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Comparative case study of Poland and Hungary: Democratic implications of the Ukrainian war on public opinion

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Citation

Papp, K. (2023). *Comparative case study of Poland and Hungary: Democratic implications of the Ukrainian war on public opinion.*

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Universiteit Leiden

COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF POLAND AND HUNGARY

Democratic implications of the Ukrainian war on
public opinion

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Submission date: 27th June 2023

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Word count: 18763

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1. Introduction

The Ukraine war has brought a wide array of challenges to the European and international political order. The full-scale invasion has changed the geopolitical reality in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The war in Ukraine is shaping the line between Europe and Eurasia (Tuzhanskyi, 2023). The subsequent EU membership promised by the EU to the war-torn country has advanced the events, regarding the Russian aggression that has been present ever since the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula. Following up on the war, the role of Russia has increasingly impacted the stance of the right-wing political parties in CEE, the sympathy with the Russian regime has a number of reasons of which the most important is the public pronouncements made by right-wing politicians (Dandolov, 2022). With these public pronouncements, right-wing politicians have been able to influence the public about their propaganda and traditional values. Even though, EU membership, democratic institutions and the *acquis Communautaire* were adopted and implemented in Poland and Hungary in order to accede the Union, it hasn't been enough to prevent the rise of authoritarian leaders (Gora & de Wilde, 2020).

Therefore, it can be observed how Russia influences the CEE region, particularly Hungary and Poland. On the other hand, the influence of media and propaganda on public opinion could possibly explain the changes that Hungary and Poland have been experiencing. The public is a very important factor in electoral democracy as it reflects on the decision-making of politicians and the government. Additionally, there are several factors that contribute to how the public views recent elections or crisis situations for example. Factors such as citizen's education background, living conditions, economic conditions, age, gender etc. The contrast between the ordinary people vs the elite gives rise to populism and authoritarian leaders to exercise full control over the population (Baum & Potter, 2008). This adds to the evaluation of citizens' behavior according to which, people's view on certain political situations are examined. These factors are important to be taken into account as it greatly adds to the outcome of decision-making. However, public opinion on rule of law/democratic issues before Russian invasion and recently in Hungary and Poland hasn't been closely investigated.

This paper aims to fill the gap in the literature by analyzing public opinion on rule of law/democratic issue, specifically people from urban versus rural areas are taken as scope of the research in both Poland and Hungary before (2021) the Russian invasion and the current happenings (2022-2023). This paper aims to answer to the following research question: How

does the Ukrainian war affect political cleavages regarding the rule of law issue in Hungary and Poland? The Russian invasion has several implications to the geopolitical order, especially given the fact that Poland and Hungary have had strong ties to Moscow. The liberal democratic principles of the EU have been challenged mostly by these two member states, since the coming to power of Fidesz (Alliance of Young Democrats) and PiS (Law and Justice). The war in Ukraine had further influenced the political dynamics of the Visegrád Group of which Hungary and Poland are two determinant members who have been recently turning against each other, by taking different positions on EU's policy towards Russia (Coakley, 2022). Before the war broke out, both countries have been violating the rule of law, jeopardizing the independence of media and courts against which the European Commission has initiated Article 7 of the EU Treaty (European Parliament, 2022). Lack of trust between the Polish and Hungarian governments has paved the way for Poland to embark upon a new policy strategy that could even make stronger alliance with the EU and stabilize the security and defense policy (Coakley, 2022).

Moreover, there are a number of reasons why Poland and Hungary are being analyzed in this paper as previously described, these two countries have a common past, have been on the same path to become liberal democracy since their transformation and the fall of Communism. Most importantly, by being so similar in their policies and approach towards the EU, helping each other regarding international affairs (such as migration crisis), have turned them against each other when the Russian invasion of Ukraine happened (Coakley, 2022). Differences between the two countries do not matter when building illiberal constitutionalism (Drinóczi & Bień-Kacała, 2019, p. 1142). Hungary's illiberal constitution is stronger than the one of Poland, the influence of oligarchs is stronger in Hungary, the political influence of the Catholic church is stronger in Poland and Hungary has a rather pragmatic relationship with the EU (Drinóczi & Bień-Kacała, 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationship with the church, EU or Russia don't influence the views of the public, ordinary citizens, they still support the populist leadership. Furthermore, the psychological factor plays an important role in the perspectives of citizens on the populist regime. Education and age matter a lot regarding citizens' voting behavior, as the older and less educated tend to support the populist regime more because they represent traditional values, emphasize nationalistic agenda and uphold gender roles (Halmai, 2018). This research has further societal relevance as the war has had a significant impact on the public opinion divide in both Poland and Hungary. Even though there are major differences between the two

countries, the view of the public significantly matters since it gives support to the governing parties. In Poland, a major public discourse began with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Poles have expressed their sympathy towards Ukraine since the struggle in the process of democratization since the fall of Communism has been a major goal for them. Moreover, there is a minority Russian speaking population in Poland having more affiliation towards Russia than the West, which caused debates in Polish media and politics contributing to the polarization of public opinion (Dandolov, 2022). On the other hand, the Hungarian government has a different approach towards the war, hence the population is a bit more manipulatable. Seeking a neutral position, the Hungarian government has managed to maintain “good” relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Although, there is a public debate on whether the government favors more having closer ties to Russia than to the West and how is it playing out regarding the war. It can be concluded, that public opinion in both countries reflects the complex historical, cultural and political ties as well as the differing geopolitical interests.

The outline of this paper is as follows: Firstly, I discuss the theoretical framework of populism in a broader sense with Mudde and Kaltwasser’s (2018) definition, then narrowing the scope down I assert the role of populist governments’ influence on public opinion and the media and propaganda influence on public opinion is defined. The theory of McCombs (2004/14) on agenda setting and media influence on public opinion is used to test two hypotheses. The dependent variable in this paper is the change in public opinion which I aim to measure regarding democracy issues such as rule of law, media, satisfaction with democracy and the EU before and after Russia invaded Ukraine. The design is outlined around a mixed method analysis, namely qualitative content analysis and quantitative statistical analysis whereby I run three-way ANOVA tests and Chi Square tests in order to see the change in public opinion with control variables: type of community and level of education which were taken from the European Commission’s Eurobarometer survey from 2021 and 2022 respectively before and after the invasion period. In addition to the statistical analysis, there is a pre-post analysis that evaluates the trust level of individuals in the years 2021, 2022-2023, taking into account relevant control variables such as community type and educational level. Under qualitative methods, content analysis has been conducted to see citizens’ opinions regarding the Ukrainian war. Most significantly, Hungary and Poland are presented as case studies and why they were chosen, whereby I explain the situation before and after the invasion and the political situation with the populist governments. Consequently, I present the results with analysis under section 4. Lastly, I draw upon the

summary of main findings, theoretical implications, limitations and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical framework (with literature review)

As discussing the people, “the public”, this paper takes on elaborating public opinion in the framework of media and propaganda with the role of populist governments. Therefore, populism in general has to be shortly defined. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has played a profound role in shaping the views of the public, but also how the governments in Hungary and Poland have conveyed the message to their citizens. It is important to understand that events such as the outbreak of a war can greatly reorganize the priorities of governments in case of securing their own agenda. Populist governments can even benefit from these events (migration policies of the EU, Covid-19 pandemic, financial economic crisis). The Fidesz government has used all these happenings and turned them into their own advantage in the past years.

In this section, after elaborating on populism, I explain public opinion in general, then the impact of populist governments on public opinion including Hungary and Poland. Finally, I assess the media & propaganda and how it is used by the government to convince the public, also the impact of a crisis on public opinion change. Drawing on the theoretical foundation of McCombs (2004/2014), who developed agenda-setting to study public opinion regarding democracy issues. Additionally, I take Moy and Bosch (2013) analysis because they further investigate the role of agenda-setting and media-propaganda. I expect that the level of education and the living area (urban or rural) play an important role in the views of the public regarding democracy issues and to what extent populist governments can frame their rhetoric with media & propaganda to convince the public and turn events, like the Ukrainian war of 2022 to their advantage.

2.1. Populism

After the defeat of Communism, the wave of democratization was a global trend in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Such a remarkable process resulted in the success of liberal democracy. Hence, the most challenging factor that liberal democracy has been facing for years is populism (Peruzzotti, 2017). The theory of populism has been defined by several authors in the field (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2018; Peruzzotti, 2018). In Peruzzotti’s analysis Laclau takes another approach to populism, according to which populism equals the

constitution of the people (Peruzzotti, 2018, p. 35). Representative democratic regimes play a neutral role in dissolving the notion of the *people*, so when the institutional system of representative government is successful, takes in the demands from the individuals, it remains isolated (Peruzzotti, 2018, p. 36). The sudden collapse of democracy in Poland and Hungary after joining the European Union and the enormous power of the authoritarian regime (that promised a better future and economy for its citizens) stepped into a slow process of hybridization in transforming the institutional landscape of democracy (Peruzzotti, 2017). Hence, populism grants a significant amount of institutional and political resources in the hand of the leader which will promote the transformation of the democratic foundations of the country while endangering the country's place in the EU.

Moreover, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2018) define add to the theoretical definition of populism by explaining the ideological approach. Followingly, this ideological approach promotes those political projects that are famous among the public, given the right-wing and left-wing populism where the former stands for the "pure people" and the latter for the socialism side of the "pure people". Therefore, according to Mudde and Kaltwasser (2018) populism is better studied in relation with different ideologies because in that way populists are able to politicize grievances in their own context (p. 1670). It's further justified that the ideational approach aims to better outline the relationship between democracy and populism, as to see that the "people" are honest and the "elite" is dishonest (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1670). This has consequences regarding the incumbent government since they enjoy the majority rule while having serious problems with liberal democracy. It is widely known that populist politicians use their power to mobilize their supporters against the perceived enemies. In this case, by power I mean they use the media. This way, the Ukrainian war could be perceived as a potential scapegoat for them (Orbán-Fidesz, Kaczyński-PiS). Populist politicians frame conflicts of the international global order as danger to their constitution and to the people (nationalist view) which could lead to divisions related to rule of law.

2.2. The impact of populist government on public opinion

The framing of public opinion is closely connected to populism and how populist governments organize their agenda around it. The public as being an important pillar of the democratic system anticipates how political candidates frame issues with propaganda to gather more support (Moy & Bosch, 2013). Additionally, citizens can base their opinions on emotions, issues that are closely connected to them or substantive information which they

receive from their respective municipality. Moy and Bosch (2013) define three types of theories of public opinion that are relevant from the perspective of media and populism. 1) Agenda-setting, 2) Priming, 3) Framing. Firstly, there are several factors that mitigate the effects of **agenda-setting**. Obtrusiveness has received the greatest attention in the scholarly debate, namely those issues that have little or no direct experience have stronger agenda-setting effect on the public (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 295). The level of obtrusiveness is driven by one's need for orientation and understanding the issue at hand; there are two types of people in this case, one who doesn't perceive the issue to be relevant, hence not moving forward and the other who views it to be relevant (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 295). Additionally, either there are people who have all the information they need, hence there is a lower orientation, or people having less information yet see the issue to be highly relevant. Both approaches can be identified with how populist governments convey their message to the citizens either through media or propaganda and it will always land on the hands of those who dedicate more orientation and those who don't. Secondly, **priming** is defined as "the continuation of agenda-setting referring to the effect of media power" (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 296). It translates into when people process information and how mass media plays an important role in shaping opinion about political candidates (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 296). This is further displayed when the public receives a very important information, such as an upcoming election, hence it can happen that some people have a very specific view on certain candidates and some don't even have sufficient knowledge on who to vote for. Media comes into play when citizens have to make decisions as they read the news on a daily basis to keep up with the happenings. Thirdly, **framing** explains the influence of media based on the coverage of a particular issue (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 297). Frame as the essence of the issue provides a solid understanding on social phenomena highlighting the information (Moy & Bosch, 2013, p. 297).

Moreover, framing impacts how the public understands certain issues and looks at the quality of the media content. According to Moy and Bosch (2013) framing and agenda-setting can be interrelated as both types deal with how media shapes the salience of the issue from the public's perspective. From among these theories, agenda-setting is the most relevant to explain how media shapes public opinion. De Vreese et al. (2018) define the importance of populist communication which is reflected through the lenses of media, further, how populist governments manage to gather support from citizens and keep power for longer periods. In order to convince the people, populist governments attempt to bring the notion of people into

existence (de Vreese et al., 2018, p. 5). Moreover, by the exclusion of out-groups and opposition to the interest of the people via political communication, populists are able to construct a social identity that lies in the core of the functioning of populism (de Vreese et al., 2018, p. 6). After having elaborated on the influence of populist government on public opinion, I aim to specify it within the context of Hungary and Poland.

2.3. Media and propaganda influence on public opinion

In this section, I aim to explain the influence of media and propaganda in the framework of populism on public opinion. After having elaborated on populism in general and populist governments' impact on public opinion I dive into deeper understanding of the main tenets of the theoretical framework, namely media and propaganda. A number of authors (de Vreese et al., 2018; Moy & Bosch, 2013; Stepinska et al., 2020; McCombs, 2004/2014; McCombs & Shaw, 1972) have devoted considerable attention to the role of media and propaganda of populist governments on public opinion. McCombs and Shaw (1972) define that media creates the salience of the issue by increased coverage to shape public opinion. Agenda-setting and priming are the two methods that are the most accessible when individuals form their opinion (McCombs, 2004/2014). Steele (2018) defines the two stages of agenda-setting that have to be present, firstly the spread of message salience which conveys the importance and secondly the information that determines which parts of the message is worth to consider (p. 21).

More importantly, the salience of the message through the media shapes public opinion. On the other hand, the role of media is very important in populist communication, the way the governing party conveys the message through the media is an essential tool (de Vreese et al., 2018). Additionally, it helps to increase the legitimacy of populist actors, therefore it is very important how people engage in politics and public life (de Vreese et al., 2018, p. 7). On the other hand, citizens are consumers of media and they have a selective mechanism how they choose certain types of outlets (de Vreese et al., 2018, p. 8). De Vreese et al. (2018) argue that it really depends on how the public perceives populist attitudes whether it be corrupt or people being under-represented. According to Moy & Bosch (2013) propaganda evokes negative connotations as it attempts to affect personalities and control the behavior of individuals in an uncertain period of time in society (p. 292). They (2013) further justify the fact that mass media rather has a mediating function among factors and influences (p. 293). Stepinska et al. (2020) assert that events can trigger populist governments to use

media in order to achieve their goals. In particular events such as election campaigns, especially the Polish media played an important role in reporting on political actors in the election campaigns which have greatly contributed to populist discourse (Stepinska et al., 2020, p. 64). Moreover, within populism, media and propaganda suggests that populist leaders potentially use the benefits of media, advertising and propaganda to mobilize masses and manipulate public opinion. They could further portray the rule of law as an obstacle to their agenda, suppressing the will of the people. So, media can be used to shape public opinion and propaganda to sway public opinion by creating false sense of consensus. Media and propaganda further undermine the role of independent and balanced news; propaganda is rather used as a tool for the government to generate more support and cover the party's interests (Gipson, 2019). The capture of public media by both Hungarian and Polish governing parties are examples of rising authoritarianism.

