DOI: https://doi.org/10.31577/SPS.2025-1.2

ELENA KLÁTIKOVÁ
Institute of Political Science, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovak Republic
0009-0001-2966-2011

Ailing Individuals, Communities and Nation-States, or the Root Causes of Othering

The paper aims to explore Othering, a process of dehumanising groups and individuals based on their differences. As has been observed, in addition to power dynamics, it results from a general sense of uncertainty, where fear and aggression prevail in heterogeneous encounters. Through creating Others, individuals and groups legitimise their alleged supremacy, fostering divisiveness and power imbalance. It is the author's contention that due to its complexity, the problem of Othering requires a systemic, integrative perspective; hence, in addition to exploring othering as part of identity-formation, the paper discusses the role of the media, territorial attachments, community, culture and communication in creating the Other at individual and group levels using an analytical approach. The paper also draws on the author's first-hand experience with Othering on multiple levels and her previous research. In addition to offering some suggestions as to how to sensitize general population to the problem, the author proposes that fair resource distribution, support of marginalised groups, concerted and consistent engagement of decision-makers, businesses, media and educators in promoting *positive* values, inclusion and empathy, streamlining efforts to combat global threats, getting rid of white-centrism and bringing questions of morality into public discourse could help heal the problems facing humanity.

Key words: Othering; identity; group belonging; disembodiment; aggression; territoriality; media; glocalization

Introduction

We live in an ephemeral, utilitarian, throwaway, mediatised world, where you can disconnect from a 'community' without anyone noticing it, where quantity (of things, relations, information) prevails over quality, where culture, or microculture, may apply to a smallest social unit, and – with a bit of a stretch – even to an individual, with omnipresent media massage, where there is no room or will for insight. Under these circumstances, marked by uncertainty (not least due to the flattening out of the hierarchical structures of society and greater permeability of state borders), broad scepticism and all sorts of cleavages, the term 'Othering'

has almost acquired a household status. Indeed, the term is widely used across the political spectrum, albeit often with different intentions and implications. While progressive activists or politicians mostly use 'Othering' to emphasise how marginalized groups are excluded or dehumanized in social, political, and media narratives, campaigning for diversity, inclusion and equality, populist actors, while not using the term, are accused of engaging in Othering by depicting minorities as a threat and brandishing nationalist or religious cards to define the in-group. Alternatively, the term may be deliberately avoided for being too ideologically loaded. Nevertheless, it has spread into mainstream journalism, education, and social media, where it is sometimes diluted; on the other hand, if misunderstood, it may shut down genuine debate by promoting binary divides.

This paper aims to explore, within its constraints, some of the root causes and most salient aspects of the phenomenon from anthropological, socio-psychological and partly political science perspectives. Each of the subsections attempts to identify the potential 'culprits', with most of the former offering possible solutions. Since many systemic problems and malaises of society are often compartmentalised Newton-wise (an approach that, due to the *emergence* factor inherent in complex systems is almost tantamount to neglect) at the expense of a holistic perspective, the author has deliberately chosen an integrative approach as leaving out any of the above views would fail to address this multifaceted problem with cumulative effects on the victim, which then define what choices they (are allowed, or feel able, or entitled to) make in life, in its fullness. Moreover, if possible, where an individual is discussed, one should also apply a group perspective and vice versa, which is either stated explicitly or implied. Apart from tracing the origins of Othering as a mechanism and attitude that rationalise discrimination through stereotyping and cognitive biases, it also discusses the role of the other in personality development and the factors promoting or inhibiting empathy – a key element in experiencing and exercising inclusion and solidarity. Further on, the paper explores aggression as the reverse of fear and a frequent concomitant of depression, whose symptoms have recently been on the rise. Since displays of Othering mostly show through communication, the latter, along with the function and forms of language used to address or label the Other, are looked into as well. The paper also questions the substance of culture and community in today's world, with group dynamics as a major element affecting one's re/actions. Since territorial belonging is intrinsic to individual and group identity, territorial attachments are also taken into account in analysing the process of Othering. Apart from significant others, particularly in the early stages of individual development, one's attitudes are massively shaped by the media, both traditional and modern, with virtual space taking over as a major opinion-maker, deepening divisions in society. Hence, towards the end, the paper offers some recommendations on how to overcome, or at least mitigate, Othering. The author's first-hand experience with Othering on multiple levels may account for why she so avidly advocates for dealing with this increasingly sore subject in its complexity. Indeed, it has revealed that the problem of Othering is both multilayered and far from rare. Even more importantly, it has shown that if one is exposed to diversity early on, such experience, followed by proper training and/or counselling, may stimulate the necessary compassion and serve as an eye-opening exercise.

Othering, otherness and stereotypes

The philosophical, cultural and social use of the term 'Other' (with capital 'O'), associated with marginalization, developed more significantly in the 20th century.[1] While the idea of 'other' as opposed to 'self' had existed in philosophical and sociological traditions even earlier, its intellectual implications have evolved with time. As Z. Parvez (2019) has observed, *"we live in a highly politicised world, where everything is part of a political project, from the food we eat to the choices we make […]. Our perceptions of people around us are also based on these politically charged ide*as. [...] *What I see around me are human beings reduced to categories, labels and stereotypes. This is what I call the branding of humanity".* Tragically, such divisive tendencies even intrude on family integrity, an institution traditionally considered the main bastion of personal security and well-being.

How do stereotypes come into being and why (and when) does difference matter? S. Hall (2013) explains: difference is crucial to meaning, which is relational: one concept assumes meaning in relation to another. The same holds for individuals – to 'know' a person means to be informed about their role, personality type, gender, nationality etc. Stereotypes derive from these categories by simplification, exaggeration and fixing the 'difference'; they also employ the process of separating *normal* from *abnormal* in terms of social standards and rules. So, the binary bias also stems from historical and societal norms that have constructed or reinforced certain rigid categories, which lead to exclusion. Let us note that stereotypes of all kinds are *sedimented* (Hall 2013) through repetition and quantity. This sedimentation process has only been augmented by the catalytic effect of the Internet. Yet, although Othering as a concept has risen to prominence relatively recently, its actual exercise reaches far back into centuries of colonisation, witch hunts and even into antiquity with ostracism, i.e., whenever power allowed the elites to create these divides.

Curiously, *cultural drives*, as psychologist M. Argyle (1967) calls them (including commitment to ideological values), are governed by similar mechanisms as those associated with autonomic arousal, so they are harder to control. As he further observes, *"people are aroused to action by flags, anthems and other symbolic objects; ideologies and morals acquire motivating force."* (Argyle 1967, p. 55) What is no less important, these *drives* are impossible to be satiated. Hence, in increasingly heterogenized encounters, one should pay attention to such 'triggers', allowing for the thinking time before taking action.

