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# MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis:

**A comparative perspective on the utility of the Fragile State Index: A critical assessment of fragility in France and Poland**

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)**

Wien 2022 / Vienna 2022

Studienkennzahl lt Studienblatt  
Postgraduate programme code

A 992 940

as it appears on the student record sheet:  
Internationale Studien / International Studies  
Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt  
Postgraduate programme as it appears  
on the student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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diplomatische  
akademie wien

Vienna School of International Studies  
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## PLEDGE OF HONESTY

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorised assistance on it.

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## 2. Foreword

During my law studies at the University of Vienna, I chose international law and international private law as my two major fields of focus. Not only have I attended several courses in these areas, but I also wrote my diploma thesis about comparative legal aspects. In between my two studies, I took advantage of this time to develop my knowledge further and took a course called “Justice” taught by Michael Sandel at Harvard University. This course certainly opened my eyes and made me realise the vast amount of aspects that can influence legislative processes and prosperity or failure within states. While studying at the Vienna School of International Studies, I had the opportunity to broaden my knowledge in comparative aspects of law as well as in politics and history. In fact, France and Poland have been my countries of choice when writing academic papers about comparative issues. During research for another academic paper, I noted a gap in the literature regarding the utility of the fragility index. Research is not about assessing data and accepting it without questioning it, but it is about diving deeper into the subject and questioning facets that comprise the data. In my opinion it is of utmost importance to examine things critically and approach subjects analytically. Therefore, I would like to assess the Fragile State Index using two countries that I am not only academically but also personally close to; France and Poland.

### 3. Abstract

The Fragile State Index, produced and published by the Fund for Peace, seemingly follows a clear structure and methodology. However, scrutinising its conceptualisation and methodological approach, intransparent aspects appear. An in-depth assessment of the two listed countries Poland and France, questions not only the accuracy of the Index, but also examines its short and long term purpose. Therefore, this study offers a broad theoretical framework, that not only interprets the term fragility itself, but also assesses theories and perceptions of institutional nature too.

To improve the essence of the index and increase its value or purpose, the case-study offers an examination of chosen indicators, explaining the motives behind developments, suggesting policy amendments and finally providing constructive critique towards the Fragile State Index. Ultimately, this study criticises the misleading character of the Index and describes the consequences of the approach taken by the Fund for Peace.

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Im Rahmen dieser Masterarbeit wird sowohl die Natur, als auch der Zweck des Fragile State Index hinterfragt. Durch eine nähere Betrachtung der Funktionsweise und der finalen Auswirkungen durch eine Kategorisierung der Länder in verschiedene Klassen und Ränge, wird die Existenz des Index von Grund auf hinterfragt. Um sinnvolle Empfehlungen zu liefern, werden zuerst terminologische Problematiken linguistisch, theoretisch und nicht zuletzt linguistisch gelöst und die zu dem Thema einschlägigen institutionellen Theorien umfassend erklärt.

Im Zuge einer Auswertung der beeinflussenden Indikatoren, werden legislative Vorschläge zur Verbesserung des Indexes vorgestellt. Die Fallstudie zu den Positionen von Frankreich und Polen innerhalb des Indexes und den zugehörigen Dokumenten, zeichnet ein genaues Bild mit konkreten Auswirkungen und liefert sowohl Verbesserungsvorschläge für den Index selbst als auch gesetzergänzende oder gesetzändernde Empfehlungen für eine nachhaltige Stabilisierung der konkreten Länder.

## 4. Introduction

Over the last few years, the fragility of countries that are part of the European Union has changed. The Fragile State Index offers a comparative analysis and a major collection of numbers that prove the ongoing changes and pressures within and outside of numerous countries. According to the Fragile State Index, several factors have contributed to these shifts and a redistribution of cards.<sup>1</sup> This thesis aims to assess the validity and utility of this Index by taking the two countries France and Poland as examples. France and Poland are certainly countries that are very different but also prove to be similar in several aspects.