2.3.1. The impact of events on public opinion change

In this section I define events such as crisis or war and how they can affect public opinion and what the concept of these events means. Moreover, I aim to explain the level of education and the location of living as possible mediating variables in shaping the citizens' view on such an event.

Extraordinary events such as catastrophes can generate different dynamics that spur different types of mass attitudes (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012). They are known in the policy world as focusing events because the mass attention is directed to them. Events that happen suddenly can produce unexpected outcomes (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p. 27). The Ukrainian war can be counted as one of these catastrophes. That's when policymakers come into play attempting to manipulate the public and use strategically the salience of the issue. Moreover, Atkeson and Maestas (2012) explain the public's reaction with the 9/11 terrorist attack which have greatly shaped American public opinion (p. 28). Therefore, the importance of events and consequently the information-processing stage is very important how people respond, for example how important the nature of the crisis is to the person, can lead to either shock or personal relevance (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, pp. 28-29). Thus, in order to understand public opinion in times of crisis, one has to look at how people process framed political messages and the importance of emotions in altering their views (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p. 29).

Media plays a significant role in the formation of public opinion as it creates a framework to understand such events by conveying message to the public from those affected by the implications of the event (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p. 30). The theories that are stated under “section 2.2” namely, media framing and priming impact opinions by changing the considerations that have been brought to the mind about an event. Therefore, the uniqueness of this model creates an environment which is likely to generate attributions of blame that are politically relevant in society (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p. 45). Erbring (1975) adds to Atkeson and Maestas’s (2012) analysis by advocating that solely “change” makes public opinion salient from the perspective of governmental policy performance, political agenda and politicians. Therefore, he concludes that “public opinion dynamics reflects the impact of political events on mass publics” (Erbring, 1975, p. 2).

It is very important to note that people differ in terms of policy preferences and background- such as political information, trust in politicians, education and age (Erbring, 1975). These factors largely contribute to the above mentioned “change” that occurs in an event of a crisis. Specifically, I consider the level of education and the location of living as possible mediating variables that play an important role in shaping public opinion. Steele (2018) in his Thesis Dissertation explains the role of education in shaping public opinion; he measures the level of education in relation with public opinion in the framework of the Iraqi war. Education can possibly change the level of outcome when crisis situation is at stake, such as a war. In this paper, I aim to analyze education together with the location of living as contributing factors in shaping of public opinion in the framework of the Ukrainian war. Steele (2018) argues that education and intelligence enhance the opinion of citizens. Moreover, educated people (having university degree) tend to think more critically than those without a degree and can contribute to information shifting better (Steele, 2018, p. 31). This doesn’t mean that people without education can’t think “outside of the box”, however, they would have a more restricted knowledge on certain complex political issues.

Education shapes public opinion on governments’ policy and provides strong knowledge on domestic as well as foreign policy issues (Steele, 2018, p. 31). Education with the influence of media creates opinion in the citizens’ mind which can be further manipulated by propaganda. Location of living is the other factor to be considered. Research has been justified that the rural-urban divide drives people’s political preferences and there are reasons why people choose to live either on the country-side or in the city (Maxwell, 2019a; Kenny & Luca, 2020). Simultaneously, rural-urban divide can be linked to the establishment of

populist right-wing sentiments (Kenny & Luca, 2020, p. 5). According to Maxwell (2019a) the most supporters of right-wing parties across Europe are in rural areas because they feel separated from the globalized economy. Highly skilled and better educated people move to bigger cities from small towns to have better jobs which leaves behind a decline in agriculture in the small towns as these people leave and less-educated would take their places (Maxwell, 2019a). Additionally, migration as a core concept plays a role in the rural-urban divide as urban areas are usually the center for administration, government, trade etc., whereas rural areas have more natural resource-based production for low-income workers (Potts, 2022). This results in young educated people leaving rural place which simultaneously reduces the economic performance of rural areas, encouraging more young people to leave (Potts, 2022). Moreover, the socioeconomic status and the location of living are interrelated in the political domain as people with high education tend to be more positive about the EU and related affairs such as migration (Maxwell, 2019b, pp. 457-458). I will examine whether these two components (location of living and education) are decisive in citizens' opinions on the Ukrainian war in both Poland and Hungary. Following the theoretical framework, these are the two hypotheses that will be tested accordingly. H1 refers to the first variable, namely education and H2 aims to test the second variable the location of living.

H1: The lower the education level of the citizen, the more his/her views can be influenced by the populist government through media and propaganda.

H2: The less urbanized the area where the citizen lives, the more his/her views can be influenced by the populist government through media and propaganda.

Level of Education: Level of education is central to shaping individuals' views and perspectives on certain topics. Having a higher-level of education provides people access to a wide range of information, critical thinking and capability to comprehend complex issues. Therefore, those with at least a university degree may possibly have a deeper understanding of public affairs that could possibly impact their opinion. In addition, educational institutions connect individuals with a diverse set of ideologies, philosophies, and perspectives, leading to a range of opinions among greatly talented people. Education and the influence of public opinion leaders might correlate with public opinion since their perspectives are represented. Consequently, individuals can be easier influenced, however, if they are unfamiliar with the

political topic, they could easily educate themselves before answering/voting for certain parties (Converse, 1964/2006; Zaller, 1991).

Type of community: The location or the type of community where an individual lives could also possibly impact their views because of a number of factors such as cultural, social, economic or political. Furthermore, regions, countries, even neighborhoods may have a variety of norms, values, historical ties that forms public opinion. Local issues and concerns can also heavily affect public opinion. For instance, people living in rural areas may have different perspectives on agricultural policies compared to those in urban areas who may focus more on urban development or environmental concerns (Scipioni & Tintori, 2021; Maxwell, 2019a; Kenny & Luca, 2020).

3. Research Design

The purpose of this study is to establish whether there has been any change regarding public opinion in Hungary and Poland taking the period before the Russian invasion of Ukraine and after (currently) into account. Whether this change regarding democracy issues occurred because of media and propaganda influence by the populist government in these countries. I was interested mainly in variables concerning democratic issues such as confidence/satisfaction with the EU, rule of law, trust in legal systems, national parliaments, media institutions. By looking at these factors one can determine the citizens' perspective and see how a crisis event such as the Ukrainian war might play a role. I used mixed methods, namely qualitative and quantitative to see and establish change in public opinion. Within quantitative methods, I take two control variables into account: the level of education and location of living.

3.1. Method of data collection and analysis

Firstly, I made use of a qualitative content analysis and coded different public opinion articles which helped me to measure the change in Hungary and Poland specifically regarding the Russian invasion and in the timeframe of 2022-2023 (after the invasion period). This was essential because I had to determine how citizens of Poland and Hungary view the Ukrainian war and their countries as well as the EU's role in it. Qualitative content analysis takes on further and goes beyond the interpretation of only "counting words in texts and examining language" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). It is used to provide knowledge and understand the phenomenon in the specific study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). So, I coded different public

opinion unit articles from the European Parliament (EP), DG Communication Public Opinion Unit (36 articles) European Parliament, 2022/23)). 21 articles have been coded from the Polish CBOS Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS, 2021/22/23). 12 articles have been coded from the Hungarian Századvég pro-Fidesz Foundation (Századvég, 2021/22/23). Seven articles have been coded from the Hungarian Nézőpont Research Institute (Nézőpont, 2022/23). Furthermore, Publicus and Pew Research Centers' articles have been taken into account as well. There is a summarized table with all the codes and newspapers at the end of this thesis under "Appendix section". The codes were identified according to EU responses to the Ukrainian war, such as 'peace', 'inflation', 'sanctions', 'Ukrainian refugees', 'popularity of Putin' etc. Additionally, I have analyzed speeches and blogposts from both Hungarian and Polish websites delivered by the prime ministers. It was essential to see whether the tone and substance of these documents could also possibly have an impact on the view of the public.

What the quantitative part considers, firstly, I used data from the European Commission- Standard Eurobarometer 95 surveys -Spring (2021) and European Commission- Standard Eurobarometer 98 surveys -Winter (2022-2023) with displaying a graph- of comparison of democracy issues between the years 2021 and 2023. However, the level of satisfaction with the EU and knowledge on rule of law were two main important variables for which I had to run ANOVA tests to see whether education levels and type of community have an influence on citizens opinion. Level of education variable had to be recoded as there were too many types of education in the dataset. The coded variable can be found under "Appendix section". These variables were derived from Leibniz Institute-Gesis Dataset and I considered the years 2021 and 2022 as to look at before and after the invasion period. When searching in the dataset, I inserted key words such as "rule of law", "democracy satisfaction", response to Ukraine war" in order to find the relevant variables.

Lastly, three-way Anova test helped to see whether there is any influence of level of education, type of community and nationality (Hungarian or Polish) on citizens' knowledge of rule of law and satisfaction with EU democracy in 2021. For 2022, the same three-way Anova test was performed to see the effects of the independent variables on the satisfaction with democracy in EU dependent variable. Additionally, a Chi Square test with Yates' Continuity Correction was performed to investigate the change regarding rule of law in 2022. In 2022, due to the rule of law variable, I have looked at whether citizens mention rule of law. Followingly, the Chi Square test of independence determines whether there is any association between two nominal variables, by comparing observed frequencies (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

“If the p-value is sufficiently small (usually $p < .05$), one can conclude that there is strong enough evidence against the null hypothesis of independence and that there is an association between the two variables in the population” (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

Anova test is used to establish whether there is an interaction effect between three independent variables, called three-way interaction effect (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). “An interaction effect occurs when the effect of one independent variable on a dependent variable is different at different levels of the other independent variables” (Laerd Statistics, n.d.).

3.2. Variables

Table 1. Values and categories of variables

Qualitative part- coded content analysis	Guiding questions to the analysis	Variables
Public Opinion Articles (2022/2023)		
European Parliament DG Comm. Unit	How do Polish and Hungarian citizens regard the Russian invasion vis-à-vis the EU and their government?	Military intervention, economic+political isolation, inflation, fear of nuclear weapons, sanctions, financial aid, military support, EU+NATO membership
Polish CBOS Public Opinion Research Center	How do Polish and Hungarian citizens regard the Russian invasion vis-à-vis the EU and their government?	Young people on EU integration, corruption, support for EU membership, security threat, acceptance of refugees, Role of church, inflation, oil+gas import, Polish-Hungarian relations, political+economic isolation
Hungarian-Századvég	How do Polish and Hungarian citizens regard the Russian invasion vis-à-vis the EU and their government?	withholding EU funds, inflation, Role of minority, military support, national security concerns, Role of Orbán, Pro-EU, Economy
Hungarian- Nézopont Research Institute	How do Polish and Hungarian citizens regard the Russian invasion vis-à-vis the EU and their government?	Ceasefire/peace, Brussels corrupt, financial aid, energy sanctions, satisfaction with government, Role of Orbán
Publicus Research Center	How do Polish and Hungarian citizens regard the Russian invasion vis-à-vis the EU and their government?	Russian aggression, Spread of war, peace, withholding EU funds, Dissatisfaction with pro-Russian policy
Blogposts/speeches from government (2021/2022/2023)		
About Hungary	How does the respective government address the Ukrainian war regarding democracy?	
Government Poland	How does the respective government address the Ukrainian war regarding democracy?	
Quantitative part- statistical analysis		
Eurobarometer95 survey Spring (2021)	How is the level of trust in democratic institutions differ?	Trust in media inst., national parliament, political parties, legal system, EU, EP, Better future outside the EU, type of community, level of education
Eurobarometer98 survey Winter (2022/2023)	How has the level of trust in democratic institutions changed after the invasion?	Trust in media inst., national parliament, political parties, legal system, EU, EP, political information online, Better future outside the EU, type of community, level of education, media use, control on political information
Leibniz Institute, Gesis dataset (2021/2022)	Do the control variables influence public opinion regarding democracy?	Type of community, level of education, satisfaction with EU democracy, knowledge on rule of law, informed about rule of law, nationality

Source: own table based on the before mentioned (Part 3.1.) selected data

3.3. Case selection: The case of Hungary and Poland

3.3.1. Before and after the invasion: Hungary

The impact of the populist governance in Hungary since 2010 has taken several forms and survived many crises situations. Populist politicians deny the fact that there is any limitation of power and the very basic idea of constitutionalism, since constitutionalism provides laws to the liberal order (Szente, 2023). The notion of directly representing the “average people” and the public interest derives from the popular sovereignty which sees the people as the major source of democratic legitimacy (Gárdos-Orosz & Szente, 2021, p. 21). Here the concept of people appears often because their genuine will counts in elections.

It played out in Hungary in the form of a referendum to serve the governmental interests (Gárdos-Orosz & Szente, 2021, p. 22). Gárdos-Orosz and Szente (2021) define the positive and negative factors of populism. These factors are essential when one wants to look at the situation in Hungary but also in Poland before Russia invaded Ukraine and to understand how it escalated. I take only the positive aspects into consideration because they reflect on the public vs the elites and how the elites can manipulate the opinion of their people. Within the positive criteria there are several subsections such as 1) popular sovereignty and direct democracy, 2) authentic popular representation, 3) extreme majoritarianism, 4) strong leader and strengthening of executive power. Authentic popular representation adds to the former point since the political ideology of the populist party claims that it represents the real interests of the ordinary citizens and legitimacy (p. 22). It explains the fact that the communication of populist governments towards the people plays an important role. They seek to consolidate their power through constitutional means such as media and campaigns against the opposition (p. 23). Extreme majoritarianism adds to the notion that the populist parties can only enjoy their power if they win majority in elections which creates a legitimate participation in the decision-making. The strong leader characteristics are clearly embodying in the personality of Orbán, who through his politics and communication style has been able to manipulate the visions of the public in Hungary long before the invasion happened. By changing the Hungarian constitution, he has been able to restrict the power of the opposition and capture the democratic institutions by placing his elite circles' members to top positions (p. 25). Additionally, crisis management of the leadership proves the legitimacy of populism. By taking the example of the Covid-19 pandemic and how the Hungarian government handled the situation. Reflecting on the

majority given to the Fidesz government, it received full authorization by the citizens because they put trust in the government to cope with the crisis (p. 27).

