleginnen und Kollegen der Weltbank und dem Internationalen Währungsfonds, zwei der wichtigsten internationalen Finanzinstitutionen der Welt. Darüber hinaus bewerteten einige die Möglichkeit im Rahmen ihres Praktikums an Delegationssitzungen der Europäis-

chen Union teilnehmen zu dürfen. Diese Erfahrung war besonders nützlich, denn durch diese Sitzungen konnten sie wertvolle Einblicke in die bilaterale und professionelle diplomatische Arbeit anderer europäischer Länder gewinnen. Einige Praktikant:innen hatten sogar organisatorische Aufgaben erhalten, wie der Praktikant in Washington D.C., der an der Organisation und Durchführung einer Startup-Konferenz mitgewirkt hat. Das ermöglichte ihm, wertvolle Erfahrungen in der Veranstaltungsorganisation zu sammeln, von denen er für seine spätere Laufbahn viel profitieren konnte. Die Mitarbeiter:innen der Botschaft unterstützten ihn und übertrugen ihm sowohl Aufgaben im Bereich der Politik als auch im Bereich der Kommunikation. Die Botschaft organisierte eine Vielzahl von Veranstaltungen, wobei während seines Aufenthalts durchschnittlich zwei bis drei Veranstaltungen pro Woche stattfanden.

Dabei bildeten Kultur und Minderheitenschutz einen Schwerpunkt, was besonders bei der Veranstaltung „Hungarian Traditional Festival“ zur Geltung kam. Die Miteinbeziehung von Praktikant:innen in die organisatorische Tätigkeiten war übrigens überall typisch. Viele haben die gemeinsam organisierten Feierlichkeiten erwähnt, wie zum Beispiel den Holocaust-Gedenktag, an dem die Botschaft mit mehreren Gästen der Opfer des Holocausts gedachte.

Ein weiteres denkwürdiges Event war das 20-jährige Jubiläum aus dem Anlass des EU-Beitritts von Ungarn, das von vielen Botschaften zusammen gefeiert wurde. Einige haben die Veranstaltungen und das Kulturangebot vom Liszt-Institut hervorgehoben, das Institut von Helsinki war besonders aktiv und organisierte regelmäßig zahlreiche Ausstellungen. Neben Kulturevents waren die persönlichen Begegnungen mit den Praktikant:innen von anderen Botschaften ein Höhepunkt des Praktikums, da durch diese Treffen ein eigenes Netzwerk aufgebaut werden konnte. Zu guter Letzt haben viele den Auslandsaufenthalt für Besuch von benachbarten Regionen oder Ländern ausgenutzt, was ihren kulturellen und interkulturellen Horizont erheblich bereichert hat.

EXTRAVERANSTALTUNGEN – THEORIE UND PRAXIS

Die Diplomatische Akademie organisierte viele Veranstaltungen an sehr abwechslungsreichen Orten. Die Teilnehmer:innen haben zum Beispiel dieses Jahr einen Etikettenkurs im Milleniumscfé im Stadtwäldchen gehabt. Der Kurs war sehr interessant, zwei Protokoll-Expertinnen aus Deutschland und Österreich sind zum Kurs gekommen und die Student:innen haben viele praktische Informationen aus erster Hand bekommen.

Die Diplomatische Akademie hat dieses Jahr auch ein diplomatisches Seminar in Budapest organisiert, und viele Referent:innen aus verschiedenen Ländern haben an der Veranstaltung teilgenommen. Man hatte die Möglichkeit, die Referent:innen kennenzulernen und sich mit ihnen über die bilateralen Beziehungen auszutauschen. Der Austausch mit der italienischen Referentin über die aktuellen Angelegenheiten beider Länder war für einen Teilnehmer besonders hilfreich, er war sehr dankbar, dass sein professionelles Netzwerk durch dieses Event weiter erweitert werden konnte. Darüber hinaus hat die Akademie viele Veranstaltungen mit namhaften eingeladenen Gästen organisiert und hat eine Vielzahl berühmter Vortragenden eingeladen. Im Rahmen dieser Veranstaltungen wurde den Studierenden die Möglichkeit geboten, sich mit renommierten Persönlichkeiten auszutauschen und von deren Expertise zu profitieren. Unter anderem war Tony Abbott, der ehemalige Premier von Australien zu Gast und hat über die aktuelle geopolitische Lage in Asien gesprochen und wesentliche Einblicke in die für Ungarn zunehmend relevante Region Südostasien vermittelt. Der ehemalige Premierminister verdeutlichte die Relevanz geopolitischer Zusammenhänge und betonte die Bedeutung föderaler Systeme. Zudem hob er die Rolle Chinas im 21. Jahrhundert hervor.