However, the literature does not provide an answer to the question of the usefulness of the Fragile State Index. By combining literature, interpretation methods and legal theory, the composition of the Index can be better understood. An analysis of the standard of living, cultural aspects, demographic pressures and internal legal issues of Poland and France will allow the author to conclude why the countries either decline or increase in fragility. Poland and France certainly share cultural and historical aspects and are therefore suitable to be compared within this academic research. The difficulty of this academic research through comparative analysis will be to determine why similar actions lead to completely different outcomes. The combination of this author's two fields of expertise, International Relations and Law, will make this thesis multidisciplinary. Consequently, this research will be pioneering, original and will contribute to a better understanding of the interaction of critical thinking and academic analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Fund For Peace (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual (2014 Reprint).

## 5. Literature Review

### a. Overview: Risk and Vulnerability index

This thesis will focus on data evaluation and analysis. Therefore, the research process and literature assessment will be theory and interpretation based. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to bring different factors and numbers into relation with each other, look behind their reasoning and use this to question the Fragile State Index. It is to be kept in mind that there is existing literature that will help in the research process, however there is no literature questioning and explaining the utility of the Fragile State Index as explicitly as this research will. Consequently, the aim of this research is, thus, to fill the blank space, which can be done by combining a literature assessment and the according use of international relation theories and legal interpretation.

### b. Research Literature

- Fiertz, Nathalie et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

The Fragile State Index is a collection of data that is produced by the Fund for Peace. Their goal is to put numbers in relation and make an understandable database without disregarding the factor of world interconnectivity. In my thesis I use their graphs and graphics in order to discuss them and look behind the factors that they describe. To that end, this author shall call upon their legal and economical expertise.

In order to achieve a high level of accuracy in this thesis, it is of utmost importance to use the most recent data provided by the Fund for Peace. The 2021 annual report considers indicators that have been influenced by several factors such as the Covid-19 crisis or the impact of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. However, this Annual Report will not include the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Therefore, it will be necessary to include recent data segments from other sources in order to provide a reliable case study and realistic policy recommendations.

- Grimm, Sonja et al. (2016). *The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas*.

This book questions the meaning of fragile states and how the reception of the connotation “fragile state” influences politics and society. Without doubt this book will be extremely important for the research process as it assesses where the initial idea of considering a state as fragile comes from and how it has influenced politics, law and society in the past and might influence in the future.

- Carment, D. et al. (2010). *Security, Development and the Fragile State: Bridging the gap between theory and policy*.

David Carment and his two co-writers provide an explanation of the Fragility of States from the American Point of view. They argue that 9/11 contributed to a global change and has significantly increased the Fragility of multiple states worldwide. In particular, the conflict-resolution aspect is of interest to this thesis as it explains the fine line of a successful conflict-resolution process and a detrimental one. This is certainly of great importance for this research as the constant relationship between the two research countries, Poland and France, requires non- cessant diplomacy action and conflict resolution management.

- Kassab, H. et al. (2018). *Corruption, Institutions, and Fragile States*.

Whilst most other sources focus on historical and political aspects of Fragile States, this book assesses the corruptive nature of fragile states in depth. Furthermore, this book contains a broad range of cultural assessments as it not only puts its focus on one region of the world map, but sees each world's region with its culture as its own potential conflict field.

This author’s premise is that the increase of corruption comes along with an increase of fragility and finally leads to a loss of trust. This loss of trust opens the gates for even more corruptive actions and can lead to a total loss of a country’s stability. This book confirms the premises laid out in this thesis and goes even beyond by using institutionalist theory in order to explain certain political happenings.



- French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. (2018). State fragility.  
[https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/meae\\_strategie\\_fragilites\\_en\\_bat\\_web\\_cle497968.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/meae_strategie_fragilites_en_bat_web_cle497968.pdf)

(Last accessed: May, 13th 2022).

The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs conducted a study in which it assessed the fragilisation not only of states but also of society. In addition, they offer an action plan that could, according to them, ameliorate the fragile situation significantly. This author would like to mention and discuss this action plan in suitable parts of the thesis.

- Trading Economics (2021). French unemployment.  
<https://tradingeconomics.com/france/unemployed-persons>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The Trading Economics offers information about the development of unemployment in France. The author would like to go back in time and have a look between the time brackets that have been set according to the political development discussed in his thesis.