Further examples justify the restrictions on certain fundamental rights and discrimination against minority (discrimination against the Roma population, immigrants, LGBTQ rights etc). *Ádám (2023)* discusses the role of the political strategy of populism and how it displays in Hungary. Importantly, the government had established political cleavages separating Hungary's allies from its enemies (*Ádám, 2023*). In this sense, the Ukrainian war can be conceptualized as a cleavage to some extent, the government makes sure that its citizens feel safe in exchange requesting unconditional cooperation to defend the national community (p. 174). On the other hand, scholars like *Czibere and Kovách (2022)* associate populism with rural support in Hungary. Populism in Hungary came to existence to maintain authoritarian power. *Czibere and Kovách* further emphasize that rural-urban divide greatly supports populism to come to power in a country, by paying attention to the historical processes and the redistribution of social, financial and natural resources (2022, p. 735). These factors are significantly visible in the Hungarian case, where the populist regime has been in power for over a decade. After the country's accession to the EU in 2004, change in the agricultural sector has rapidly formed the social division, which has also greatly impacted the upcoming parliamentary elections (*Czibere & Kovách, 2022, p. 737*). Moreover, it is established that the success of re-election of the populist party over and over again is the result of rural votes (*Czibere & Kovách, 2022, p. 737*).

Lastly, the situation in Hungary before the invasion has been already deteriorating given the ultimate power of the Fidesz government and their rule over the media institutions. The Ukrainian war has caused a dilemma in order to decide which part is the most beneficial for the government, the East or the West.

3.3.2. Before and after the invasion: Poland

Poland has similar historical background as Hungary, however, its democracy started backsliding at a later stage (2015) as well as populism became a "famous" concept in the country's EU relations. The above-mentioned positive criteria of *Gárdos-Orosz and Szenté (2021)* can be applied to Poland as well. The Polish case such as its Hungarian counterpart reflects on the transformation from Communism to liberal democracy and then becoming a member of the EU (*Stambulski, 2023*). It is very important to note that Polish society is divided into two groups homogeneous and antagonistic (*Wróbel, 2011*). The people are

drawn into different classes such as Catholics, workers, farmers and other social classes. Given the role of the church which plays a determining role and seen interconnected with politics. All these social classes are disappointed with Europeanisation, democratization and globalization as such, processes that took place after the fall of Communism, bringing the country into a better economic condition or expecting better standards. The populist government had taken on this perspective and jointly raised its voice against the so-called enemy, the enemy here is embodied in the EU and its policies such as the migration/asylum policies, supporting the LGBTQ rights and such. All of which are disapproved by the Polish PiS party.

The political propaganda of the governing PiS party seeks support with direct, easy questionnaires replacing the national referendum (no national referendum has been held since 2015-PiS coming to power) without having any legal consequences (Szente, 2023). The Polish government refers often and speaks on behalf of the people by preaching that “we want the best to our nation by defending national values”, however, the constitutional principle has not been strengthened. Another important pillar is the way populists use their power, such as putting their trustees to govern institutions. The lower house of Parliament (The Sejm) in Poland got restricted by the governmental influence and the PiS took complete political control over the governing of other judiciary bodies such as the supreme court (Szente, 2023). Extreme majoritarianism empowered the government to take any legal action, including adopting a new constitution. In Poland, after the 2015 elections and success of the PiS party, the Constitutional Tribunal’s members were replaced with the Sejm’s own people (Szente, 2023). Moreover, the judicial independence has been curtailed and a new central administration has taken place. This centralization of power has further restricted the Media Council and gave the PiS government autonomy to exercise full power. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Polish government has been authorized with full power to regulate the crisis so they could act without any parliamentary decision (Szente, 2023).

Therefore, the period before the invasion can be explained as a genuine power control by the government, however, it took a more determinate and ambitious role, standing by Ukraine and fully dedicate efforts with a united Europe to defeat Russia and end its imperialistic attitude. It can be concluded that Polish attitude differs from that of the Hungarian and emphasizes the unity of the EU more, while Hungary doesn’t believe completely that the EU acts in a favorable way (Rácz, 2021).

3.3.3. The reasons why Hungary and Poland were chosen as case studies

In the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Poland and Hungary are the best examples to show how citizens' opinions regarding democracy issues differ before and after Russia invaded Ukraine. Then, I focus on the public's view. There are a number of reasons why these countries have been chosen.

Firstly, the ruling governments in Poland and Hungary are very similar in their populist strategies and how they frame their rhetoric around the EU. Secondly and most importantly, populists present themselves as defenders of the common traditional values such as religion and family (Gyulavári & Pisarczyk, 2023). Thirdly, the national and European policies are framed in a way for the public to easily adjust. Hence, the most important for them is to win the public. What determines democratic backsliding under the rule of the populist governments is that democratic institutions and legal values are always oppressed (Gyulavári & Pisarczyk, 2023). Additionally, Szente (2023) asserts that the economic boom of the 2010s made it possible for the governing parties (PiS, Fidesz) to consolidate their power and win a strong popularity (p. 5). Only Poland and Hungary have been able to dismantle the institutional system of checks and balances and follow the Christian conservative ideology. These are the only two countries in CEE that have been able to institutionalize the semi-authoritarian political and constitutional system through constitutional changes abandoning the Western modelled ideals of democracy (Szente, 2023, p. 5). Fourthly, corruption and Hungary's Russia friendly policies and approach are significantly different from that of the PiS. Which brings me to the point of the reaction of the public on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The responses of both governments greatly differ regarding the war situation. The regimes in Poland and Hungary are perceived authoritarian, based on their nationalist political reforms opposing Western European populism which still keeps the rule of law alive (Gárdos-Orosz & Szente, 2021, p. 10). Emphasizing the gap between representative institutions and the people, the real issues of liberal democracy is further deteriorated. Moreover, Fidesz gained enough majority to change the constitution for the purpose of its own ideological and political wins, however in Poland there wasn't enough majority to do so (Szente, 2023, p. 6). Additionally, Poland has a much stronger opposition in the parliament.

Lastly, although there have been many similarities between the two countries regarding their national security concerns, populist rhetoric which aligns with the nationalist view, the power for more control and the erosion of democratic norms/institutions are

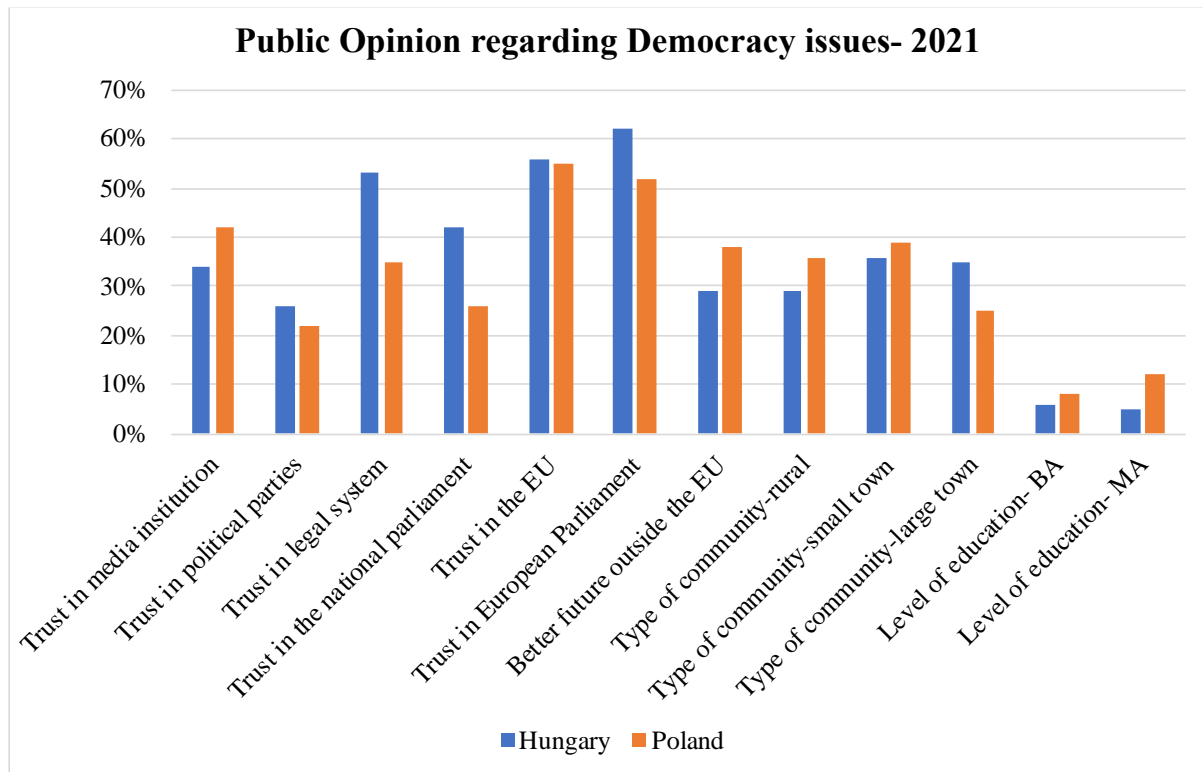
important to understand why Hungary and Poland are the best to showcase public opinion change regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, EU membership plays a significant role too because Hungary and Poland are both members of the EU which has enormously helped to mediate the conflicted situation. It is very important to understand that the relationship with EU amends the view of the governments by being either too hostile towards Ukraine or too friendly towards Russia, which affects the political cleavages as the EU is a key supporter of the democratization process in Ukraine.

4. Analysis and Results

Under this section, I first introduce the pre-post analysis regarding democracy variables and the role of media and propaganda. It is important to develop an understanding of citizens views regarding democracy which will be completed by the quantitative and qualitative sections. Pre-post analysis shows the level of trust in media institutions, political parties, legal system, national parliament, EU, European Parliament- moreover, whether better future exist outside the EU, how often do citizens use the media and whether they trust in online information platforms regarding politics with type of community and level of education indicated.

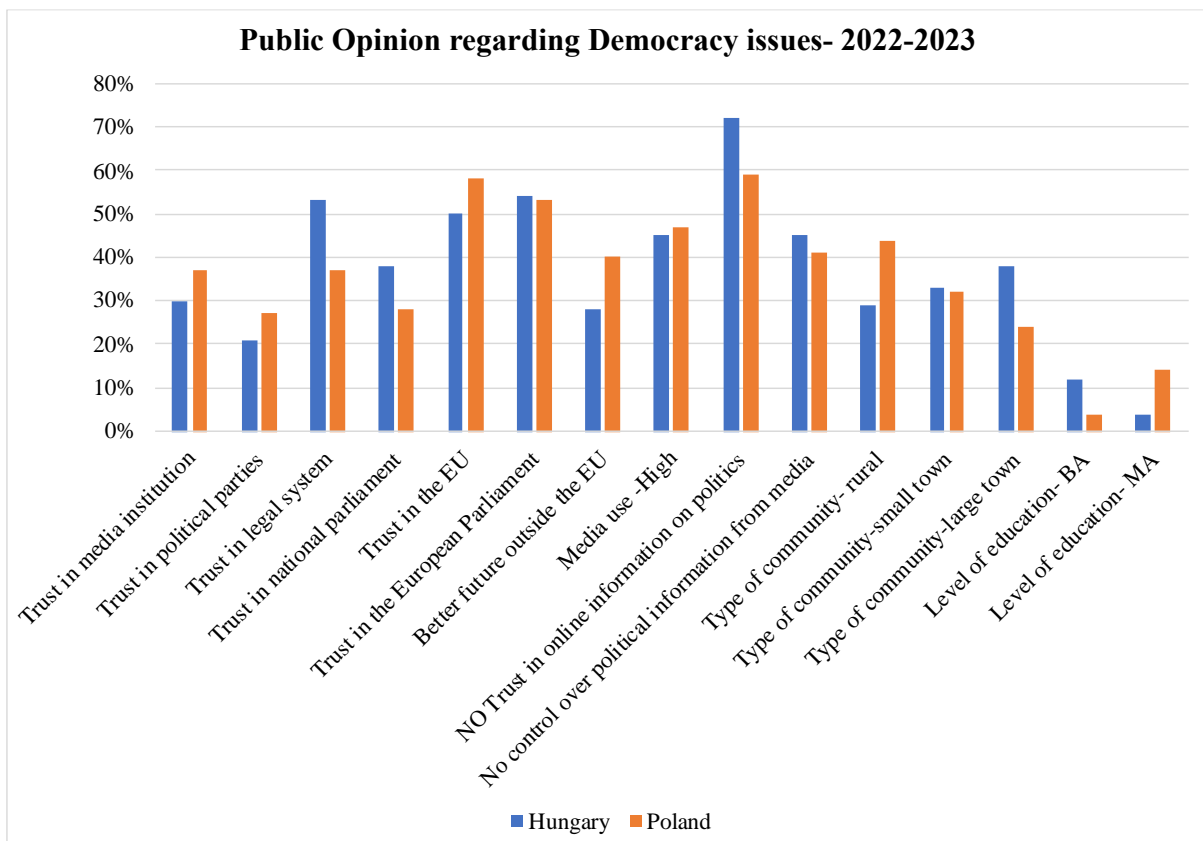
4.1. Pre-Post analysis with regards to democracy variables

Graph 1. Public Opinion regarding democracy issues- 2021



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer95 Spring 2021

Graph 2. Public Opinion regarding democracy issues- 2022-2023



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer98-Winter 2022-2023

When choosing among the surveys, I have looked at democratic variables in both Poland and Hungary, furthermore the survey had to be in the year of 2021 as this concerns the ‘before invasion’ period and the year of 2022-2023 as this concerns the ‘after invasion period’. The Standard Eurobarometer surveys are public opinion surveys conducted on behalf of the European Commission focusing on monitoring key trends relevant to the European Union as a whole, European Commission priorities as well as contemporary socio-political events (Eurobarometer, n.d.). In the survey of 2021, there is no word mentioned about the war, nor predictions that war could break out. However, in the survey of 2022-2023 I chose indicators that are focused more on media as media and propaganda is an important factor that could potentially influence both citizens’ views and governments.

In the graphs, I have looked at the main democracy variables, type of community and level of education. Nevertheless, these graphs do not account for the community's nature and educational background; they solely depict the pre-invasion and post-invasion changes among the participants. There were in total 1040 respondents interviewed in Hungary and 1014 in Poland in 2023 (European Commission, Eurobarometer98, 2022-2023). 1021 respondents in Hungary and 1017 in Poland were interviewed in 2021 (European Commission, Eurobarometer95, 2021). The percentage on the left side of the graphs indicates the citizens’ answers, I looked at always the total number “yes” or “no” at the end of each survey which helped me to draw conclusions and differentiate between the years. Next, I explain the graphs and the indicators then I differentiate between the two.