The tendency to reduce a complex problem to two categories especially shows in times of uncertainty, when people sink into the fight-or-flight mode, with survival instincts getting the upper hand. Such polarisation may be further promoted and cemented by the media, as will be discussed later.

[1] The capitalization of O in „Other" became more prominent in the context of postcolonial theory, especially in the works of Edward Said. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said uses the term to describe the way Western societies have historically defined and constructed the East (the Orient) as an inferior, exotic, and often threatening 'Other' in contrast to Western identity. This term has been extended to other declassed groups: of other prominent authors, one should also mention works on gender and feminism by S. De Beauvoir or more recent work by J. Butler, M. Foucault's work on power, knowledge and social control, S. Ahmed's works on the role of emotions in our perception of belonging and exclusion or G. Spivak's work on race and class.

To conclude, in the process of Othering, opinions are shared and handed down as *knowledge* – although not verifiable, they are 'verified' based on cognitive distortions and internalised as (subjective) reality.

Identity, self-image, self-esteem and group belonging

The concept of 'other', as free from any indication of inferiority, is inextricably linked to those of *identity* and *self*, which are shaped against the background of others. Hence, our identities are moulded by what we learn and experience, and, based on our values, let in through our senses via cognitive and affective filters and then internalise, most often unconsciously. Sociologist Z. Zevallos (2016) writes that the *"definitions of self and others […] are tied to rewards and punishments […], material or symbolic".* So, it is these expectations of gain and fears of loss that drive our need for group belonging and group identity.

Z. Bauman (2017) holds that one of the paradoxes that drive human behaviour is the need to gratify two contradictory cravings: *"the desire to belong and the desire to stand out"*. Hence, central to our identity formation is the idea of reference group, which describes how individuals' behaviours and attitudes are shaped by groups they identify with or aspire to belong to, while at the same time creating our awareness of an out-group. Yet, with the increasing real and virtual mobility, group membership and structure become more ad-hoc and fluid, which further adds to the general sense of elusiveness and exclusion. (Interestingly, in societies where physiological and material needs are met in abundance, instead of bringing satiety and security, this often results in hoarding rather than willingness to share, leading to separation and a win-lose mentality, which suggests that something else is missing to create a sense of security and stimulate good will, tolerance and compassion, as will be discussed later).

Research shows that group identity and group belonging are more pronounced under stress, allowing the *bandwagon effect* and emotional contagion to come into play. In their study, social psychologists K. Greenway and L. Aknin (2018) found out that in stressful situations, feelings of affiliation and group identification increase along with the use of visible reminders of group membership. Indeed, belonging needs occupy the third lowest rung in Maslow's pyramid, which indicates that their not being met in the long run may lead to greater vulnerability and depression. This has also been evidenced by a variety of social studies. For instance, in the US, one of the most developed countries in the world, depression rates, especially among young people aged 16 to 29, have increased threefold between 2009 and 2017 (Brueck 2019), and this even before the outbreak of the Covid pandemic. Increase in depression was significantly more rapid among youth relative to all older age groups. The graphs covering the last two decades show an alarming rise in mental health problems. Multiple studies have consistently demonstrated that depression is closely associated with (inward or outward) aggression as an inevitable outlet for the bottled-up emotions, in the latter case targeting victims in an act of *rationalisation*. These associations have been observed across various age groups and cultural contexts, suggesting a robust relationship between depressive symptoms and aggressive behaviours (Ruchkin et al. 2023). While at first sight, self-directed aggression may seem to have no direct relation to Other-

ing, a study involving 134 patients diagnosed with major depression found that inward-directed anger in individuals suffering from depression can lead to outward aggression (Franke et al. 2019). Also, research suggests that depression can increase the risk of various forms of aggression both in terms of its different forms such as irritability, hostility or anger attacks and in terms of who is being targeted (see also Robertson 2022).

Thus, the insidiousness of our functioning in the modern world lies in the disconnect between the complacent sense of independence and the growing rates of mental problems. Related to this are two other (largely culture-related) problems: mandatory spacing or queueing requirements, often treated as safety measures, and the dubious misinterpretation of touch. Even though proxemics may vary across the world, with the advent of globalisation, such universal standards are sometimes enforced on cultures where these norms differ, having some meaning for them. With regard to the so-called *safety distances*, it is our strong contention that their artificial introduction may in collectivist cultures create *walls* between its members, breeding distrust and suspicion, along with the (subconscious) feeling that the person standing at a distance has something to hide and, by the same token, belongs to an out-group.

One cannot but wonder as to the inconsistency (if not hypocrisy) of today's world when, on the one hand, artificial distances are created between living, embodied human beings while allowing our most private data (age, marital status, education level, health status, political bent or affiliation) to be shared anonymously, without our prior consent or knowledge. As an example, one might notice the artificiality of such arrangements while queuing at the chemists' or elsewhere, when, as we have observed, people, succumbing to their natural practices, often stand closer only to move apart in a *proxemic dance*, suddenly becoming aware of the introduced norms. This factor would undoubtedly deserve a more thorough analysis and examination, especially with regard to Othering.[2]

Teleologically, a human needs, or looks for, a purpose in life; those who are socially, ideologically or spiritually adrift, are only happy to belong to a clearly defined group, the more distinct, the better. Or are they? Indeed, self-consciousness and self-presentation increasingly take precedence over self-awareness and self-exploration.

Another feature affected by the dominance of *gleichschaltung* applies to the factor of touch as well as to other culture-related psycho-social aspects imposed on other cultures due to globalisation, which, mildly speaking, pays little respect to cultural relativism[3]. As S. Sreenivasan and L. E. Weinberger (2021) warn, "*restrictions of touching behaviour due to the COVID pandemic may have increased individuals' psychological distress and coping mechanisms."* Touch is a powerful form of social interaction and may be even more important for those who are alone. As a basic experience of our body, touching helps us develop a sense of self (Gillmeister et al. 2017). This is echoed by J. H. Kryklywy, P. Vyas, K. E. Maclean and R. M. Todd (2023), who

[2] While proxemic behaviour has been mostly studied as a more-or-less fixed individual and group (cultural) characteristic, artificial introduction of new norms and its implications have not yet been properly investigated.

