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Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies

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The *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies (AJMS)* is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law, Urban Planning, Architecture and Environmental Sciences. Many of the papers published in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored by the [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs \(CEMA\)](#) of the [Athens Institute for Education and Research \(ATINER\)](#). All papers are subject to ATINER's [Publication Ethical Policy and Statement](#).

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The current issue is the third of the ninth volume of the *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies (AJMS)*, published by the [Athens Institute for Education and Research](#).

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER



Athens Institute for Education and Research

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

17th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies

25-28 March 2024, Athens, Greece

The [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc) organizes the 17th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 25-28 March 2024, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Mediterranean Studies, such as history, arts, archaeology, philosophy, culture, sociology, politics, international relations, economics, business, sports, environment and ecology, etc. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2024/FORM-MDT.doc>).

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Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **31 August 2023**
- Submission of Paper: **26 February 2024**

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- Abstract Submission: **14 November 2023**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **20 May 2024**

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Whither Democracy in the Mediterranean Basin

By Gregory T. Papanikos^{*}

Democracy was born in the Mediterranean basin alongside almost all the known political systems that currently exist in the world today. Since antiquity, the qualitative merits of the various political systems have been discussed in such masterpieces as in Herodotus' 'Histories' and Aeschylus' 'The Persians'. And, of course, in Thucydides' 'The Peloponnesian War', which includes Pericles's 'Funeral Oration'; a praise of the Athenian political system. In all these works, the various political systems were compared using qualitative (mostly ethical) criteria. However, the difficulty is to evaluate a democratic political system using a quantitative index. In this paper, I use two well-known indices of democracy (EUI and Freedom House) to evaluate cross country differences on the level and the trend of democracy in the Mediterranean basin. Based on this evidence, two main conclusions emerge. First, substantial differences exist between countries and group of countries in the Mediterranean based on geography. Second, an overall assessment shows that democracy in the Mediterranean basin area is declining.

Keywords: *democracy, Mediterranean Basin, isegoria, isonomy, isocracy, isoteleia, isopoliteia*

Introduction

This paper uses two well-known indices of democracy to evaluate the performance of the Mediterranean basin countries. The *Economist Intelligent Unit* (EIU) publishes an index of democracy based on five composite criteria. Similarly, the *Freedom House* measures democracy using two criteria. This paper uses these two measurements of democracy (a) to look at differences between the geographical block of Mediterranean countries as far as their democratic performance is concerned, and (b) to examine whether democracy is improving or regressing in the entire Mediterranean basin based on data from 2006 to 2022.

This paper is organized into four sections, including this small introduction. The next section proposes a theory of democracy based on five criteria explained in detail in my previous studies, especially my book (Papanikos 2020a): *Isegoria, Isonomy, Isocracy, Isoteleia and Isopoliteia*. The argument made in this section is that the performance of any political system—democratic or non-democratic—very much depends on the equal distribution of education and the virtue of each one of its citizens. In other words, it depends on equal distribution of a minimum level of pedagogy. I call this criterion *isopaideia*.

The third section of this paper presents and discusses the measures of democracy and looks at the trend of democracy in the Mediterranean countries

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during the last two decades. The last section recapitulates my main arguments and summarizes the main findings.

On the Theory of Democracy

Democracy is a mechanism to make decisions when a group of people with common interests convenes to discuss and choose different courses of action. The first such gatherings were made as part of a military expedition; Homer reports a number of such assemblies in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.¹

What differentiates this mechanism from any other mechanism of making decisions is the hypothetical equality of participants. At the level of a political unit (city, state, nation etc.), the most important decision is the adoption of a legal system (rules that govern how people should conduct their affairs) and the selection of leaders responsible to implement (execute) the adopted laws. In a democracy, the most important political entity is the individual who has the unbounded political right to participate.

How can any political system be evaluated? Criteria should be developed. In my previous work, I have proposed five such criteria which are shown here in Figure 1. I have extensively discussed these criteria in many writings, including a short book on democracy.² In this section, I will briefly discuss these five criteria as well as the role of *isopaideia*, i.e., the equal provision of education to all, as these have been demonstrated in Plato's ideal politeia and in many other dialogues. The theory presented here makes democracy a function of *isegoria*, *isonomy*, *isocracy*, *isoteleia* and *isopoliteia*. I will briefly discuss each one of these variables.

Isegoria means more than freedom of expression. The word is a synthesis of equal (ἴσος) and speak (ἀγορεύω) in front of an audience that is assembled to listen and decide on an issue. For the first time, this type of public speaking is mentioned by Homer (Papanikos, 2021a). Of course, freedom of speech (expression) is only a small part of *isegoria*. In a democracy, what is important is the equal right to speak in front of an audience that is willing to listen and then decide. In the ancient Athenian democracy, people will gather in the agora (a place and an institution) which was called the *ecclesia of demos* (the general assembly of all citizens). The process of deliberations will start when the Crix would call upon the members of the assembly with the phrase, "who wants to talk?" (τίς ἀγορεύειν βούλεται;). In modern, so-called advanced democracies, or what *Freedom House* calls *free* countries, the criterion of *isegoria* is not satisfied even though there is freedom of speech. Only a handful of citizens have the right to speak in front of an assembly such as a parliament or congress which is making

¹Homer mentions a number of meetings not only among soldiers who convene to make decisions, but among citizens to be informed by their rulers giving them the opportunity to express their vocal approval or discontent. These meetings happen both in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In Papanikos (2021a), I have identified ten such meetings in Homer's *Odyssey* where participants' opinions were heard after the dissemination of the relevant information by the authority who called the meeting.

²See Papanikos (2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2020a, 2017a, 2016, 2011) and the comments by Meydani (2022) and Petratos (2022).

decisions that affect the lives of all citizens and not only those who participate in the decision-making body.

Isonomy comes from the two Greek words equal (*ἴσος*) and law (*νόμος*).³ It characterizes what it would be called today a “just” society. Democracy is a fair society and all its citizens are equal before the law. In a democracy, the rule of law prevails.⁴ *Isonomy* by itself cannot distinguish between a democracy and a non-democracy. The rule of law may also be a characteristic of a non-democratic political regime such as a monarchy where a king may decide and implement fair laws to all citizens without any exception, which applies to the king himself. In ancient Athens, Pisistratus (600-527 BCE) was an Athenian tyrant who, according to Plutarch, governed by respecting the laws established by Solon (see Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives: Solon*). The latter, one of the seven sages of ancient Greece, was called by all parties of Athens to set up rules and laws that everybody would respect. *Isonomy* is not only unique to democracy but it is quite possible that it is not the best political system to apply it. A monarch like a “philosopher king” may be better suited to apply *isonomy* rather than the democracy system which in many cases can turn into ochlocracy (mob) as discussed below.

Isocracy is the third criterion of democracy. The second word “-cracy” is first mentioned by Homer and appears either as a noun “strong force” (*κραταις*) or as a verb (*κρατέω*) which may be translated as rule, hold power, govern. It means that each citizen has the same opportunity (chance) to hold power. The functional interpretation of the word is really very difficult. How do we apply *isocracy*? Technically, we can say that each citizen has the same probability of holding power as is the case when rulers are chosen by a lottery system. In ancient Athens, there were many offices whose officers were elected by the chance of a lottery system. On the other side of this story is political absenteeism both in voting and in running for office. Citizens are not interested in participating in the political process. This has been explained by many authors since antiquity. In the second half of the 5th century BCE, Pericles, facing a similar problem, paid the Athenian citizens to participate in the deliberations of the *ecclesia of demos*. Of course, citizens in an ideal democracy will be trained to consider as their ultimate duty and honor to participate in the political process. Even in the current imperfect political system, Carrera (2022) makes the argument for developing a participatory political culture through training.

The three criteria discussed so far are pretty well known in the modern discussion of democracy. The last two criteria of *isoteleia* and *isopoliteia* are not considered as part of democracy although are thoroughly discussed in the literature of optimal taxation⁵ and international affairs.

³It might also be interpreted to mean the equal distribution of political power from the Greek verb *νέμω* (distribute).

⁴Igwe (2021a, 2021b) discusses this issue using the case of Nigeria.

⁵One may make the argument that taxes are the true causes of any revolution. The Solonian revolution in the 6th century BCE in Athens had to do with restructuring the tax system as so masterfully is explained by Aristotle in his masterpiece of the *Athenian Politeia*. Similar arguments of the role of taxes can be made for the American and French Revolutions in the latter part of the 18th century.

Isoteleia means equal or fair economic contribution by all citizens and in many cases, non-citizens to public revenue. Equality here means that each contributes according to his wealth and therefore not a blanket amount of taxes. The first such known comprehensive system of taxation was proposed by Solon in the 6th century BCE in Athens. Fair taxation of income and wealth is usually a characteristic of democracy. Additionally, democracy is a very expensive political system and citizens should pay for it. *Isoteleia* implies that each citizen pays according to their ability. This may sound not so equal but it is indeed equality if we consider what is at stake. Rich citizens have much more to lose than poor citizens if democracy is abolished either by a foreign power and/or because of internal strife, as was the case during the years of Solon. As he himself argued in the very few excerpts that survived from his writings, the Solonian taxation system saved the rich because the poor wanted to take the land from the rich through a system of land distribution. Solon rejected this policy and instead formulated an optimal taxation system based on wealth. The level of wealth gave political rights as well which were eventually abolished by Cleisthenes and Pericles until all citizens had the same political rights irrespective of how much taxes they paid. The actual choice was not between taxing or not taxing the wealthy, but between taxing wealth or confiscating it. Even in modern times taxing wealth guarantees this type of *isoteleia* without undermining economic growth (i.e., efficiency and effectiveness) as I have explained in Papanikos (2015).

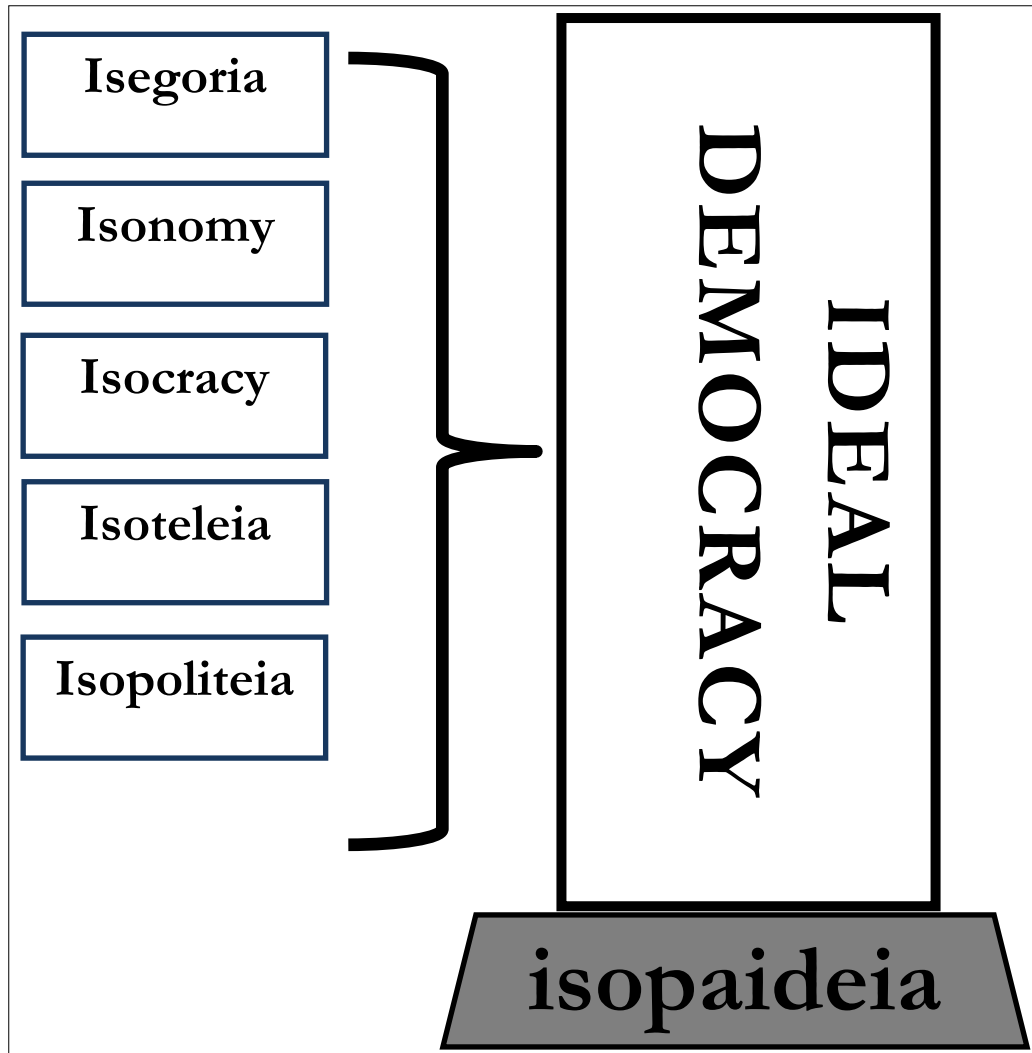
Isopoliteia deals with the relations of a democratic politeia with other independent states. Promoting democracy is only one part of it. Today this is called global democracy. However, it is very difficult to argue on deontological grounds how a democratic state can impose democracy on another state. The only alternative that seems more acceptable from an ethical point of view is to help other countries develop the necessary conditions which will lead to the adoption of a democracy as a political system. One such important condition already mentioned since antiquity is pedagogy, i.e., education with virtue. This important issue is examined next.

Figure 1 summarizes what we have already discussed. A true democracy must fulfill all five criteria. If these five criteria are met, then one may identify this political system as an ideal democracy. The most that modern democratic countries can do is strive to improve their performance in all five criteria of democracy. However, this is not an easy task. The whole foundation of an ideal democracy is based on education on a mass scale. All citizens should be educated.⁶ *Isopaideia* here means equality in education but this cannot be achieved without pain. All youth should be forced to learn; this is the *paideia* part. All youth should learn to behave with virtue; this is the *agoge* part. Both terms give us pedagogy which means education with virtue, or that education should aim at making virtuous citizens, or in ancient Greek, *καλὸς καγαθός*. One argument that was raised in the literature is whether people without

⁶This issue has been extensively discussed in the relevant education and philosophy literature; see for example Verharen (2020). Other studies explore the idea of democratic values in the teaching process see for example Çelik et al. (2022) for Turkey; Coulter and Herman (2020) and Reid (2019) for USA; Parziale and Vatrella (2019) for Europe; Rafapa (2018) for South Africa.

pedagogy should be allowed to be elected to office, or even vote for those who run for office.

Figure 1. *The Five Criteria of an Ideal Democracy*



Taking this argument further, one may argue that what matters in creating an ideal political system is not the mechanism of making decisions but whether those who are making the decisions possess pedagogy. Thus, a political system as a thing in itself does not say anything about whether this society is characterized by eudaimonia or not.

Table 1 demonstrates the above argument. What matters is not the system but who leads the political system. The three well-known systems appear with two faces: the good and the bad.

A democracy can become an ochlocracy, which becomes almost inevitable when there is an economic and social crisis when extreme groups can exploit

the anomaly by disseminating misinformation always leading to intolerance.⁷ Citizens become a mob. If this mob becomes a majority and is democratically elected, then they are “politically” justified to take measures and implement laws that discriminate against the minority of any kind. This has happened many times in history by people who lacked if not only education, definitely lacked virtue.

Similarly, an aristocracy which is the political system in which the best rule can turn into an oligarchy which is usually identified as kleptocracy. Finally, monarchy can turn into a tyranny when the king or even a democratically elected leader becomes a dictator (a tyrant).⁸

Table 1. *Quality of Leadership and Political Systems*

Leadership	Number		
	One	Few	Many
Good	Monarchy	Aristocracy	Democracy
Bad	Tyranny	Oligarchy	Ochlocracy

Thus, to use Pericles’ definition of democracy⁹ in which decisions are taken by the many and not by the few, how many people rule does not guarantee an ideal democratic society. In general, the number of people who rule –one, few, many— is neither necessary nor sufficient to create an ideal society. It seems that without pedagogy that is equally distributed to all citizens, an ideal society is not possible under any arrangement of making collective decisions. To extend this argument further, only citizens with pedagogy can take into consideration the interests of the unborn which are affected by the democratic or non-democratic decisions of the current generation.

The five criteria of democracy as well as the concept of *isopaideia* are difficult to quantify. If everything depends on education and its equal distribution, one may argue that education can be quantified by the number of years in school or other indicators. But education is only one part of *isopaideia*. The other is virtue and this cannot be quantified; at least with the means that we have today.

In any case, the next section uses two well-known indices of democracy and applies them to the countries of the Mediterranean basin to examine differences between countries and groups of countries and trends. These indices do not measure the criteria of democracy as these were developed in this section. I will have more to say on this in the concluding section of this paper.

⁷The dissemination of information as a threat to democracy is examined by Marchetti (2020). See also Obot (2019) for the role of media in the democratic process.

⁸A special case is Brazil; see the analysis of elections in Brazil by de Caria (2022). In general elections with parties is questioned as well; see Fruncillo (2017).

⁹It is well known that in ancient Athens many people were excluded from voting including women. On the role of women during the democracy years in ancient Athens see Gilby (2021). The other group who was excluded were the non-Athenian free men (*περίοικοι*) and of course the slaves.

Measuring Democracy in the Mediterranean Basin

The Mediterranean constitutes an area of many different cultures, languages, political systems, religions, natural resources, etc., making it an interesting area to test various theories including a theory of democracy because of its many different political systems which offer researchers sufficient variations for their analyses.

In a series of papers, I have examined different aspects of the challenges and prospects that countries located in the Mediterranean basin are facing today. I have examined some facets of religious aspects using Hagia Sophia as a case study in Papanikos (2020b). The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine and its impacts on the MENA countries were analyzed in Papanikos (2022d), which is related to military spending and energy security in the area; aspects of both issues were studied in Papanikos (2015) and Papanikos (2017b) respectively. One of the thorny issues in the Mediterranean basin is the Turkish-Cypriot-Greek conflict which has deep historical roots that I have examined in Papanikos (2022e) and Papanikos (2021b), and more generally in Papanikos (2022f, 2021c, 2021d). Another important issue is the relations—especially the economic relations—between the European Union and the non-European countries of the Mediterranean basin. These have been analyzed in Papanikos (2008).

This section presents the data on democracy based on the two indices. Table 2 provides the raw data of the democracy score using the EIU index. The overall score is out of ten and the rank reported in the last column is the world rank. Figure 2 reports the performance of the countries in descending order. According to the EIU index the maximum value of democracy was achieved by France and Spain with 8.07 points followed by Greece with 7.97. Syria (1.4), Libya (2.1) and Sudan (2.5) are at the bottom of the list.

According to the *Freedom House* index of democracy (see Figure 3), the three countries which rank at the bottom of the list are the same as in the EIU index. Sudan, Libya and Syria score very low on the 100-scale index of democracy. At the top of the list, there are differences relative to the previous list but overall one may conclude that the two indices give pretty much the same measurements.

Both indices show considerable differences between the various regions of the Mediterranean as these are depicted in Tables 3 & 4. As shown in Table 2, the countries of the Mediterranean basin are grouped into four types of countries: European Union, Southern Europe, Western Asia and Northern Africa. Tables 3 & 4 paint the same picture. The European countries have, on average, much higher measures of democracy than in the Western Asian and Northern African countries. A t-test (not reported) shows that there is no difference in the mean of the democracy index between the European Union and the Southern European countries, but there is statistically significant difference between the European countries and the Western Asia and Northern African countries. On the other hand, a t-test shows that there is no difference between the Western Asia and Northern African Mediterranean countries. The results are similar if the *Freedom House* index is used.

Table 2. *Democracy in the Mediterranean Basin Countries by Geographical Area*

Country (2022)	Area	Overall score	Rank
Albania	Southern Europe	6.41	64
Algeria	Northern Africa	3.66	113
Bosnia and Hercegovina	Southern Europe	5	97
Croatia	Southern Europe + EU	6.5	59
Cyprus	Western Asia + EU	7.38	37
Egypt	Northern Africa	2.93	131
France	Southern Europe + EU	8.07	22=
Greece	Southern Europe + EU	7.97	25=
Iraq	Western Asia	3.13	124
Israel	Western Asia	7.93	29
Italy	Southern Europe + EU	7.69	34
Jordan	Western Asia	3.17	122=
Lebanon	Western Asia	3.64	115
Libya	Northern Africa	2.06	151
Malta	Southern Europe + EU	7.7	33
Montenegro	Southern Europe	6.45	61=
Morocco	Northern Africa	5.04	95
North Macedonia	Southern Europe	6.1	72
Palestine	Western Asia	3.86	110
Portugal	Southern Europe + EU	7.95	28
Slovenia	Southern Europe + EU	7.75	31
Spain	Southern Europe + EU	8.07	22=
Sudan	Northern Africa	2.47	144
Syria	Western Asia	1.43	163
Tunisia	Northern Africa	5.51	85
Turkey	Western Asia	4.35	103

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/>.