According to 2021 survey, the trust reached the highest point among member states since 2008, with respect to Poland (58%) and Hungary (50%). Both Polish and Hungarian citizens trust the EU and its institutions, especially the European Parliament, which hasn’t changed much regarding the Ukrainian invasion, however, both nationalities are concerned about the economic situation (European Commission, Eurobarometer95, 2021). While, trust is very high in the EU and the EP, citizens tend to trust less in their respective national parliaments, as to see that it deteriorated in Hungary from 42% to 38% and in Poland it got increased by only 2%. I looked at the general situation in these countries which is not mentioned in the graph and interestingly only 41% in Poland and 45% in Hungary agrees that its “rather good” in 2021 (European Commission, Eurobarometer95, 2021). Moreover, it can be seen that there were more Polish citizens (44%) from rural areas responding in 2023. While the percentage of Hungarian respondents from rural areas hasn’t changed between the

years. The percentage of respondents from large towns has also slightly increased in the Hungarian case (from 35%-38%). Those having a higher-level education BA in Hungary has doubled, which could be reflected on the other percentages, such as trust in legal system, EP, national parliaments and better future outside the EU- as all these indicators have significantly decreased since 2021.

In 2023, these numbers decreased gradually to 34% in Hungary and 38% in Poland (European Commission, Eurobarometer98, 2023). After the invasion almost half of the respondents agree that the situation in their countries is “rather bad” than good. The pessimistic picture created in citizens’ views continues to rise as media and the online platform appears more frequently among the questions in 2023. Therefore, I added plus information on the 2023 graph about media as it plays an important role in how citizens perceive the information surrounding them about the war. The variable “no control over political information from media”, less than half 45% in Hungary and 41% in Poland said “yes” that media is free from political pressure, which is a lot. In order to understand the role of the media in these two graphs, I gathered some additional information from the Polish and Hungarian websites regarding media influence on Hungarian and Polish public opinion. In 2023, the use of media and consequently the trust in media institutions have changed, people trust less in media institutions, however they tend to rely more on online content regarding the war (European Commission, Eurobarometer98, 2023). Polish public media has rather been functioning as a tool for propaganda by the government since 2019 (Gipson, 2019). Not only the elections have been greatly supported by the media campaign but also the overwhelming positive coverage of the PiS party and its interest (Gipson, 2019). Eddy and Fletcher (2022) also analyze the impacts of media use on public opinion and concludes that in Poland citizens’ attention to the media and getting information from it, is relatively high.

On the other hand, after the 2022 elections in Hungary, the role of the media has taken a deeper meaning in the political landscape. Since taking office (2010), the Fidesz party has captured state institutions among which the media empire of the Orbán government has received the most attention (Magyar, 2016). However, the wrongdoings of the Hungarian government were retaliated, as in the light of the 2020 ruling of the EU Court, the government had to revoke a law requiring NGOs to register with foreign authorities (Mong, 2022). These plans are similar to the one of Russia, where NGOs and journalists are exposed to severe threats from the government (Mong, 2022). Consequently, after the 2022 Hungarian elections, the pro-government media outlets have attacked the opposition party by giving them different labels and consequently reassuring their position in the country (Mong, 2023,

CPJ). Additionally, alongside the Ukrainian war, the economic crisis and fears over rising prices have helped the Orbán government to win the constitutional supermajority (Mong, 2022, CPJ). The same has been happening in Poland since 2015, PiS took control over the media outlets and reformed Polish public media (Gipson, 2019). As well as in Hungary, PiS government used the media to foster its election campaigns. *Wiadomości*, the chief Polish news program has been favoring the PiS party, ever since it came to power (Chapman, 2018). The government further used the media as a tool to accuse the opposition of “political hypocrisy” of trying to block PiS’ efforts to change the electoral law (Chapman, 2018).

Lastly, it can be seen that the media plays an important role in the political landscape of both governments. While, both governments have been using it as a tool to influence the public, it is observed in the graphs that the Russian invasion has changed it, as people tend to trust less in media institutions and online resources on political affairs.

4.1.1. Summary and conclusion

In conclusion, trust in media institutions have deteriorated after the invasion, however, Polish citizens tend to trust more than Hungarians. Trust in political parties, legal system (judiciary) and the national parliaments show an obvious decrease in Poland. Moreover, Polish people trust the EU more than Hungarians, interestingly the European Parliament is not so well trusted among citizens of the respective countries after the invasion. Moreover, Polish citizens believe that there is better future outside of the EU, even though they were among the ones that are the most optimistic about the future of the EU in 2021, the Ukrainian war has changed this perspective. Surprisingly, the satisfaction rate with democracy in the EU has increased in Poland from 68% to 72% and decreased in Hungary from 65% to 46% (European Commission, Eurobarometer, 2021/2023).

More importantly, there is a diverse viewpoint on the influence of social media and propaganda on public opinion in Hungary and Poland. While in Hungary its more significant and profound due to the polarization and lack of diversity, most media outlets are controlled by the government, announcing pro-government interests. There is also a strong Russian influence on media in Hungary, furthermore, the Hungarian government mostly being two-sided as to preaching solidarity for Ukraine through propaganda, but also emphasizing the ethnic Hungarian minority’s role in the political agenda. Hence, the Hungarian government is promoting a narrative opposing sanctions against Russia and promoting a geopolitical conflict between Russia and the West in which Hungary has no role. Thanks to propaganda, the polarization of the issue has been very strong, most Hungarians view the conflict through

the eyes of the government. Hence, it can be said that the one-sided narrative promoted by the government has found many supporters among the public, therefore turning the public opinion in favor of the government. On the contrary, the Polish government has been very pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian. The Polish media has a positive impact on the public as to portray Ukraine being under Russian oppression. There is also a large amount of help needed in order to restore European security. The Polish media has further emphasized the historical past which binds the two countries together. Additionally, Poland is the largest receiver of Ukrainian refugees amounting to almost 2 million people. Even though Russian propaganda tried to influence the Polish public, the government has been counteracting by greatly supporting the sanctions package.

4.2. Quantitative analysis

Under this section, I present the tables from the Anova tests of 2021 and Anova+ Chi Square test of 2022. It's important to establish that the dependent variables measured are "Informed about rule of law in country" and "Satisfaction with democracy in the EU", the independent or control variables are "level of education", "type of community" and "nationality".

Moreover, under this section I determine whether the level of education and type of community could possibly influence public opinion on rule of law and satisfaction with democracy in the EU. This is essential to establish since it adds to the theory of McCombs (2004/1014).

Firstly, 2021 is analyzed. Two three-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of nationality, level of education and type of community on informed about rule of law in country and democracy satisfaction in EU, for the year of 2021.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics Showing the Difference in Informed about Rule of Law in Country Based on Demographic Variables in 2021

Variable	Subcategory	N	Mean	SD
Nationality	Hungary	1076	2.50	.80
	Poland	1061	2.73	.74
Education Level	Primary education	913	2.10	.86
	Secondary education	14229	2.53	.79
	Short cycle tertiary	2141	2.75	.79
	University Level	9122	2.82	.76
Type of Community	Rural area or village	8250	2.56	.81
	Small/middle town	9592	2.66	.77
	Large town	8601	2.67	.81

Table 3*Results of Analysis of Variance for Informed about Rule of Law in Country in 2021*

Variable	df	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Nationality	1,2113	2.22	.137	.001
Education	3,2113	13.74	.000	.019
Community	2,2113	.56	.573	.001
Nationality*Education	3,2113	2.65	.047	.004
Nationality*Community	2,2113	.31	.736	.000
Education*Community	6,2113	.61	.725	.002
Nationality*Education*Community	4,2113	.43	.788	.001

Note: Dependent variable: *Knowledge about Rule of Law in Country*

Firstly, Anova test was conducted to investigate the difference in respondents' knowledge about rule of law in country based on nationality, level of education and type of community. Knowledge about rule of law was measured with scale ranging from 1 to 4, with higher score means higher level of knowledge about rule of law in country.

Results indicate that the interaction of nationality with type of community, level of education with type of community, and nationality with education and type of community are not statistically significant as shown in the table 2. However, the interaction between nationality and education was statistically significant, $F(3,2113) = 2.65, P=.047$. The main effect of nationality and type of community were not statistically significant. But the main effect of level of education was significant.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics Showing the Difference in Satisfaction with Democracy in EU in 2021*

Variable	Subcategory	N	Mean	SD
Nationality	Hungary	1054	2.61	.65
	Poland	1021	2.73	.64
Education Level	Primary education	834	2.40	.77
	Secondary education	13840	2.49	.71
	Short cycle tertiary	2119	2.53	.70
	University Level	9035	2.60	.68
Type of Community	Rural area or village	8030	2.50	.72
	Small/middle town	9408	2.52	.69
	Large town	8423	2.58	.70

Table 5*Results of Analysis of Variance for Satisfaction with Democracy in EU in 2021*

Variable	df	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Nationality	1,2052	.82	.365	.000
Education	3,2052	3.17	.023	.005
Community	2,2052	1.70	.182	.002
Nationality*Education	3,2052	1.13	.334	.002
Nationality*Community	2,2052	1.66	.191	.002
Education*Community	6,2052	1.00	.424	.003
Nationality*Education*Community	4,2052	1.63	.165	.003

Secondly, another Anova test was performed to investigate the difference in Democracy satisfaction in EU based on nationality, level of education and type of community.

Democracy satisfaction in EU is measured with scale ranging from 1 to 4, with higher score means higher satisfaction about democracy in EU.

Results show that no interaction effects were significant as shown in table 4. The main effect of nationality and type of community were not significant. However, the main effect of level of education on democracy satisfaction is statistically significant.

Table 6*Descriptive Statistics Showing the Difference in Satisfaction with Democracy in the EU in 2022*

Variable	Subcategory	N	Mean	SD
Nationality	Hungary	996	2.57	.69
	Poland	1032	2.87	.66
Education Level	Primary education	899	2.54	.77
	Secondary education	13582	2.60	.74
	Short cycle tertiary	2044	2.67	.70
	University Level	8609	2.66	.72
Type of Community	Rural area or village	8237	2.64	.74
	Small/middle town	9159	2.60	.71
	Large town	7775	2.64	.75

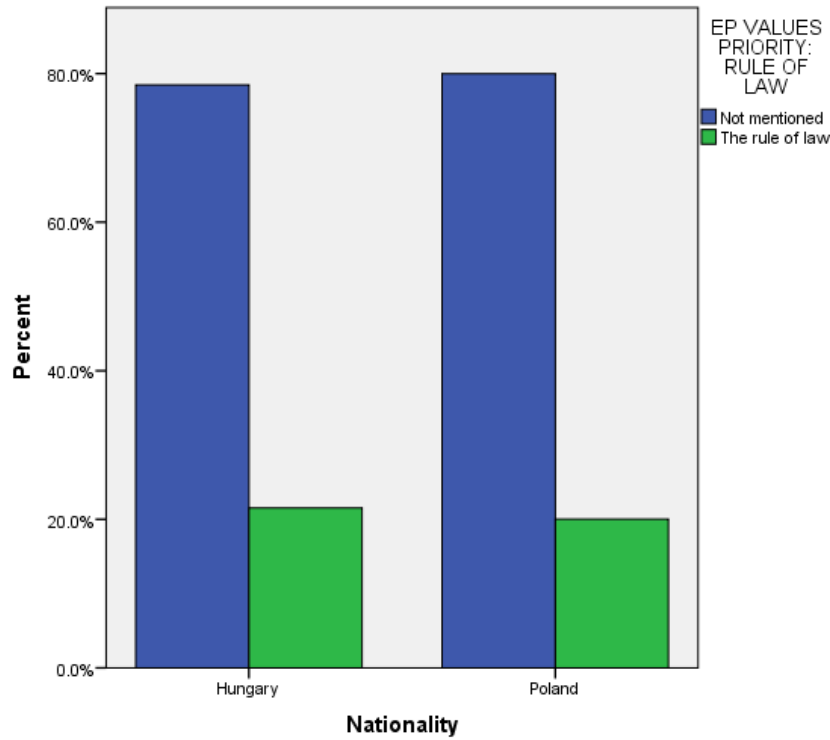
Table 7*Results of Analysis of Variance for Satisfaction with Democracy in the EU in 2022*

Variable	df	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Nationality	1,2004	8.49	.004	.004
Education	2,2004	1.79	.167	.002
Community	3,2004	.20	.894	.000
Nationality*Community	2,2004	.13	.876	.000
Nationality*Education	3,2004	.36	.779	.001
Education*Community	6,2004	1.23	.288	.004
Nationality*Education*Community	6,2004	1.26	.272	.004

The same three-way Anova tests were repeated to investigate the effect of nationality, level of education and type of community on democracy satisfaction in EU for the year 2022. The results show that neither level of education, type of community have significant effect on democracy satisfaction in EU. Only the nationality variable shows significant effect on democracy satisfaction in EU. Descriptive statistics indicate that Polish national (Mean=2.87, SD= .66) has significantly higher satisfaction with democracy in EU compared to Hungarian national (Mean=2.57, SD=.69) in 2022.

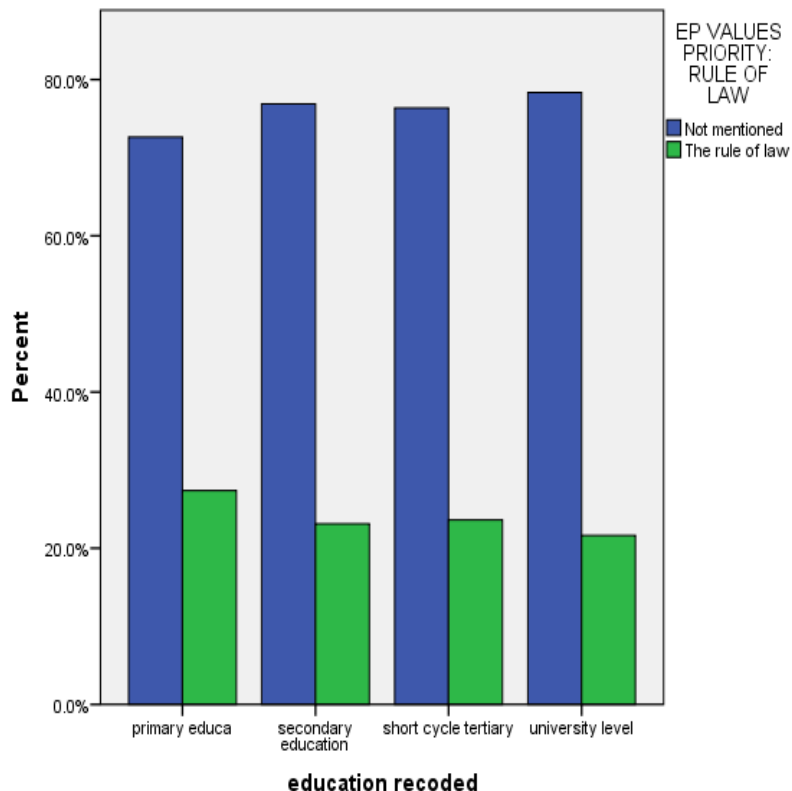
The interaction between nationality, level of education and type of community are not statistically significant.