- Banque de France. (2022). Projections macroéconomiques.  
<https://publications.banque-france.fr/projections-macroeconomiques-mars-2022>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

In order to analyse the reasons and solutions for inflation, this thesis calls upon publications from the Bank of France. They offer a wide range of publications about policies that might help to combat the current inflation. However, it is certainly important to assess the point of views of this source by combining them with publications by the European Central Bank. This conundrum will ensure a firm basis for further analysis.

- OECD. (2020). What is fragility?. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ba7c22e7-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/ba7c22e7-en>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022)

The OECD publication brings fragility into a global context and provides various contexts leading to different outcomes. Their study highlights the importance of cooperation instead of isolation in order to make states stable in the long run.

- Naudé, W. et al. (2011). Fragile States: Causes, Costs and Responses.

This book offers a very useful insight into different forms of definitions and views on fragile states. Especially the high quality of accuracy and clearness will help in the assessment of the definition of the word 'fragile' and in analysing potential responses that could help to improve the stability of a state. Furthermore, Naudé et al. propose an insightful critique towards responses given towards fragility in the past by offering a broad range of case studies. In the last chapter, Sanjeev Gupta suggests solutions for a more efficient use of assistance and hence a significant improvement of a fragile state. These insights will certainly be of high interest in the assessment and proposition of policies in the third chapter of this study. All in all, this book is one of the very few sources that provide a neutral in depth assessment of the terminology and the causes for an increase of fragility. In the course of this thesis, the book Fragile States: Causes, Costs and Responses will be one of the most important fundamentals on which the argumentation will be built upon.

- French ministry for Europe and foreign affairs. (2022). Poland. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/poland/>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The website of the French government offers an overview about the relationship of the two countries Poland and France. This is definitely something that will need to be built into this thesis in order to bring these countries into relation and to assess each opinion towards the other as well.

- OECD (2022). Stats.

<https://stats.oecd.org>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The OECD.stat website provides numerous statistics and graphs that visualise aspects such as the GDP, FDI, national health, unemployment, income distribution, population or social expenditure. In the scope of the master thesis it is certainly beneficial to incorporate these statistics and discuss them. This will not only help to strengthen arguments, but also will ensure to have reliable data sets. Lastly, it is important to highlight that the thesis will only include statistics that are relevant for the main aspects of the fragility index and the direction of interpretation.

- IEA. (2021). Despite some increases in clean energy investment world is in midst of uneven and unsustainable economic recovery with emission set for 2nd largest rebound in history.

<https://www.iea.org/news/despite-some-increases-in-clean-energy-investment-world-is-in-midst-of-uneven-and-unsustainable-economic-recovery-with-emissions-set-for-2nd-largest-rebound-in-history>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The International Energy Agency discusses the future perspective and the clean energy plan in accordance with Europe's Digitalisation 2030 plan. This source provides a further opinion on the future development of Europe's economy and (mis)investments. It will for sure not be a principle source, but a source that will strengthen the arguments that will be given in the thesis.

- Michael, C. (2022). Migration and the Crisis of Democracy in Contemporary Europe (Europe in Transition: The NYU European Studies Series).

Explaining the functions and defaults of different democratic systems in Europe, professor Michael postulates a crucial framework for this thesis. Not only does he elaborate on the numerous democratic proceedings in depth but also he describes the influence of the western perception of democracy in international politics, economics and trade. Pointing out the non objective nature of the Fragile State Index, this book offers an interesting insight into the existing critiques.

- European Commission (2021). Summer 2021 Economic Forecast. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-performance-and-forecasts/economic-forecasts/summer-2021-economic-forecast\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-performance-and-forecasts/economic-forecasts/summer-2021-economic-forecast_en)

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The European Commission website gives valuable information regarding the economic performance of the European countries but also provides a forecast to the expected development without disregarding the Covid Crisis. Furthermore, the recovery and resilience facility presents solutions on how to make the European Union's resilience stronger by helping each member state in a specific way. This is certainly highly interesting and important for the thesis and will be incorporated to further strengthen my arguments.

- United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights shall serve as a common ground for the acceptance and application of Human Rights. As all indicators of the Fragile State Index relate to Human Rights, it is of utmost importance to have the legal basis in the back of the head and include points of it into the thesis. All in all, the declaration of Human Rights will not be the most present framework within the thesis, but certainly the basis of most legal argumentations.