Ein anderer Gast, János Martonyi, Ungarns ehemaliger Außenminister hat im Rahmen von Foreign Affairs Club über Wirtschaftsdiplomatie und internationale Handelspolitik einen interessanten Vortrag gehalten. Der Vortrag fokussierte sich auf die Details der Wirtschaftsdiplomatie und gewährte den Teilnehmer:innen einen Einblick in eine Reihe von handelspolitischen Verhandlungen.

Andere prominente Gäste waren unter anderem der Staatssekretär Péter Sztáray, der einen Vortrag über die aktuellen Herausforderungen der Sicherheitspolitik gehalten hat und zahlreiche Analysten, von denen Zoltán Sz. Biró mit dem Thema Russland und der Kaukasus besonders großen Erfolg hatte.

Langfristige Effekte des Bildungsprogramms

Das Bildungsprogramm der Ungarischen Diplomatischen Akademie setzt mit bewusster Mischung aus Theorie und Praxis und mit vielen Experten und namhaften Gastvortragenden betont darauf, langfristige Wirkung zu erzielen. Diese Struktur kann anderen Institutionen als gutes Beispiel dienen.

Die Teilnehmer:innen am Programm werden fortlaufend ermutigt, ein eigenes berufliches und persönliches Netzwerk aufzubauen, was eine gute Basis für den künftigen diplomatischen Beruf bilden kann. Um dies zu erreichen, ist regelmäßige Teilnahme an verschiedenen diplomatischen Veranstaltungen von großem Vorteil. Der aktuelle Jahrgang hatte die Möglichkeit an zahlreichen solchen Veranstaltungen teilzunehmen, gute Beispiele dafür waren das Treffen junger Praktikant:innen von verschiedenen Botschaften oder die Teilnahme am 20-jährigen Jubiläum aus dem Anlass des EU-Beitritts von Ungarn. Über diese Veranstaltungen hinaus gab es auch andere organisatorische Aufgaben und zahlreiche Sitzungen, wo die Student:innen ihre Fähigkeiten auf die Probe stellen konnten.

Auch die Rolle der Mentor:innen muss betont werden, denn sie geben für die Studierenden ein fortlaufendes Feedback und können ihnen immer wieder individuelle Ratschläge geben. Durch diese praktischen Elemente hat das Programm das Potential, einen langfristigen Effekt zu erzielen.

FAZIT

Die Schnittstellen der theoretischen und der praktischen Bereiche sind in dem Bildungsprogramm der Ungarischen Diplomatischen Akademie klar zu sehen, Theorie und Praxis harmonisieren sehr wohl miteinander und gegenseitige Vorteile werden im Laufe des Programms stets effektiv ausgenutzt. Die Diplomatische Berufssprachprüfung des Ministeriums für Auswärtiges und Außenhandel wo eine Prüferin/ein Prüfer und eine Diplomatin/ein Diplomat anwesend sind, dient auch als ein gutes Beispiel für die Kooperation zwischen Lehr- und Fachkräften.

Das dargestellte Bildungsprogramm dient als Beispiel auch für die Entscheidungsträger der BBU. Dieses Programm zeigt klar, wie die zwei Welten von Theoretikern und Pragmatikern noch enger zusammengeführt werden können und wie man sich die Vorteile in so einer Kooperation für sich nutzen könnte. Ein guter Ausgangspunkt wäre dabei, das Alumni-Programm intensiver und gezielter auszunutzen, um das aktuelle Knowhow aus erster Hand vom Markt zu holen. Ein System von Mentor:innen auszubauen, die sich regelmäßig um die Studierenden kümmern und sie nach ihrem besten Wissen und Gewissen individuell unterstützen wäre auch erwünscht.

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