Graph 3



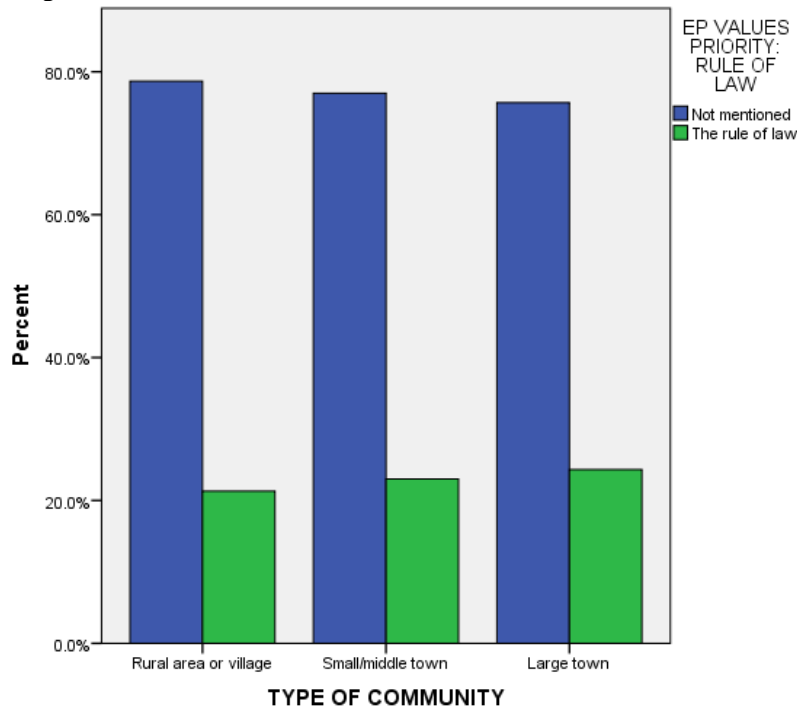
In the year of 2022 analysis “the Rule of Law” variable was measured with Chi Square Test with Yates’ Continuity Correction and investigate whether citizens have mentioned rule of law after the invasion of Ukraine or not. A Chi-square test for independence (with Yates’ Continuity Correction) indicate no significant association between nationality and EP values priority: Rule of Law, $\chi^2(1, n = 2119) = .65, p = .39, \phi = -.02$. Two by two cross tabulation indicated that 21.5% of Hungarian national considered rule of law as part of EP values priority while the proportion is 20% for Polish National.

Graph 4



Another Chi- square test for Independence was performed to investigate the relationship between level of education and opinion about rule of law as a part of EP values priority. The test for indicate a significant association between level of education and EP values priority: Rule of Law, $\chi^2(3, n = 26529) = .19.84, p < .001, \text{phi} = .027$. Four by two cross tabulation indicate that 27.4%, 23.1%, 23.6%, 21.6% of the respondents considered rule of law as part of EP values priority with primary, secondary, short cycle, university level education respectively.

Graph 5



Lastly, a Chi- square test for Independence was conducted to investigate the relationship between type of community and opinion about rule of law as a part of EP values priority. The test for indicate a significant association between type of community and EP values priority: Rule of Law, $\chi^2 (2, n = 26566) = 22.12, p < .001, phi = .029$. Three by two cross tabulation indicate that 21.3%, 23%, 24.3% of the respondent considered rule of law as part of EP values priority with rural area, small/middle town and large town respectively. So, citizens from large towns consider rule of law as EP value priority the most.

4.3. Qualitative content analysis

4.3.1 Public Opinion Articles discussing the Ukrainian war’s implications on Hungarian and Polish views

Table 8. Hungarian public opinion on the Russian invasion of Ukraine-coded

Codes	Articles	Frequency
Withholding EU funds	11.2022, 01.2023, 12.2022	3x
Economy	11. 2022, 09.2022, 12.2022	3x
Inflation	09.2022, 04.2023, 05.2022,	3x
Sanctions	01.2023, 09.2022, 05.2022, 07.2022,20.05.2022, 29.09.2022, 12.10.2022, 20.10.2022, 16.03.2022	10x
Role of Minority	01.04.2023	1x
Pro-peace	01.2023,09.2022,03.2023	3x
Security concerns	02.2022, 03.2022,	2x
Christian culture	01.2023, 07.2021	2x
Role of Orbán	03.2022, 03.2022	2x
Military support	01.2023, 05.2022, 03.2022, 02.2022, 16.03.2022, 20.04.2022	6x
Popularity of Putin	10.06.2022	1x
Russian aggression	11.2022, 03.2022	2x
Dissatisfaction with pro-Russian policy	11.2022, 03.2022	2x
Financial aid	11. 2022	1x
Satisfaction with government	07. 2022	1x

Source: own table, based on Századvég, Nézőpont, Publicus and European Parliament-Eurobarometer data

Firstly, it has to be explained that the sources from the public opinion sites are mainly covering the years 2022 and 2023 so “the after and during invasion period”. It is important to take this into account due to the recency of the research topic. In Table 10. I have collected all the public opinion sources from Hungarian public opinion websites such as Századvég, Nézőpont, Publicus Research Center and few of them from European Parliament DG Comm’ Public Opinion Monitoring Unit which published surveys and polls regarding the Ukrainian war. These opinion articles are assembled in a comprehensive way, indicating all EU member states opinions. Followingly, I looked at only Hungary and Poland starting from 04.03.2022 until 11.05.2023 (European Parliament, Eurobarometer, 2022-2023). The Hungarian Századvég is a pro-Fidesz public opinion site, publishing mainly in favour of the government. I have collected articles respectively the war period (2022-2023) but also from 2021. Nézőpont has been established to improve Hungarian public life and public discourse by providing real data, there is also a bit of bias in the representation of public opinion and favoring the government (Nézőpont, 2023). Publicus research center is commissioned by Népszava and conducts decision-preparatory analysis for companies, public service and government bodies.

Secondly, I explain the codes and the respective articles chosen. The codes were chosen in accordance with the content of articles searching for the most frequent phrases.

“Withholding EU funds” refers to the concern of the Hungarian government according to which Budapest didn’t support financial aid package to Ukraine as Brussels has been withholding EU funds for post Covid 19 recovery purposes and other cohesion funds (Századvég, 09. 2022; Publicus Research, 12.2022). Citizens have been deemed the EU’s acts unfair as it should support first EU members such as Hungary and then non-members such as Ukraine. “Economy” and “Inflation” codes are intertwined in a sense that they both refer to the current situation that Hungary is facing. Majority of Hungarians believe that the sanctions that are posed by the EU on Russia hurt the EU’s economy and hence Hungarian economy (Századvég, 11. 2022). Furthermore, citizens think that it’s more likely for an economic crisis to happen in the next 12 months, due to the high inflations rates. Sanctions code appeared the most in the articles and the Hungarian nation has a very diverse and distinct view on the sanctions package dedicated by the EU towards Russia. More than 68% of Hungarians expressed their feelings towards the EU sanctions package and found it rather unfavorable as it would bring the economy down and people would suffer more in the EU (Századvég, 09. 2022). Furthermore, there is a high percentage of people, 79% who believe that the sanctions plan plays a decisive role in the rise of fuel and energy prices (Századvég, 09.2022).

The “role of minority” has an important place in Hungarian history, as there is a significant number of people living on Ukrainian territory. Their rights as minority have been recognized in 1991 Joint Declaration while further encouraging Ukraine to respect minority rights since it’s a fundamental principle to become EU member state (Századvég, 04. 2023). There have been serious differences between Hungarians and Ukrainians in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea 2014, and with the new education law coming into effect in 2017, the relations have been further deteriorated (Századvég, 04. 2023). “Pro peace and security concerns” codes are linked together as well. From the beginning of the war, Hungarians stand by the fact that peace negotiations are utmost important given the security issues. Moreover, Hungary has its borders with Ukraine which complicates the issue further as there is a massive refugee flow coming into the country (Századvég, 09. 2022). The “role of Orbán” and the “Christian culture” codes appear in Századvég and Nézőpont public opinion articles. It is less frequent, however, its significant to look at how many times the Orbán government has referred to the role of Christianity in Europe and in Hungary, especially during the migration crisis (Századvég, 07. 2021, 01. 2023). The code “military support” and “popularity of Putin” are closely connected too. Military support has appeared more in the respective sources and it reflects on the significance of the issue. According to Századvég

survey, 80% of Hungarians oppose sending arms to Ukraine, which is the highest score among EU member states (Századvég, 01. 2023). There is also an internal struggle among member states, whether to continuously support Ukraine with military assets or not.

The “popularity of Putin” code reflect on the fact that Hungarian society is highly polarized. His popularity has declined since 2017 and both pro-Fidesz and opposition voters have rejected to support his agenda (European Parliament, 06.2022). As well as other EU nations, Hungarians deemed the act of Russia as an aggression, breaking a sovereign nation state internal security (Publicus Research, 11. 2022, 04.2022). The codes “Russian aggression and “dissatisfaction with pro-Russian policy” underline that the Orbán government wants to keep its good economic relations with Russia, however, the public considers that the government’s Russian policy is only there to serve Russian interests (Publicus Research, 03. 2022). “Financial aid” code refers to the financial package that the EU had allocated for the restoration of Ukraine. Hungarians strongly disagree (66%) with this (Nézőpont, 11. 2022). It could be referred to the EU funds that have been withheld by Brussels given the high corruption rates in Hungary. The country had to show whether it can seriously launch new reforms in order to stop backsliding (Burchard, 2022). According to Nézőpont survey, the Hungarian nation is the most satisfied with their government in CEE accounting to 61%, whereas in Poland only 25% (Nézőpont, 07.2022). This is an interesting fact since after so many crises’ situations such as the pandemic and the ongoing migration, Hungarians still believe that their government does everything in its power to stand for the nation and keep the country out of war.

Table 9. Polish public opinion on the Russian invasion of Ukraine-coded

Codes	Articles	Frequency
Military intervention	13.05.2022, 18.03.2022	2x
Peace	25.03.2022	1x
Role of the West	29.04.2022, 24.06.2022, 05.2022, 01.2023	2x
Popularity of Putin	22.05.2022, 20.05.2022,24.06.2022,10.06.2022	4x
Support for gas embargo	08.04.2022, 10.06.2022	2x
Economy	24.06.2022, 11.05.2022, 01.05.2022, 03.2022	2x
Inflation	08.07.2022, 02.09.2022,29.09.2022, 10.2021	4x
Fear of nuclear weapons	29.09.2022	1x
Sanctions	06.10.2022, 20.05.2022	2x
Financial aid	03.2022, 08.04.2022	2x
Anxiety	17.06.2022	1x
Military support	13.05.2022	1x
Acceptance of refugees	11.2022, Jul/Aug 2022, 05.2022, 06.2022, 01.2023	5x
Less confidence in Nato	12.2021, 02.2023	2x
Corruption	12. 2021	1x
Young people on EU integration	Jun/Jul 2021, 02.2021	2x
Security concerns	10. 2021, 05.2022, 01.2023	3x
Spread of war	05. 2022	1x
Support for Ukraine's EU + Nato membership	03. 2022	1x
Role of church	06. 2022	1x

Source: own table based on CBOS-Public Opinion Research Center; European Parliament-Eurobarometer data

The most recent Polish public opinion source was derived from CBOS Public Opinion Research Center which is an independent non-profit public foundation and opinion polling institute. It conducts research for Polish public administration bodies, societies as well as government bodies (CBOS, 1990). I additionally used the European Parliament DG Comm’ Public Opinion Monitoring Unit as in the Hungarian section. The codes in this table are slightly different than those of the Hungarian.

Poles have a stronger opinion on “military intervention” than Hungarians, 60% of the population believes that NATO forces should not intervene militarily and that Ukraine can fight off the war (European Parliament, 03.2022, 05. 2022). Peace is greatly emphasized among Polish people regarding the war as much as among Hungarians. Moreover, young generation greatly supports the government in responding to war crimes (European Parliament, 03.2022). The “role of the West” code reflects on Polish people’s attitudes towards the West, as it doesn’t support Ukraine enough, it could do more (European Parliament, 04.2022, 06.2022). This comes from the assumption that Poland relies heavily on US support, there is a strong 82% of confidence rating in US President Joe Biden (Pew Research Center, 06.2022). Consequently, 75% of Polish people wants Ukraine to become a NATO member as soon as possible, and would defend Ukraine using military force. The

following codes are closely linked: “economy” and “support for gas embargo”. After the invasion, Poles are the most concerned about their economy, 65% of the population is pessimistic about the future of the economic situation (European Parliament 06.2022). Moreover, 79% of the population who have higher education believe that Poland should resign from purchasing energy sources from Russia completely, so the complete economic isolation and the admission of Ukraine to the EU are the top purposes of the agenda (04. 2022). 63% of Poles support gas embargo on Russia and further military sanctions (European Parliament, 06. 2022). Inflation surprisingly appears more frequently in Polish public opinion than Hungarian. As the escalation of the conflict intensifies, the fear of future concerns such as inflation, economy and spread of war become more present in daily life (European Parliament, 07.2022). Additionally, half of the Polish population is concerned about the use of nuclear weapons and simultaneously inflation becomes global concern (European Parliament, 09. 2022).

Poland greatly supports the EU sanction package as well as the financial aid to Ukraine. As citizens are more concerned about the war and its surroundings, anxiety and sadness are key words describing people’s feeling about Russia’s advance and how fear becomes part of their daily lives (European Parliament, 06. 2022). Therefore, Polish people are among the ones, who support the most that Ukrainian refugees stay in their country as long as needed. As well as financial aid, military and support for refugees are very important. It can be seen in almost all opinion articles, that support and acceptance of refugees are determinant factors in the light of solidarity and cooperation (European Parliament, 05. 2022, -CBOS, 05. 2022, 07. 2022, 11. 2022, 01. 2023). In 2021, it can be observed that corruption is already being a problem which appears mostly among politicians, hence trust in NATO has declined among the public (CBOS, 12.2021). Interestingly, the role of NATO appears again in public opinion articles in 2023. A year after the invasion Polish people believe (44%) that the actions of NATO member countries are too cautious (CBOS, 02. 2023).