- European Investment Bank (2021). Generational and political divides in France. <https://www.eib.org/en/press/all/2021-358-climate-crisis-generational-and-political-divides-in-france>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022)

The European Investment Bank assessed the generational and political conflict within France that is caused by the climate crisis and further challenges that we are facing in this decade. Even though it would be important that the younger and the elder generations stick side by side and find solutions, they often end up fighting each other which leads to further challenges. Whilst one generation thinks that tighter measures have to be imposed in order to ameliorate the overall situation, most people of the other generation highlight their individuality and civil rights. This source provides valuable information and numbers that can be used as a basis for further assessments.

- Fund For Peace. (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual. (2014 Reprint).

The Fund for Peace established their own evaluation toolbox on how to assess the fragility of a country. In order to be able to also include factors outside of politics, the framework offers a broad range of tools for an analysis of social pressures and a country's dynamics in depth. Therefore, the study of the conflict assessment framework manual is of utmost importance to to understand the process behind the Fragile State Index.

- Eurostat (2021). Fertility statistics (European Commission).  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Fertility\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Fertility_statistics)

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022).

The European Commission publishes yearly European fertility statistics that will have to be assessed in the scope of this thesis. In the third chapter, the demographic pressures for Poland and France each have to be analysed. Also, fertility statistics are highly interesting as they can indicate certain tendencies or grievances.

- Trading Economics (2021). French unemployment.  
<https://tradingeconomics.com/france/unemployed-persons>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022)

The Trading Economics is offering the reader information about the development of unemployment in France. As France has been suffering from several waves of unemployment, this resonates within the economic indicators of the Fragile State Index. In the third chapter, the unemployment rates of France will have to be addressed and analysed in order to be able to provide efficient policy recommendations.

- D Israel. (2009). Data Analysis in Business Research.

The functioning of the Fragile State Index requires a good understanding of different mathematical approaches to calculate the indicators within the Index. This book certainly offers a broad understanding of statistical calculations that are needed to explain the mathematical approach used in the Fragile State Index. As different

approaches lead to varying results, it is of utmost importance to point out the benefits of a certain approach in this particular regard.

- Nowak, Marta (2016). Cultural determinants of accounting, performance management and costs problems.

A view from the Polish perspective using G. Hofstede's and GLOBE culture dimensions Marta Nowak's study is focusing on the cultural differences that go beyond Hofstede's projection of cultural determinants. In the scope of this research the author will certainly draw back not only on Hofstedes but also Nowak's explanations and perceptions of the similarities between the French and Polands cultures.

- Kelsen, Hans (1965). Was ist juristischer Positivismus (in: Juristenzeitung 20. Jahrgang 15/16 p. 465-469).

In the 15/16th edition of "Juristenzeitung" Kelsen explains the basis of legal positivism. He sharply distinguishes legal positivism from philosophical positivism. In the scope of the research and interpretation process it will be important to interpret underlying treaties and legal frameworks accurately. Kelsen argues that qualified acts lead to the final law and it therefore has to be considered a "ius positivum".<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the use of Kelsens understanding of law will be beneficial for the research and interpretation process of this thesis.

- European Commission. (2022). Culture and financial report.  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/341465/3199631/essnet-culture.pdf/a6518128-69b3-4d89-82b8-060a3ad0d1d5>

(Last accessed: April, 23rd 2022)

Lastly, the culture and financial report provided by the European Statistical System Network on Culture, presents a high quality in their analysis of statistics and highlights the importance that cultural factors can have in the financial development of a country. This source is of great importance for my research as it allows me to perceive the cultural influence for a country's economy. Moreover, this source provides

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<sup>2</sup> Kelsen, H. (1965). Was ist juristischer Positivismus (in: Juristenzeitung 20. Jahrgang 15/16 p. 465-469)

recommendations and assumptions for a potential future development and how it can be influenced by investing according to cultural preferences.

## 6. Research question

The following working title “**Comparative perspective on the utility of the Fragile State Index: A critical assessment of stability in France and Poland**” points out that the thesis will focus on the utility of the Fragile State Index.