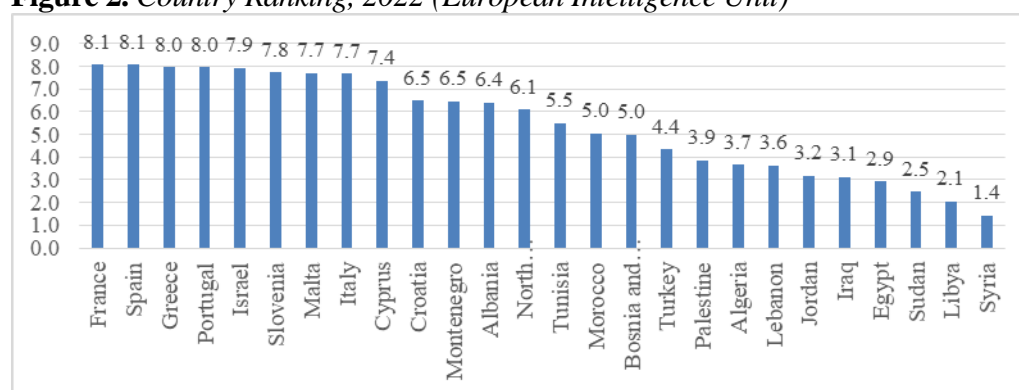
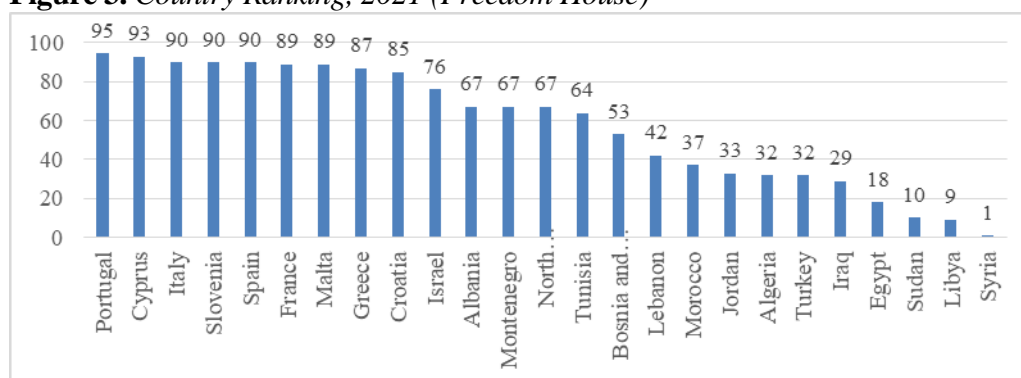
Figure 2. *Country Ranking, 2022 (European Intelligence Unit)*

Figure 3. Country Ranking, 2021 (Freedom House)**Table 3. Summary Statistics, 2022 (European Intelligence Unit)**

Statistic	Total	European Union	Southern Europe	Western Asia	Northern Africa
Average	5.47	7.68	7.14	4.36	3.61
Standard Deviation	2.18	0.49	1.01	2.21	1.40
Maximum	8.07	8.07	8.07	7.93	5.51
Minimum	1.43	6.5	5	1.43	2.06
Number of Countries	26	9	12	8	6

Source: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/>.

Table 4. Summary Statistics, 2021 (Freedom House)

Statistic	Total	European Union	Southern Europe	Western Asia	Northern Africa
Average	57.8	89.78	80.75	43.71	28.33
Standard Deviation	30.9	2.95	13.45	31.00	20.87
Maximum	95	95	95	93	64
Minimum	1	85	53	1	9
Number of Countries	25	9	12	7	6

Source: <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>.

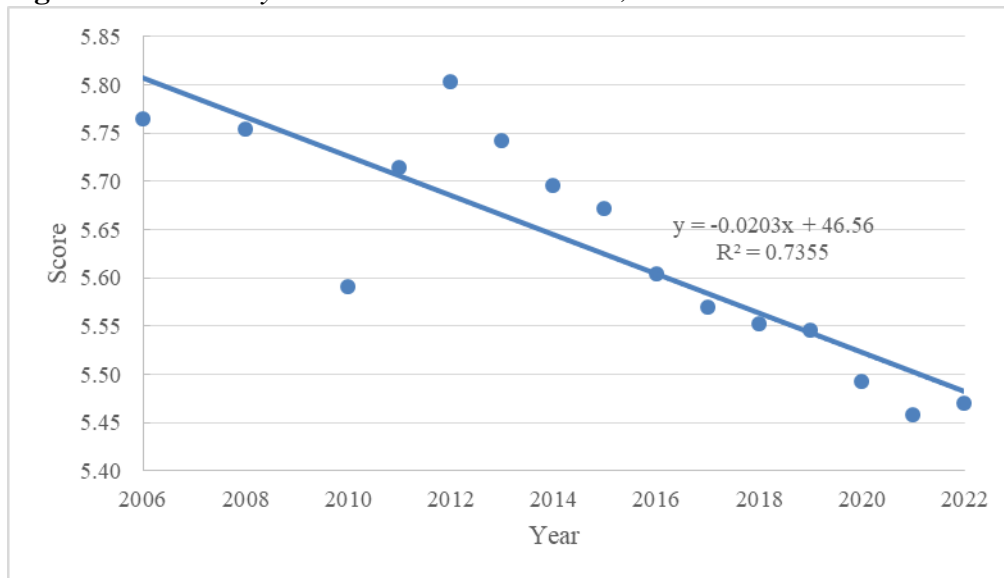
Is democracy declining in the Mediterranean countries? Figure 4 shows that this might be the case. The vertical axis depicts the average democracy score and the horizontal are the years from 2006 to 2022. From 2006 to 2012, the democracy index shows a non-Euclidean decline. The year 2012 marks the maximum value of the democracy index of the entire period (5.8 points). From 2012 until the last data available in 2022, democracy in the Mediterranean is constantly declining.

The EIU democracy index is composed of 60 parameters grouped into five categories of democracy: civil liberties, political culture, political participation, functioning of government, electoral process and pluralism. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of the EIU index in the Mediterranean. The weakest of all is the functioning of government followed by political culture and civil liberties. Stronger are the political participation (5.94) and the electoral process and pluralism (6.07).

The democracy index by *Freedom House* decomposes the index into civil liberties and political rights. Figure 6 shows the performance of democracy

according to these two indexes in the Mediterranean countries. The score of civil liberties is higher with a score of 34.68. The score of the political rights index is 23.12.

Figure 4. *Democracy in the Mediterranean Basin, 2006-2022*

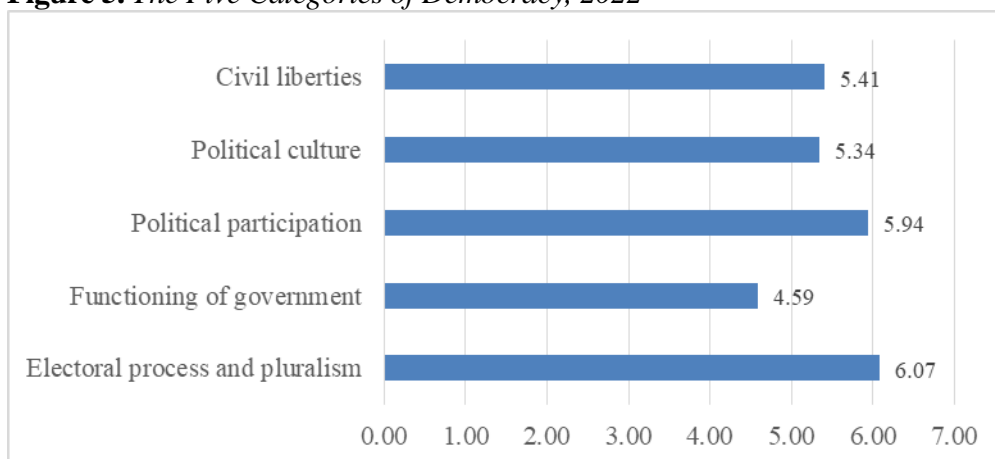


Source: European Intelligence Unit.

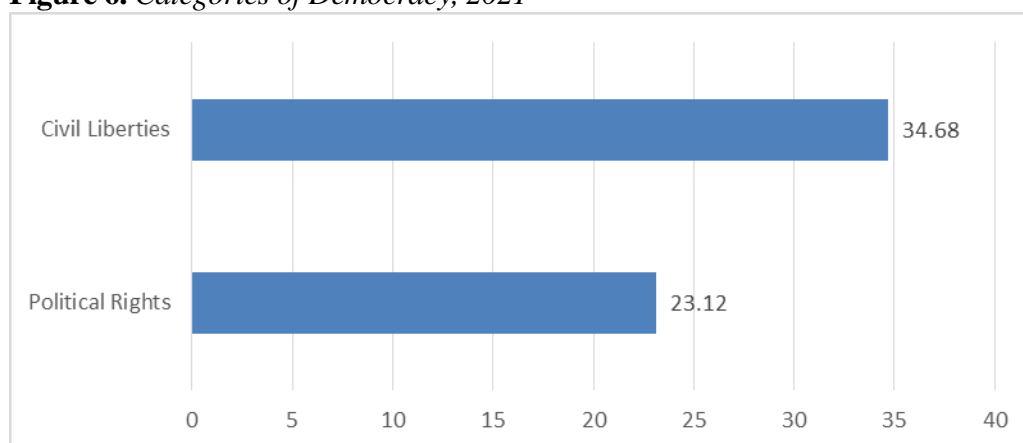
Note: The annual series of the democracy index starts in 2006 but data for 2007 and 2009 are not available.

Based on the democracy index and the scores achieved, the *Freedom House* classifies the countries into three types: free, partly free and not free. Figure 7 shows the number of Mediterranean countries in each category. Ten countries have been categorized as free, eight as not-free and seven as partially free. The raw data per country are given in Table 5.

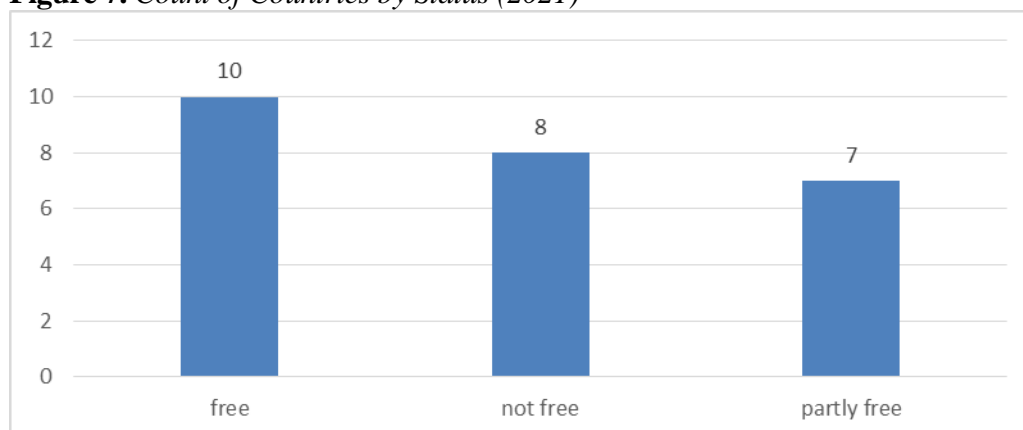
Figure 5. *The Five Categories of Democracy, 2022*



Source: European Intelligence Unit.

Figure 6. *Categories of Democracy, 2021*

Source: Freedom House.

Figure 7. *Count of Countries by Status (2021)*

Source: Freedom House.

Table 5. *Democracy in the Mediterranean Basin and Status*

Country (2021)	Total Score	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Status
Cyprus	93	38	55	free
Israel	76	34	42	free
Croatia	85	36	49	free
France	89	38	51	free
Greece	87	37	50	free
Italy	90	36	54	free
Malta	89	35	54	free
Portugal	95	39	56	free
Slovenia	90	38	52	free
Spain	90	37	53	free
Algeria	32	10	22	not free
Egypt	18	6	12	not free
Libya	9	1	8	not free
Sudan	10	0	10	not free
Iraq	29	16	13	not free
Jordan	33	11	22	not free

Syria	1	-3	4	not free
Turkey	32	16	16	not free
Morocco	37	13	24	partly free
Tunisia	64	26	38	partly free
Lebanon	42	13	29	partly free
Albania	67	28	39	partly free
Bosnia and Hercegovina	53	19	34	partly free
Montenegro	67	26	41	partly free
North Macedonia	67	28	39	partly free

Source: Freedom House.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to study cross-country differences in the Mediterranean basin using two well-known indices of democracy. It also examined the trend of the democracy index from 2006 to 2022. The two main conclusions are: (a) there are large—statistically significant—differences between the European and non-European countries of the Mediterranean basin, and (b) taking the countries of the area as a whole, democracy is declining in the Mediterranean basin.

These observations need further elaborations and country-by-country analyses which went beyond the purpose of this paper. However, one may contrast and challenge these indices of democracy with what was the meaning of democracy in its birthplace, i.e., ancient Athens during its golden age of the latter part of the fifth century BCE. One thing is certain: representative democracy would have been considered a mockery of the democratic process. The two most important differences between democracy and non-democracy are isegoria and isocracy. No country today can claim that it is a democracy because the criteria of isegoria and isocracy are not satisfied; not even by the so-called representative democracies. Even the criterion of isonomy can be better satisfied by non-democratic political systems. The rule of law can be applied more efficiently and effectively by an enlightened despotism rather than by a democracy, either its ancient Athenian version or its modern version of representative democracy.

After all, the ideal politeia suggested by Plato is one version of a political system of monarchy where the monarch (king) was a philosopher. This brings the discussion to education and virtue, i.e., to pedagogy. One may claim that if all people acquire pedagogy (education + virtue), then any political system is as good as any other. A monarch with education and virtue will make decisions and implement them which will not be any different from a system where the many rule as Pericles so profoundly defined Athenian democracy.

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Risk and Opportunity: Italy in the Troubled Mediterranean during the 1970s¹

By Mariele Merlati & Daniela Vignati[±]*

During the Seventies, in the stormy Mediterranean theatre, many events endangered NATO's positions all along the Southern flank and threatened to jeopardize the stability in Europe and thus the Détente itself. In this scenario, Italy played a dual role. On the one hand it contributed to increasing the risks of instability with its own internal instability. During the so-called Years of Lead, Italy was affected by social turbulence, political terrorism, and violence, while at the same time going through economic decline and skyrocketing inflation. In the meantime, a sharp increase of votes for the Italian Communist Party (PCI) ignited fears that the PCI might be close to taking power, thus being able to further weaken the Atlantic Alliance by pushing Italy out of it. On the other hand, Italy was pivotal in serving the interests of the Alliance in the Mediterranean, avoiding an alteration of the military balance in Southern Europe by keeping Malta from shifting towards the Soviet Union. The Italian-Maltese agreement signed in August 1980 was the climax of this process. In addition to literature, this paper relies on documents, both edited (Foreign Relations of the United States) and unedited (held by The National Archives in London, the NARA II in Washington D.C., the Gerald Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor, the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, and the National Archives in Rabat, Malta).

Keywords: *Italy, NATO, Mediterranean, Malta, United States, Cold War; Communist Question*

Introduction

During the Seventies of the XX Century, the Mediterranean area was in turmoil, due to the numerous events occurring at the time: the Cypriot crisis between Greece and Turkey and the strains it caused inside the Atlantic Alliance; the end of dictatorships in Greece, Portugal and Spain which seemed to give way to instability; the sinister presence of the Soviet fleet; the decision taken by the Greek Government to leave the NATO military command; the ambiguous position of the Maltese Prime Minister Dom Mintoff, swinging between NATO, USSR and Libya; the US withdrawal from the Wheelus base in Libya after the coup led by Muammar Qadhafi. Not only were these events seriously endangering NATO's positions all along the Southern flank; they were also threatening the balance in

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¹ The first part of this paper was written by Daniela Vignati and the second part was written by Mariele Merlati; Introduction and Conclusions are by both of them.

Europe and thus the Détente itself, which was founded on a mutual, if tacit, interest in preserving the status quo between the two blocs in the Continent.²

The paper investigates the role played in such scenario by Italy.

Since the early days of the Cold War, Italy's stance in the Western bloc had been marked by a blatant duality. On the one hand, Italy took an active part in building up the Atlantic Alliance: after adhering to it in 1949, Italy contributed to its strengthening by hosting US military bases, facilities and even missiles when needed. On the other hand, Italy had been kept under strict scrutiny by its own allies – the United States above all – because of its political domestic scene. The influence enjoyed by the local communist party (PCI in the Italian acronym, Partito Comunista Italiano) and the large appeal it exerted on the electorate raised doubts about the reliability of the continuing Italian participation in the Western defensive system in the long run.

The present essay explores how such typical dual nature was still a feature of Italian posture inside the Western bloc in a time of increasing turbulence in NATO's Southern flank such as the Seventies were. It therefore investigates both the "communist problem" as seen from Washington, focusing on the crucial turning point of the biennium 1974-1976, and the service Italy provided to the Atlantic Alliance in the Mediterranean at the same time, focusing on the pivotal role Italy played in avoiding an alteration of the military balance in Southern Europe by keeping Malta from shifting towards the Soviet Union and Libya.

The US' preoccupations with the Italian communist problem have long been considered – albeit non extensively – by literature. Framing such preoccupations inside the logic of the Cold War, historians have devoted growing attention to the way subsequent American Administrations dealt with it in the late Forties and with the gradual tilt towards the left of the Italian political system in the early Sixties: James E. Miller somehow paved the way by exploring how Truman and his advisers responded to the risk that the first democratic elections held in Italy in 1948 might result in the victory for the PCI – which in turn would have dramatically altered the borders between East and West placing Italy on the other side of the Iron Curtain (Miller 1983);³ other historians (mostly Italian) have further widened the knowledge on the topic, either by taking into account other governments' point of view (Varsori 1982, Bernardini 2010, 2011a, 2011b), or by analysing the US' gradual coming to terms with the prospective that the co-optation of the socialists into Italian cabinets could be the best way to contain the communists (Gentiloni Silveri 1998, Nuti 1999). More recently, as archival records were becoming available,⁴ scholars have come to research the troubled Seventies and the firm opposition raised in the US government by the PCI's quest for power. And yet, historiography has so far largely overlooked the debate about the Italian situation during the Ford Administration's years and only few studies

²See on the issue: Varsori (2009), Pedaliu (2009), Del Pero et al. (2010).

³From the same author see also: Miller (1986).

⁴An exception worth mentioning is the study published in 1991 by the Italian journalist Claudio Gatti. While not based on primary sources, it relies on interviews conducted with former officers of the US government and its ramifications. It provides an extremely acute account of the US's policy towards Italy during the Cold War years by uncovering details that have often been corroborated by documents later available. See Gatti (1991).

encompass – albeit sporadically – the period taken into consideration in this essay (Gentiloni Silveri 2009, Cominelli 2014, Heurtebize 2014, Guarna 2015, Ambrogetti 2016, Vignati 2019).⁵ As regards the Mediterranean in the 1970s and the Italian Mediterranean policy, the issue has attracted the attention of an increasing number of Italian historians in the last decades.⁶ Regarding specifically the Maltese issue, anyway, really few are the historical publications on the topic. Among them, it is worth mentioning here the recent book written by Gaetano La Nave, which analyses in depth Italian-Maltese relations from the Second World War to the Seventies and the contributions regarding the Italian-Maltese-Libyan triangle at the end of that decade, recently published by one of the two authors of the present essay (Merlati 2020, 2017).

Literature has therefore analysed separately the two sides of Italian dual stance in the Atlantic Alliance; the attempt is here to put them together, suggesting the hypothesis that the internal fluctuating political scene, the uncertainty determined by the communist question and the overall weakness Italy was projecting throughout the Seventies did not prevent it from effectively contributing to the defence of NATO's position in the Mediterranean area.

More than literature, the main source of the analysis is the original documentation available, both edited and not. The authors' research has been in fact conducted during several years, at The National Archives in London, at the NARA II in Washington D.C., at the Gerald Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor, at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta, at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome and at the National Archives in Rabat (Malta).

Shadows of 1948: The United States and the Communist Problem in Italy on the Eve of 1976 Elections

Since the very beginning of the Cold War, Italy has represented a major source of concern for the United States and its soon-to-be-allies. Besides the obvious circumstances imposed by geography (Italy being situated along the Iron Curtain and bordering with Yugoslavia), it was Italy's peculiar political landscape to elicit such worries. More specifically, it was the vast popularity enjoyed by the local communist party, the strongest of the whole Western world.

Having catalysed during the Second World War a large component of the resistance movement against the nazi-fascism and then given a significant contribution to the founding of the new Republic, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) established itself as one of the main protagonists of the domestic political scene once the democratic system had been formed. After sealing an alliance with the Italian Socialist Party in late 1940s, the PCI ascended to become a major rival

⁵For a comprehensive and updated examination of the international projection of the Italian communist problem and of the interplay between foreign policy and the internal dimension see: Del Pero and Romero (2018), Pons (2018), Varsori (2022).

⁶Historiography on the Mediterranean policy of Italy also comprehends research studies on the issue of Italy and the Middle East (see, among others: L. Monzali and Soave (2021), Caviglia and Cricco (2006). Regarding specifically the Mediterranean, see in particular: Calandri et al. (2012), Di Nolfo (2010), De Leonardis (2003), Bosco (2009).

to the moderate Christian Democratic Party (Democrazia Cristiana, DC), strong enough to quest for power.

It was not coincidental that the Truman Administration devoted considerable attention to Italy on the eve of the first democratic elections that took place in April 1948; nor it was that, as historiography has thoroughly shown, the first meeting of the newly created NSC was convened to discuss the Italian situation and to define a strategy to contrast the advent of a communist-led government (Miller 1983).

The victory eventually obtained by the DC and the moderate parties at the 1948 elections did not put an end to the communist problem in Italy, as over the following decades the PCI managed to increase its popularity. The decision made by the socialist party at the beginning of the Sixties to embrace Atlantism and Europeanism in order to be admitted joining the government, left the PCI in a privileged position where it could take full advantage of its role as leader of the opposition. In times of turmoil, being the sole party – among those that had fought the nazi-fascism – that could claim to have steadily remained far from responsibilities of government certainly paid off. At the same time, having proved to be capable and efficient when confronted with the task of governing (something that happened locally, in the administration of some of the most important cities of the country, and usually in coalition with the socialists) only made the PCI grow stronger.