[3] One might even go so far as to state that the notion of *cultural imperialism* may not be so much out of place. The concept of common culture and cultural homogeneity is problematic also because, as H. Goemans claims, according to this principle, the state should extend to, and control the territory where these people (i.e., sharing that common culture - note EK) live.

write that not only does affiliative touch have a soothing effect, but it also plays "*an active role in establishing and maintaining social bonds"*. Yet, in recent decades, the factor of touch has turned into a contentious issue, with touchlessness due to the virtualisation of our communication, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, becoming a norm rather than an exception.

Ch. Taylor (1992) discusses "*three malaises of modern society"* that are sources of worry and signs of decline; let us mention two of them: individualism which, although as many believe is "*the finest achievement of modern civilisation"*, has come at the expense of "*breaking loose from older moral horizons",* leading to narcissism and hedonism and the loss of *"sense of higher purpose*", making one less prepared for active solution of interpersonal problems; the *"primacy of instrumental reason"* and looking for the best cost-benefit ratio: "*once social arrangements and modes of action are no longer grounded in the order of things or the will of God"*, they are at an individual's disposal, redesigned to be used for the fulfilment of individual goals. The same holds for objectifying other individuals, who may be turned into "*raw materials or instruments for our projects".* Such disintegrative trends and the win-lose mentality preclude holistic perspectives and global vision, bringing forth differences rather than willingness to seek a consensus.

Empathy, social interaction and disembodiment

The instrumental reason, or relying on reason *per se,* may get in the way when we should employ our emotions and empathy. As King (1979) explains, unlike sympathy, empathy goes deeper, when you 'immerse' yourself in the other's person, losing the boundaries of self. Buda (1994) points out that the ability to empathise is not so developed in those who are rather used to applying analytical and intellectual reasoning. Moreover, we tend to judge other people based on *our* perceptions and preconceived ideas about the others. What may enable or at least facilitate empathy is shared experience and values.[4] As Buda contends further, the cult of individual in Western societies impairs the ability to empathise, with material prosperity even compounding this numbing effect. Conversely, lack of material resources sensitises one to other people's suffering as they have learnt firsthand what scarcity is like.[5]

As observed by many social scientists, co-presence is vital for providing the context for our interactions. In a widely cited study by P. Eckmann and W.V Friesen, creators of facial expression taxonomy, showed (1971) that there are quite a few universals as to facial behaviour that are read unmistakably by members of different cultures, even the preliterate ones, unexposed to the cultural influence of the West. This reading of other people's emotions is vital to experiencing and showing compassion, rather than framing strangers as Others.

[4] According to Buda, there are numerous studies which show that one of the driving forces behind the use of narcotics (or alcohol) is the desire for a common experience or resonance, the wish to break the barriers separating individuals.

[5] Maslow himself, the oldest of seven children and a descendant of Jewish immigrants, who fled from Czarist prosecution, may serve as a good example. Of many others, let us also mention that of the famous British poet and playwright Oscar Wilde and his radical transformation following his release from prison.

So, is empathy possible in less homogeneous and more disembodied societies? E. Durkheim developed the concept of organic solidarity, which arises in complex social formations, where people are connected not because they share similar values or beliefs, but because they depend on each other's skills and contributions. This interdependence creates a form of solidarity that acts as a cohesive force despite the differences. Ideally, this should lead to mutual respect for diverse roles. Yet, one might ask here, is the 'live and let live' attitude enough for a healthy society? Is it not a sign of instrumental reason or utilitarianism at work? Durkheim argues that society is like a human body, made up of various institutions that act like organs, which need to be working properly for the body to function. To this, rather mechanistic, 'Newtonian' definition, we prefer a more fitting analogy with an *entire* human individual, including emotions, or a family, the latter being not only a system, with the division of roles, but, equally importantly, also a relationship. So, even if the system is working well, with each 'cog' knowing its place, does this alone guarantee a happy, healthy family? In the book cited above, Ch. Taylor writes: *"In the light of the ideal of authenticity, it would seem that having instrumental relationships is to act in a self-stultifying way. The notion that one can pursue one's fulfilment in this way seems illusory."* (Taylor 1992, p. 53).

How does mind operate in the disembodied world online? Unless the communicators know each other well or share a relevant common experience, absence of body clues may increase cognitive distortions. The use of emoticons cannot make up for the missing clues that we use in face-to-face interactions. Worse still, human vocabulary is based on dichotomies rather than on a continuum, devoid of any shades of meanings, which are often necessary to mitigate the impact of the message or specify its meaning. Yet another information carrier is what Ekman, Wallace and Friesen refer to as *emblems* (Buda 1994, p.109), which provide further clues in a face-to-face situation. Emblems function as symbols of culture (headcover), status (designer clothes and jewellery), profession (white coat, uniform), political attitude (flags) etc. The authors have also observed that there are spontaneous micro-expressions that cannot be imitated, which betray one's emotional state. M. Gladwell (2005) describes an experiment with a highly educated and articulate man affected with autism, who was asked to watch an emotionally charged film; he was fitted with an eye-tracking device, which monitored the direction of his gaze. The findings were then compared with those on regular viewers. The experiment revealed that the autistic man was only paying attention to the literal meaning of verbal exchanges and inanimate objects, being totally oblivious to the emotions experienced by the main characters, and failing to read non-verbal clues. (Gladwell 2005, pp. 214–217). By contrast, the control group viewers focused on the characters' facial expressions and eyes to see their reactions and nuances in their emotions. These skills, according to the author, are acquired naturally from our childhood through social interaction. So, are we not losing the ability to *read other people's minds* by giving preference to online interactions?

One of the mechanisms that works behind the scenes of online communication, and, in a way, enhances the *echo chamber effect*, is *algocracy,* or governance by computer algorithms. The idea behind the concept introduced by sociologist A. Aneesh is that, with the advent of big data, our online behaviours, choices or opinions are monitored, tracked and leveraged. This creates a system where, as philosopher J. Danaher (2016) adds, *"our decisions are 'nudged' in certain direc-*

tions by data-processing algorithms." And he continues: *"the system's algorithms do the moral calculus on their own."* This gives rise to *"a sort of 'invisible barbed wire', which constrains our intellectual and moral development as well as our lives in general*", leading to some kind of digital exclusion. So, unlike censorship, where a portion of information is usually removed across the board, the workings of algocracy are much subtler.

Fear, aggression and their expression through language

Fear, loss of stability (of culture, community, territory, roles, principles, criteria) and trust**,** coupled with perceived loneliness regardless of one's social status, as confirmed by the study conducted by F. Matlock and M. Langlais (2025), have become prevailing sentiments in our daily existence. Psychologist and neurologist St. Porges maintains that when we feel safe, we tend to engage more in the relationships with others, we are more benevolent, feel more sympathy and need to help and include them in our group.