Therefore, it will not only be assessed what factors influence which numbers, but also how the potential use of the Index can influence future numbers.

Consequently, the research question raised as the core of this thesis is as follows:

**“How valuable is the Fragile State Index in assessing systemic fragility in France and Poland?”**

My hypothesis is that even though Poland and France share numerous cultural, historical and political aspects, the resistance towards the authorities is continuously declining. Therefore Poland faces issues in Human Rights protection and in the Rule of Law. A strong leader however causes the reduction of fragility, as the state and its actions become more predictable in Poland. France, on the other hand, is experiencing demographic pressures caused by the Covid-19 crisis and its weakened national health system.

Insecurity among the people can lead to a spread of conspiracy theories and make them, due to the uncertain situation, more believable. Making a political leader strong is also partly in the hands of the population. Obedience and resistance are sometimes closer to each other than expected but have very different and far reaching consequences. When assessing the outcome in the Fragile State Index, which is shown in numbers and graphs, it will be interesting to assess the final utility of this index in terms of future development.

In the next section this thesis will present the theoretical framework that shall be used for research in favour of the given question. This section is essential in order to determine from which perspective the issue shall be analysed.



## 7. Methodology

This section will discuss the methodology that will be used in the scope of the research and the writing process. For this reason, it is of utmost importance to point out not only the preferable approach but also aspects such as applied paradigms.

Firstly, in order to ensure the highest quality possible for the implementation of this research, this author draws upon her language skills and analyses various sources from different backgrounds, countries and perspectives. The cultural and ethnic aspects are vital to understand certain developments and tendencies, and it is therefore certainly beneficial to assess as many articles, research analysis and data as possible. The most important source will certainly be the Fragile State Index, the Annual Reports of the Fragile State Index published by the Fund for Peace, publications of the European Commission and various European government websites. For the compilation of opinions and tendencies it will be important to analyse national newspapers, yearly reports, data from national surveys or censuses. The core idea is not necessarily about the ability to understand the written language, but to understand the cultural paradigm of the foreign written sources. Having lived for several years in both countries this author is evidently a suitable candidate to not only perceive but also to interpret these cultural paradigms and describe her assessment through an academic lense.

Secondly, the main approach of the written thesis will be inductive. The inductive reasoning method will allow the author to create her own hypotheses and therefore come up with her own assumptions, conclusions and compare them to the status quo. A combination of enumerative and eliminative induction will draw a sharper scenery and consequently lead to a solid and more educated reasoning in the conclusion.

Thirdly, this author's comparative approach will consist of pointing out similarities and finding differences to then make an assessment that will take place in the background. Therefore, the reading process will be facilitated for the lecturer by illustrating the most demonstrative hypotheses, deductions and conclusions. France and Poland may appear to be very similar but also very different countries in some ways. The principal criterion for the comparative process will be the Fragile State Index and its annual

reports.<sup>3</sup> The combination of the understanding of cultural paradigm and the comparative approach will allow us to assess the country's common ground but also their major differences easily.

With the help of the introduced methodology, the thesis will not only have a solid foundation but also provide well explained reasons which will be easy to understand and to perceive for the reader. In order to arrive at a final answer to the research question, the issue of utility of the Index will finally have to be assessed from different viewpoints using a broad range of assessment skills. This will certainly be possible by utilising the above explained methodology.

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<sup>3</sup> Fund for Peace. (2022). Demographic Pressures <https://fragilestatesindex.org/indicators/s1/> (last accessed: Jan, 23rd 2022)

## 8. Summary

The Fragile State Index list classifies countries into different levels of fragility by analysing political, economic and social indicators of each and finally ranks them according to a point system. This means that the more points a country is allocated, the more fragile it is considered.

A discussion of the Index in question reveals a wide range of issues that are either not being addressed by the Fund for Peace and leaves one wondering why this vast array of blank space is being avoided. Further, an in depth assessment of the two example countries listed in the Index, Poland and France, proves their irregular developments and the lack of predictability of their future movements when only taking into consideration the documents provided by the Fund for Peace. Therefore, the author dives into the deep fundament of the Fragile State Index and questions its purpose, its linguistic definitions and attempts to see through the theories used by the Fund for Peace. Moreover, she offers a theoretical framework using legal positivism and institutionalist theory to create an understandable layout on which can be built upon to ultimately fill in the blank space.