As Italy entered the “Long Seventies” torn between terrorism and an eroding support for the mildly reformist policies of the centre-left governments, whilst Détente was unfolding and the US and USSR intensified their dialogue, the communist problem in the country was still upsetting the United States.

The incertitude that dominated Southern Europe and North Africa would cast a long shadow on it, but the alarm in Washington (as well as in London, Paris or Bonn) was due to the events that shook Italian domestic politics in the early Seventies: in 1973, in response to the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile, the PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer proposed the so-called historic compromise, a political alliance between the PCI and the DC that in his vision was the only way the communists could expect to attain power in a Western country; in 1974, a referendum on the divisive issue of divorce revealed that the DC had lost its connection with a relevant section of the Italian society; a year later, the regional elections held for the second time in the Republic’s history gave the PCI an astounding 33% of votes. When President Leone decided to dissolve the Parliament and convene the general elections for the late spring of 1976, the alarm reached its peak. It was January 1976, and the prospective of a communist-participated government, as a result of a communist victory at the elections, seemed far from unrealistic. In the following months, the 1976 elections scheduled for June were frequently compared to those held in 1948, as observers tended to consider them equally critical (Cominelli 2014, p. 208).

How the Ford Administration dealt with the communist problem on the eve of the 1976 elections is the question at the core of this first section of the essay. Literature and records held by the National Archives and Records Administration and by the Ford Presidential Library, combined with those released by the CIA

and the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, are of inestimable help in formulating an answer to that question.

Two aspects emerging from primary sources stand out.

The first one has to do with the nature of the threat represented by the PCI in the eyes of the US; in other words, with the way the PCI was perceived at the highest levels of the Administration. In this regard, records show unmistakably that the convictions held by the Secretary of State Henry Kissinger did not enjoy unanimous support inside either the CIA, the National Security Council or the State Department itself. It is a well-known fact that Kissinger made it clear more than once that the United States would not welcome the PCI inclusion into the Italian government. If such event had ever occurred, the United States would have been forced to readjust its policy towards Italy and Europe, even to the point of reconsidering its own commitment to NATO.⁷

Kissinger warnings, conveyed via both public and confidential channels, rested first and foremost upon his – alleged? – preoccupations with the destiny of Italian democracy. To those who might have pointed out that the PCI had fully accepted democracy and its procedures, Kissinger usually responded with what looks like a paradox: the PCI was way more dangerous, not *in spite of* its commitments to democracy, but just *because of* them. Being commonly accepted as a party bound to respect the democratic process only made the PCI more likely to gain respectability and votes among a larger part of Italian society, that would have been repulsed by a self-proclaimed antidemocratic party devoted to building a soviet-like regime.⁸ In one occasion, Kissinger admitted that his “colleagues at Harvard” – meaning scholars and intellectuals – had come to the conclusion that the PCI should be “promoted”. “I haven’t yet reached that stage of objectivity” – he promptly added.⁹ Another Kissinger’s favourite objection was that not a single communist leader in the countries of Eastern Europe had ever said in the aftermath of the Second World War anything different from what the Italian communist were saying in the Seventies.¹⁰

Given Kissinger’s pivotal role inside the US Administration, there was no chance that any different – cooler – assessment could prevail. Still, this did not

⁷For the content of Kissinger’s declarations and the reaction they raised in Europe, see for instance: Anonymous (1975), Lewis (1975), Shuster (1976).

⁸During a meeting with the Italian President Giovanni Leone in September 1974 Kissinger stated: “frankly we are more worried about a responsible than an irresponsible Communist party, because if they appear responsible they will be a bigger threat to democracy in the long run”. See memorandum of conversation, H. Kissinger, G. Ford and G. Leone, 25 September 1974. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2021). Speaking with the leader of the Portuguese Socialist leader Mário Soares, he reasoned: “luckily, the Portuguese communists did not have a leader like that of the Italian communists, or your position would have been much more difficult”. See memorandum of conversation, H. Kissinger, H. Sonnenfeldt, M. Soares and others, 26 January 1976. Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State (hereafter RG 59), Office of the Counselor (Helmut Sonnenfeldt), Country and Subject Files, 1973–1976, box 7, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA).

⁹Memorandum of conversation, H. Kissinger, J. den Uyl (Netherlands Prime Minister) and M. van der Stoep (Netherlands Minister of Foreign Affairs), 11 August 1976. RG 59, Records of H. Kissinger, 1973–1977, box 17, NARA.

¹⁰Ibid.

stop other officers from expressing their views. Both the CIA in its vast majority (with the significant exceptions of the deputy director Vernon Walters and the agents operating in Rome)¹¹ and the Policy Planning Staff were inclined to be less pessimistic. After all – they were reasoning – the PCI had participated in the founding of the democratic Republic and, especially after 1968, had showed a substantial amount of autonomy from Moscow. Under the guide of its young leader Enrico Berlinguer it had embraced a political platform that could easily be viewed as social-democratic by Western standards. Communists were unanimously considered competent administrators on a local level; on a national level, PCI leaders were often involved in behind-the-scenes consultations with members of the government regarding delicate economic and financial issues. The analogy between Italy in the Seventies and Eastern Europe on the eve of the sovietisation that Kissinger loved to evoke was simply nonsense, since it clearly disregarded the fact that Italy was not occupied by the Red Army as the Eastern countries had been after the war.¹²

Despite the distance between Kissinger's gloomy vision and the more nuanced conclusions reached by other officers, there was still a common ground in their analyses: it was the shared fear that an actual communists' participation in the Italian government could weaken NATO. Even those who rejected the idea of the Italian communists as mere soviet puppets, and acknowledged the wide autonomy the PCI displayed in relations with Moscow, conceded that its success in getting back to power could affect Italy's participation in the alliance. The least it could be expected was that the PCI would question the need for Italy to do its part in the burden sharing the US were advocating inside the Atlantic Alliance; others feared a more assertive policy that could lead Italy to reconsider the permanence of US troops, bases and facilities over the Italian soil; according to some CIA experts and part of the Armed Forces, it was even plausible that the Italian communists – if ever included in government – would start lobbying for the Italian withdrawn from NATO.¹³

Kissinger for his part tended to be more caustic, as he was when he gathered with Italian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs while they all were in Helsinki to participate in the ceremony for the signing of the Final Act in August 1975: "we don't care if [the Italian communists] sign onto NATO in blood.

¹¹Letter from V. Walters (Deputy Director, CIA) for G. H. Bush (Director), 2 June 1976. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/>; Gatti (1991), 141.

¹²Prospects for and Consequences of Increased Communist Influence in Italian Politics, National Intelligence Estimate 24-1-74, 18 July 1974. U.S. Declassified Documents, Thomas Gale Group; Authoritarianism and Militarism in Southern Europe, CIA Research Study, March 1975. Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/>; The Communist Party of Italy: An Analysis and Some Prediction, CIA Research Study, June 1975. U.S. Declassified Documents, Thomas Gale Group; Report by J. Walker of the Policy Planning Staff, If the Communists Come in, 6 April 1976. RG 59, Records of H. Kissinger, 1973–1977, box 19, NARA.

¹³Prospects for and Consequences of Increased Communist Influence in Italian Politics, cit.; If the Communists Come in, cit.; NSSM 242–US Policy toward Italy. National Security Council Institutional Files, box 44, Gerald Ford Presidential Library.

Having the communists in the Government of Italy would be completely incompatible with continued membership in the Alliance".¹⁴

Another side of the problem, however leading to the same conclusion that the PCI participation in Italian government would be detrimental for NATO and the US, was taken into consideration by the Counselor of the Department of State Helmut Sonnenfeldt. It did not matter how far the Italian communists had gone in their search for autonomy from the USSR; it did not matter how deeply Moscow's resented the PCI and its stance towards the Breznev Doctrine or Soviet dissidents. Once a Communist Party had ever taken power in a Western country that was part of NATO, that fact *per se* would have altered the delicate balance established in Europe between East and West, and thus disrupted Détente and jeopardized the core of US' interests.¹⁵

Against such dark background, the second interesting aspect of the US policy towards Italy emerging from records concerns the initiatives envisioned and undertaken in order to prevent the Italian communists from entering the national cabinet.

The leverages available to the scope, and in general to influence the Italian political scene, were diligently assessed by the Ambassador to Rome John Volpe in a telegram he sent in August 1975 to the Assistant Secretary of State Arthur Hartman. Firmly convinced that the United States should take action, he emphasized the importance of reinforcing the Italian Christian-democrats, the socialists and the moderate parties that represented the only viable alternative to the communists.¹⁶

The most vexed and controversial among the measures suggested by the Ambassador was the need to provide friendly parties with financial support. Here overt actions met covert action. It is widely known that the US had carried out a covert program of financial aid in favour of the anti-communist forces from the early stages of the Cold War until the late Sixties, when the Johnson Administration cut it off. It is also very well documented that the financial support was resumed – and extended in its scope – in the early Seventies due to the pressing of the then US Ambassador in Rome Graham Martin.¹⁷

What was unknown until recently, and has only been revealed by newly released documents, is that following the shock caused by the outcome of the regional elections in 1975 a new covert action program was launched. In its original formulation, the program was estimated to cost \$4.87 million and was

¹⁴Memorandum of conversation, H. Kissinger, G. Ford, A. Moro (Italian Prime Minister), M. Rumor (Italian Foreign Minister) and others, 1st August 1975. RG 59, Records of H. Kissinger, 1973–1977, box 12, NARA.

¹⁵Letter from H. Sonnenfeldt for H. Kissinger, 12 January 1976. RG 59, Office of the Counselor (H. Sonnenfeldt), Country and Subject Files, 1973–1976, box 4, NARA.

¹⁶Telegram from J. Volpe for A. Hartman (Assistant Secretary of State), 22 August 1975. National Security Adviser Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, box 9, Gerald Ford Presidential Library.

¹⁷As historiography has abundantly shown, Martin obtained almost total autonomy in handling the funds made available by the US government, and he handed part of them to Vito Miceli of the Italian secret service, someone who was known to be near the neofascists of the MSI. See for all: Guarna (2015), pp. 262–264.

aimed at “support[ing] the democratic parties”, “increase[ing] contact and support for non-political Italian groups and individuals including media, government, business, professional, farming and labor”, at seeking the support of Western Europe to US objective and at “denigrat[ing] the Italian Communist Party”.¹⁸ Both in its goals and its means, it was therefore consistent with what Volpe had suggested and with similar programs previously implemented in Italy.

President Ford approved the proposed program on December 1975, but its application had to be almost immediately suspended in January 1976. The Committee of the House of Representatives chaired by Otis G. Pike was just concluding its inquiry about the intelligence activities. The final report it produced would not be officially released (it would be later published in the UK) (CIA 1977), but large extracts from it were leaked to the press. The public outcry caused by the information it contained about Martin’s covert aid to Italians prompted the Administration to set the new program aside.¹⁹

In May, however, as the negative publicity seemed to fade and the fateful 1976 elections approached, President Ford himself directed that the program be reconsidered. He later approved a scaled-down covert action program that had been worked out by the CIA and discussed (albeit not unanimously supported) by all the offices involved. Due to the constraints imposed by the imminence of the elections, the revised new program had a limited purpose, being intended to only “influenc[e] a small percentage of the voters to decrease the total PCI vote by 1% to 3%”. Still, it represented a remarkable departure in the US policy towards the Italian communist problem. Contrary to what had been done in the past, it did not provide any financial support to Italian political forces. It rather consisted in a massive, unprecedented operation of propaganda, deception, and fabricated stories that the US intelligence was supposed to orchestrate in order to discredit the PCI.²⁰

Meanwhile, the core of the debate inside the US Administration had been shifted from “what to do to keep the communists out of Government” to “what to do in case we fail and the communists come in”. Such process was set in motion by the NSSM 242 whereby in May 1976 President Ford “directed a priority review of U.S. policy toward Italy in the near-term”, that should “consider U.S. policy and options [...] in the event that national elections in Italy result in the participation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in the Italian government”.²¹

The review requested by President Ford turned out to be useless, as the outcome of the elections finally held in June kept the doors of the Italian cabinet locked for the communists. This suited the US government, that just few days after

¹⁸Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford, 29 November 1975, in (2021) *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, 360.

¹⁹Memorandum prepared for the 40 Committee, 2 February 1976, in (2021) *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, 362.

²⁰Memorandum from the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford, 22 May 1976, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, 370. The program had received full or mild support from the CIA and the Department of State, whilst the General Attorney, the Defence Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Operation Advisory Group expressed many reserves, mainly due to concerns related to the risks of new leaks.

²¹National Security Study Memorandum 242. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2021), 367.

the ballots were closed joined its main partners at the G7 meeting of Puerto Rico. There, the US and its Western allies agreed to make any financial aid to Italy contingent upon the communists' exclusion from the next Italian government (Varsori 2008). The communists would in fact remain outside the cabinet, although they abstained from voting against it and even joined the parliamentary majority in 1978. By then, the new US Administration led by President Jimmy Carter had chosen a path that avoided any form of interference in Italian domestic situation, while at the same time reiterating the US government's preference for any solution that would have kept the communists out of power (Njølstad 2002). The way to neutralize the communist problem in Italy was eventually found by the Italians themselves. From 1976 to 1979 the Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti engaged Berlinguer's party in an exhausting cooperation with the government that was certainly crucial in substantially decreasing the support it had previously enjoyed. Meanwhile, the newly elected leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi, resurrected the centre-left formula as an alternative to the historic compromise by breaking all his party's ties with the communists and by relaunching the alliance with the christian-democrats (Varsori and Acquaviva 2022). Finally, in 1979 Andreotti jumped at the chances offered by the evolving international scene to push the PCI back to the opposition, by adhering to both the European Monetary System and to the so-called NATO's "double-track decision". Such choices were too much for the Italian communists to accept, so they had no chance but to break their cooperation with christian-democrats and put the historic compromise to rest.

The Italian "Mediterranean Role" and the 1980 Agreement with Malta

If Italian internal instability in the Seventies and the consequent risk of the PCI taking power were reasons for great concern between the Western allies, completely different considerations should be made in relation to the bigger picture of Italy's role in the Mediterranean in the framework of the Atlantic Alliance.

A useful starting point for an analysis of this issue could be a Report dedicated to the Italian Mediterranean policy by Ronald Arculus, British Ambassador to Rome from 1979 to 1982. In his 1981 Report to the Foreign Office, significantly entitled "Italy and the Mediterranean", the UK Ambassador emphasized the role Italy was playing in the Mediterranean at that time and in the opinion of the Ambassador, Italian policy towards Malta with the agreement signed by Italy and Malta in August 1980 best exemplified the priority of the Italian Mediterranean policy as well as the useful contribution it could provide to Western interests in the area.²²

The long path of the Italian Maltese relations during the Seventies, concluding in the 1980 agreement, will be then the focus of this second section of the essay aimed to better explore the Italian Mediterranean policy and its contribution to the Western security system.

²²R. Arculus (British Embassy, Rome) to Lord Carrington, *Report Italy and the Mediterranean*, 18 June 1981. FCO 9/3210, The National Archives of the UK.

Part of the British Empire since 1814, the island of Malta gained independence in 1964. However British troops' stay in the island did not stop then. It is worth recalling Simon C. Smith's words in the review *Contemporary British History*: "There is growing recognition that the end of formal empire did not equate with the ending of ties between the imperial power and its erstwhile dependencies [...]. Indeed, while September 1964 marked the constitutional separation of Britain and Malta, there remained strong residual links in the military, strategic, economic, and financial spheres that persisted beyond formal independence" (Smith 2022).

In the same year of 1964, in fact, London and La Valletta signed the Mutual Defence and Assistance Agreement which allowed British forces to stay in Malta for the following ten years and provided for the amount of 50 million pounds in economic assistance to the island for the same period.

It was the labour party leader Dom Mintoff, elected Prime Minister in 1971, who decided to renegotiate that agreement in the framework of his increasing distancing from the West and the Atlantic Alliance, which was the distinctive feature of his foreign policy since the moment he won the election. It should be borne in mind that two of his most clamorous earlier decisions aimed to carve out for Malta a more independent space between the two blocs: Dom Mintoff denied requests for Sixth Fleet visits, vetoing the use of port facilities²³ and immediately after the election expelled from Malta Italian Commander Gino Birindelli, Commander of the NATO naval base on the island, declaring him *persona non grata*.²⁴

As inevitable, Dom Mintoff's political stance caused a lot of concern among the Western allies, first of all in the United States. Behind his stated neutral position, in fact, it was impossible not to recognise the great danger of Soviet (and Libyan) expansion in the area. For the Western allies it seemed then to be compelling to prevent Moscow from acquiring air and naval bases, as well as facilities on the island, a crucial Mediterranean crossroads.²⁵

"With no more British presence on Malta – the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson said to Henry Kissinger at the Senior Review Group Meeting of October 5, 1971 – Mintoff could turn to Libya or the Soviet Union. He may have gotten money from Qadhafi [...]" Kissinger's reply is crystal clear: "I would like to make a couple of observations. First, we obviously have a significant interest in Malta. Second, we want to keep the Soviets out [...]. Third, we are not willing to let Libya come in if this can be prevented at a manageable cost".²⁶

It was in this framework that at the end of 1971 a deep crisis in Anglo-Maltese relations took place, following Dom Mintoff's election; the crisis was determined by the different perspectives the governments in London and in La Valletta had on the terms of the renegotiation of the Mutual Defence and

²³Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Malta, 29 June 1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2012), 228.

²⁴Malta espelle Birindelli, Riunita la Nato a Bruxelles, *Corriere della Sera*, 26 June 1971.

²⁵See for example, National Security Study Memorandum 135, 17 July 1971. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2012), 229; Response to National Security Study Memorandum 135, 3 August 1971. Ibid., doc. 232.

²⁶Minutes of a Senior Review Group Meeting, 5 October 1971. Ibid., doc. 236.

Assistance agreement – particularly regarding its economic terms – and was destined to have significant consequences for the entire Atlantic Alliance. The Italian government made a decisive contribution as mediator between the two sides. The Italian mediation in 1972 could be considered an early sign of the more important role the Italian government would play in that Mediterranean theatre at the end of the Seventies and the beginning of the Eighties.²⁷

On February 12, 1972, the Italian Prime Minister Emilio Colombo sent a long letter to President Richard Nixon, observing how dangerous a break in the Anglo Maltese negotiations could be, as it could offer the Soviet Union the chance to increase its presence in the Mediterranean Sea: “As representatives of Countries aware of their responsibilities for maintaining the balance of power and influence in the Mediterranean Sea [...], we must be aware of the necessity not to worsen the actual yet thorny situation [...]. Well knowing the importance of maintaining Malta’s loyalty to the West, I think we must make one more effort to avoid a break that could produce more onerous financial obligations” (Bosco 2009, p. 278).²⁸

Rome was the city where, between January and March 1972, many meetings between the UK Defence Secretary Lord Carrington, Dom Mintoff and the NATO General Secretary Joseph Luns took place, in the presence of the Italian Foreign Minister Aldo Moro. On each occasion, leaving Italy, Dom Mintoff stated his appreciation of the Italian mediation. The Italian Ambassador to London, Raimondo Manzini, also played an important role in the whole negotiation process, as emerges from the Italian and the American diplomatic documents.²⁹ Enrico Serra, one of the main analysts of the issue of Italian diplomacy in an historical perspective dedicated many pages to the important role of mediator Raimondo Manzini played (Serra 2001, p. 91).

Also thanks to Italian mediation, after nine months of negotiations, the United Kingdom and Malta signed a 7-year agreement in London on March 26, 1972, allowing for the United Kingdom’s continued use of military facilities in Malta in exchange for a yearly payment. Italy and other Atlantic Alliance countries contributed with a one-off payment. Malta agreed that neither Soviet nor Warsaw Pact forces would be allowed to establish bases on Malta or use its military facilities.

The second half of the 1970s opened a new period in Malta’s foreign policy giving one more chance for an incisive Italian role in that crucial Mediterranean area.

In 1976 Dom Mintoff decided that after the British retreat in 1979 Malta would take a neutral stance in international politics and he asked for international assistance to ensure that neutrality. Italy had then the chance to replace London as

²⁷On the issue of Italian-Maltese relations during the Cold War see the recent book of La Nave (2022).

²⁸See also references to the letter in Memorandum From H. Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig), 23 February 1972. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2012), 246.

²⁹See the meetings of 14-15 and 19-21 January, 7-8 February and 8-9 March. 1972. *Testi e documenti sulla politica estera dell’Italia*. Roma: Ministero degli Affari Esteri (<https://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/biblioteca/testiDocumenti/4>). See also Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom, 14 January 1972. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976* (2012), 244.

Malta's protector and so exercise what the Italian Ambassador and historian Sergio Romano defined as a "Western proxy" (Romano 2002, p. 199).

From 1976 to 1980, all the main actors of Italian foreign policy – Moro, Andreotti, Forlani, Rumor, Cossiga, Colombo – were engaged in negotiating and defining a Maltese neutrality policy with Dom Mintoff. From the reading of the MAE documentation we know it was a really demanding process, requiring "perseverance"³⁰ and at times "tedious and frustrating".³¹

The EEC delegated Italy and France to examine the issues connected with the Maltese neutrality project. As emerged from primary sources and from the invaluable testimony of Edgar Mizzi, a main actor of Maltese Foreign Policy³², the negotiations had a dual aim: on the one hand, a multilateral assurance of Maltese neutrality by Italy, France and also Libya and Algeria that could give Malta a stronger stability in the framework of the Cold War; on the other hand, a project of multilateral economic assistance to help Malta after the British retreat. In this case the project would also involve Germany. The economic aspect of the negotiations was the most important for Dom Mintoff who demanded an enormous amount of financial assistance as a prerequisite for any other agreement.³³

It was a difficult process, characterized by many stops and starts. At every stall Dom Mintoff's more or less veiled threat was always the same: that of leaving the European negotiations and putting Malta in Libyan hands.