In his book, M. Stein (1972) quotes an article by R. Benedict, where the author points out that during our life cycle, society imposes on us *"sharply contrasting roles […] as regards responsibility, authority and sexuality, without providing any significant transition rituals to bridge these discontinuities"* or equipping us with definite guidelines as to the appropriateness of our behaviour at individual stages of our development. This, along with the extended period of economic dependence amid general chaos, causes an individual to fall into *social neoteny*[6] (Klátiková 2010) by disproportionately prolonging the phases of childhood and adolescence. This is largely manifested through self-centredness and rebellion, which emerge each time the developing individuals search for, rediscover and reaffirm their identity, with *finger-pointing instead of introspection.*

According to Bauman (2002), in post-industrial society, four personality patterns stand out in particular: those of a tramp, a tourist, a loiterer, and a gamester. Their underlying common features are indifference, opportunism, focus on oneself and nonbelonging. As the flip side of general distrust, aggression arrives on the scene amid all-pervasive expectation of evil from the environment. Globalisation comes as a *"faceless force which cannot be targeted,"* (Majewska 2022), unlike minority groups or individuals, labelled as Others. The most 'tangible' displays of online aggression are verbal abuse and hate speech. Due to technology, an individual has now more power without accountability. Sadly, the somatic effect for those targeted in virtual space is almost identical to a physical attack. The sudden eruption of acts of violence, according to Baumann (2017) and others, is mostly caused by the media, which grab the audience's attention by bombarding it with endless news of doom and gloom. Another culprit, according to Baumann, is the state itself, which even adds to the general vulnerability, if not by straightforwardly infusing fear and violence into our lives and politics, as suggested by himself and by H. Giroux, whom Baumann quotes, then at least by losing its position of authority. Indeed, in the past, our belief

[6] In biology, it describes a process where an adult organism retains traits typically seen in the juvenile stage of its development.

systems and sense of security largely derived from the dictums of some deity or someone we trusted and considered the rightful decision-maker.

Among the aspects that come into play in our communication in cyberspace, which may factor into the process of Othering, is an indefinite range and number of recipients of information with unpredictable impact, consequences and reverberations. Even as early as 17th century, in his book Leviathan, T. Hobbes mentions three abuses of speech: for deception, i.e., to lie or to manipulate others; using ambiguity either through vague statements or by intentional confusion; to sway opinions by emphasising emotion over facts.[7]As King and others point out, language influences our thought patterns and may even affect our memory. In an experiment carried out by E. Loftus and J. Palmer (1974), which clearly demonstrates the manipulative power of words, the participants who were shown a record of a car accident reported greater speed of the vehicles when asked how fast the cars was going when they 'smashed' into each other than those asked how fast the cars were going when they 'bumped' into each other; what is more interesting, however, is that the first group reported seeing broken glass even though there was none.[8] Politicians are largely aware of the power of language. Allegedly, Obama's reluctance to use the term 'Islamic' with regard to terrorism mostly stemmed from his concern that this would incite anti-Muslim xenophobia, a prediction that, as we know, has not been very far from reality.

One of the difficulties presented by language is verbal polysemy. Also, in the heat of debate, communicators often fail to distinguish between messages conveying facts and those offering judgment. Moreover, facts may be deliberately distorted, misrepresented, exaggerated or some relevant information may be left out. Alongside explicit messages, words and sentences may convey secondary meanings, which may either 'leak' during a verbal exchange or may be 'smuggled in' deliberately. A message may contain a 'promotive layer'(Buda 1994), superimposed on that conveying information, with an emotionally charged hidden message to prompt the recipients to do/not to do something. (Not only) in the heat of debate, stereotypes regarding race, gender or religion may creep in along with other cognitive biases, further widening the divides and promoting Othering.

To sum up, alongside literal meanings, words are "layered with judgment, attitude and feelings, as W. Eadie and R. Goret (2013) point out. Hence, hate speech, in addition to overtly derogatory words, may contain the type of language identified as hateful even though it does not appear as such when parsed (e.g. protect us, send them home – the us/them dichotomy).

[7] In fact, the ethical and rhetoric aspects of speech and language had already been addressed by ancient philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle or Cicero.

[8] Memory can also be affected by what is called hindsight bias, where the real outcome of a predicted event may override the recollection of the original prediction (See Kahnemann, D., Thinking, Fast and Slow, Penguin Books, 2012) Thus, although our stored experience is largely based on memories, they are far from being perfect and do not record reality as it happened.

Culture, communication, conflict and dialogue

Culture Matters (2012) likens culture to an iceberg, with its larger part lying below the water line. The book's authors identify four building blocks of culture, which are rarely acknowledged and thus cause much misunderstanding.[9] In addition to these underlying building blocks there are features such as communication styles, customs and rituals, social etiquette, attitude to women, the concept of friendship, the role of family etc, which affect the way we perceive others. The problem is that these building blocks, while value-based, are not readily noticeable, unlike more apparent behaviours and visual reminders of otherness - the part of the iceberg above the water line, which are secondary to these and which may cause 'cultural shock' and, 'aided' by ingrained patterns and belief systems, may lead to Othering.

What are the cultures of the Western world like in today's terms? How much of what makes an individual culture unique is still in place? Can we still rely on its cohesive force or its diachronicity, with reverence for old traditions, beliefs, values, customs or norms handed down to the generations to be? Not only with regard to the current mounting conflicts and migration waves, or the virtualisation of our lives, culture has turned into a volatile category, composed of an infinite number of subcultures or microcultures whose size, composition and value systems may vary ad-hoc as new preferences and practices are absorbed with each encounter, breeding opportunism and alienation.

According to King, the two main goals of communication are to ensure the match between intended and received meanings, i.e., *efficiency,* and to elicit the desired response, i.e., *effectiveness*. As the author explains further, at any stage of interaction, communication may be impaired by barriers, which prevent or distort the intended message, and breakdowns, caused by misunderstanding or unwillingness to be influenced by the sender's message, rendering the communication ineffective. R. King has identified three myths surrounding communication: communication is inherently beneficial; more communication must decrease conflict; communication skills are innate. To these, we could add the fourth myth, you only communicate when you want and what you want. To sum up, in addition to underlying technological irregularities, communication barriers and breakdowns are also caused by what we would refer to as affective-cognitive noise (Klátiková 2010).