Following the invasion, there have been clear differences among member states in their approach towards the war which makes it too difficult to act for Europe as a united actor (CBOS, 02. 2023). Simultaneously, Polish people believe (90%) that their country does enough in their power to respond to the crisis (CBOS, 02. 2023). It is very important to see, that young people’s opinion appear a lot regarding EU integration and the future of Poland in the EU (CBOS, 06. 2021, 07. 2021, 02. 2021). Young people between the age of 18-24 often share their views on accepting refugees from Africa or the Middle East is good or bad for EU integration (CBOS, 07-08. 2021). Security concerns are expressed many times among Poles

as being very close to both Ukraine and Russia (CBOS, 05. 2022). Almost 73% of the population thinks that Poland's security is in danger as the conflict escalates (CBOS, 05. 2022). Moreover, Poland has been very supportive of advancing EU and NATO membership for Ukraine since the outbreak of the war (CBOS, 03. 2022). 60% of the population believes that Ukraine should join the EU as soon as possible and interestingly there is no controversy in Polish society about this topic; people with different political affiliations and backgrounds support equally Ukraine's future EU and NATO membership (CBOS, 03. 2022).

4.3.1.2. Summary and differentiation between the above analyzed tables

The Ukrainian war has definitely changed the political landscape. Research centers' analyses such as Pew Research Center (2022) and Publicus Research (2022) have assessed citizens' opinions in both Poland and Hungary vis-à-vis the relations between their country and Russia since the invasion of 2022. Clancy (2022) asserts that although, the issues have been circulating around the independence of judiciary, media and the sanctions package against Russia, citizens of both Poland and Hungary are positive towards the EU. In terms of peace, democratic values and prosperity; Poles are more positive than Hungarians, they say that the EU shows ultimate respect towards their country and respects the citizens' needs (Clancy, 2022). The European Parliament's Communication DG Public Opinion Unit has added to the country specific public articles by elaborating on the situation in general in these countries.

Moreover, Hungary was highly dependent on Russian gas and oil before the war, which has continued to be the case after the war (Ivaldi & Zankina, 2023). Being the only European country that has rejected the sanctions package multiple times claiming the reliable economic ties to Moscow, Hungary has always used its strategic game not to be completely excluded from Brussels' plans regarding the invasion. As a very important internal factor, the electoral campaigns cannot be left out of how the public perceives the Russian invasion of Ukraine and more importantly how the incumbent uses the war as a rhetoric not to put the citizens in danger as the war could spill over to other EU countries. The strategy of Fidesz in the 2022 elections was exactly the same as to portray the oppositions' campaign on their advantage, Fidesz was preaching that the oppositions' pro-Ukraine friendly stance could put Hungary into danger (Ivaldi & Zankina, 2023). Publicus Research commissioned by Népszava (2022) measured public opinion in Hungary towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Majority of the respondents believe that the invasion was rather aggressive than

defensive and the government should condemn Russia more harshly for attacking a sovereign state (Publicus Research, 11. 2022).

Additionally, the majority of citizens have been dissatisfied with the governments' Russian foreign policy before the war. Hungarians would rather think that nuclear weapons would be deployed to Ukraine, than the war would spread to Hungary (Publicus Research, 11. 2022). On the other hand, Poles' negative attitude towards Russia are higher than ever, having no confidence in Russian leader, Vladimir Putin (Poushter et al., 2022). The opposite of Hungarian attitude, the Polish benefited the West, specifically the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU. Most importantly, Polish citizens support Ukraine's NATO membership to strengthen the alliance and give Ukraine a place in the EU. According to 2022 survey on Polish people's opinion on their governing party have significantly decreased (Poushter et al., 2022). The majority of people believe that the PiS doesn't treat Poland fairly, doesn't respect Poland's values and doesn't understand the needs of Polish citizens (Poushter et al., 2022). Hungary's outstanding and important relations with Moscow has not been fading away ever since Russia invaded Ukraine. Economic and political relations through energy policy have been proven to bring mutual benefits to both countries. For instance, the construction of the nuclear powerplant in Paks is a key economic bridge between the two (Józwiak, 2021). However, Poland has initiated to become independent of Russian gas.

Moreover, even the great support of the South Stream pipeline could not stop the Hungarian government from excluding Ukraine from supply routes. The government rhetoric on these economic terms has not been changed ever since the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, bearing in mind the security threat that Russia poses to the EU and aggression against Ukraine (Józwiak, 2021). The profound presence of Russian influence on media in Hungary adds to the creation of conspiracy theories among the public. As disinformation circulates in the media, foreign policy issues are being affected as well, such as Hungarian foreign policy towards the Balkans (Józwiak, 2021). As mentioned earlier, even though Hungarians have a pro-European vision, they perceive Russia as a bridge between the East and the West which can't be left out of negotiations between Russia and the EU. Poles see the role of Russia differently and they want to exclude it from future partnerships as well as cut off the energy lines.

4.3.2. Speeches/ blogposts from Hungarian and Polish governments

In this section, I analyze the speeches and blogposts that have been chosen from the respective governments' websites in order to complete the analysis whether there is any influence from politicians on public views through the media.

The international global order and the positions of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries within the EU have undergone a significant reorganization due to the emergence of the new geopolitical entity resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Ivaldi & Zankina, 2023). The bonds between the far-right radical parties and Russia are deeply embedded in the media and propaganda infrastructure, where it can be observed that Russia uses public diplomacy tools such as international television channel -Russia Today to boost disinformation campaigns while expanding its political influence in countries such as Hungary and Poland (Ivaldi & Zankina, 2023).

4.3.2.1. Hungarian government

The prime minister has emphasized the energy crisis and its implications to the future of Hungary's economy (Kovács, 03. 2022). Moreover, he has called attention for the congress of Hungarian Association of Farmers' Groups and Cooperatives (MAGOSZ) and the National Chamber of Agriculture (NAK), preaching that the government takes decisions on behalf of the public to secure them from paying huge prices for the war (Kovács, 03.2022). To secure the energy deal with Russia and to guarantee the security and peace of Hungary, are the most important tenets of the government. Moreover, the Orbán government has stressed many times since the outbreak of the war- that Hungarians would not pay for the costs and that the country would stay out of the war (About Hungary, 03. 2022).

According to the Hungarian PM, the fighting is a local conflict between Ukraine and Russia and instead of staying out of it, the EU and US supplies Ukraine with weapons and money- which is totally condemned by the Fidesz government (About Hungary, 09. 2022). Additionally, he emphasized that if sanctions were lifted, inflation would drop and the European economy could revive, since sanctions have caused massive damage to Europe so far (About Hungary, 09. 2022). State Secretary, Zoltán Kovács on behalf of the government asserted that Hungary won't send weapons to Ukraine and won't drag itself to war as Hungarian economy and households were 85% dependent on Russian gas (About Hungary, 04. 2022). The government has portrayed this message as the public demanded for it in order to show that the government does everything in its power to serve the needs of citizens.

Furthermore, supporting EU's and NATO's decisions on achieving peace and ceasefire are significant goals of the agenda. Foreign Minister of Hungary, Péter Szijjártó made it clear that Hungary won't support the Commission's sanctions package concerning restrictions on energy because it is problematic for the country and doesn't offer a solution to the crisis (About Hungary, 05. 2022). The government has been continuously addressing the nation, the "Hungarian people" and calls for the support of citizens not to accept Brussels' stance on arming Ukraine (About Hungary, 03. 2022). This is a very important factor as it shows how the government's rhetoric frames the issue to gain influence. Moreover, Hungary has been continuously disagreeing with Brussels and standing strongly by what's best for the nation (About Hungary, 11. 2022).

Apart from the sanctions package and energy crisis that dominate the speeches and news of the government, Hungary has early warned Ukraine about respecting the minority rights which is crucial to preserve the cultural ties (About Hungary, 07. 2021). In 2019, the Hungarian government has stated that its willing to approve Ukraine's NATO membership once the minority rights are restored (About Hungary, 12. 2019). Thus, the minority rights question has always been present on the agenda, however, with the Ukrainian war the tensions have been intensified around this topic. Very importantly, NATO and EU membership have been on the way for Ukraine, yet the EU deals with objections from Hungary mainly. The Hungarian government has been opposing to grant NATO membership to Ukraine since the 2017 State Language law came into being which bans ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine to speak Hungarian in all spheres of public life, so it can only be spoken privately or during religious events (Washington Times, n.d.) Lastly, PM Orbán had several bilateral meetings with Russian president, Putin discussing mostly trade between the two countries and the protection of Christianity around the globe (Kovács, About Hungary 10. 2019).

In conclusion, all the elements that have been mentioned in the respective Hungarian public opinion polls and the codes that I have drawn, came back in the above-mentioned statements from the government. Such as the "withholding of EU funds", "sanctions", "role of minority", therefore, the framing of the governments' agenda on political issues regarding the war has been a decisive element of how the public views the happenings. Moreover, there is also some overlap between the government statements and public opinion articles (Századvég) as it conveys message favoring the Fidesz party, so key words such as "withholding of EU funds", "sanctions" and "Christian culture" can be found in a similar context. Its furthermore shown in the statements that security is very important given the

nationalistic rhetoric of the government. The governments' rhetoric is "not to drag the Hungarian nation into war", as Ukraine is not a NATO member so Hungary is not obliged to deliver weapons (About Hungary, 03. 2022).

4.3.2.2. Polish government

It can be observed that the Polish government emphasizes that it has remained the most devoted supporter of Ukraine's NATO and EU membership (Government, 05. 2022). Additionally, since the invasion, Poland has been a great supporter of sanctioning the Russian elite, the economy and all the relations that Russia has with the West. While the Polish government tries to look for alternative ways to get independence from Russian gas, Hungary has been reinforcing its dialogue with the aggressor (Government, 03. 2023). Minority right have come up among the Polish ministerial statements too. Even though there is a Polish minority living on Ukrainian soil, the Polish government has a different stance than the Hungarian on this matter.

As well as there have been restrictions on Hungarian language, Polish language and culture were also exposed to discriminatory practices by the Ukrainian government (Markiewicz, 2023). One important fact is that the historical bond between Poland and Ukraine are stronger than that of Ukraine and Hungary. After the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, Poland and Ukraine have been on the move to counter the Soviet expansionism. The Joint Declaration signed by the presidents of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine is one of the strategic measures that has been pulling Ukraine closer to NATO and EU membership and adding to the common European plan according to which Russia must be stopped (Markiewicz, 2023). Moreover, in these Polish political statements from the government, there is a stronger demand for sanctions, rebuilding Ukraine, sending military weapons, hosting refugees and less nationalistic views. The tone of the statements is more convincing and calling for support from all EU member states and that Poland has a special responsibility (Government, 06. 2022). In a sense that Poland was the first country to recognize Ukraine's declaration of independence and showing solidarity towards democracy (Government, 05. 2022).

In the past 30 years, the Polish government has always supported Ukraine EU and NATO aspirations and that the country will become a member of both alliances. Understanding the threat that Russia to European security, dates back to Poland's own historical relationship with Russia. Moreover, prime minister Morawiecki has stated that Europe's security architecture is the most important which leads to a deep reorientation of the

entire energy policy (Government, 10. 2022). Additionally, helping Ukraine is an immense opportunity for Poland for the economy and investing in more infrastructure (Government, 10. 2022). While the Hungarian government strongly believes that keeping economic ties to Moscow is important since it's the only energy source that the country can get, the Polish government has already taken measures to become independent from Russian gas (Government, 03. 2023). The government has future plans in constructing new nuclear power plant, as it believes that the energy architecture is a possible way to secure the future. In conclusion, all these tenets shown by the government are reflected upon in the public opinion articles that I have above analyzed. While Moscow has tried to blackmail Poland, by spreading false media news, the government has taken counter measures given the fact that the Russian media is very strong. Additionally, Russian propaganda in Poland has been trying to take over the political landscape with false news by suggesting that inflation would disappear once Poland stops its "Russophobia behavior" (Government, 12. 2022). Polish PM has warned several times that Russian natural resources and the agreements with Nord Stream pipeline 1 and 2 are the biggest influence with which Russia can blackmail the EU (Government, 06. 2022).

4.3.2.3. Summary and differentiation

There is a diverse viewpoint on the influence of social media and propaganda on public opinion in Hungary and Poland. While in Hungary its more significant and profound due to the polarization, lack of diversity, most media outlets are controlled by the government, announcing pro-government interests. There is also a strong Russian influence on media in Hungary, furthermore, the Hungarian government mostly being two-sided as to preaching solidarity for Ukraine through propaganda, but also emphasizing the ethnic Hungarian minority's role in the political agenda. Hence, the Hungarian government is promoting a narrative opposing sanctions against Russia and promoting a geopolitical conflict between Russia and the West in which Hungary has no role.

Thanks to propaganda, the polarization of the issue has been very strong, most Hungarians view the conflict through the eyes of the government. Hence, it can be said that the one-sided narrative promoted by the government has found many supporters among the public, therefore turning the public opinion in favor of the government (Wójcik, 2022). On the other hand, there are some free media outlets that stand for freedom of press and speech which sent out information regarding the Ukrainian conflict shaping the situation in a different way (so as to see Ukraine as a future EU member state and NATO member,

portraying Russia as an aggressor). On the contrary, the Polish government has been very pro-Ukrainian and anti-Russian. The Polish media has a positive impact on the public as to portray Ukraine being under Russian oppression. There is also a large amount of help needed in order to restore European security. The Polish media has further emphasized the historical past which binds the two countries together. Additionally, Poland is the largest receiver of Ukrainian refugees amounting to almost 2 million people. Even though Russian propaganda tried to influence the Polish public, the government has been counteracting by greatly supporting the sanctions package. Hence, it can be concluded that there is influence of media on public opinion both in Poland and Hungary, however, the Hungarian case is stronger (Wójcik, 2022). As the end of the analysis section, the two hypotheses are presented and elaborated on in terms of the results.

H1: The lower the education level of the citizen, the more his/her views can be influenced by the populist government through media and propaganda.

The first hypothesis is approved.