Italian negotiators defined Dom Mintoff's approach to deal making as "policy of blackmail"³⁴, "policy of usury"³⁵ and "strategy of sending messages"³⁶. This approach is an undisputed element of continuity from 1976 to 1980. We can repeatedly see the threat of becoming closer to Libya in Dom Mintoff's letters to Andreotti in 1977³⁷, to Carter in 1978³⁸, as well as in his words of September 1978 when in Strasburg he offended the European negotiators, accusing them of "arrogance" and "lethargy".³⁹

In 1980, after four years of negotiations, it seemed impossible to reach the multilateral agreement France and Italy had sought. So, in spring 1980 bilateral negotiations between Italy and Malta alone accelerated. This opened the path to the bilateral agreement Italy and Malta signed in La Valletta on August 2, 1980,

³⁰MAE note, no date, Il governo italiano per Malta post '79. Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS).

³¹Letter n. 2562, Ambassador E. Da Rin to A. Forlani, 5 August 1978. Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, ACS.

³²E. Mizzi was Attorney General. See Mizzi (1995).

³³MAE note no date, Il governo italiano per Malta post '79, cit.

³⁴MAE note, 12 September 1977. Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, ACS.

³⁵Letter n. 2562, Ambassador E. Da Rin to A. Forlani, 5 August 1978, cit.

³⁶MAE telegram n. 790224/0169 from Malta (La Marte) to Rome, 24 February. Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, ACS.

³⁷Letter from D. Mintoff to G. Andreotti, 8 September 1977 and letter from D. Mintoff to G. Andreotti, 14 June 1978. Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, ACS.

³⁸Letter to D. Mintoff to J. Carter, 18 April 1978, in telegram to La Valletta Embassy, 22 April 1978. NLC-16-101-6-22-2 CREST SYSTEM, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

³⁹MAE telegram n. 56499, Consiglio d'Europa- Discorso Mintoff ad Assemblea Consultiva, 28 September 1978, *Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio*, Malta, ACS.

under which Italy alone would assure Malta's neutrality with an additional protocol that provided direct economic assistance.

Turning to the reasons for the acceleration of the bilateral Italian-Maltese negotiations, we can underline a number of aspects. On the one hand, as regards France – as Olivier Stirn, Undersecretary at the Quai d'Orsay told Giuseppe Zamberletti, Undersecretary at the Italian Foreign Ministry – the French feared Dom Mintoff's unreliability as well as Qadhafi's ambiguities, but also, they refused to “act in international affairs following Italian political initiatives”, because of the “pride of a big power” (Zamberletti 1995, p. 33).

On the other hand, regarding the triangle between Italy, Malta, and Libya, the hypothesis formulated by the author to account for the acceleration of the Italian-Maltese negotiation is connected with the status of Libyan-Maltese relations at that time.⁴⁰ In other words, an in-depth study of the available Maltese and Italian sources led the author to suggest that it was more due to a Maltese initiative than an Italian one that the negotiations moved from a multilateral to a bilateral dimension. The hypothesis, which only the availability of more documentation could confirm, is that the deterioration of Libyan-Maltese relations in the Spring of 1980 led Dom Mintoff to decide to conclude the agreement with the Italian government only. It is worth mentioning here not only the underlying incompatibility between the two leaders, Dom Mintoff on the one hand and Qadhafi on the other. Most significantly, in the Spring of 1980 the Maltese government had to confront the major issue of the cessation of an important commercial and economic agreement with Libya, under which Qadhafi's Libya had guaranteed oil at a discounted price to Malta for many years. The numerous attempts by the Maltese government to renew the agreement failed, so contributing to a deterioration in the relationship between the two countries. Perhaps more than that, it was the old quarrel on the delimitation of territorial waters which generated tensions between Tripoli and La Valletta. The sources conserved at the National Archives in Rabat can throw some light on that. In May 1980, in fact, the two governments exchanged diplomatic notes by which the Libyans denounced Maltese concessions for oil exploitation on a part of the continental shelf belonging to Libya and threatened serious consequences, despite Maltese rebuttals of the accusations.⁴¹

In the author's opinion, the tension in Maltese-Libyan relations led Dom Mintoff to look for a more rapid conclusion of the negotiations with the Italians, who – he knew – were in any case willing to reach an agreement, even if it were bilateral in nature. Already in 1978, in fact, the Italian Foreign Minister Arnaldo Forlani had made known its intention to “deal with the issues of an active collaboration between Malta and Italy, bilaterally if necessary”, should it have proved impossible to find a multilateral agreement.⁴²

⁴⁰On the Italian-Libyan-Maltese triangle see Merlati (2020, 2017).

⁴¹Verbal Note, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Popular Committee of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 21 May 1980 and Verbal Note, Secretariat of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the Maltese Embassy in Tripoli, 10 May 1980. DOI/111/80, Malta Libya dispute on oil exploration, Department of Information, Rabat National Archives.

⁴²Inpol to Forlani, Ansa, Roma, 21 July 1980, Fondo Consigliere diplomatico alla presidenza del Consiglio, Malta, ACS.

From the month of July 1980 relations between Malta and Lybia degenerated, leading to the crisis known as the Medina crisis.⁴³ In the meantime, as I mentioned before, in La Valletta Giuseppe Zamberletti signed the neutrality agreement with Malta on behalf of the Italian government.⁴⁴

That was the end of a long path and represented, in Zamberletti's view, a great chapter of Italian foreign policy, from then on more prestigious also towards NATO's allies. "My belief – Zamberletti wrote in his memoirs – was that the agreement with Malta was inaugurating for Italy the chance for a more active and incisive Mediterranean policy" (Zamberletti 1995, p. 10).

On September 15 an exchange of diplomatic notes finalized the agreement. On the same day, before the Italian Parliament, Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo explained the path of the previous years as well as the content of the agreement, underlining how important it was in the framework of Italy's Mediterranean policy:

"The agreement with the Maltese government is framed in the constant political orientation of Italy aimed at contributing to the consolidation of peaceful relations between Mediterranean countries. This aim represents a vital interest for Italy, which finds itself in such a crucial area. In effect, it is an area with a central geopolitical connotation and it is the crossroads of relationships between the Continents. Thus, the importance of the Italian "Mediterranean role", which constitutes an essential element of Italy's participation in the European Community and, in more general terms, in international affairs." (Accordo Italia-Malta 1981, p. 289).

Conclusions

In his aforementioned 1981 Report to the Foreign Office, the British Ambassador Ronald Arculus wrote: "Italy claims a special role in the Mediterranean and relations with the other Mediterranean countries form an increasingly important part of Italy's foreign policy [...]. Italy's Mediterranean policy has defects – he added – but Italy can serve as a useful link between Western Europe and Italy's neighbours in the area."⁴⁵

The Ambassador emphasized how different Italy's position was from that of countries such as Britain or the Federal Republic of Germany. "Her South is closer

⁴³The crisis originated from the Dom Mintoff's decision of authorizing drillings in the contested maritime area of Medina. See Malta-Lybia Oil Saga. Texaco hopes for resumption of oil drilling on Medina, *The Times of Malta*, 27 August 1980; Malta's stand on oil drilling dispute, *The Times of Malta*, 28 August 1980; Libyan helicopter personnel withdraw from Malta, *The Times of Malta*, 28 August 1980; Malta stunned by serious turn in relations with Libya, *The Times of Malta*, 29 August 1980.

⁴⁴Malta declared its neutrality by adhering to a policy of nonalignment and by refusing to participate in any military alliance and to allow foreign military bases or facilities in Maltese territory. Italy recognised Malta's neutrality, declared to respect the sovereignty, unity, independence, neutrality, and integrity of Malta and to act in conformity therewith in all respect. A financial protocol was added to the agreement that provided direct economic assistance amounting to \$12 million per year.

⁴⁵R. Arculus (British Embassy, Rome) to Lord Carrington, *Report Italy and the Mediterranean*, 18 June 1981. FCO 9/3210, cit.

to Tunisia then to Turin: Naples and Rome are Mediterranean cities even if Milan is not. Italian governments can readily understand Egypt's or Algeria's industrial and agricultural problems. Italian advice, entrepreneurs and middlemen can be acceptable where British, French and Germans are less so." In conclusion, Arculus underlined how the Italians could "help to blur the distinction between North and South, between Western Europe and its Mediterranean neighbours, between the developed and developing countries to the advantage of the community". "In focusing her attention on the Mediterranean, therefore – he wrote – Italy has claimed with some justice to be serving both her own interests and those of the Alliance [...]. The Italians are condemned to a Mediterranean destiny and are framing a policy which takes account of this."⁴⁶

Perhaps in a too generous way, in 1981 the British Ambassador to Rome listed Italian Mediterranean policy's purposes, advantages and merits and underlined how well that policy could serve Western interests in the long run.

Arculus' conclusions are broadly confirmed – while with a less enthusiastic tone – by what has emerged in the previous pages. The essay discussed the worries raised abroad by the unresolved communist question and the efforts made by the United States to prevent the PCI from joining the Italian government, but at the same time it illustrated the line of continuity by which, during the Seventies, Italy acted in the Mediterranean. Such parallel enlightens how little the internal instability and political crisis influenced Italy's Mediterranean role and the service Rome could provide for the Atlantic Alliance. Notwithstanding its domestic turbulence, Italy successfully contributed to preventing Soviet and Libyan expansion in the Mediterranean theatre, firstly mediating between Malta and the United Kingdom and, later, ensuring Malta's neutrality.

The Italian-Maltese agreement of 1980 was the climax of this process and opened a new decade in which Italy consolidated its role in the Mediterranean area, while finally overcoming the "communist problem" on the domestic level.

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⁴⁶Ibid.

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Distribution and Nature of Bioethical Research by Mediterranean Authors on the Example of the Croatian Bioethical Journals

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Taking the basic goals of the scientific project “EUROBIOMED” (Croatian Science Foundation, HRZZ IP-2020-02-7450) as a starting point, the research investigates an important segment of bioethical production by Mediterranean authors. All main Croatian journals officially dedicated to bioethical research are taken into consideration as a corpus of research: Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics, Synthesis philosophica, and Filozofska istraživanja (Philosophical Investigations). Methodologically, only scientific and professional articles are taken, the criteria for defining articles as “bioethical” were given by leaning on bibliometric characteristics, and the considered approaches for content analysis were presented. Three dimensions are analysed. First, the research reveals all Mediterranean countries from which bioethical authors come. Second, topics that are represented in those works are described and categorized under mentioned methodological criteria. Third, the methodology applied in those articles is critically analysed and debated in the mentioned project’s framework. Apart from the distribution of authors from Mediterranean countries, the results have broader significance for the issues of representation of Mediterranean topics and methodology concerning bioethics in general, and, indirectly, say much about the relevance of all three mentioned journals in this context, i.e. their place and significance in the bioethical dimension of enriching and contributing to the Mediterranean Studies.

Keywords: *bioethics, Mediterranean, Croatia, journals, content analysis, Mediterranean studies, EUROBIOMED project*

Introduction – Research Context

In the framework of the scientific project “EUROBIOMED: From the diversity of traditions to a common Euro-Mediterranean bioethical platform – creation of a tool for dialogue and action” (HRZZ IP-2020-02-7450) the main goal was to “explore the similarities and differences among the major cultures of the European Mediterranean” (Muzur 2020, p. 5). Already in the initial meetings, it was decided, among other things, that one of the corpora of research will definitely be the journal production, especially that of the project-targeted Mediterranean countries, among which is Croatia.

The main objective of this paper is to present the bioethical research of Mediterranean authors in three Croatian bioethical journals (*Jahr*, *Filozofska istraživanja* [*Philosophical Investigations*], and *Synthesis philosophica*) by identifying the dominant topics and methodologies, but also the Mediterranean

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countries from which the authors of the papers come. The aim of our research is not only to show the richness of bioethical research by Mediterranean authors in Croatia, but also to claim that the diversity of topics and methodologies in these papers is (intentionally or unintentionally) related to the growing concept of integrative bioethics. Finally, we believe that this research can shed light on the need for a pluriperspective approach in bioethics as the main methodological demand of integrative bioethics, and provide an incentive for strengthening the cooperation of Mediterranean bioethicists to this end.

Literature Review and Materials: Croatian Bioethical Scientific Journals¹

Given that *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics* is one of the few journals in the Mediterranean whose name already indicates an unequivocal thematic focus on bioethics, and has been published for more than a decade, it naturally imposed itself as a part of the basic research material for this study. *Jahr* started in 2010 as *Jahr – Annual of the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities* (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine) with its scope to publish articles on a wide range of topics (from ethics and bioethics, over history and philosophy of science and medicine, to sociology, cultural anthropology, theology, law, etc.). But only “after four years, the journal went beyond its domicile framework and changed its name into *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics* with its scope to publish papers dealing with bioethical topics from the perspective of different sciences”, with a clear focus “on the promotion of European bioethics, as opposed to the mainstream bioethics, narrowed-down to a new medical ethics” (Šimunković et al. 2022, p. 421). The analysis includes all volumes of the journal published from May 2010 (first issue) to December 2021 (a total of 24 published issues in 12 years/volumes).

Scientific journal *Filozofska istraživanja* [*Philosophical investigations*] started as an initiation of the wider project, “which rests on the idea of integrative thinking, follows the concept of philosophical and interdisciplinary dialogue, i.e. openness to all philosophical directions and non-philosophical approaches, enabling interaction between them” (Grgec 2008, p. 526). In such a broad conception of the journal’s scope, a description of which explicitly includes (integrative) bioethics along with interdisciplinary humanistic studies and philosophy (Hrčak n.d.a), *Filozofska istraživanja* provided a central and most important platform of dissemination of bioethical research in Croatia from the mere beginnings of the discipline in this country. Moreover, it was the only platform for the systematic publication of bioethical studies through targeted thematic sections from the

¹It should be noted that there are several more Croatian journals that explicitly state that their scope includes bioethics, but these journals do not gain some important impact (e.g., they are not even included in Scopus scientific database), and they do not have a significant tradition of publication. If we take the criteria of analysis in this research, this becomes apparent in the potential number of articles that could be included: in *Journal of Applied Health Sciences / Časopis za primijenjene zdravstvene znanosti* and *The holistic approach to environment* we count only 3 such articles per journal, in *Zdravstveni glasnik / Health Bulletin* only 1 article, and in *Holon* no such articles.

beginning of the bioethical discussion in Croatia (see Barišić 2008, pp. 16–17). More specifically we count six bioethical thematic sections: “Challenges of Bioethics” (1998/4), “Bioethics” (2000/2–3), “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch (I)” (2001/4), “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch (II)” (2002/1), “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch (III)” (2002/2–3), and “Bioethics – themes and approaches” (2011/2).² As a central Croatian philosophical journal, it starts with publication in 1980 and just four years after it got the ambitious rhythm of 4 published issues per year (Čović 2006, p. 3). The analysis includes all volumes of the journal published from May 1980 (first issue) to December 2021 (a total of 164 published issues in 41 years/volumes³).

Closely related to *Filozofska istraživanja* is the journal *Synthesis philosophica*, which is originally intended as an international edition of the previous journal. Very soon it was transformed into a completely independent journal, becoming equally important as the *Filozofska istraživanja* not just for the general dissemination of philosophical research but also for more specific bioethical studies. The scope is a little bit broader defined than in the *Filozofska istraživanja*, but the (integrative) bioethics is again listed in the scope of the journal along with “Interdisciplinary Areas of Knowledge, Interdisciplinary Humanistic Studies, Philosophy, Humanistic Sciences” (Hrčak n.d.b). We count four bioethical thematic sections: “Bioethics” (1999/1–2), “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch” (2002/1), “Bioethics and Science in the New Epoch (II)” (2002/2), and “From Ethics to Bioethics” (2003/1–2).⁴ Sometimes articles (even whole parts of thematic sections) from both *Synthesis philosophica* and *Filozofska istraživanja* duplicate because of the twofold intention: firstly, to translate important contribution into Croatian for reaching and spreading the wider audience and propelling the philosophical (also bioethical) discussion; second, to promote and share already published results of Croatian authors by translating them to some of the world spread languages (English, German, or French⁵). These articles are considered only once (as one article, omitting the translated one) in our analysis: those of Croatian authors published in Croatian as part of *Filozofska istraživanja* are taken as the original versions, and for the articles of other authors are taken those published in *Synthesis philosophica* as the original versions. *Synthesis philosophica* starts with publication in 1985 with a continuous rhythm of 2 published issues per year (Grgec 2008, p. 527). The analysis includes all volumes of the journal published from May 1985 (first issue) to December 2021 (a total of 72 published issues in 36 years/volumes).

All three journals have enormous role in conceptualization and establishing the original bioethical thought in Croatia, especially under the name of integrative

²It should be noted that there are several other bioethically relevant thematic sections such as for example “Philosophical Ecotopia” (1997/1) which are considered in academia as such (see Barišić 2008, p. 17).

³In 1980 and 1983 there were 2 published issues, in 1982 there were no published issues, and in 1981 there were 3 published issues. Since 1984 there is a continuous rhythm of publication of 4 issues per year.

⁴It should also be noted that there are several other bioethically relevant thematic sections such as for example “Hans Jonas 1903 – 1993 – 2003” (2003/1–2).

⁵Those are the languages represented in the *Synthesis philosophica*.

bioethics and the followed idea of Europeanization of bioethics (see Zagorac and Jurić 2008, Jurić 2010, p. 254, Eterović 2017, pp. 79–92, Šimunković et al. 2022).

Methods of Analysis

At the beginning of the project, it was agreed that the bioethical production of European Mediterranean countries would be researched along two axes: content related and methodological one. The first refers to the dominant topics (humans, animals, plants, environment, and other), and the second to the approaches that dominate in the study of these topics (philosophical, medical, legal, and other). We stick to that model in the research of the aforementioned corpus of journals and related articles.

The choice of these specific topics and methodologies also forms the hypothesis that these will be the most numerous in the results of the analysis. This hypothesis was based on preliminary insight (however, far from systematic one) into Croatian bioethical production, but the one which an average reader of bioethical publications could have. Namely, one could suppose that bioethical consideration of humans will be most dominant, and followed by the environment, and only then by animals, and finally plants (one could hardly think of other subjects of consideration). This would be expected because, even though bioethics in Croatia does not have only an anthropocentric perspective – on contrary, it is mostly nominally biocentric – bioethicists are still mostly concerned with issues concerning human life. Concerning the topics of bioethical considerations, it is only natural that methodology would prevalingly be philosophical (primarily ethical) and medical, and only then legal. This can be also concluded following the fact that scientists from faculties of philosophy, medicine, and law introduced bioethical discussions in Croatia (see Rinčić and Muzur 2011), as well as catholic clergy (however, their discussions in the three mentioned journals can be expected to be more philosophical than theological).

It was also agreed that all those published contributions that have the form of an article with all associated formal units (title, abstract, key words, body of the article, and references) have been taken into account, i.e., original scientific articles, preliminary communications, review articles, professional articles, conference presentations, and (formally structured) essays.

Finally, an operational definition of what would be bioethical articles was determined: “those articles that have the root *bioeth** in the title and/or abstract and/or keywords” (Eterović 2021). Namely, as much as we are aware of this rather strict and rather formalistic limitation, we were guided by three thoughts. First, we needed a clear, unambiguous and comparable criterion for the entire scientific production, in this case the articles in the periodicals (journals). We had to have enough wide but still comprehensive criterion which can be efficiently used. Second, putting terms related to bioethics in the mentioned formal parts of the article shows a certain amount of author’s awareness or at least the intention to participate in the discourse that is determined as “bioethical”. We did not take the same criteria for the names of thematic sections, and abandoned the idea of

automatically taking into consideration all articles in bioethical sections, because that would be too wide criterion. More elaborately, it shows the intention of (guest) editor, and usually authors are not too much preoccupied with names of section in which their contributions will take a part. Third, we have thus obtained a precise and narrowed corpus that enables the realistic implementation of research. Therefore, we also adopted such an operational definition of a “bioethical article” for the research of the corpus of this article.

For this research we also defined what should we consider Mediterranean authors by the two conditions related to the author’s affiliation: 1) it is taken the *affiliation at the moment of publication* of the articles analysed as a representative point and 2) the *Mediterranean country as a country of affiliation* of the author or at least one co-author. Mediterranean countries include those countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, and European countries include Spain, Gibraltar, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. It should be noted that there are no authors represented in any of these journals from other Mediterranean countries, those from the Levant⁶ or North Africa⁷. However, it should also be emphasized that some countries are included in the list of Mediterranean countries even though they do not have their own coast on the Mediterranean Sea, due to some other criteria such as geographical, economic, geopolitical, historical, ethnic, and cultural. Thus, this wider view will add to the list of European Mediterranean countries following countries: Portugal, Andorra, San Marino, the Vatican, Serbia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Mediterranean region is fairly hard to define,⁸ especially concerning the countries which can be marked as Mediterranean. It may seem that the best way in which one could make such a list is to stick to the criteria of having a coast on the Mediterranean Sea. However, this criterion must be partially decisive. One surely cannot define the northern French provinces as parts of the Mediterranean area. Also, as we take into account the affiliations of the author, it would be silly not to name writings of Albert Camus published in Paris as Mediterranean ones, since Camus is a Mediterranean man and thinker *par excellence*. On the other hand, due to the cultural influences, one can even defend the thesis that large portions of Latin America can incorporate the idea of the Mediterranean (Abulafia 2005, p. 64). Therefore, since there is not (or even cannot) be a compromise about the list of Mediterranean countries, our selection must be in a sense arbitrary. However, our list is made according to the 2015 United Nations World Tourism Organization list (UNWTO 2015).