While turn-taking enabled by online communication creates a semblance of dialogue and parity, this is not always the case, and it was only under the influence of cybernetics that the role of feedback has drawn attention to the recipient. Based on H. Mead's interactionist theory,

[9] In individualist cultures, individual needs must be satisfied before those of the group; individuals are more distanced emotionally from each other. In a collectivist culture, one's identity is a function of one's role in a group; harmony and interdependence are valued and there is a strong sense of obligation to group members. In particularist cultures, how you behave depends on the circumstances; you treat an in-group the best you can, others are left to themselves. In universalist cultures, certain absolutes apply regardless of the circumstances, the same rules hold for everyone. In monochronic cultures, time is the given and people's needs are adjusted to schedules or deadlines, people do one thing at a time; in polychronic cultures, more time is always available and you can work on several things simultaneously. When the locus of control is internal, there are no givens in life and no limits on what you can become. Life is what *you do*. When the locus of control is external, some aspects of life are predetermined, there are limits you should not cross and life is largely what *happens* to you.

dialogue came to be seen as a process whose outcome is not in charge of any of the parties but a joint product. K. Cissna and R. Anderson (1994) have identified four key features of a real dialogue: immediacy of presence - genuine interest and participation, resulting in communication that is not pre-planned or rehearsed; emergent unanticipated consequences; collaboration orientation; vulnerability and honesty. Communication can cause and increase conflict by emphasising differences and disagreeing with every viewpoint presented, undercutting the other party's self-esteem; the more severe the criticism, the more the communicators move away from the substance of interaction, with emotions taking over. Conversely, it can prevent conflict by being open-minded and ready to explore new ideas through empathy and creating a supportive climate to establish trust, or it can at least reduce conflict by focusing on points of agreement, emphasising shared goals, being sensitive to the other party's needs and feelings. Since parties to communication can only guess at all the variables taking place during the process, what they should focus on is the honesty of intention and some underlying value system that both parties are committed to, or are willing to accept as relevant and worthy.

Community, roles, trust and the struggle for recognition

In his book *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives,* its author A. Giddens (1999) wonders: "*When the image of Nelson Mandela may be more familiar to us than the face of our next-door neighbour, something has changed in the nature of our everyday experience".* What constitutes a community? Typically, it is defined as a group of people with common interests, values and experience, often bound together by geographical location, social connections or mutual support. This implies shared identity, goals, cooperation and responsibility, which foster the feelings of belonging and security. To some extent, collective experience also involves tradition, including common in-group rituals, symbols, codes and roles. The more binding the community rules, the greater the sense of belonging, and the more resilient it is (note, e.g., the so-called *Blue Zones*). A. Giddens holds that a society that lives away from nature or tradition is condemned to replacing these with negative habits and addictions. As the author contends, both in tradition and in addiction, repetition plays a key role, however, in the latter, repetition is induced by anxiety, while the past, which structures the present experience, results from *an individual's* encounters, which, inevitably, tears communities apart. In traditional settings, the sense of self largely leans on the stability of social roles. With the demise of tradition, an individual is faced with the task of creating and recreating their identity anew.

As mentioned earlier, communities are largely influenced by group dynamics, which cannot be understood by studying their members individually. In addition to features intrinsic to communities such as roles, norms, cohesion or accountability, what comes into play is power dynamics, with some individuals exerting greater influence, and others succumbing to conformity and acting in ways they would not choose as individuals. Experiments have shown that not only conformists can be swayed by groupthink despite the facts indicating the opposite.

Amid heterogeneity and change, humans, both as individuals and as groups, appear to be forced to skip the first step of *man know thyself*, and move right onto the next phase of *man for-*

get thyself. Globalisation acts as a centrifugal force that pulls local communities and nations into the global arena. In the wake of the globalisation tendencies, local cultural identities are revived to counter the pressure. Recently, a new trend has been observed whose actors are turning the tables of history referred to as *reverse colonisation* – return of a colonised people or land to their native ownership and control. One example of this trend is cooperation between the countries of the Global South (as an answer to the North-South asymmetry), focusing on mutual exchange of resources, technology and knowledge. Other such tendencies that aim to emancipate former colonies from globalisation include the system of *intercultural democracy* in Bolivia (Mayorga 2017), a *"heterogenous combination of the rules of representative, participatory and communal democracies, the latter referring to the use of indigenous peoples' own customs and traditions […] when […] forming autonomous indigenous governments"*, or de-peripherisation of the Indo-Pacific and central Eurasian regions.

Yet another trend to offset globalisation experienced as a force causing loss and imbalance is the concept of *glocalization*, popularised in the 1990s. The idea behind the term, referring to the simultaneous occurrence of universalising and particularising tendencies, had already been in practice especially in global businesses. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines the concept thus: "*Glocalization represents a challenge to simplistic conceptions of globalisation processes […] it indicates that the growing importance of continental and global levels is occurring together with the increasing salience of local and regional levels."*

Although originally mostly business- and profit-driven, the idea, if injected into the spheres of culture and social life, with respect for, and preservation of, the best of knowledge, attitudes to life, behaviours, arts and traditions, may embody the ideal that humankind should be striving for – the building of balance and stability.

A central element in any community is the category of trust. Trust-building is a gradual process; it is developed through consistent behaviour, shared ethical principles and values, openness and transparency, compassion and understanding, mutual respect and fair treatment. Trustworthiness is reinforced by positive reputation, which, again, is built over time. If mistakes are made, trustworthy community members acknowledge them and take responsibility for their actions. One can easily infer that trust can be undermined by conflict of interests, information uncertainty, power imbalance, manipulation, opportunism.

(How) can trust be built and sustained online? And is (purely) virtual community still a community? Looking at its constituent elements, one can easily see that while superficially, there are some features which entitle this concept to be extended to online space, some of the fundamental traits such as shared location or common real-world context and history, traditionally the factors that bind community together, along with physical proximity and the ensuing tangible aspects of communication enabling a deeper connection, are missing.

What is more, in a virtual community, the boundaries between personal and public life are blurred as members of online communities often share private details, which may sometimes be misused. Another feature supporting the elusiveness of online community is that with the possibility of concealing one's real identity one can easily disengage from the interactions, with little to no accountability, which, in a real life, may be attached to social norms. Yet another objection is that, rather than focusing on real people, online exchanges are often centred around topics,

which may sometimes produce an exclusionary effect, rendering virtual communities rather transient, unstable and frustrating. Ideally, as observed by many social scientists and other experts, for virtual communities to be beneficial, they should at least be complemented with one's being embedded in groups existing outside cyberspace, while maintaining personal integrity in both.