The first part of the quantitative analysis, the Anova test shows that education level plays an important role in citizens' being informed on political matters. Level of education has played a role in the view of citizens on being satisfied with democracy in 2021, however in 2022 education didn't have an effect on democracy variable, but regarding EP values priority: Rule of Law. Those with primary education (27.4%) considered the importance of rule of law as an EP value priority. Additionally, the pre-post analysis covered education level and type of community, furthermore, it investigated the level of trust in the EU and democratic institutions between 2021 and 2022-2023. Regarding type of community, especially the percentage of Polish people coming from rural areas has significantly rose to 44%. Only 24% of Polish respondents come from a large town in 2023 which reflects on the fact that the other variables such as trust in legal system, media, national parliament have also increased.

However, it was important to showcase the level of trust as it contributes to the citizens' opinion. Moreover, in the qualitative section under the "speeches and blogposts from Hungarian and Polish governments", asserts that both governments frame their national rhetoric according to their favor and in this case the Ukrainian war has been dominating the political landscape so Polish and Hungarian governments have been supportive but also cautious. It could be perceived more among the Hungarian population as they are more cautious about being independent from Russian gas for example. Therefore, it was essential to use both quantitative and qualitative methods as the two complements each other. The

level of education has been measured quantitatively with Anova and Chi Square tests, while the influence of media through populist governments have been studied through qualitative methods. The second hypothesis follows.

H2: The less urbanized the area where the citizen lives, the more his/her views can be influenced by the populist government through media and propaganda.

This hypothesis can also be approved.

The first part of the quantitative analysis, the Anova test showed whether there is any association between type of community so whether a citizen is from a rural or urban area and satisfaction with democracy in the EU in 2021 and 2022. Type of community hasn't played a role whether citizens are satisfied with democracy in the EU or not. However, the rule of law variable and whether type of community has an impact on citizens' views regarding the rule of law as EP value priority was significant. 24.3% of respondents coming from large towns considered rule of law as EP value priority. Additionally, the Chi Square test showed that slightly more Hungarians (21.5%) consider rule of law as EP value priority. Moreover, the pre-post analysis showed significant change among Polish and Hungarian respondents coming from either rural or urban area. The percentage for Hungarian respondents (29%) in both periods have not changed. People coming from urban areas have increased with 2%, while in the Polish case it decreased with 1%. 44% of respondents come from rural areas in Poland. According to Eurobarometer98 (2022-2023) survey 59% of Polish respondents don't trust online information on political matters, however, almost half of the respondents (47% in Poland and 45% in Hungary) use media very often. Which points to the fact that media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion regarding rule of law and democracy. Media is used to promote the governments' agenda and sway public opinion in favor of their policies and ideologies.

In both Polish and Hungarian cases, it can be concluded given the percentage of results that media plays an important role in how citizens view political affairs. Furthermore, in rural areas where access to sources may be limited, citizens rely on government-controlled media. The robust backing from rural regions is intricately linked to electoral processes in both countries, particularly in Hungary. This association was evident in the 2018 elections, where the Fidesz-KDNP coalition garnered overwhelming support from the most economically disadvantaged villages (Vaski, 2022). It can be determined from the results of the analysis, that citizens from villages/rural areas don't have the same access to jobs and education as citizens from large towns, thus they are dependent on financial support from the

government (Vaski, 2011). The Orbán government for example has taken care of these people and introduced the “concept of work-based society” and with public work opportunities so even Roma (largest minority in Hungary) can have access. On the other hand, Polish rural society accounts for the largest in the EU, 40% of the population lives in rural countryside (Mularczyk, 2023). There is a significant difference between Hungarian and Polish rural society, Polish people support EU integration more. The governing PiS party in Poland influence the people in villages through their agricultural policies and through the Catholic church which has been dominating Polish politics and has a major role in small villages rather than bigger cities (Mularczyk, 2023). Lastly, it can be asserted that in both cases - Polish and Hungarian- the populist governments possibly impact the views of people living in rural areas through their policies and media outlets which benefits these people hence right-wing politicians win their votes.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Main findings of the research and interpretation

In this section I will reflect on the main findings of the research as well as the theoretical framework whether the theory of McCombs (2004/2014) holds. Moreover, I restate the research question which guided this study. Lastly, I refer to the reliability and validity of the results. In this study, I wished to see how has public opinion changed regarding the rule of law issue in Hungary and Poland and I took the Ukrainian war as a central point of the research. The Ukrainian war is an interesting event that has profoundly changed the political landscape and the security order of the EU. More specifically, the CEE region enjoys the scope of this research as it has political and societal implications to both Russia and the EU.

The research question of this paper: How does the Ukrainian war affect political cleavages regarding the rule of law issue in Hungary and Poland? By answering to this question, it has to be stated that public opinion has been changed since the outbreak of the war as the periods of before and after the invasion have showed that citizens both in Poland and Hungary have diverse opinions. In the quantitative part, I reflected on the level of education and type of community which have been analyzed in the pre-post analysis part too. Overall, Polish people feel the EU closer than Hungarians since the outbreak of the war, trust in democratic institutions such as national parliament, European Parliament, media institutions have significantly changed when comparing 2021 and 2022-2023. The level of education is certainly a factor which influenced public opinion, alongside type of community

where people come from a rural or urban area. The complexity of this study showcased that public opinion is extremely important to have a reliable democratic system in a country. Given the recentness of the issue and the democratic backsliding status, both these countries showed that being a member of the EU is very important, however, a crisis such as the Ukrainian war could change the political order very fast.

According to the theoretical framework on agenda-setting and the role of media and propaganda, it can be stated that the theory of McCombs (2004/14) holds. The agenda-setting theory defines that the news and coverage become what individuals wish to see regarding the issue of the day (McCombs, 2004/2014). The main findings furthermore reflect on the impact of events on public opinion change. As the conclusion of the political speeches and blogpost section explains that high profile events or crisis situations (in this case the Ukrainian war) could trigger populist governments to use media in order to achieve their goals (Stepinska, 2020). Moreover, Atkeson and Maestas (2012) assessed the role of events and the information- processing stage since it's the most important how people respond to crisis events whether its personal or comes from a shock (pp. 28-29). Hence, this issue takes the main focus of the day and the individual can decide how to interpret it.

In this research, I used mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of public opinion change regarding democracy in the respective countries. Mixed methods were further useful given the recency of the event. The pre-post analysis was completed with the consequent quantitative analysis part where Anova tests and Chi Square tests helped to investigate the association between rule of law, Satisfaction with democracy, nationality, type of community and level of education in 2021 and 2022. Moreover, the pre-post analysis measured citizens' trust level in democratic institutions involving the media, which is an essential part of the research. It was established that Polish people already before the war thought of a better future outside the EU which didn't change after the invasion. Whereas Hungarians are less positive about a future outside the EU. This attitude can be connected to both governments' rhetoric, as the Hungarians are more in favor of saving the nation and calling the EU for revising the sanctions package as it harms the European economy more since the outbreak of the war. The Polish government took a defensive mechanism to do everything in its power to save Ukraine bearing in mind that Russia could anytime attack another Eastern European state. Additionally, results indicate from the Eurobarometer (2022-2023) that Hungarians (72%) are more likely not to trust in online platforms regarding political issues and 45% of them think that the media provides information free from political or commercial pressure. Its impressive

as it counts for almost half of the respondents' views. Therefore, it can't be completely stated that the government propaganda influences the Hungarian public opinion during the war. Even though, independent media exists in Hungary, the governments' practices and systematic discrimination limit their reach (International Press Institute, 2022, p. 4). It is true that there have been many attempts by the government to call attention for the "inadequate behavior of Brussels' elites in handling the war, however, it has not been as efficient (European Commission, Eurobarometer98, 2022-2023). Proving this claim with an example: The Hungarian Telegraph Office (MTI) state news agency belongs to public media; however, political interests shape its operation which shows how government staff interfere with content creation in several ways for example: reporting about prime minister Viktor Orbán public appearance is planned in advance, MTI reporters often get phone calls from ministry press officers, communiqués of government bodies must not be modified (Wirth, 2022). The independence of media is a fundamental condition for a democracy to properly function (Wirth, 2022). However, media and propaganda aren't the solely factor to influence public opinion in a country.

In Poland, 53% of the respondents don't trust in online platforms providing information on politics and 41% of them think that the media provides information free from political or commercial pressure (European Commission, Eurobarometer98, 2022-2023). It slightly differs from the Hungarian responses. While, Russia has tried to blackmail both countries regarding their attitudes of the war, the Polish media totally rejected and attacked Russia, the Hungarian media didn't (Krekó, 2022, pp. 4-5). Russian government has taken a determining role in Hungarian media landscape in order to impact Hungarian public opinion (Krekó, 2022). Moreover, the Hungarian state and its pro-government media empire have already advanced Russian interests regarding the war, as could be seen in the Hungarian rhetoric, while supporting the EU's sanctions package at a later stage and condemning the violations against Ukrainians, Hungarian domestic politics doesn't convey the same message about Ukraine joining NATO and the EU (Krekó, 2022). The violations of media freedom and pluralism are serious, the main concerns lie in both countries' media regulator's lack of independence (Wójcik, 2022). The Media Council in Poland and Hungary are part of the respective governments' informal power grab, loyalists of the parties dominate the director seats of the media regulators, hence limiting the freedom of media (Wójcik, 2022). The elections have played an essential part of the media freedom in both countries, especially the latest Hungarian elections (2022), the Hungarian Media Council didn't renew Klubrádió's license neither the non-profit Tilos Rádió which is another sign of the limitations of media

freedom (Wójcik, 2022). Followingly, as part of rule of law, the media capture is another serious issue that the EU is facing today with both Hungarian and Polish governments that have also contributed to how citizens think of democracy and rule of law in their countries and in the EU. Fidesz party has captured the media institutions through a network of loyal oligarchs (Wójcik, 2022).

Regarding the first part- quantitative, I could establish that in 2021, the level of education played a significant role on citizens' being informed about the rule of law, which increases the importance of level of education, as well as, being satisfied with democratic development in Europe. On the other hand, in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine nationality has played a more significant role than level of education and type of community. Polish people are more satisfied with democratic developments in the EU than Hungarians. Surprisingly, more Hungarians (21,5%) consider the rule of law as an important EP value than Polish (20%). This also correlates to the level of education, according to which the more educated the person is, the more he/she considers the rule of law as an important EP value. Moreover, in the 2022 section regarding EP values priority was established that there is no association between the nationality of the citizen and rule of law. It is important to mention that in the 2022 section rule of law variable and whether it is important to them or not after the invasion of Ukraine. Hence, nationality didn't have an effect on rule of law as EP value priority but level of education did. The level of education shapes public opinion, especially on government matters (Converse, 1964/2006; Zaller, 199). Critical thinking is a significant part of intelligence, however, education or having a degree is no guarantee of having knowledge (Steele, 2018, p. 31). Additionally, university degree allows one to form political opinion on certain matters without being biased. Among Polish Public Opinion, it was found that younger generations are more aware of the EU and integration than the older for example (CBOS, 07-08. 2021).

Lastly, in order to assess the reliability and validity of the results, it has to be stated that to enhance the representativeness a great amount of the population has been taken into consideration in both countries. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure which means that over time, across items and across different researchers the results are consistent (Chiang et al., 2015). Moreover, mixed methodology of combining qualitative with quantitative was chosen to ensure the highest possible reliability of the research. These methods aligned well with the type of the research question as to measure change in public opinion. However, I had to choose two controlling variables which limited the validity of results, for instance gender or age were not considered among the population. This could be a

possible selection bias because I greatly relied on the theory chosen regarding media and propaganda. For instance, gender could have influenced public opinion change to a greater extent. Additionally, the results obtained after following the analysis section based on the theoretical framework, it can be established that they represent the variables they were intended to represent (Chiang et al., 2015). Since the selected methodology was appropriate for generating reliable outcomes, it substantiates the validity of the research.

5.2. Theoretical implications

This research has helped to identify the gap in the literature concerning the impact of education and type of community on public opinion change before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While acknowledging the importance of the findings and the pre-existing theoretical framework, it has been uncovered that when examining public sentiment towards the rule of law and democracy within a nation, it is crucial to investigate the educational attainment and geographic background of citizens, specifically distinguishing between rural and urban areas. Although education has been credited with facilitating informed perspectives and solidifying political beliefs (Converse, 1964/2006; Zaller, 1991), its influence on response to agenda-setting remains uncertain. The repetition of messages by the news media could potentially enhance agenda-setting's effectiveness, thereby perpetuating the dissemination of incorrect, deceptive, or false information. Typically, education acts as a safeguard against the negative effects of repetition and agenda-setting. One positive outcome of this study is the potential for enhancing public policy by deepening our comprehension of the factors shaping public opinion and improving the effectiveness of policy initiatives.

However, during times of crisis, it might impact public opinion on foreign affairs differently, thereby weakening its protective role. On the other hand, type of community isn't always a predictor of public opinion regarding democracy issues when a crisis happens. It could play a more significant role during voting/elections in a country as to see that more people from rural areas voted for Hungarian mainstream party Fidesz in 2022 (Vaski, 2011; Mularczyk, 2023). I found that the type of community was not significant on democracy satisfaction, but level of education played a more important role. Additionally, the qualitative analysis of public opinion articles helped to identify citizens' opinions regarding the war with the help of different democracy-related variables which also re-appeared in blogposts and speeches from the respective governments. Indicators such as "pro-peace sentiment,"

"corruption levels," "inflation rate," "financial assistance," and "satisfaction with the government" reveal that citizens are significantly influenced by the political climate, particularly when it pertains to events occurring in neighboring countries. Therefore, it could be concluded that while level of education was significant, the media coverage triggered a sense of support among both Hungarian and Polish citizens. These sentiments held significant importance before the war, and it is evident that they persistently resurface following the invasion of Ukraine.

As it has been established in the theoretical framework, populist governments use media and propaganda to possibly influence the opinion on the public regarding rule of law. McCombs and Shaw (1972) defined that media is important in creating coverage for the salience of the issue hence shaping public opinion. Furthermore, two stages of agenda-setting have been defined by McCombs (2004/2014) which points to the fact that the role of media is essential in populist communication and how the message is conveyed to the public. However, public opinion can be influenced in many ways and by many actors. It has been summarized as well how high-profile crisis events can have impact on perspectives of the public, furthermore, it can trigger populist governments to use propaganda and turn the events of a crisis to their advantage (Moy & Bosch, 2013; Stepinska, 2020; Gipson, 2019). The research conducted by Atkeson and Maestas (2012) expanded our understanding of the impact of media and propaganda, illustrating how crisis events serve as a foundation for communicating messages to the general public.