Results

In this research three dimensions are analysed. 1) First, the research reveals from which countries of the Mediterranean the bioethical authors who publish in

⁶These are Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.

⁷These are Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

⁸For different ways in which the Mediterranean region can be defined, alongside visuals, see: Wainwright and Thornes 2004.

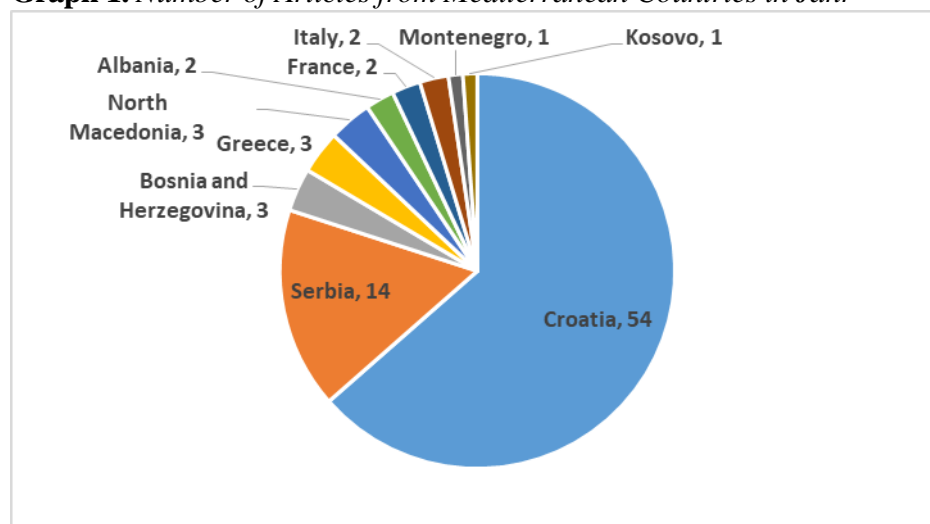
all three journals come from. 2) Second, topics that are represented in those works are described and categorized under mentioned methodological criteria to provide a basic content analysis: dominant topics in these bioethical articles of Mediterranean authors are reviewed and compared. 3) Third, the methodologies applied in those articles are critically analysed and debated in the mentioned project's framework as a further step of content analysis and broader reflection of bioethical trends among bioethical authors represented in the three journals analysed. More specifically, we look at the methodology that these authors apply in their research, but only in such a way as to try to determine as precisely as possible which dominant approach was used by the author in investigating a certain topic – mostly by other keywords, but sometimes by the dominant methodology used in every specific article.

We will demonstrate the results by journals for better visibility and transparency.

Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics

Taking into account what has been said, as well as the mentioned definition of “bioethical article”, a total of 114 such articles were recorded, from which a total of 82 articles are recorded with at least one author from a Mediterranean country. The analysis of the corpus showed that the Mediterranean authors of bioethical articles come mostly from Croatia – 54 articles, followed by Serbia – 14 articles, then Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and North Macedonia – 3 articles each, then Albania, France, and Italy – 2 articles each, and finally Montenegro and Kosovo – 1 article each (see Graph 1).⁹

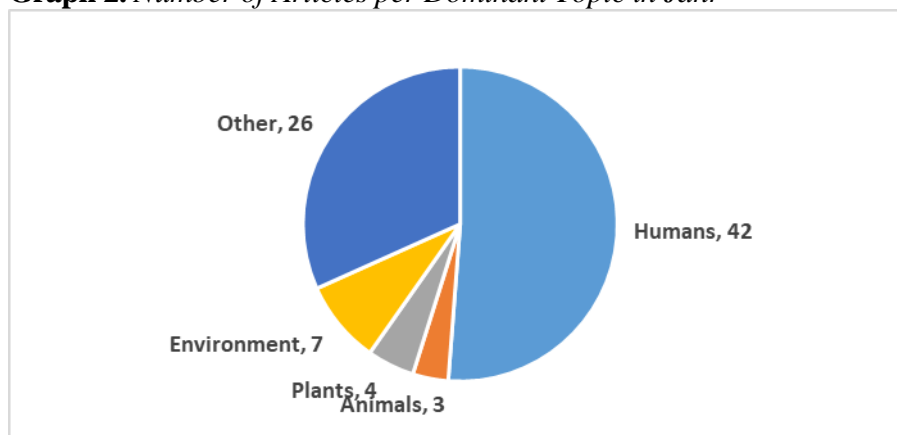
Graph 1. *Number of Articles from Mediterranean Countries in Jahr*



⁹The count of these articles presented in Graph 1 by countries shows 85, and not 82 (as it was indicated above). There are three cases where co-author's affiliations are from 2 Mediterranean countries. Only for these single articles we took the number of authors as relevant for our research purpose in this segment (distribution of Mediterranean authors) and those three articles are taken as representing two countries each.

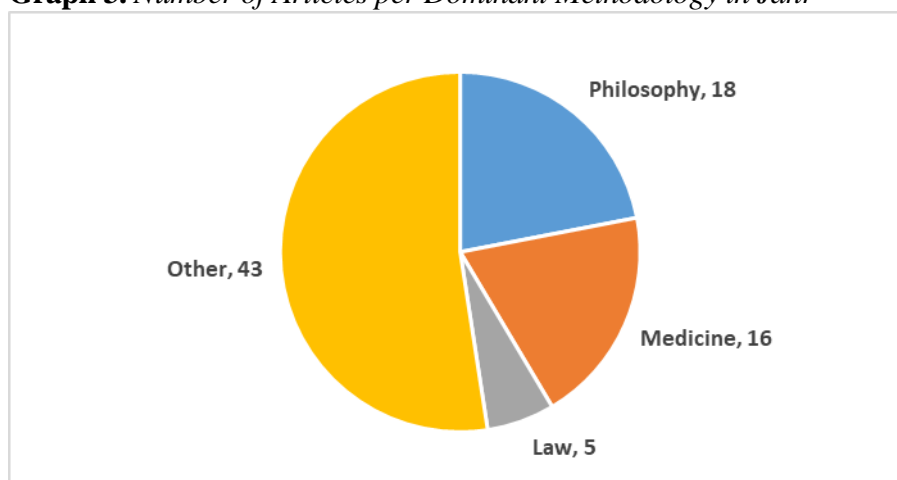
Among the topics, human one dominates, i.e., primarily devoted to norms related to human behaviour and actions towards human beings – as many as 42. Animals as a dominant topic appear 3 times, plants 4 times, the environment 7 times, and other topics are dominant in as many as 26 articles (see Graph 2). In the case of the latter, it is mostly a matter of conceptual determinations of the content and/or methodology of bioethics or historical overviews and analyses. It is interesting that the authors deal with such topics (historical and/or theoretical analysis related to the determination of bioethics as a discipline) on a large scale, right after the normative topics related to humans. Animals are extremely poorly represented, plants somewhat more, and the environment as a whole is somewhat more significant.

Graph 2. *Number of Articles per Dominant Topic in Jahr*



The philosophical and medical approaches dominate – philosophy in 18, and medicine in 16 articles. Then follows the legal approach – in 5 articles. In the other 43 articles – one or the other approaches dominates: pedagogical – 12; sociological – 11; historical – 7; psychological – 3; ecological – 3; biotechnological – 2; economical – 1; philological – 1 anthropological – 1; politological – 1; and linguistical – 1 (see Graph 3).

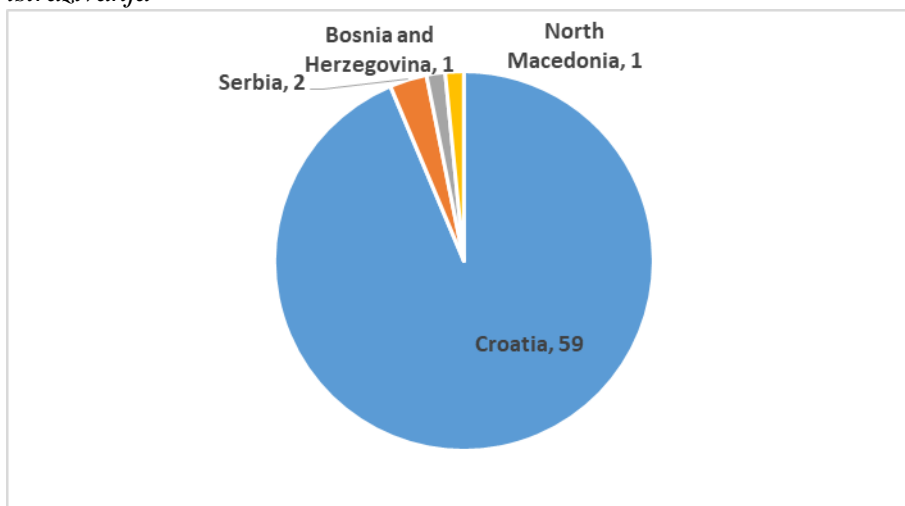
Graph 3. *Number of Articles per Dominant Methodology in Jahr*



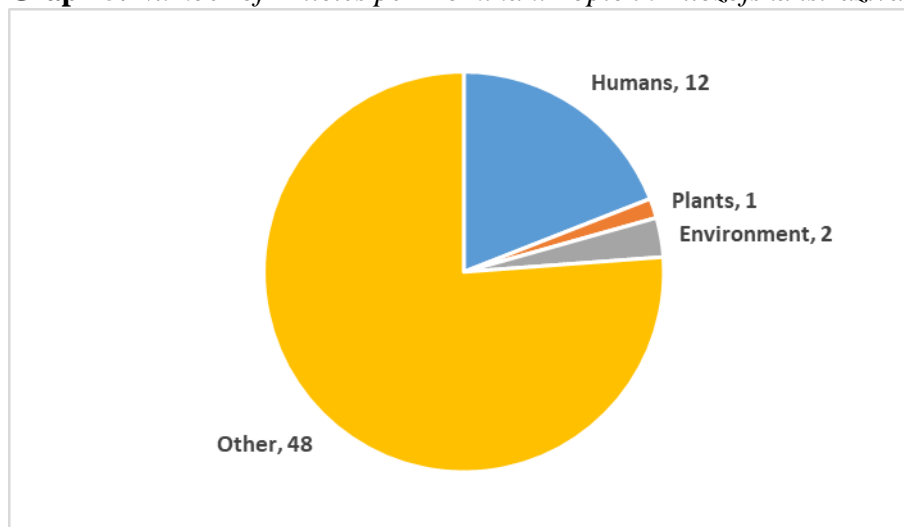
Filozofska Istraživanja

In *Filozofska istraživanja*, a total of 64 bioethical articles were recorded, from which a total of 63 articles are recorded with at least one author from a Mediterranean country. The analysis of the corpus showed that the Mediterranean authors of bioethical articles are mostly those coming from Croatia – 59 articles, followed by Serbia – 2 articles, and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia – 1 article each (see Graph 4).

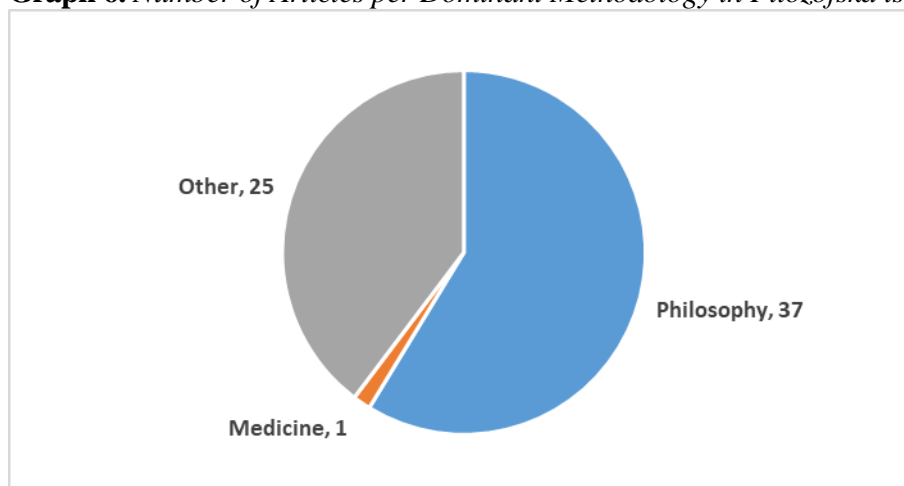
Graph 4. *Number of Articles from Mediterranean Countries in Filozofska istraživanja*



Contrary to *Jahr* other topics are dominant, although the human one has an important share. Thus, there are 48 articles dealing with other topics, in 12 people are the main subject, just in 1 the plants are dominant topics and in only 2 environment is in main focus. There are no articles concerned with animals as a dominant topic (see Graph 5). In the case of the first, it is mostly a matter of conceptual determinations of the content and/or methodology of bioethics or historical overviews and analyses. It is just partly understandable that a philosophical journal has these topics as predominant having in mind the vast sphere of practical philosophy mostly engaged in the bioethical discussion in most western countries. Especially is troubling that there are no articles discussing animals in a bioethical context, and there is an extremely poor representation of articles concerned with plants and the environment as a whole.

Graph 5. Number of Articles per Dominant Topic in *Filozofska istraživanja*

As expected concerning the nature of the journal, the philosophical approach absolutely dominates – in as many as 37 articles. The medical approach is present in just 1 article, and the rest (25 articles) are related to transdisciplinary approaches with different basic methodologies and standpoints, mostly historical – in 7 articles, sociological – also in 7 articles, anthropological – in 6 articles, politological – in 3 articles, and theological – in 2 articles (see Graph 6).

Graph 6. Number of Articles per Dominant Methodology in *Filozofska istraživanja*

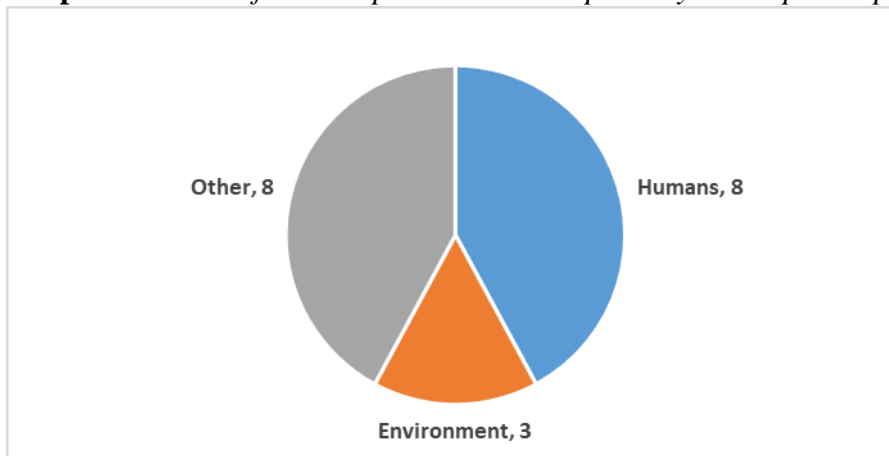
Synthesis Philosophica

There are a total of 33 bioethical articles in *Synthesis philosophica*, from which a total of 19 articles from Mediterranean authors are recorded. The analysis of the corpus showed that all authors are coming from Croatia.

It is interesting that although it is a philosophical journal like *Filozofska istraživanja* there is no clear dominance of other topics but both people and other topics (mostly theoretical analysis and historical overviews about bioethics as a

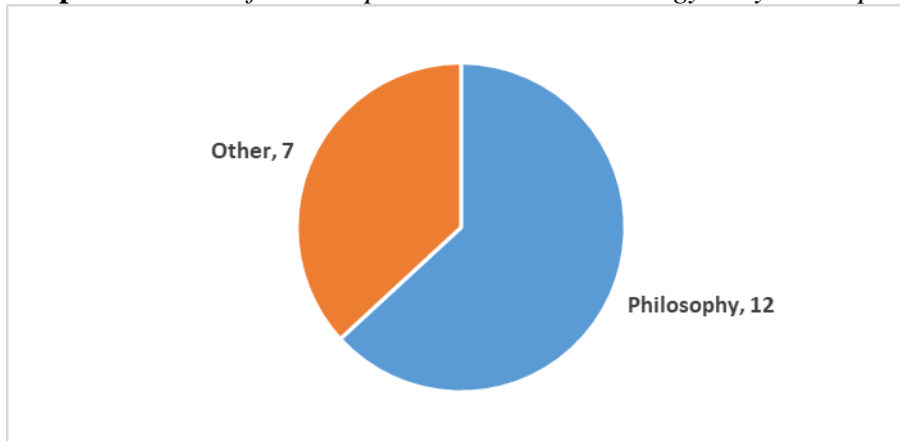
discipline) are evenly represented – in 8 articles. The remaining 3 articles are devoted mostly to the environment as a whole (see Graph 7).

Graph 7. *Number of Articles per Dominant Topic in Synthesis philosophica*



Concerning the methodology, here the expectations are quite similar to those related to *Filozofska istraživanja* concerning the nature of the journal, thus the philosophical approach absolutely dominates – in as many as 12 articles. There are no articles with dominant medical or legal methodology, thus remaining 7 articles represent other approaches, mostly the pedagogical – in 4 articles, and the historical – in 3 articles (see Graph 8).

Graph 8. *Number of Articles per Dominant Methodology in Synthesis philosophica*



Discussion

Having in mind the number of bioethical articles analysed, and the variety of topics and approaches, we can say without any doubt that all three journals have been an indispensable platforms for testing arguments, disseminating research, and sharing the results which surely propelled the incredibly rich bioethical discussion

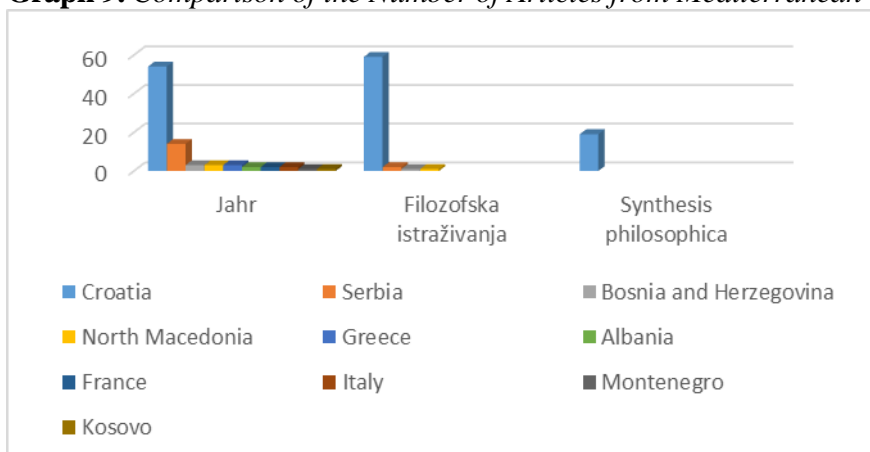
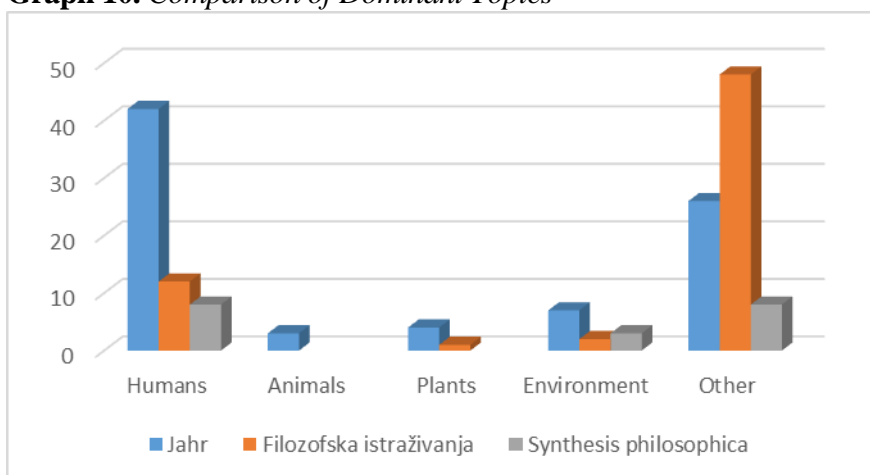
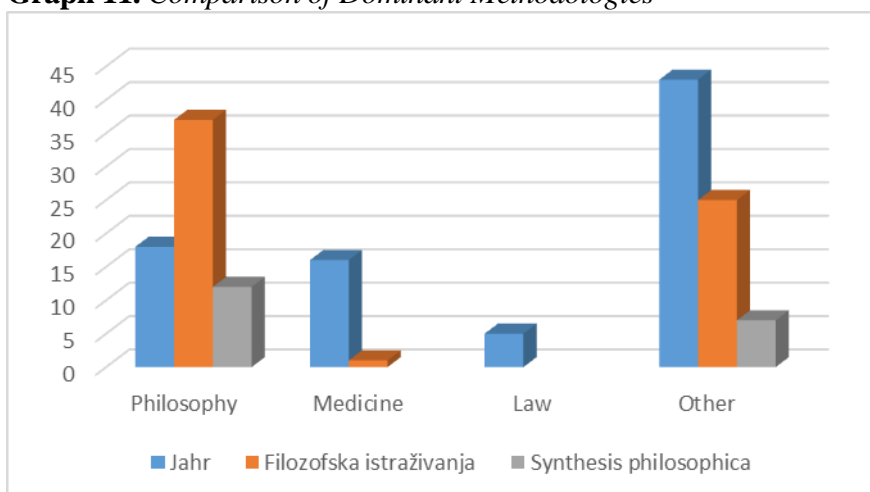
and related propulsive bioethical scientific productivity (Rinčić and Muzur 2011) for a relatively small scientific community such as Croatian one.