Territorial attachments in a globalised world and in the digital age

Territoriality, with its spatial and behavioural aspects, constitutes part of our identity, our physical anchoring both as individuals and as groups. The power of a territory lies in its ability to shape collective and individual identities, evoke emotions and symbolize historical and cultural continuity. As political economist M. Kahler (2006) writes, territoriality contains three dimensions of variation: intensity and precision of attachment, stakes, especially recognised by political actors, which may be either tangible – control over territory, its population and resources, or intangible, which "*cannot be accounted for through the intrinsic economic or demographic value of the territory"*, and territorial regime, with *"border delimitation and jurisdictional congruence"*.[10]

According to Goemans (2006), territoriality provides *"the core principle that allows identification of group membership"* (where homeland is common knowledge) and promotes group cohesion, enabling the followers to monitor the leaders and the latter to identify their subjects, who can then be counted on when collective defence is needed (it should also work as a deterrent for the outsiders and an identifying element of group members).

Have our territorial claims and territorial attachments diminished as we move into a globalised world? Recent – and not-so-recent – examples show that this is not the case. Indeed, what holds for individuals vying for attention doubly holds for territorial claims as means of protecting the eroded individual and collective selves. In the era of mobility, which, in and of itself, is often felt as an assault on individual and group identity, territorial attachments can be even *"mobilised into politics in ways that* [may] *reinforce conflict"* (Kahler 2006).

As Kahler points out, it is also due to globalisation that *internal* clashes have recently represented the largest share of violent conflicts. David Newman (2006) argues that in recent decades, local territorial attachments have become increasingly dynamic, with *"invisible borders*" daily "*constructed at the local level*" in a bottom-up fashion. In this respect, one can mention the phenomenon of diasporas, which have acquired greater salience also due to globalisation. By these, *"homeland is often defined more precisely and emotionally than by homeland residents themselves"* (Kahler 2006). Citing Monica Toft, Kahler maintains that "*populations concentrated territorially and lacking any other homeland are more likely to turn to violence […]in the face of state resistance to greater autonomy"*. As Kahler notes further, not only has a modern nation-state not become obsolete with [post-1945] globalisation, but the latter is described as "*one of the determinants of territoriality rather than a force for its eradication".*

[10] Regarding territoriality, what would especially deserve attention is when, why and how the Westphalian system can be challenged by humanitarian intervention.

Overall, as pointed out by many authors, seemingly paradoxically, globalisation has brought an even stronger need for the demarcation of state borders and consolidated nation states as well as the tendency of states' size to shrink amidst the growing international economic integration, which allows power to be exercised through foreign investment rather than through the overt conquest of land. As Kohler sates, *"territorial attachments remain profound in much of the globalised world"*.

What makes the problem of territoriality rather intractable is the fact that, like in culture, the major determining factors behind territorial attachments (with their set of mostly intangible biological, psychological and anthropological aspects and cultural overlays making up the symbolic value of a territory) remain hidden from view. Yet it acts as a most potent mobilising factor when needed. The symbolic value of the territory lies in our deep connection with it, providing safety, ensuring our survival (which occupy the lowest tiers in Maslow's pyramid); also, it fosters our sense of belonging associated with our ancestry, shared history and cultural practices; moreover, it evokes (ideally) feelings of pride. We could extrapolate to apply here the principles of attachment theory, which describes the dynamics of long-term human relationships, particularly focusing on the bonds between children and their caregivers; the stronger the feelings of safety and comfort early on, the greater the likelihood of a grown-up individual to develop and maintain healthy relationships. Hence, in a way, our territorial attachments may derive from similar mechanisms, where territories may be viewed as *caregivers*, while our healthy attachments to a stable, uncontested territory may provide a sense of security and promote tolerance and open-mindedness later on.

With the virtualisation of our lives, the meaning of territoriality has shifted to mean also expectations of our personal online security and non-violation of our private lives. So, apart from conflicts in real environments, we have to face these also in cyberspace, with our personal autonomy being encroached upon. In addition, like the *"lack of coincidence between homeland attachments and countries of residence", which "lies at the heart of many ethnonational disputes within existing states"*, frequent dissonance between our attachments (to family members etc) in the physical world and those to our conversational partners in cyberspace, whose perceived identities in our eyes often result more from our guesswork than from their familiarity, affect our sense of belonging, creating new tensions.

Media and propaganda

J. Thompson (1995) holds that the media, as the carriers of symbolic power (to define, shape and influence how people perceive the world, themselves, and their social realities), traditionally wielded by the state in addition to its coercive power, have always been instrumental in helping political or religious representatives to maintain and justify order and control.

According to Thompson, the ability of modern technological media to store, reproduce and access information regardless of time and space casts doubt on the originality and value of the information. In addition, as Z. Bauman (2017) observes, the transformation of the public arena, brought about by the "*separation of* collective opinion *from the physical proximity of its carriers*

and promoters", reassembling themselves as need be, results in a curious feature: *"at no stage of the opinion-formation process is a dense crowd […] necessary,* so, due to its magnitude and reach, online communication becomes a new form of action.

The introduction of digital production has led to the commodification of information exchanges, where in addition to the information itself, advertisement overlays can be monetized. To target the right audiences, advertisers use strategies like *behavioural marketing* or marketing to *a social graph*. The same techniques and channels can be used by individuals and groups promoting their ideologies.

M. Gladwell (2002) describes three categories of people that help spread information: *connectors, mavens and salesmen*. Connectors stand out by the number of people they know and can bring together. Mavens are considered experts in their area, their views are relied upon; what is more, they are eager to share this information. Salesmen are persuaders; what is important in their communication style is *how* they pass on the information, using expressive means. All these together, as well as each separately, can start a *social epidemic*. Another feature that Gladwell speaks about is the *stickiness factor*, the feature enabling the information to be remembered. Moreover, techniques used by advertisers such as key words (which act like triggers), 'expertise', repetition, the 'camera never lies' effect, or 'keeping up with the Joneses' (i.e. the factor of envy) to persuade their target audiences work equally well in social groups as their mechanisms are very intricate and covert. One can easily see how their manipulative force may sway opinions, fuelling hate if one does not stay on guard.