Lastly, every citizen aspires to comprehend the functioning of government, regardless of their educational background or location of living. This understanding holds great significance, not only for individuals but also for incumbents who have a responsibility to safeguard the interests of their constituents. Nevertheless, it's crucial to positive social change that citizens are fully aware of their politicians running for office, voting and elections as it affects their communities as well as the news and media coverage framing political issues. This paper indicated that level of education, democracy variables and media propaganda play an important role in altering public opinion, especially during times of war.

5.3. Generalizability of the findings

The effects/implications of the Ukrainian war may or may not be generalizable to public opinion change in other contexts, however, given the complexity of the situation it is a good opportunity for populist right-wing governments to potentially have an impact on the public

through media. The effects of media and propaganda during high crisis events can be a useful tool for incumbents because they can gather more support for their agenda (Moy & Bosch, 2013; Stepinska, 2020). It has been established that level of education may be linked to policy issues covered by the media and propaganda during times of crisis, such as before and after Russia's invasion of a sovereign state.

The domains in which the significance of education was clearly established may not directly demonstrate the inherent value of education, but rather confirm its pivotal role in civic discourse. The findings from the quantitative analysis led to the conclusion that individuals who pursue higher education are more likely to acquire a deeper understanding of government, policy, media, and public opinion compared to those with lower levels of education. Accordingly, the findings can be applied to a larger population and different countries in the EU with similar political landscape- such as higher corruption rate, democratic backsliding, restrictions on media freedom, as in my research there are two countries taken into account with populist governments. Therefore, contextual factors, considering historical, political and cultural contexts are necessary to evaluate the patterns and relationships as they can influence the generalizability of the findings. Hence, the impact on other countries may vary, as only the Baltic states and Eastern European nations share historical connections with Russia and neighboring Ukraine. Furthermore, the consideration of representativeness is crucial, as it involves examining the diverse backgrounds of the study participants. This aspect enhances the applicability of the study's findings.

While this thesis was conducted with both qualitative and quantitative methods- the method of content analysis, coding with different democracy related variables produced results that divide the Hungarian and Polish public on the perspective of the war. Qualitative content analysis is a useful tool to identify themes or patterns in text or articles subjected to interpretation (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). On the other hand, the results of the quantitative analysis indicates that while the specific domains where education has been found to be significantly influential may not serve as direct proof of its value, they do indeed validate its crucial role in shaping civic discourse, as well as the role of the type of community variable (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). These findings demonstrate that education plays a substantial part in fostering informed discussions and active participation within society.

5.4. Limitations and recommendations for future research

This study has some limitations which I summarize in this section, then I point out recommendations for future research. Limitations can influence internal and external validity (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). More specifically, there are three main limitations to be discussed.

Firstly, due to the recent happenings around the Ukrainian war, I faced some restrictions when collecting data for the quantitative part of the analysis. I had to determine possible indicators that reflect on democracy and rule of law in a country, while there are many indicators to be taken into account such as corruption rate, state capture relating also to age and gender, I focused specifically on two key aspects: the level of satisfaction with democracy in both the European Union and individual countries, as well as the knowledge and understanding of the rule of law within a particular country. Taking only into account citizens educational background and type of living. Hence, focusing on more variables would have enhanced the validity and transparency of the research. Additionally, the study was conducted through a comparative case study whereby I looked at two countries (Hungary, Poland) which have similar historical background and political situation concerning the war, however, they differ in their policies vis-à-vis the Ukrainian war and Russia's threat to the security structure of the EU. Bulgaria, Romania or Greece is impacted by the war too since they fear Russian threat and by regarding the public view in these countries could produce similar interesting facts as well (Stefanescu et al., 2023).

Secondly, it was difficult to find variables regarding the year 2022/2023 due to the recentness of the topic as above-mentioned. This has been reflected upon in the pre-post analysis section as well, where I focused on some institutions (such as national parliament, media) regarding democracy and measured the level of trust in these institutions. There have been some limitations concerning the qualitative part of the analysis too. When conducting qualitative content analysis, one has to determine certain factors that could possibly be biased given the sensitivity and salience of the issue (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). I could rarely find available public opinion articles from the year of 2021 that relate to democracy measures in the light of a possible crisis situation which has limited my scope to mainly look for indicators that come up frequently in the year of 2022 and 2023.

Thirdly, taken into account that Eurobarometer surveys have been recently conducted, the populations might have been biased by the ongoing political conflicts in their respective

countries and being subjected to media pressure that dominates everyday life. Moreover, by eliminating the possibility of assessing gender and age and only considering a specific amount of people that have been interviewed, I could not apply the case to a larger extent/whole population.

What future recommendations consider, in order to understand how public opinion is formed before and during times of crisis and then differentiate whether a war could change the views of the public related to democracy through media and propaganda, more study would be needed. Steele (2018) argues that there is a limited number of research on the impacts of media on foreign policy. Further studies could assess more in detail the preferences of respondents on media and how they view their government as an important factor in it. Such as how many times respondents at a certain age refer to their government, whether the government is mentioned in a positive or negative light, whether propaganda is more likely to navigate their interests towards a certain goal or not. Hence, by asking more specific questions, about democracy, rule of law, state capture a more concrete picture could be delivered. Additionally, it could be determined whether the answers were manipulated, if one looks at more specifically on education levels. Determining the levels of education, by grouping the respondents into different categories based on field of study and then assessing whether there is a significant influence on public opinion regarding a crisis situation. In this way, the research could show whether the field of study is important in examining resiliency of citizens to propaganda or control mechanism (Steele, 2018). Taking these recommendations into account, future research could develop a more profound understanding about the public opinion change before and after crisis situations.

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Appendix

2022. Variable-Label	Question	Answer-Value
Nationality:Hungary	Please tell me which country are you a citizen of?	Not mentioned/mentioned
Nationality:Poland	Please tell me which country are you a citizen of?	Not mentioned/mentioned
EP Values Priority: Rule of law	What measures and actions has the European Parliament taken to uphold and promote the principle of the rule of law within EU member states?	Not mentioned/The rule of law
Type of community	What would you say...?	Rural area or village, Small/middle town, large town, DK (SPONT)
Democracy satisfaction: European Union	All in all, with the way democracy works within the EU, you ...?	Very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, Not at all satisfied, DK (SPONT)
Education recoded	What is your highest completed education?	Primary education, Secondary education, short cycle tertiary, University level, Study abroad, No answer
2021. Variable-Label	Question	Answer- Value
Nationality:Hungary	Please tell me which country are you a citizen of?	Not mentioned/mentioned
Nationality:Poland	Please tell me which country are you a citizen of?	Not mentioned/mentioned
Type of community	What would you say...?	Rural area or village, Small/middle town, Large town, DK (SPONT)
Democracy satisfaction: European Union	All in all, with the way democracy works within the EU, you ...?	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Not very satisfied, Not at all satisfied, DK (SPONT)
Education recoded	What is your highest completed education?	Primary education, Secondary education, Short cycle tertiary, University level, Study abroad, No answer

Informed about Rule of law in a country	To what extent do you feel informed or uninformed about the rule of law...?	Very well informed, Fairly well informed, Not very well informed, Not at all informed, Dont know (spont)
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Source: gesis dataset Leibniz Institute, 2021/2022, my own table based on selected variables

All codes of Public Opinion Articles under qualitative analysis section

Codes	year	frequency	number	number2	yes/no
Pro-peace stance	2022/23	6x	5 out of 6	1 out of 6	yes
Security concerns	2022/23	5x	2 out of 5	3 out of 5	yes
Role of opposition	2022	1x	yes		no
Christian culture/tradition	2021/23	2x	yes		no
Role of church	2022	1x		yes	no
Role of international community	2022/23	2x		yes	no
Spread of war	2022	2x	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	yes
Diplomacy	2022	1x		yes	no
Political and economic isolation	2022	3x	1 out of 3	2 out of 3	yes
Polish-Hungarian relations	2022/23	2x		yes	no
Corruption	2021/23	2x	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	yes
Views on Russia and US	2022	1x	yes		no
Satisfaction with government	2022	1x	yes		no
Role of Orbán	2022	2x	yes		no
Views on democracy	2021/2022	2x	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	yes
Russian aggression	2022	2x	yes		no
Pro-EU	2021	1x	yes		no
Military intervention	2022	3x	1 out of 3	2 out of 3	yes
Role of West	2022	2x		yes	no
Support for gas embargo	2022	2x		yes	no
Fear of nuclear weapons	2022	2x	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	yes
Financial aid	2022	3x	1 out of 3	2 out of 3	yes
Popularity of Putin	2022	4x	1 out of 4	3 out of 4	yes
Anxiety	2022	2x	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	yes
Less confidence in Nato	2021/23	2x		yes	no
Young people on EU integration	2021	2x		yes	no
Acceptance of refugees	2022/23	5x		yes	no
Impact of sanctions against Russia	2022	1x		yes	no
Military support	2022/23	8x	6 out of 8	1 out of 3	yes

Source: my own table based on selected Public Opinion articles 2021/2022/2023

Public opinion- Eurobarometer Standard Eurobarometer98-Winter 2022-2023

QA1.1. How would you judge the current situation in each of the following? - the situation in your country

<u>Hu</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Very good: 23- 2%.</u>	<u>24- 2%</u>
<u>Rather good: 356- 34%</u>	<u>384-38%</u>
<u>Rather bad: 491- 48%</u>	<u>421- 41%</u>
<u>Very bad: 167- 16%</u>	<u>160-16%</u>

QA6.1. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? The media

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust: 311-30%</u>	<u>372-37%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust: 712-68%</u>	<u>599-59%</u>
<u>Don't know: 31-6%</u>	<u>44-4%</u>

QA6.2. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? - political parties

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:215-21%</u>	<u>270-27%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:805-77%</u>	<u>709-70%</u>
<u>Don't know:20-2%</u>	<u>35-3%</u>

QA6.3. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Justice legal system

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:556-53%</u>	<u>369-37%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:473-46%.</u>	<u>601-59%</u>
<u>Don't know:11-1%</u>	<u>44-4%</u>

QA6.10. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Nationality parliament

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:390- 38%</u>	<u>290-28%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:628-60%</u>	<u>687-68%</u>

Don't know:21-2% 37-4%

QA6.11. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? EU

HU PL

Tend to trust:525-50% 585-58%

Tend not to trust:452-44%. 340-33%

Don't know:63-6% 89-9%

qA11.1. Please tell if you tend to trust or tend not to trust these European institutions?

EP

HU PL

Tend to trust:560-54%. 537-53%

Tend not to trust:405-39%. 313-31%

Don't know:64-13% 164-16%

QA12.2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(OUR COUNTRY) could better face the future outside the EU

HU PL

Total agree: 280-28%. 413-40%

Total disagree:680-65%. 552-55%

SD18a. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (OUR COUNTRY)?

HU PL

Total satisfied:481-46% 582-58%

Total dissatisfied:548-53% 411-40%

SD18b. And how about the way democracy works in the EU?

HU PL

Total satisfied:587-56% 727-72%

Total dissatisfied:411-40% 236-23%

C4. Media use index

<u>Hu</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Very high:207-20%</u>	<u>202-20%</u>
<u>High:467-45%</u>	<u>481-47%</u>
<u>Poor:317-30%</u>	<u>304-30%¹</u>

QF6.2. Regardless of whether you participate in online social networks or not (social networking websites, blogs, video hosting websites), please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements-
Information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted

<u>Hu</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Totally agree:756-72%</u>	<u>597-59%</u>
<u>Totally disagree:188-19%</u>	<u>283-28%</u>

QF7.2. For each of the following statements, please tell to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) media
- (NATIONALITY) media provide information free from political or commercial pressure

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Total yes:466-45%</u>	<u>416-41%</u>
<u>Total no:537-52%</u>	<u>527-52%</u>

D8c. What is the highest level of education you completed?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>BA: 120-12%</u>	<u>44-4%</u>
<u>MA: 44-4%</u>	<u>144-14%</u>

D25. Would you say you live in a...?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Rural area/village:297-29%</u>	<u>443-44%</u>
<u>Small/middle sized town:346-33%</u>	<u>325-32%</u>
<u>Large town:397-38%</u>	<u>246-24%</u>

Public opinion- Standard Eurobarometer95 Spring 2021

QA1a.1. How would you judge the current situation in each of the following?

The situation in (OUR COUNTRY) in general

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Very good: 52-5%</u>	<u>55-5%</u>
<u>Rather good:458-45%</u>	<u>418-41%</u>
<u>Rather bad:412-40%</u>	<u>402-40%</u>
<u>Very bad:89-9%</u>	<u>101-10%</u>

QA6a.1. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?

Media

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:350-34%</u>	<u>430-42%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:657-65%</u>	<u>534-53%</u>
<u>Don't know:14-1%</u>	<u>53-5%</u>

QA6a.2. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Political parties

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:267-26%</u>	<u>228-22%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:731-72%</u>	<u>738-73%</u>
<u>Don't know:23-2%</u>	<u>51-5%</u>

QA6.3. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Justice legal system

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:546-53%</u>	<u>362-35%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:447-44%</u>	<u>606-60%</u>
<u>Don't know:2-3%</u>	<u>50-5%</u>

QA6.10. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? Nationality parliament

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:426- 42%</u>	<u>264-26%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:552-54%</u>	<u>692-68%</u>
<u>Don't know:43-4%</u>	<u>61-6%</u>

QA6.11. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? EU

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:571-56%</u>	<u>558-55%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:396-39%</u>	<u>330-32%</u>
<u>Don't know:53-5%</u>	<u>130-13%</u>

qA10.1. And do you tend to trust or tend not to trust these European institutions?

EP

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Tend to trust:635-62%</u>	<u>528-52%</u>
<u>Tend not to trust:323-32%</u>	<u>294-29%</u>

QA11.2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

OUR COUNTRY) could better face the future outside the EU

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Total agree:302-29%</u>	<u>386-38%</u>
<u>Total disagree:655-65%</u>	<u>543-53%</u>

SD18a. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (OUR COUNTRY)?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Total satisfied:562-55%</u>	<u>484-48%</u>
<u>Total dissatisfied:453-45%</u>	<u>506-50%</u>

SD18b. And how about the way democracy works in the EU?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Total satisfied:664-65%</u>	<u>691-68%</u>

Total dissatisfied:311-30% 281-28%

D8c. What is the highest level of education you completed?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>BA: 58-6%</u>	<u>79-8%</u>
<u>MA: 53-5%</u>	<u>125-12%</u>

D25. Would you say you live in a...?

<u>HU</u>	<u>PL</u>
<u>Rural area/village:295-29%</u>	<u>368-36%</u>
<u>Small/middle sized town:369-36%</u>	<u>398-39%</u>
<u>Large town:357-35%</u>	<u>250-25%</u>