It is also noted that the platform of openness of the initially philosophical project related to *Filozofska istraživanja* easily complements the idea of integrative bioethics which calls for interdisciplinarity, pluriperspectivism and integrativeness of thought (see Jurić 2012, Eterović 2017, pp. 65–76). Thus, Croatian philosophers widely embraced this idea and this is probably the reason for predominating philosophical approaches and theoretical analysis concerned mostly with the foundation of bioethics as a discipline, its nature, and possibilities for further development (see Graph 11).

More specifically, the aforementioned bond between *Filozofska istraživanja* and *Synthesis philosophica* brought a relevant platform for the exchange of thought and encouraged vivid bioethical discussion. It is very significant that non-Croatian authors published texts in *Filozofska istraživanja*, translated into Croatian, and *vice versa*, many Croatian authors published in German, English, or French, making so the audience wider and more discussants potentially included. On the other side, *Jahr* provided the possibility of publication in Croatian or in English from the beginning. Both these facts (the bond between the first two journals and the bilingual publication of the last) were probably the main reason for so many authors from different Mediterranean countries included (see Graph 9).

Filozofska istraživanja and *Synthesis philosophica* are primarily general philosophical journals, so it is completely understandable that the *Jahr* as a journal dedicated to bioethics, despite the fact that is a much younger journal, has complete dominance in the number of bioethical articles, variety of topics and methodological approaches and – correspondingly – the greater number of Mediterranean authors included (see Graphs 9–11).

There are also visible indications of some trends. First, still Croatian authors dominate (see Graph 9), which is not so odd if we have in mind that the oldest and biggest (4 issues per year) of these journals publishes exclusively in Croatian. It is quite normal that Croatian journals represent primarily the platform for Croatian authors to publish their (bioethical) research. Second, concerning the topics of bioethical articles, the vast majority of articles at first were simply tied to the theoretical discussion about the nature of bioethics, but with the *Jahr*, the increasing variety of topics is more evident, and discussions about plants, animals, and the environment as a whole have been coming more in focus (see Graph 10). This is also quite understandable having in mind the strict focus on bioethical issues and more intensive orientation towards the international audience – including potential authors – which brings richer scientific backgrounds and professions into the journal. Third, anyway, regarding the approaches and perspectives (methodology used) in the bioethical articles, the philosophical approach with the associated methodology still completely prevails (see Graph 11).

Graph 9. Comparison of the Number of Articles from Mediterranean Countries**Graph 10.** Comparison of Dominant Topics**Graph 11.** Comparison of Dominant Methodologies

Conclusions

Having in mind that the first bioethical articles appeared in these journals in 1997, following the increasing interest of Croatian academia in bioethics, it could be said that despite the fact that as philosophical journals they contributed the most in the areas of theoretical reflections and conceptual analysis related to methodology of bioethics, both *Filozofska istraživanja* and *Synthesis philosophica* become an important platform for dissemination of slowly appearing bioethical research. Moreover, with several thematic issues those two journals were the important systematic contribution to bioethical discussion in Croatia.

These were the good fundaments for the appearance of the idea of a journal completely devoted to bioethics which culminates with publication of *Jahr*, which very soon become even more ambitious in gathering European authors around bioethical topics, visible in its renaming, or better adding in the title: *European Journal of Bioethics*. The number of articles, the variety of topics, and the diversity of methodology revealed by our research, clearly show that this journal further propelled the development of bioethical discussion in Croatia.

Moreover, the number of internationally engaged authors, especially from the Mediterranean, shows also the important role of this journal in linking with international scientists and especially the intensifications of collaborative paths with Mediterranean authors in the Europeanization of bioethics as a background agenda of the journal.

In the end, it can be concluded that almost half (10/22) of the countries of the European Mediterranean are represented by their authors in *Jahr*, looking exclusively at bioethical production according to the mentioned parameters (see Graph 1). If the analysis included authors dealing with other topics relevant to bioethics, the number of these countries would increase significantly (e.g., Malta, Bulgaria, Albania, etc.).

In terms of content, ethics and general normativity related to humans are dominant, i.e., topics of human ethics, rights, and anthropocentric values. However, one should have in mind that topics represented in the graphs are *dominant* topics, which does not necessarily mean that authors who are not dominantly preoccupied with plants or animals in their papers promote anthropocentric values. Only a glimpse into the titles of the articles (see Appendix I, II, and III) at least indicates (and its reading shows) that there are authors who take biocentric perspective seriously or take non-human living beings into consideration, but in certain paper, they are more focused on conceptual or theoretical analysis (e.g., in *Jahr*: Jurić 2011; or in *Synthesis philosophica*: Jurić 2015; or in *Filozofska istraživanja*: Guć 2021), on historical aspects of bioethics (e.g., in *Synthesis philosophica*: Zagorac 2011) or simply on human issues (e.g., in *Filozofska istraživanja*: Marjanić 2005).

Methodologically, there is a certain freshness of various approaches, regardless of the dominance of the philosophical approach, which often combines different positions and methodological approaches right from the start.

In summary, it can be said that while *Filozofska istraživanja* and *Synthesis philosophica* prepared a stable ground for the development of bioethical discussion in Croatian periodicals, *Jahr* moved that discussion a step further. In

the context of Mediterranean authors engaged in bioethics first two journals provide a solid ground for neighbouring countries or countries from former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia), and *Jahr* expands this pool of Mediterranean authors, representing a significant training ground for the bioethical production of authors from Mediterranean countries.

Even though thematically a certain conservatism is still present, manifested in the attachment to human ethics, at the same time a certain modernity is present methodologically, in which, in addition to the dominant philosophical aspect, there are numerous other perspectives appearing slowly but steadily.

Acknowledgments

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Filozofska istraživanja – volumes 1980–2021 (no published issues in 1982).
Jahr – European Journal of bioethics – volumes 2010–2021.
Synthesis philosophica – volumes 1985–2021.

Appendix I. List of Bioethical Articles from Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics 2010–2021 Written by Mediterranean Authors

Author(s)	Country	Title	vol.	no.	pp.		Dominant topic	Dominant methodology
Željko Kaluđerović	Serbia	Bioethical Analysis of the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning	1 (2010)	1	39	50	humans	philosophy
Marija Todorovska	N. Maced.	Interpretation and Implementation of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights	1 (2010)	1	51	62	humans	philosophy
Gordana Pelčić & Anamarija Gjurani-Coha	Croatia Croatia	UNESCO, bioetika i dijete [UNESCO, Bioethics and Child]	1 (2010)	1	63	68	humans	other
Iva Sorta Bilajac	Croatia	Informirani pristanak u UNESCO-vim bioetičkim dokumentima [Informed Consent in UNESCO's Bioethics Documents]	1 (2010)	1	77	85	humans	medicine
Dejan Donev	N. Maced.	The Development of Bioethical Consciousness in Macedonia: the Absence of Legislative Dismissals and Its Consequences	1 (2010)	1	113	124	other	law
Ana Horvat	Croatia	Issues in Bioethics: Advance Directives in a Canadian-Croatian Perspective	1 (2010)	2	323	337	humans	law
Aleksandar Stošić	Croatia	Nužnost nadzora zdravlja djece uključene u športske aktivnosti – etički aspekti [The Necessity of Supervising the Health of Children Engaged in Sports Activities – Ethical Aspects]	2 (2011)	1	235	240	humans	medicine
Sonja Antonić	Serbia	Ethical and Bioethical Implications of Contemporary Women Gymnastics	2 (2011)	1	241	250	humans	philosophy
Amir Muzur & Iva Rinčić	Croatia Croatia	Fritz Jahr (1895–1953): a Life Story of the "Inventor" of Bioethics and a Tentative Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Discovery of His Work	2 (2011)	2	385	394	other	other
Nada Gosić	Croatia	The Actuality of Thoughts of Fritz Jahr in Bioethics Education or Why Fritz Jahr Advocates Character Education	2 (2011)	2	407	414	other	other
Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur	Croatia Croatia	European Bioethics Institutionalisation in Theory and Practice	2 (2011)	2	415	429	other	other
Christian Byk	France	Bioethics, Law and European Integration	2 (2011)	2	431	444	other	law
Eleni M. Kalokairinou	Greece	Tracing the Roots of European Bioethics Back to the Ancient Greek Philosophers-Physicians	2 (2011)	2	445	456	other	philosophy
Igor Eterović	Croatia	Kant's Categorical Imperative and Jahr's Bioethical Imperative	2 (2011)	2	457	474	other	philosophy
Hrvoje Jurić	Croatia	Hans Jonas' Integrative Philosophy of Life as a Foothold for Integrative Bioethics	2 (2011)	2	511	520	other	philosophy
Marija Selak	Croatia	Philosophy of the World and Philosophy of Karl Löwith as a Precursor and Incentive to the Idea of Integrative Bioethics	2 (2011)	2	525	532	other	philosophy
Ivan Šegota	Croatia	Početak bioetičke edukacije na Medicinskom fakultetu u Rijeci [The Beginnings of Bioethics Education on Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka]	3 (2012)	1	17	22	humans	other
Nataša Vulić	Croatia	Bioetičko obrazovanje u srednjoj školi [Bioethics Education in High School]	3 (2012)	1	23	28	humans	other
Dejan Donev	N. Maced.	Raskorak makedonskog obrazovnog sustava i svjetskih obrazovnih tendencija s obzirom na (bio)etičku edukaciju [The Gap between Macedonian Educational System and World's Educational Tendencies on the Issues of Bioethical Education]	3 (2012)	1	29	36	other	other

Sunčana Roksandić Vidlička & Dijana Hršić & Zrinka Kirin	Croatia Croatia Croatia	Bioethical and Legal Challenges of Surrogate Motherhood in the Republic of Croatia	3 (2012)	1	37	67	humans	law
Ivana Zagorac	Croatia	Kritičko mišljenje i bioetika [Critical Thinking and Bioethics]	3 (2012)	1	69	80	other	philosophy
Marko Trajković & Niko Josić	Serbia Serbia	O neophodnosti bioetičkog obrazovanja pravnika [On the Necessity of Bioethics Education for Lawyers]	3 (2012)	1	81	92	other	law
Karel Turza & Sandra Radenović	Serbia Serbia	Bioetička edukacija na Medicinskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Beogradu [Bioethical Education at the Faculty of Medicine University of Belgrade]	3 (2012)	1	93	98	humans	other
Nada Gosić	Croatia	Bioetička edukacija u Hrvatskoj: povijesni i aktualni pristup [Bioethics Education in Croatia: History and Current Approach]	3 (2012)	1	99	110	humans	other
Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur	Croatia Croatia	Od bioetičara – učenika do bioetičara – učitelja: pijetizam i edukacija u životu i djelu Fritzja Jahra [From Bioethicist – Student to Bioethicist – Teacher: Pietism and Education in the Life and Work of Fritz Jahr]	3 (2012)	1	111	116	other	other
Boris Brajović	Monten.	Pojam "liječka" u bizantskoj tradiciji: filozofsko-teološki aspekti [Notion of "Medicine" in Byzantine Tradition: Philosophical-Theological Aspect]	3 (2012)	1	117	121	other	other
Orhan Jašić & Dževad Hodžić & Senada Selmanović	Bos./Her. Bos./Her. Bos./Her.	Utjecaj religijskog statusa i kvalitete života na konzumaciju alkohola među studentskom populacijom Sveučilišta u Tuzli [The Influence of Religious Status and Quality of Life at Alcohol Consumption among Students Population of University of Tuzla]	3 (2012)	1	123	137	humans	other
Bardhyl Çipi	Albania	Ethical, Juridical and Historical Aspects of Medical Confidentiality	3 (2012)	1	139	146	humans	medicine
Vjera Duić	Croatia	Kontroverzni učinci primjene Zakona o medicinskoj oplodnji iz 2009. godine na uspješnost postupaka u Hrvatskoj [Act on Medical Fertilization (2009) and Its Controversial Effects on the ivf Efficiency in Croatia]	3 (2012)	1	147	159	humans	medicine
Maja Žitinski	Croatia	Paternalism as a Field of Bioethical Concern	3 (2012)	1	265	179	humans	medicine
Nada Mladina	Bos./Her.	Bioetika i liječnik u partnerstvu s bolesnikom [Bioethics and Physician in Partnership with Patients]	3 (2012)	1	181	190	humans	medicine
Sandra Radenović	Serbia	Bioetika i nasilje [Bioethics and Violence]	3 (2012)	1	205	218	humans	other
Karel Turza	Serbia	Bioetika i kultura. Može li bioetika pridonijeti stvaranju interkulturalnosti? [Bioethics and Culture. Can Bioethics Contribute to Formation of Interculturality?]	3 (2012)	1	255	266	humans	other
Srećko Gajović	Croatia	Regeneracija mozga: od neuroznanstvene nade do bioetičkog problema [Regeneration of the Brain: from Neuroscientific Hope to Bioethical Problem]	3 (2012)	1	267	277	humans	medicine
Heda Festini	Croatia	Bioetika i filozofija biologije [Bioethics and Philosophy of Biology]	3 (2012)	1	279	284	other	philosophy
Bruno Atalić	Croatia	Historical Development and Ethical Considerations of Vivisectionist and Antivivisectionist Movement	3 (2012)	2	399	414	animals	other

Ifigenija Račić	Croatia	Medijska slika bioetike – 9. svjetski bioetički kongres u Rijeci [Media Image of Bioethics – 9th World Congress of Bioethics in Rijeka]	3 (2012)	2	433	459	other	other
Vuk Prica & Igor Salopek	Croatia Croatia	Ksenobioetički izazovi u pristupu psihijatrijskom pacijentu [Xenobioethical Challenges When Approaching a Psychiatric Patient]	3 (2012)	2	495	498	humans	medicine
Heda Festini	Croatia	Proteinska sinteza kao poluga evolucije [Protein Synthesis as a Lever of Evolution]	3 (2012)	2	461	466	other	philosophy
Alessandra Vicentini & Kim Grego & Daniele Russo	Italy Italy Italy	The Pro.Bio.Dic. (Prototype of a Bioethics Dictionary) Project: Building a Corpus of Popular and Specialized Bioethics Texts	4 (2013)	1	339	354	other	other
Branislava Medić & Zoran Todorović & Katarina Savić & Vujović & Radan Stojanović & Milica Prostran	Serbia Serbia Serbia Serbia Serbia	Oboljeli od rijetkih bolesti kao vulnerabilni ispitanici u kliničkim studijama [Patients with Rare Diseases as Vulnerable Subjects in Clinical Studies]	4 (2013)	2	715	724	humans	medicine
Duškanka Krajnović & Hajrija Mujović-Zonić	Serbia Serbia	Etički i pravni aspekti zaštite vulnerabilnih skupina: međunarodni i nacionalni normativi [Ethical and Legal Aspects of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups: International and National Standards]	4 (2013)	2	725	737	humans	medicine
Sandra Radenović & Vida Jeremić & Karel Turza	Serbia Serbia Serbia	Bioetička edukacija i zdravstveni problemi romske populacije [Bioethical Education and Health Problems of Roma Population]	4 (2013)	2	773	778	humans	medicine
Zoran M. Todorović & Anja Živanović & Dragana D. Protić	Serbia Serbia Serbia	Bioetička pitanja u vezi sa sigurnošću lijekova kod vulnerabilnih skupina [Bioethical Issues Regarding the Safety of Drugs in Vulnerable Groups]	4 (2013)	2	779	790	humans	medicine
Heda Festini	Croatia	Zašto trebamo znanje o obilježjima zakona u biologiji [Why do We Need Knowledge About the Characteristics of Laws in Biology?]	5 (2014)	1	83	95	other	philosophy
Nina Jelić	Croatia	Bihevioralna ekonomija, neuroekonomija, neuromarketing [Behavioral Economics, Neuroeconomics, and Neuromarketing]	5 (2014)	1	193	209	humans	other
Marko Kos	Croatia	Lud, zbunjen, političan i subjekt [Insane, Confused, Political, and the Subject]	5 (2014)	1	211	221	humans	other
Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur & Sandra Bošković	Croatia Croatia Croatia	The Role of Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka in Developing and Promoting Deaf Culture: a Few Old Experiences and a Promising Recent Initiative with Deaf Education	5 (2014)	2	309	322	humans	medicine
Marina Casini & Joseph Meaney & Emanuela Midolo & Anto Cartolovni & Dario Sacchini & Antonio	Italy Italy Italy Italy Italy Italy	Why Teach “Bioethics and Human Rights” to Healthcare Professions Undergraduates?	5 (2014)	2	349	368	humans	medicine

Spagnolo								
Tomislav Krznar	Croatia	While We are Standing Away. Do We Need to Consider Hunting as a Bioethical Issue?	6 (2015)	2	191	200	animals	philosophy
Željko Kaluđerović	Serbia	“Upward Levelling” of Plants – Early Greek Perspective	6 (2015)	2	201	214	plants	philosophy
Amir Muzur & Iva Rinčić	Croatia Croatia	Practical Aspects of Bioethics: Some European and American Views	6 (2015)	2	223	226	other	other
Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur	Croatia Croatia	In Search of (Lost) Connection: Organic Architecture and Bioethics. The Case of Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959)	6 (2015)	2	227	232	other	other
Bardhyl Çipi	Albania	Deontology and Its Role in Practice Medicine in Albania	6 (2015)	2	367	374	humans	medicine
Ivana Kovačić	Croatia	Moždana smrt i transplantacija organa u Japanu: pogled kroz vrijeme [Brain Death and Organ Transplantation in Japan: A View through Time]	7 (2016)	1	63	76	humans	medicine
Eleni M. Kalokairinou	Greece	Fritz Jahr’s Bioethical Imperative: Its Origin, Point, and Influence	7 (2016)	2	149	156	other	philosophy
Amir Muzur	Croatia	Standardi u bioetici: motivi, efekti, limiti [Standards in Bioethics: Motives, Effects, Limits]	7 (2016)	2	197	202	other	other
Ivica Kelam	Croatia	Odgovorno upravljanje poljoprivrednim zemljištem [Responsible Management of Agricultural Land]	7 (2016)	2	203	215	environment	philosophy
Valerije Vrček	Croatia	Status of Transgenic Crops in the Encyclical „Laudato si’“	7 (2016)	2	217	223	plants	other
Saša Marinović	Croatia	Biotehnologija iz ekoetičke perspektive [Biotechnology from Ecoethical Perspective]	7 (2016)	2	279	292	environment	other
Damir Hršak	Croatia	Uvod u holistički environmentalizam [Introduction to Holistic Environmentalism]	8 (2017)	1	83	96	environment	other
Matija Mato Škerbić & Sandra Radenović	Croatia Serbia	Bioetika sporta: prisutnost bioetičkih tema na području filozofije i etike sporta u Hrvatskoj i Srbiji [Bioethics of Sport: The Presence of Bioethical Topics in the Field of Philosophy and Ethics of Sports in Croatia and Serbia]	9 (2018)	2	159	184	humans	other
Karlo Kožina	Croatia	Zaštita dostojanstva: postoji li eugenika u Republici Hrvatskoj u postupku medicinski pomognute oplodnje? [Protection of Dignity: Is There Eugenics in the Republic of Croatia in the Procedure of In Vitro Fertilization?]	9 (2018)	2	223	233	humans	other
Luka Janeš	Croatia	Tangente narcizma i psihoze u kontekstu aktualne ekološke krize [Tangents of Narcissism and Psychosis in the Context of the Actual Ecological Crisis]	10 (2019)	1	49	74	environment	other
Luka Perušić	Croatia	Fritz Jahr as Methodological Paradigm in Bioethical Education	10 (2019)	2	287	310	other	other
Amir Muzur & Iva Rinčić	Croatia Croatia Croatia	Bioetika na istoku Europe: panorama pogleda, pojava i pojmova [Bioethics in Eastern Europe: Panorama of Views, Phenomena and Concepts]	10 (2019)	2	311	324	other	other
Luka Janeš	Croatia	Biopolitical Laboratory and the Genetic Modification of the Psyche	10 (2019)	2	341	360	humans	other
Mile Marinčić & Berislav Čović	Croatia Croatia	An Ethical View on International Trade Agreements TTIP and CETA in the Republic of Croatia	10 (2019)	2	377	396	humans	other
Željko Kaluđerović	Serbia	Genetički modificirane biljke – bioetički pristup [Genetically Modified Crops – Bioethical Approach]	10 (2019)	2	397	412	plants	philosophy