What also deserves attention is politically correct speech (PC), whose proclaimed aim is to eliminate -isms. But is it really so benign? It is our belief that PC often not only obscures the seriousness of a situation (e.g., expressions such as friendly fire, slimming down of the workforce, job seeker etc.), adding to the frustration of those affected, but may also cause a shift or blending of meanings such as the word 'value' both as an ethical category and as an expression from the world of commerce (interestingly, the latter definition is entered first in the Longman Dictionary). Other types of media manipulation are what W. Eadie and R. Goret, (2013), citing McCombs and Shaw (1972), refer to as *agenda setting*, i.e., the media directing their targets towards *"what to think about"* and *framing*, i.e., *how* to think about the depicted events, both of which we would refer to as *censorship by distortion*, where important information is skewed or treated as meaningless while some trivial events may be inflated.

Media are also powerful at creating prototypes, i.e. what we perceive as *ideal* or most representative examples of a category or concept, and then use that prototype as a reference point for making judgments. Objects more similar to a prototype are recognized faster because they facilitate categorisation. The prototype effect can influence many aspects of our decision-making, opinions of people and our ideas. The results of the experiments conducted by Ch. Dahlman et al. (2015), suggest that "*the features of the prototype overshadow and partly overwrite the actual facts of the case. The case is, to some extent, judged as if it had the features of the prototype instead of the features it actually has".*

When one of the leading experts in media theory Canadian philosopher M. McLuhan wrote a book on the media as a vehicle shaping and influencing the conveyed content, he entitled it *The Medium is the Massage*. While the original title he had in mind was *The Medium is the Message*,

in preparing the book, the title was mistakenly printed with 'a'. McLuhan liked the new title so much that he decided to keep it. To him, the word 'massage' more accurately expressed the idea of how media mould human consciousness and perception (McLuhan – Zingrone 2000).

Conclusion

Othering stems from complex historical, social and psychological processes that have existed for centuries to demonstrate power or justify individuals' or groups' sense of superiority; media may only fuel negative sentiments, using stereotyped representations in films, cultural narratives and myths, perpetuating the asymmetry, especially in difficult times when scapegoating diverts attention from real culprits. These attitudes may be further reinforced by social norms and educational systems. While othering, without dehumanising, is an essential condition of identity formation, it needs to go together with respect for, and recognition of, others, with underlying awareness of common goals, shared values and problems faced by humanity. Ch. Taylor writes: *"We saw earlier that just the fact that people* choose *different ways of being doesn't make them equal; nor does the fact that they* happen to find *themselves in different sexes, races, cultures. […] If men and women are equal, it is […] because overriding the differences are some properties, common or complementary, which are of value."*

We are stirred to activity through emotions. By giving priority to reason, and relying on it alone, we forget that the former, in addition to achievable goals and realistic hopes, are what prompts us to action and feeds motivation. So, why not move world elites to action in an effort to create existential balance for all? Why not create common symbols, codes, flags, showing our belonging to one human race and pledge allegiance to our planet as a common territory worth fighting for as one man, giving rise to global patriotism, where everyone's role counts? Why not resurrect Zamenhof's idea of *lingua franca* unburdened by dubious legacy? Why not engage educators, why not use the media to a good purpose, fostering group solidarity instead of discord, priming their audiences for *positive* solutions? Why not encourage glocalization in all spheres of life? We need to understand that by exercising white-centrism, we deprive ourselves of other perspectives, knowledge, creativity, heritage in the same way that we limit our experience by reductionism and surrounding ourselves with artificiality as a pale imitation of nature (without devaluing the best creations of humanity). It is our contention that we need to be aligned horizontally – integrated into our communities, peer groups, cultures, with their social and psychological roles, which give us a sense of identity, security and belonging, and vertically – with its spiritual and ethical aspect of ideal, respect, role model or self-transcendence worth striving for (Klátiková 2010). Our disengagement from these structures, and alienation from the world of nature, which in itself combines both principles, leads to stagnation, isolation, loss of life purpose and depression. Both McLuhan and Thompson optimistically argue that we are beginning to feel responsibility for the entire planet and that the interconnectedness of people, ideas and locations is increasing. We all love happy endings – we badly need one now.

Bibliography

ARGYLE, Michael (1967). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Behaviour*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 283 p. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.122.3.359.

BAUMAN, Zygmunt (2017). *Retrotopia*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 179 p.

BAUMAN, Zygmunt (2002). *Úvahy o postmoderní době.* Praha: SLON, 167 p.

BLAKEMORE, Colin – COOPER, Grahame (1970). Development of the Brain Depends on the Visual Environment. In *Nature* 228, pp. 477–478.

BLATTER, Joachim (2022). *Glocalization*. [online]. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/money/glocalization.

BRIGEVICH, Anna (2011). Identity, attachment to Europe, and decentralisation in the French regions. Paper prepared for the 2011 European Union Studies Association Meeting in Boston, March 3–5. [online] Available at: https://backends.it.ntnu.no>rest>files.

BRUECK, Hilary (2019). Depression among Gen Z is skyrocketing – a troubling mental – health trend that could impact the rest of their lives. [online] Available at: https://www.businessinsider.in/depression-among-gen-z-is-skyrocketing-a-troubling-mental-health-trend-that-could-impact-the-rest-of-their-lives/articleshow/68505568.cms.

BUDA, Béla (1994). *Empatia.* Nové Zámky: PSYCHOPROF. 338 p.

CISSNA, Kenneth N. – ANDERSON, Rob (1994) Communication and the Ground of Dialogue. In ANDERSON, Rob – CISSNA, Kenneth N. – ARNETT, Ronald C. (eds.). *The Reach of Dialogue: Confirmation, Voice and Community.* New Jersey: Hampton Press, pp. 9–30.

CULTURE MATTERS (2012). Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange Publication No. T0087. [online] Washington DC: Peace Corps Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support. Available at: https://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/T0087_Culture_Matters.pdf.

DAHLMAN, Christian – SARWAR, Farhan – BÅÅTH, Rasmus – WAHLBERG, Lena – SIKSTRÖM, Sverker (2015). Prototype Effect and the Persuasiveness of Generalizations. In *Review of Philosophy and Psych*ology, 7, pp. 163–180. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s13164-015-0264-1.

DANAHER, John (2016). The Threat of Algocracy: Reality, Resistance and Accommodation. In *Philosophy & Technology*, 29, 3, pp. 245–268. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-015-0211-1.

DE BONO, Edward (2016). *Six Thinking Hats*. London: Penguin Books, 192 p.

EADIE, William F. – GORET, Robin (2013). Theories and models of communication: foundations and heritage. In COBLEY, Paul – SCHULZ, Peter J. (eds.). *Theories and Models of Communication*. Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013, pp. 17–36. A DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110240450.17.

EKMAN, Paul – FRIESEN, Wallace V. (1971). Constants across cultures in the face and emotion. In *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 17, 2, pp. 124–129. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030377

BLATTER, Joachim (2022). *Glocalization*. [online]. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/money/glocalization

FRANKE, Irina – SHEANR, Riad – NIGEL, Stefanie – OTTE, Stefanie – BÜSSELMANN, Michael – STREB, Judith – DUDECK, Manuela (2019). Selbstaggression als Mediator zwischen Depression und Aggressivität [Self-aggression as mediator between depression and aggression]. In *Psychiatrische Praxis, 46*, 6, pp. 332–337. DOI: 10.1055/a-0860-4719.

GIDDENS, Anthony (1999). *Runaway World. How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives.* London: Profile Books Ltd., 138 p.

GLADWELL, Michael (2002). *The Tipping Point. How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.* New York: Back Bay Books, 301 p.

GLADWELL, Michael (2007). *Blink. The Power of Thinking Without Thinking.* New York: Back Bay Books, 296 p.

GOEMANS, Hein E. (2006). Bounded communities: territoriality, territorial attachment, and conflict. In KAHLER, Miles – WALTER, Barbara F. *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalisation.* New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 27–61.

GREENWAY Katharine H. – AKNIN, Lara. B. (2018). Do people turn to visible reminders of group identity under stress? In *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 48, 4, 205–216. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12503.

HALL, Stuart (2013). The Spectacle of the "Other". In HALL, Stuart – EVANS, Jessica – NIXON, Sean (eds.). *Representation.* London: SAGE Publications, 2013, pp. 215–271.

HOBBES, Thomas (1651). *Leviathan. The Matter, Forme and Power.* [online]. London: printed for Andrew Crooke, at the Green Dragon in St. Pauls Church-yard. Available at: https://historyofeconomicthought.mcmaster.ca/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf.

KAHLER, Miles (2006). Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalisation. In KAHLER, Miles – WALTER, Barbara F. *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalisation.* New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–21.

KING, Robert G. (1979). *Fundamentals of Human Communication*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 371 p.

KLÁTIKOVÁ, Elena (2005). Dokáže náboženská výchova alebo etická výchova pomôcť pripraviť platného člena globálnej spoločnosti? (Survey findings report). In *Pedagogické rozhľady,* 4, pp. 1–5.

KLÁTIKOVÁ, Elena (2010). Kyberfenomén a ilúzie Matrixu. In *Studia Politica Slovaca,* 3, 2, pp. 80–104.

KRYKLYWY, James H. – VYAS, Preeti – MACLEAN, Karon E. – TODD, Rebecca M. (2023). Characterizing affiliative touch in humans and its role in advancing haptic design. In *Ann N Y Acad Sci*, 1528, 1, pp. 29–41. DOI: 10.1111/nyas.15056.

LOFTUS, Elisabeth F. – PALMER John C. (1974). Reconstruction of Automobile Destruction: An Example of the Interaction Between Language and Memory. [online]. In *Journal of verbal learning and verbal behaviour* 13, pp. 585–589. Available at: https://www.demenzemedicinagenerale.net/images/mens-sana/AutomobileDestruction.pdf.

MAJEWSKA, Ewa (2022). Belonging despite the state of exception. The LGBTQ+ counterpublics in Poland after 2015. [online]. Available at: https://belonging.berkeley.edu/democracy-belonging-forum/papers/state-of-exception.

MATLOCK, Falescia – LANGLAIS, Michael (2025). Perceived loneliness during COVID-19 and young adult mental well-being: testing socioeconomic status as a moderator. In *Mental Health and Well-Being*, 2, 1. DOI: doi.org/10.20935/MHealthWellB7496.

MAYORGA, Fernando (2017). The Plurinational State and Intercultural Democracy in Bolivia. In *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 32, 94, pp. 1–14. DOI: 10.17666/329401/2017.

McLUHAN, Marshall – ZINGRONE, Frank (2000). *Člověk, média a elektronická kultura.* Brno: Jota, 415 p.

NICKERSON, Raymond S. (1987). Why teach thinking? In BARON, Joan B. – STERNBERG, Robert J. (eds.). *Teaching thinking skills: Theory and practice* (pp. 27–37). New York: Freeman, pp. 27–38.

PARVEZ, Zarqua (2019). The 'othering' of humanity, a divided world and the global rise in terrorism. [online]. In *Memo. Middle East Monitor*. Available at: https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/the-othering-of-humanity-a--divided-world-and-the-global-rise-in-terrorism/.

ROBERTSON, Ginger (2022). *Recognizing the Lesser-Known Symptoms of Depression* [online]. Available at: https://www.nami.org/depression-disorders/recognizing-the-lesser-known-symptoms-of-depression/.

RUCHKIN, Vladislav – STICKELY, Andrew – KOPOSOV, Roman – SUKHODOLSKY, Denis G. – ISAKSSON, Johan (2023). Depressive symptoms and anger and aggression in Russian adolescents. In *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health* 17, 130. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-023-00677-w.

SAID, Edward W. (1979). *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books, 377 p.

SREENIVASAN, Shoba – WEINBERGER, Linda E. (2021). *The Importance of Touch. How can the COVID-19 pandemic affect this sensory modality?* [online]. Available at: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/emotional-nourishment/202108/the-importance-of-touch.

STASZAK, Jean-François (2009). "Other/Otherness". In KITCHIN, Rob – THRIFT, Nigel (eds.). *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography.* Oxford: Elsevier, vol. 8, pp. 43–47.

STEIN, Maurice (1972). *The Eclipse of Community.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 430 p.

TAYLOR, Charles (1992). *The Ethics of Authenticity.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 142 p.

THOMPSON, John B. (1995). T*he Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media.* Oxford: Polity Press, 324 p.

WEINBERGER, Andrea H. – GBEDEMAH, M. – MARTINEZ, A. M. – NASH, D. – GALEA, S. – GOODWIN, R. D. (2018). Trends in depression prevalence in the USA from 2005 to 2015: widening disparities in vulnerable groups. In *Psychological Medicine*, 48, 8, pp. 1308–1315. DOI: 10.1017/S0033291717002781.

WITTERS, Dan (2023) U.S. Depression Rates Reach New Highs. [online] Available at: https://news.gallup.com/poll/505745/depression-rates-reach-new-highs.aspx.

ZEVALLOS, Zuleyka (2016). *What is Otherness?* [online]. Available at: https://othersociologist.com/othernessresources/.