Jelena Loborec & Saša Zavrtnik & Damir Zubčić	Croatia Croatia Croatia	Uloga bioetike u obrazovanju inženjera okoliša [The Role of Bioethics in Environmental Engineering Education]	10 (2019)	2	425	435	environment	other
Kostas Theologou	Greece	Space and Ethos; Fostering Supranational Citizenship in Urban Bioethics	11 (2020)	1	129	142	humans	philosophy
Iva Rinčić & Robert Doričić & Sun-yong Byun & Chan Kyu Lee & Amir Muzur	Croatia Croatia (S. Korea) (S. Korea) Croatia	From Mere Urbanity to Urban Bioethical Standards: An Invitation to a Broadening of Bioethics	11 (2020)	1	143	158	humans	other
Tomislav Krznar	Croatia	Problem ekohistorije u misli Milana Polića [The Problem of Ecohistory in the Thinking of Milan Polić]	11 (2020)	2	413	430	environment	philosophy
Draženko Tomić	Croatia	Bioethical Topics in the Works of Kvirin Vasilj (1917 – 2006)	11 (2020)	2	431	444	humans	other
Bruno Ćurko	Croatia	Community of Philosophical Inquiry as a Method in Early Bioethical Education	11 (2020)	2	481	497	humans	other
Orhan Jašić & Željko Kaluderović & Samir Beglerović	Bos./Her. Serbia Bos./Her.	Bioetička edukacija na teološkim fakultetima Univerziteta u Sarajevu [Bioethical Education at Theological Faculties of the University of Sarajevo]	11 (2020)	2	499	515	humans	other
Saša Zavrtnik & Damir Žubčić & Jelena Loborec	Croatia Croatia Croatia	Zdrav međuodnos ljudi i životinja – važnost obrazovanja o pozitivnom međudjelovanju [A Healthy Relationship between Man and Animals – the Importance of Education of Positive Interaction]	11 (2020)	2	531	546	animals	other
Ivica Kelam	Croatia	A Brief Historical Overview of Bioethical Activism in Croatia – as an Impetus for the Development of an Educational Model of Bioethical Activism	11 (2020)	2	547	558	environment	other
Krešimir Veble & Vatroslav Veble	Croatia (Germ.)	Cjeloživotno obrazovanje u vodnom sektoru – početne bioetičke opservacije	11 (2020)	2	559	580	plants	other
Christian Byk	France	Transhumanism: from Julian Huxley to UNESCO. What Objective for International Action?	12 (2021)	1	141	162	humans	other
Valdete Haliti & Druton Abdullahu & Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur	Kosovo Kosovo Croatia Croatia	Bioethics Institutionalisation in the Republics of Kosovo and Albania: Legal, Public-Administrative, and Social Challenges	12 (2021)	2	233	242	other	other
Ivica Kelam & Kristina Dilica	Croatia	Bioetički aspekti utjecaja teorija zavjere na borbu protiv pandemije COVID-19 u Hrvatskoj [Bioethical Aspects of the Impact of Conspiracy Theories on the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic in Croatia]	12 (2021)	2	285	306	humans	other

Appendix II. List of Bioethical Articles from Filozofska Istraživanja 1980–2021*Written by Mediterranean Authors*

Author(s)	Country	Title	vol.	no.	pp.		Dominant topic	Dominant methodology
Ante Čović	Croatia	Znanje i moralnost [Knowledge and Morality]	17 (1997)	4	1049	1064	other	philosophy
Ivan Šegota	Croatia	Nova definicija bioetike [A New Definition of Bioethics]	18 (1998)	4	733	744	other	other
Ante Čović	Croatia	Etika i bioetika [Ethics and Bioethics]	18 (1998)	4	745	761	other	philosophy
Ivan Cifrić	Croatia	Bios i etos – okoliš u bioetičkoj paradigmi [Bios and Ethos – Environment in the Bioethical Paradigm]	18 (1998)	4	763	774	other	other
Luka Tomašević	Croatia	Bioetika u kršćanskoj tradiciji i sadašnjosti [Bioethics in Christian Tradition and Today]	18 (1998)	4	775	791	other	other
Pavo Barišić	Croatia	Bioetika i ljudska prava [Bioethics and Human Rights]	18 (1998)	4	793	800	other	other
Fulvio Šuran	Croatia	Bioetika između morala i znanosti [Bioethics Between Moral and Science]	18 (1998)	4	809	816	other	philosophy
Maja Žitinski-Šoljić	Croatia	Pravo na život pretpostavlja pravo na pravedan život [The Right to Life Requires the Right to Rightful Life]	18 (1998)	4	843	857	humans	other
Ante Pažanin	Croatia	Jonasov "princip odgovornosti" kao problem a ne kao rješenje suvremene etike [Jonas' "Principle of Responsibility" as a Problem and Not a Solution of Contemporary Ethics]	18 (1998)	4	883	894	other	philosophy
Hrvoje Jurić	Croatia	Princip očuvanja života i problem odgovornosti [The Principle of the Preservation of Life and the Ethics of Responsibility]	18 (1998)	4	895	900	other	philosophy
Ivan Šegota	Croatia	Van Renssealer Potter II: "otac bioetike" [Van Renssealer Potter II: "Father of Bioethics"]	19 (1999)	3	623	634	other	other
Nada Gosić	Croatia	Bioetika u Hrvatskoj [Bioethics in Croatia]	20 (2000)	2–3	385	399	other	other
Ivan Šegota	Croatia	Darryl R. J. Maccer, vodeći azijski bioetičar [Darryl R. J. Maccer, the Leading Asian Bioethicist]	20 (2000)	2–3	401	410	other	other
Tonči Matulić	Croatia	Bioetika i autoritet. Ljudski razum i problem autoriteta u bioetici kao filozofskoj disciplini [Bioethics and Authority. Human Reason and the Issue of Authority in the Bioethics as a Philosophical Discipline]	21 (2001)	4	551	569	other	philosophy
Luka Tomašević	Croatia	Bioetika kao etika odgovornosti građanskog društva [Bioethics as Ethics of Responsibility of Civil Society]	21 (2001)	4	583	597	other	philosophy
Ivan Cifrić	Croatia	Bioetika i sociologija [Bioethics and Sociology]	21 (2001)	4	599	608	other	other
Nikola Skledar	Croatia	Uzajamni poticaji suvremene biologije, bioetike i antropologije [Mutual Impulses Between Contemporary Biology, Bioethics and Anthropology]	21 (2001)	4	609	618	other	other
Tomislav Petković	Croatia	Znanstveni izvori bioetike. Primjer Enrica Fermija, posljednjeg univerzalnog fizičara [The Scientific Resources of Bioethics. A Case of Enrico Fermi, the Last Universal Physicist]	21 (2001)	4	633	645	other	other

Heda Festini	Croatia	Bioetika danas [Bioethics Today]	21 (2001)	4	647	652	other	philosophy
Nada Gosić	Croatia	Bioetika, politika i bioetičko obrazovanje [Bioethics, Politics and Bioethical Education]	22 (2002)	1	115	132	humans	other
Dalibor Lovrić	Croatia	Kulturalne razlike, znanost i bioetika [Cultural Differences, Science and Bioethics]	22 (2002)	1	133	145	other	philosophy
Ivan Šegota	Croatia	Sociologija bioetike: nova akademska disciplina [Sociology of Bioethics: New Academic Discipline]	22 (2002)	1	147	152	other	other
Igor Čatić	Croatia	Biotehnika – jedna od čovjekovih tehnika [Biotechnology – One of the Man's Technologies]	22 (2002)	1	153	167	other	other
Marija Šimoković	Croatia	Bioetički aspekti kloniranja [Bioethical Aspects of Cloning]	22 (2002)	1	169	198	humans	philosophy
Aleksandra Frković & Silvija Zec Sambol	Croatia Croatia	Informed consent u opstetirciji [Informed consent in opstetrics]	22 (2002)	2–3	549	555	humans	medicine
Vladimir Jelkić	Croatia	Znanost i život [Science and Life]	22 (2002)	4	675	681	other	philosophy
Luka Tomašević	Croatia	Smrt i umiranje danas [Death and Dying Nowadays]	24 (2004)	3–4	883	904	humans	philosophy
Tonči Matulić	Croatia	Problem pluralizma i moralna autonomija. Izazovi religijske i filozofijske fondacije etike u bioetici [The Issue of Pluralism and Moral Autonomy. Challenges of the Religious and Philosophical Foundations of Ethics in Bioethics]	24 (2004)	3–4	977	1000	other	philosophy
Tonči Matulić	Croatia	Prevladavanje sukoba između znanja i odgoja za vrijednosti. Bioetika - primjer integracijskog modela odgoja i obrazovanja [Hidden Conflict Between the Knowledge and Value-Based Education. Bioethics as an Integration Model of Education]	25 (2005)	2	345	372	other	philosophy
Suzana Marjanić	Croatia	Transrodnost (i transvrizizam) i kao utopijska projekcija [Transgenderism (and Transspeciesism) Also as a Utopian Projection]	25 (2005)	4	849	861	humans	other
Darko Polšek	Croatia	Anatomija jednog paternalističkog i anti-liberalnog stava prema suvremenoj eugenici [Anatomy of a Paternalist and Anti-liberal View on Contemporary Eugenics]	26 (2006)	1	179	193	humans	philosophy
Snježan Hasnaš	Croatia	Priroda i čovjek. Pregled nekih problema vezanih za filozofsko razmatranje odnosa čovjeka i prirode od novog vijeka do danas [The Nature and the Human. An Overview of Some Problems Related to the Philosophical Consideration of the Relationship between Man and Nature from the Modern Age to the Present Day]	27 (2007)	2	389	406	environment	philosophy
Slavko Amulić	Croatia	Poredbenost perspektiva [Perspectival Comparison]	27 (2007)	2	407	425	other	philosophy
Tonči Matulić	Croatia	Istraživanje korijena mediteranske bioetike. Etika vrline i sreće kao conditio sine qua non [Researching the Roots of Mediterranean Bioethics. The Ethics of Virtue and Happiness as conditio sine qua non]	27 (2007)	3	529	550	other	philosophy
Mislav Kukoč	Croatia	Suvremena hrvatska filozofija. Uz temu [Contemporary Croatian Philosophy. An Introductory]	28 (2008)	3	513	519	other	other

Goran Grgec	Croatia	Pola stoljeća Hrvatskog filozofskog društva kao istraživački izazov [Half a Century of Croatian Philosophical Society as a Research Challenge]	28 (2008)	3	521	537	other	other
Slobodan Sadžakov	Serbia	Labirinti etike. Od Kangrge do bioetike [Labyrinths of Ethics. From Kangrga to Bioethics]	28 (2008)	3	589	600	other	philosophy
Ivana Zagorac & Hrvoje Jurić	Croatia Croatia	Bioetika u Hrvatskoj [Bioethics in Croatia]	28 (2008)	3	601	611	other	philosophy
Mladen Labus	Croatia	Filozofija i život: Filozofska i socio-kulturna antropologija Nikole Skledara [Philosophy and Life: Philosophical and Socio-Cultural Anthropology of Nikola Skledar]	29 (2009)	1	205	214	other	other
Marija Selak	Croatia	Bioetički osvrt na filozofiju Nikolaja A. Berdjajeva. Promišljanje degradacije duhovnosti i biti tehnike u prijelomu epoha [A Bioethical Review of Nikolay A. Berdyayev's Philosophy. Rethinking the Degradation of Spirituality and the Essence of Technology at the Turn of the Epochs]	29 (2009)	3	603	614	other	philosophy
Iva Rinčić	Croatia	Teorija institucija Arnolda Gehlena: prilog istraživanju bioetičkih institucija [Arnold Gehlen's Theory of Institutions: A Contribution to the Analysis of Bioethics Institutions]	29 (2009)	1–2	141	159	other	other
Kiril Temkov	N. Maced.	Dvije osnovne značajke sporta [Two Basic Characteristics of Sport]	29 (2009)	3	437	441	humans	philosophy
Damir Smiljanić	Serbia	Problem pogleda na svijet i integrativna bioetika [Problem of Worldviews and the Integrative Bioethics]	31 (2011)	2	245	253	other	philosophy
Vladimir Jelkić	Croatia	Kakvo znanje trebamo? [What Kind of Knowledge Do We Need?]	31 (2011)	2	255	261	other	philosophy
Snježana Prijić-Samaržija	Croatia	Kontracepcija: prirodno, umjetno, moralno [Contraception: Natural, Artificial, Moral]	31 (2011)	2	277	290	people	philosophy
Dževad Hodžić	Bos./Her.	Whiteheadova filozofija prirode i bioetika [Whitehead's Natural Philosophy and Bioethics]	31 (2011)	2	291	297	other	philosophy
Igor Eterović	Croatia	Kantova teleologija kao podloga orijentiranju u ekologiji [Kant's Teleology as the Basis for Orientation in Ecology]	31 (2011)	2	299	309	environment	philosophy
Katica Knezović	Croatia	»Moralni status« biljaka u bioetičkoj prosudbi biljne genske tehnologije [»Moral Status« of Plants in Bioethical Evaluation of Plant Gene Technology]	31 (2011)	2	323	333	plants	philosophy
Livia Pavletić & Sead Alić	Croatia	Istok i Zapad ljudskoga mozga [East and West of the Human Brain]	31 (2011)	2	353	364	humans	other
Tihomir Engler	Croatia	Antikrist Larsa von Triera kao alegorikum čovjekova odšašća [Lars von Trier's Antichrist as an Allegoricum of Human Desurrection]	31 (2011)	3	651	668	humans	philosophy
Luka Tomašević & Ana Jeličić	Croatia	Etika znanstvenog istraživanja i načelo opreznosti [Ethics of Scientific Research and the Principle of Precaution]	32 (2012)	2	243	260	other	philosophy
Marina Katinić	Croatia	Filozofija za djecu i mlade i integrativna bioetika [Philosophy for Children and Youth and Integrative Bioethics]	32 (2012)	3–4	587	603	humans	philosophy

Marko Kos	Croatia	Od Fritza Jahra do integrativne bioetike. Prikaz razvoja jedne ideje [From Fritz Jahr to Integrative Bioethics. Presentation of the Development of an Idea]	34 (2014)	1–2	229	240	other	philosophy
Mislav Ježić	Croatia	Kulturne perspektive i znanstvena metodologija [Cultural Perspectives and Scientific Methodology]	34 (2014)	4	471	485	other	other
Igor Eterović	Croatia	Traženje uporišta za integrativno mišljenje u Kantovoj teoriji spoznaje [The Search for Strongholds of Integrative Thinking in Kant's Theory of Knowledge]	34 (2014)	4	497	507	other	philosophy
Ana Jeličić	Croatia	Franjevačka zauzetost za očuvanje dostojanstva i integriteta stvorenog [Franciscan Devotion to the Protection of Dignity and Integrity of the Creation]	34 (2014)	4	559	575	other	other
Željko Pavić	Croatia	»Pluriperspektivizam« – slučaj jedne natuknice u Filozofskome leksikonu [“Pluriperspectivism” – The Case of an Entry in the Philosophical Lexicon]	34 (2014)	4	577	600	other	philosophy
Ana Jeličić	Croatia	Intelektualna i duhovna baština Pierrea Teilharda de Chardina iz perspektive suvremenih bioetičkih problema [Intellectual and Spiritual Heritage of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin from the Perspective of Contemporary Bioethical Issues]	35 (2015)	2	289	300	other	other
Berislav Čović & Mile Marinčić	Croatia	Društvena odgovornost za zdravo društvo u kontekstu promišljanja Küngova projekta svjetski etos [Social Responsibility for Healthy Society in the Context of Küng's Weltethos Project]	36 (2016)	3	473	491	other	other
Luka Janeš	Croatia	Budućnost filozofije psihe u Hrvatskoj [The Future of the Philosophy of Psyche in Croatia]	38 (2018)	2	293	314	other	philosophy
Josip Guć	Croatia	Treba li se kritika bojati svojih rezultata? [Should the Critique Be Afraid of Its Results?]	38 (2018)	2	315	324	other	philosophy
Ante Čović	Croatia	Besmisao »primijenjene etike« Od etičkog vakuuma do etičkog apsurdna [The Nonsense of “Applied Ethics” From Ethical Vacuum to Ethical Absurdity]	39 (2019)	1	247	264	other	philosophy
Josip Guć	Croatia	Antropomorfizam danas – sudbina Protagorina impulsa [Anthropomorphism Today – the Destiny of Protagoras' Impulse]	41 (2021)	2	293	308	other	philosophy

Appendix III. List of Bioethical Articles from Synthesis Philosophica 1985–2021*Written by Mediterranean Authors*

Author(s)	Country	Title	vol.	no.	pp.		Dominant topic	Dominant methodology
Ante Čović	Croatia	New Paths of Medical Ethics	12 (1997)	2	559	571	other	philosophy
Ante Čović	Croatia	La biopoétique et la bioéthique dans la prose existentielle de J.-D. Bauby <i>Le scaphandre et le papillon</i> [Biopoetics and Bioethics in J.-D. Bauby's Existential Prose <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i>]	13 (1998)	1	269	283	humans	philosophy
Nada Gosić	Croatia	Novelties from Croatia: Students of Philosophy, Law and Theology in Bioethical Education	18 (2003)	1–2	365	376	humans	pedagogy
Iva Rinčić Lerga	Croatia	First International Summer School of Integrative Bioethics	22 (2007)	2	523	536	other	other
Snježana Prijić-Samaržija	Croatia	Bioethical Issues and Sorites Paradox	23 (2008)	2	203	212	humans	philosophy
Nada Gosić	Croatia	The Hippocratic Oath. A Historical Perspective in Bioethical Education	23 (2008)	2	225	238	humans	other
Ivana Zagorac	Croatia	The Body and Technology. A Contribution to the Bioethical Debate on Sport	23 (2008)	2	283	295	humans	philosophy
Nada Gosić	Croatia	Definitions of Bioethics in Bioethics Education in Croatia	24 (2009)	2	349	368	humans	other
Amir Muzur & Iva Rinčić	Croatia Croatia	Fritz Jahr (1895–1953) – the Man Who Invented Bioethics. A Preliminary Biography and Bibliography	26 (2011)	1	133	139	other	other
Ivana Zagorac	Croatia	Fritz Jahr's Bioethical Imperative	26 (2011)	1	141	150	other	other
Iva Rinčić & Amir Muzur	Croatia Croatia	Variety of Bioethics in Croatia: a Historical Sketch and a Critical Touch	26 (2011)	2	403	428	other	other
Ivana Zagorac	Croatia	One World or None: Albert Schweitzer as a Peace Activist	27 (2012)	1	69	80	environment	philosophy
Zdenko Zeman & Marija Geiger Zeman	Croatia Croatia	Environmental Issues from Hollywood Perspective – Celluloid Utopias and Anthropocentric White Patriarchal Capitalism	27 (2012)	1	123	139	environment	philosophy
Hrvoje Jurić	Croatia	From the Notion of Life to an Ethics of Life	30 (2015)	1	33	46	other	philosophy
Luka Janeš	Croatia	Paradogma of the Psychic Entropy of Evil and the Palingenesis of All-Oneness	32 (2017)	1	31	50	other	philosophy
Tomislav Krznar	Croatia	Remarks on Understanding Phenomenon of Life in the Philosophy of José Ortega y Gasset	32 (2017)	2	421	432	other	philosophy
Matea Zajc Petranović & Julia Erhardt & Matija Mato Škerbić & Nataša Jerman & Petra Korać	Croatia Croatia Croatia Croatia	Genome Editing and Selection Based on Genes Associated with Sports Athletic Performance – Some Bio-Ethical Issues	34 (2019)	2	323	340	humans	philosophy
Igor Eterović	Croatia	Between Sport and Bioethics: Grounding the Philosophy of Mountaineering	34 (2019)	2	267	284	other	philosophy
Matija Mato Škerbić	Croatia	Bioethics of Sport and its Place in the Philosophy of Sport	34 (2019)	2	379	394	humans	philosophy

Touria Nakkouch: A Moroccan Vociferous Poetess Spelling Out her Gendered Voice Anew

By Ibrahim A. El-Hussari*

*Few are those Arab poetesses whose voices have made an outreach beyond their locale. Touria Nakkouch, an outspoken Moroccan poetess¹ from the city of Agadir, and a university professor of comparative literature, is one of them. In her maiden collection of poems entitled *The Dance of the Moon*, published in Casablanca in 2009, professor Nakkouch braves the traditional, worn-out Establishment of Morocco and the Arab World by initiating a disquieting feminist monologue in search of a constructive dialogue with the other gender in a world punctuated by masculine hegemony. She redefines her own gender and feminist identity in a reluctant discourse embedded in an internal monologue which seems to transmit various messages addressed to the powerful other. This paper looks at the discursive features of one of her poems entitled “Musings Before Birth”, in which she ascribes to herself the voice of a stubborn fetus resisting to be born into a world a female newborn is almost unwelcome as a guest. To this effect, the paper uses a discourse analysis approach, informed by positioning theory, to uncover the multi-layered feminist message implied in the text to create a gender-focused understanding of the audience.*

Keywords: *Nakkouch, establishment, discourse, positioning, dialogue, monologue, feminist*

Preamble

It was during an evening gathering of poetry reading, scheduled by the Agadir Conference² for a cultural activity, that I met Touria Nakkouch for the first time. In that gathering, Touria gave me a gift. It was a poetry book signed by her. It was *The Dance of the Moon*.³ I read her first collection of thirty-seven poems in one sitting. I should admit that the book is both a source of amusement and an urge for contemplation. What matters most in this poetry book is not the variety of themes tackled by poetess Nakkouch, but her authoritative voice reverberating throughout all the poems making that book. While addressing various disrelated topics, each of which can be viewed as an issue in itself, the voice of the poetess remains the

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¹This paper uses ‘poetess’ (not poet) to make a gendered point carried by female poets with audible voice.

²It was the International Conference on Comparative Literature & the ‘Un-Worlding’ of the Human Sciences in the Global Era, organized by Professor Touria Nakkouch, then Dean of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Ibn Zohr university, Agadir, Morocco, 13-15 March, 2012. In those gatherings, most of the participants in the conference, including Touria, would recite from their own poetry collections.

³It is Touria Nakkouch’s maiden book of poems, some of which are written in Arabic, others in English & French, published by Najah El-Jadida, Casablanca, Morocco, 2009.

same: steady, confident, challenging, and unfaltering. Hence, the itch for writing this conference paper. My very choice of the poem “Musings Before Birth” for a textual, discursive study, is justified as follows. The poem is so compelling that it has made me, both as reader and scholar, raise an eyebrow concerning the poetess’s unorthodox approach to the term *dialogue*. Dialogue is traditionally defined as a fundamental tool of expression often used to exchange views between two or more persons over disputable issues, and this can be dubbed as dialogue in practice. However, the poem “Musings Before Birth”⁴ as envisioned by Touria Nakkouch is a virtual dialogue, or an internal monologue, that is a dialogue made impractical in the absence of another interlocutor. If the central issue of the poem is a feminist complaint against a social fabric tailored by masculine domination and discourse, then who is the poetess addressing to make a point? What message is being sent in that manner to make a difference? Why is the poetess avoiding a face-to-face dialogue with the other gender? Is the poetess’s internal monologue an implicit form of a dialogue with a silent other? All these questions raised for research correspond to the poetess’s voice contemplating resistance to the existing scale of values endorsed by a stagnant socio-political and socio-moral system towering over her Arab Moroccan Community. In this connection, it is the poetess’s voice which, alone, is likely to prompt readers to develop an assumption about the type of person who would spearhead that imaginative confrontation with the regrettably unresponsive other.

Prompted by the above questions, this paper studies the discursive features of the language transmitted through the feminist voice betraying a seemingly irreversible trauma plaguing the male-female relationships in the poetess’s local community and probably beyond.

Introduction

The interface of language and social reality has constantly revealed itself in literature. Poetry, as one of the four genres of literature, would function as a plane mirror reflecting the private worries of the poet as well as the public concerns of the nation. Poetry would do that in an intimate manner more than any other literary genre. Hence, it is not uncommon to say that the poet is the voice of his own clan, tribe, or community. This has precisely been the situation in Arabia⁵ and elsewhere across world cultures (Breathwaite 1984). In her poetry book, *The Dance of the Moon* (2009), Touria Nakkouch plays this representative role of the poet as she voices her feminist concerns against the backdrop of her own macho culture, as implied in her poem “Musings Before Birth” (Appendix). Quite aware of the power relations in her conservative community, her prideful, yet powerless, voice underlying the written text is still desperately seeking a way out – probably waiting

⁴See Appendix.

⁵The term is not only restricted to the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, but it also includes the Arabian geographic space between Morocco on the Atlantic Ocean and Sultanate of Oman on the Arabian Sea. In this Muslim-dominated culture, the Arab poet is often viewed as the voice of his tribe, clan, or nation. Examples from the history of Arabic literature abound.

for a powerful and wise voice coming from that Establishment for a dialogue that might open some opportunity for both sides to settle that feminist and socio-cultural gender issue. If the written text in question is telling a story, it is the poet's discourse that counts much in the context of conflicting discourses. Her narrative may illuminate directions by means of which a buried wisdom may emerge if the dialogue between the two conflicting voices allows for a starting point and gradually leads to a common ground. In this connection, Isaacs (1999) argues that real dialogue is the art of thinking together, where there should be no winners or losers – just the opposite of what an ego-centric debate usually yields. In conducting a constructive dialogue, where participants should attempt to find a common ground to reach a mutual understanding, there is no room for the ego to boast or show off, for “ego-centeredness is not individuality at all” (Bohm 1996, p. 18). To recall Paolo Freire:

Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their own decisions, do not organize the people – they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.
(Freire 1970, p. 23)

In the same vein, Romney (2005) elaborates on the parameters of a dialogue by adding a prompting factor. That is, she encourages interlocutors to keep raising questions and listening to one another. She calls this mutual act of questioning ‘the spirit of wonder’ which to her is ‘a sine qua non’ of dialogue. To quote her:

It is when we let our guard down and allow our differences and doubts to surface and interact that something authentic and original can begin to emerge, tentatively, in the spaces between us.
(Romney 2005, p. 9)

Despite the specificity of the context of situation peculiar to each of the above descriptions framing the term dialogue, the four researchers quoted above seem to have agreed on setting similar criteria for an effective engagement in a dialogue. A significant factor they share is the assumption that dialogue, as an art, needs the participation of two or more people who are willing to suspend their certainty and individuality in the presence of each other. However, none of them seems to have crossed the theoretical threshold of their descriptions to explore new and tangible ways for participants to see and do things – that is dialogue in practice. None of them has ever assumed that a dialogue may also take place in the physical absence of one of the participants engaged in the same dialogue. As a matter of fact, today various social media platforms⁶ can be used to record virtual dialogues taking place between two or more participants. Equally important, yet provocative enough, is the assumption that a dialogue could take place in the absence of the other participant or participants altogether. It all depends on the context of situation pre-

⁶Platforms used to extend conversational dialogues are increasing in number today, thanks to the advanced technological communication applications and platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Instagram, to mention only the most common.

conditioning that peculiar form of dialogue. In this sense, an internal monologue as discourse can be considered one of the various types of dialogue. Puchalska-Wasyl (2016) illustrates the difference between three types of dialogical activity: dialogue, soliloquy, and internal monologue. She argues that internal monologue is a type of dialogue through which polyphonic intrapersonal communication (Bakhtin 1981) is viewed as complex, yet a revealing activity that reflects conflicting discourses and disputes over identity, gender, ethnicity, and other controversial issues.

This paper looks at the significance of the discursive features of the poetess's internal monologue in terms of discourse. The poem "Musings Before Birth" (Appendix), as a written text, extends this possibility of studying the conflicting discourses embedded in the socio-cultural milieu in which poetess Nakkouch addresses her own complaint in form of a dramatic monologue. To that effect, this paper recalls discourse analysis as a research tool used to approach the poem as a polyphonic text raising questions that beg for answers. Although the voice of the poetess in the text is unheard, thanks to the internal monologue carrying it, her feminist position is quite clear. The written text makes her voice loud enough to be considered effective and worth studying as part of an unorthodox form of dialogue basically entrenched in conflicting discourses. Hence the following research question: What is the message borne by the poetess's voice that resists being born as a baby girl (female) in what she views as patriarchal community?

Literature Review

Text and discourse are two terms which are commonly used in literature, linguistics, and language studies. These two terms are not necessarily interchangeable; however, they inform of each other when the text is said to be socially situated or contextualized. That is, in the process of socially produced utterances, text can add to the dimensions of discourse, for utterance is considered as a unit of discourse (Bakhtin 1981). Bakhtin also argues that all texts have "dialogic overtones, and that each sphere in which language is used develops its own types of these utterances which are social constituents rather than individual psychological expressions" (1984, p. 81). Likewise, Hoey (2001) sees that the written text, as discourse, tends to avoid overt confrontation and looks for consensus building. He claims that discursive studies can be enriched by focusing on textual interaction between writer and reader, speaker and addressee. Furthermore, Fairclough (1993) develops an original framework for discourse analysis which firmly situates discourse in a broader context of social relations bringing together text analysis, the analysis of processes of text production and interpretation, and the social analysis of discourse events. Fairclough seems to have built his view of discourse analysis on the premise that institutionalized power operates in modern societies to effect social change. In "Musings Before Birth", the poem under study in this paper, Foucault's concept of power is recalled to text-analyze what the poet says and does to map forms of knowledge, sites of resistance, and social change. It is through sites of resistance engendered by power relations that "the positioning of social subjects is achieved in discourse"

(Fairclough 1993, p. 4). Positioning theory (Moghaddam et al. 2008) applies to conflicting discourses where participants seek a situated definition and redefinition of the “I” for the construction and reconstruction of social order.

Linguists also argue that a written text, as discourse, can be highly interactive. It can be viewed from a variety of perspectives, one of which is internal monologue. In fact, the dialogic features of the formally monologic written text are of increasing interest in the field of discourse analysis (Bondi 1999). The assumption that “inner monologue” and “inner dialogue” are interchangeable; that is, they are the two sides of the same coin, is practically associated with the task of the writer catering to the needs of the target audience. In “Musings Before Birth”, the poetess is exercising this privilege, for her indirect feminist discourse is also dialogic. It involves the active collaboration of other interactants, for it indirectly addresses a social reality represented by powerful yet silent voices (Kauffman 1970, Mey 2020). It is through language that we communicate our own social perception of reality. However, our perception of reality is never fixed, especially when it comes to gender differences in practice. Hence the emergence of stereotypes as both cross-cultural and culture specific variables. This is roughly the case when people interact with each other and continue to reproduce their gender images as often revealed in literature, art, scholarship, stand-up comedy shows, and television social programs (Talbot 1998). In a study of forms of social oppression conducted on ethnic minorities inhabiting a suburb of New York city, Fiske (2011) has found that stereotypes can be used to subordinate certain social groups. However, social change across various cultures remains a possible endeavor, thanks to the increasing voices and sites of resistance emerging from those cultures. To this effect, Cameron (2003) suggests that if more people question the status quo, opponents cannot keep standing in the way of social change. She contends that power in today’s social relationships can be negotiated, for it is never stable or consistent.

In “Musings Before Birth”, the voice of the poetess, transmitted through an internal monologue, is only a show case of her own uneasy feminine status in a conservative society. Seemingly a powerless speaker, the poetess’s attempt to negotiate her feminine status cannot be viewed as worthless. Decrying her feminine status could be part of a larger feminist movement taking place across other cultures. Discourse, as Foucault (1975) has claimed, does not explain where resistance to power or domination comes from. In practice, however, feminist resistance to oppression starts when people, including women, recognize how a patriarchal society has managed to produce knowledge and has also determined what counts as commonsense knowledge or “truth” (Foucault 1972, Weatherall 2002). In the text under study (see Appendix), the voice of the poetess keeps rising steadily, from beginning to end, to question that “truth” produced by social institutions over time.

To conclude this section, it is not uncommon to consider a situated dialogue as one of the perspectives of discourse in both theory and practice. Most of the literature reviewed above has shown salient discursive features of text when language is used to extend and communicate various dialogical perceptions of social reality. However, none of those research works has directly studied the

significance of internal monologue as another form of dialogue. This paper assumes that in a culture-specific context, as reflected in “Musings Before Birth”, the internal dialogue used by the poetess as a tool to communicate her own apprehension about becoming part of a male-dominated social order cannot be viewed as a call in the wilderness. No matter how implicitly or indirectly addressed, this internal monologue caters to a wider community, including the people guarding the Establishment and its social order. Accordingly, this paper focuses on the significance of the poetess’s internal monologue communicating a real female grievance that needs to be redressed, despite power relations that may delay or slow down the process of social change.

The Poem as a Dialogic Text

“Musings Before Birth” is a conventional, narrative poem consisting of eleven sections that carry the bold and consistent message of poetess Touria Nakkouch. However, that message, which holds a feminist issue, is channeled in an unconventional manner to reach the end-users. Although the lines comprising these sections vary in length and number, the linguistic valency of the female issue communicated through the voice of the poetess is never reduced in effect. The poem follows a narrative pattern without sacrificing rhyme and syllabic stress; however, as a piece of art telling a tale, the poem uses economic language to show rather than tell. The only voice filling the space of this narrative poem is that of the indignant, yet audacious, poetess recollecting the tiny moments of her mother in travail; voicing her own resistance as a fetus about to leave her mother’s womb and come out into this world; describing her plight as a growing-up female; and conjuring up her own way into freedom as a mature woman. It is the poetess, as the storyteller of her own tale that fantasizes the three stages of her life as dramatically anticipated in the modern yet patriarchal Moroccan society.

The poem opens with a short scene showing an obstetrician/midwife breaking the news that the poetess’s mother is expecting a fine, baby girl “in a month or so”. In reaction to that news, the poetess, as a fetus, feels stifled as her mother’s uterine muscles begin to contract more intensely due to “the first shock” she received. So far, there is no clash with the outside world – only a sheepish reaction to that news on the part of the mother as felt by the poetess recollecting that moment.

The next scene shows the poetess taking the part of a would-be child questioning herself if the world to be born in would be ready to accept her as a female. Still, there is no clash with the outside world; however, there is a mounting doubt or fear on the part of the poetess-as-narrator that she might not be welcome as a newcomer into her own community.

Being born a female in a male abode?
My first thought! The unsure present I am to be born in
And the happy past where my mother and I have been.

The scene that follows echoes the same concern of the poetess as a fetus about to be delivered into an unfriendly world. However, this time her feeling uneasy

about her future turns out to be an intense vocal protest, not only on her own behalf but also on behalf of her race. The following lines, betraying a clash with the outside world, express the poetess's angry attitude towards her community in a blunt manner (see Harlow 1987). The voice of the storyteller is looking for a response, a reaction, so that a dialogic argument would take place.

Clear the way for me; I shall oceans and deserts ride;
Carry my virtues and sins and those of my race, beside!

I know that world I am supposed to be born in,
I heard it in my mother's -- and sister's -- sobbing.

The last lines of this poem close the last scene of the story. They steadily build up the poetess's potential resistance to the status quo and culminate in her brave decision to break away with that stagnant social order, construct a new genderless identity, or vanish once and for all.

I would rather make the rest of the journey across
As simply me, unique, indivisible, genderless;
I would rather be given means and the right
To choose what cause to guard, what war to fight.

*O God, let me out free or else
Freeze me into one of those Sleepers
Who stay on in their liquid innocence,
Until they die or till man's madness ends. [italics mine]*

In brief, "Musings Before Birth", as a text holding a feminist message, cannot be simply categorized as just an internal monologue. It is rather a complex text through which the poetess, Touria Nakkouch, addresses a long-standing gender issue in a male-dominated Arab Moroccan community. Telling the tale of an unborn baby girl in that unconventional manner rests on two assumptions when it comes to the end-users receiving the poetess's message. Firstly, it is an inward message where the speaker is recollecting her own plight as a female barely welcome into her own social milieu. Secondly, it is an outward message where the speaker is raising a gender issue which needs redressing through a possible social change. The clash between sexes, as gradually nursed through the poetess's voice of resistance, sounds virtual. In fact, the text mentions no "powerful" man as addressee or opponent; it only hints to man as an oppressor. However, the rigorous presence of masculinity as an implied authoritarian power guarding that social order runs throughout the poem. In a word, "Musings Before Birth" is a dialogic text par excellence.

Discussion

A salient, discursive feature of “Musings Before Birth” is the feminist issue of producing the self in the context of incompatible social power relations. In a speech-act theory, spoken statements can do things and create new situations (see Austin 1975). In the text under study, the speaker does this action through self-narration. She, as the storyteller of part of her own autobiography, plays three roles simultaneously: animator, author, and main character. Such multiple vantage points show someone whose position is established when words are spoken, beliefs are told, and commitment to what is said is met (see also Goffman 1981). Hence, the reference to discourse positioning as a process in which interactants locate themselves in relation to others by producing a narrative. Positioning is, hence, a discourse process through which people negotiate their own and others’ identities in interaction by portraying themselves as characters in the narratives they produce (see Batroy 2010, Jauss 1985). There are two types of positioning: reflexive and interactive. In reflexive positioning, the interactants position themselves as having a distinct voice, their own voice. In interactive positioning, the interactants position themselves and others, thus creating ample room for negotiating identities. In this connection, this paper uses interactive positioning as a tool to study the implied meanings of discourse and interaction in “Musings Before Birth” as text.

Interactive positioning (Harré and van Langenhove 1999) is the discursive construction of personal narratives. It adds meaning to the action or issues raised by the individual telling his/her own stories in a way that intelligently caters to speaker and hearer in a specific situated context. With interactive positioning, the focus is on the way in which conflictive discursive practices allow the interactants involved to negotiate new positions within the social order to which they belong. In “Musings Before Birth,” as a narrative poem, there is no candid clash between speaker and hearer as interactants, because the narrative space described in the text is virtual, and because the conflict does not pit them against each other directly. It is the speaker who takes a position and gradually sees the world from that position. However, in telling a fragment of one’s life-story, “a speaker assigns parts in the episode, both to oneself and to other people described (see Davies and Harré 1990). In the text in question, the narrator, who speaks like a victim, is consistently addressing an unidentified public hearer, to make a point. She uses her own feminine discourse as a way of being in the world, and through which she transforms words into practice (see Ferlinghetti 2007). In the last scene of the narrative, the speaker files a grievance, on behalf of herself and her race, against a social order denying the feminine gender access to personal and social identity.

Let man not decide of our becoming. (Appendix 41)

Harré and van Langenhove (1999) elaborate on “the dichotomy of the perceived permanency of personal identity and the changeability of social identity as it is constantly in flux by constricted in situ” (p. 61). In line with her demand to prove her feminine identity, the poetess, as character-narrator, gradually heightens the tone of her voice as the sequential scenes of the narrative frame her feminist

position. The discursive features of the language used by the speaker embolden her resistance to the male-dominated social order which has for long marginalized her as a woman and neutralized her voice and role. That's why the speaker seems to have restored her own voice when her defensive attitude at the beginning of the poem turns out to be offensive as the narrative is gradually closing.

I would rather make the rest of the journey across
As simply me, unique, indivisible, genderless

Nevertheless, the speaker's new position, adjusted by her sharp tone of voice and attitude, may not be seen as involving a shift in power or access to claimed or desired identity. This statement is endorsed by Isolda Carranza as follows: "To center our attention on the content of the participants' narrative is to limit analysis to the ideational function of language, which does not lead us to a fruitful exploration of identity" (Carranza 2009, p. 154). In other words, in the unintentional absence of a public hearer, the assumed dialogue sounds rather monologic and univocal, for it is hard to believe if the implied other or hearer is made ready to conform to the speaker's definition of herself as a feminist. One way of grasping the concept of positioning is to assume that someone is listening to or reading the narrative voiced by someone else on the receiving end. However, this does not mean that positioning oneself in a dialogue, whether real or virtual, is eventually a fiasco in practice. The possibility to agree or disagree with an assigned positioning is equally as present as the possibility of resisting it. In fact, when power relations are challenged by the unprivileged, it is the subject position made available within the discourse of the less powerful that counts. Positioning herself as a "powerless" female denied access to rights and duties not equally or fairly observed by her own society, and raising questions to that effect, the poetess-as-speaker makes a moral choice stemming from her strong discourse in producing self to reconstruct or reinvent her own identity. The repetition of the situated first-person pronoun as a stance marker in the wider context of contradictory gender discourses, along with relevant discursive practices thereof, is likely to lead to negotiating the need for social change and eventually the production of personal and social identity. Viewed as a potential force for changing social reality, her voice, corresponding to her new position, is likely to usher in a process by means of which certain trains of consequences are set in motion.

I would rather be given means and the right
To choose what cause to guard, what war to fight.

The role that language plays in the construction of social reality owes, in large part, to the discursive practices of the interactants involved in a dialogue. As an approach to episodic language informing of social and cultural significance, discursive practice elucidates the consequences of grounding language use in a view of social realities as discursively constructed, of meanings as negotiated through interaction, of the context-bound nature of discourse, and of discourse as social action. In "Musings Before Birth", discursive practice sounds functional, for

poetess Nakkouch uses it smartly to construct her own feminist narrative which is totally addressed to herself and her male-sharers in that social order. The poetess's internal monologue, whispered aloud to send a message, is also one form of dialogue in practice. In linguistics, discourse is not something located in one's mind, nor is it something which has a personal form. It is a collective and dynamic process through which meanings are shaped, constructed, acquired, and transformed. Accordingly, the language used in the text in question has not probably constructed the basis for social action, and this assumption is likely to invite further academic negotiation.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has used discourse analysis, informed by interactive positioning, as a research method of analysis to study the discursive features of Touria Nakkouch's narrative poem, "Musings Before Birth." This academic method fostering the dramatic function of the internal monologue, which the speaker espouses to voice herself, is also dialogic in effect. It allows the poetess-as-speaker to address the hegemonic masculinity represented in the text by the virtual recipient of the message sent, requesting a practical response. Hence the significance of the discursive feminist issues in gender relationships, most important of which is the female personal and socio-cultural identity. This paper has also shown that identity, dramatized in the text as a problematic issue, is situated in a real socio-cultural milieu portrayed as livid with tacit anger. This specific Moroccan milieu is what makes the text interesting for academic research on gendered issues. The speaker's consistent feminist attitude owes much to the internal monologue viewed by discourse analysts as a contextualized utterance or discourse, be it monologic or dialogic. In brief, the poetic monologue in Touria Nakkouch's 'Musing Before Birth' is both strategic and smart insofar as it affords her a capacious intellectual and emotional space to explore her own 'gendered' voice without being overtly adversarial.

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Appendix

The Poem as Text

The poem under study is taken from Touria Nakkouch, *The Dance of the Moon*, Casablanca, Morocco: Najah El Jadida, 2009, pp. 43–44).

Musings Before Birth

“In a month or so”, said the soft fingers
As they dealt bold, hygienic tapings
To the roof of my dark dwelling
“A fine baby girl you will deliver!”

A first shock! Water stiffened around me
And the reeling filament almost stilled me.

Is it merry excitement I now exhort,
Sharing already my sister’s playground?
Or is it something else – an itching of sorts –
Being born a female in a male abode?

My first thought! The unsure present I am to be born in
And the happy past where my mother and I have been.

How I had kicked and kicked,
Gliding that harness binding me to her,
How I had danced to her uneven notes,
Impatient to discover the world out there!

How I had dared the taut walls of my concavity
Until, from joy or pain, I heard her shout;
How I had dared the world I was to be born into
In friendly fingers that kept daring me out!

I had felt my power surge in loud protest
Deadened only by the aquatic end of my site.
Clear the way for me; I shall oceans and deserts ride;
Carry my virtues and sins and those of my race, beside!

But now that the erudite claim has been made
I am no longer sure: to step out or stay behind?
I know that world I am supposed to be born in,
I heard it in my mother’s – and sister’s – sobbing.

I heard it in the sneers of those who will, I am sure,
For greed or concepts, hurt me with tact and tenure.

I sensed it in conflicts resolved at persons' expense;
In wars waged in my name or out of sheer nonsense.
I would rather make the rest of the journey across
As simply me, unique, indivisible, genderless;
I would rather be given means and the right
To choose what cause to guard; what war to fight.

O God, I am not yet born and
It will take the world and time to be;
I'll need oceans of love and humility
To lift the architecture of my sinking world.
Let man not decide of our becoming.

O God, let me out free or else
Freeze me into one of those Sleepers
Who stay on in their liquid innocence
Until they die or till man's madness ends.