The last chapter provides legal recommendations leading to an economic strengthening and stabilisation of the inflation rate in Poland and France after the Covid-19 crisis. Demographic pressures such as a low birth rate in Poland can be politically, socially and legally resolved by providing a legal framework that encourages not only young people to remain in Poland and build their career in the respective country but also by offering social and economic benefits for families. France could ultimately decrease its security threats given by terror attacks by strengthening security aspectse of their constitution and eliminating corruptive tendencies within politics.

Finally, this thesis proves the importance of having a critical mind and questioning datasets or Indexes. Having an open spirit, providing educated opinions and ideally offering constructive solutions, can not only improve Indexes such as the one discussed in the scope of this thesis, but also allows for the creation of a better tomorrow.

## I. Discussion of the index in question: Fragile State Index

The Fund for Peace, an American non-governmental research and educational institution, releases the Fragile State Index on a yearly basis.<sup>4</sup> Its aim is to follow state developments in depth and put it into relation with other countries. Chapter I. will discuss the concept of the Fragile State Index, the methodology, the indicators and their evaluation method, the practicality and the general reception. In order to be able to examine these points in practical cases, it is important to look at the methodology behind the Index.

### a. Concept

First and foremost, the Fragile State Index attempts to define a state's fragility by assessing a broad range of factors in order to describe each country's risk of failure in a precise manner.<sup>5</sup> Due to the high amount of factors, the regular pressures that every country encounters once in a while, do not weigh heavily in the equation. However, irregular pressures that influence one of the factors heavily, can already lead to an increase of fragility.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, this concept allows us to identify the concrete factors that can trigger and eventually lead to an increase of fragility in the future. All in all, the Fund for Peace created the Fragile State Index in order to provide a tool that can be used as an early-alert system identifying states at risk so that conflict resolution methods such as policy changes can be preemptively put in place.<sup>7</sup> In order to become a listed country, there are two prerequisites: Firstly, it is mandatory to be a member state of the United Nations.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, there must be a considerable amount of data available that is conducive for a substantial analysis within the assessment tool. In 2021, 179 countries were assessed and listed in the Index.

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<sup>4</sup> Fund For Peace (2022). Programs. <https://fundforpeace.org/programs/> (last accessed: April, 25th 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Fund For Peace. (2018). "How many countries are included in the fragile state index?". <https://fragilestatesindex.org/frequently-asked-questions/how-many-countries-are-included-in-the-fragile-states-index/> (last accessed: April, 9th 2022)

## b. Methodology

Secondly, the methodology of the Fragile State Index is complex and therefore requires an examination and discussion. The foundations of the Fragile State Index lie in the Fund For Peace Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST).<sup>9</sup> This assessment tool not only evaluates countries that are already in a state of crisis, but also identifies critical factors of countries pre and post crisis.<sup>10</sup> It is important to underline that CAST does not only encompass qualitative but also quantitative methodology.<sup>11</sup>

CAST is an assessment tool operating with twelve indicators that help to evaluate the state of affairs.<sup>12</sup> These indicators are classified into three categories (a) social indicators, (b) economic indicators and (c) political and military indicators.<sup>13</sup> Each of the twelve indicators can be rated on a scale from one to ten (1-10). The lower the number on the scale, the more stable the country can be considered. For example, the numbers 8-10 indicate an increased danger due to the low stability within the country.

In this section the indicators will be briefly introduced so that the following chapters are coherent for the reader.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Fund For Peace (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual (2014 Reprint).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p.4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## i. Social indicators:

### 1. Demographic pressures<sup>15</sup>

Demographic pressures can emerge when a country has a high population density but low access to food and potable water. Due to low hygienic standards that are caused by the lack of water and access to hygiene products, diseases are more likely to spread rapidly. This grievance usually leads to a further decline of stability and an increase of demographic pressure.

It is of utmost importance not to underestimate the power of group patterns that can impede human freedom. Pressures within religious or settlement communities can lead to a reduction of human productivity that consequently result in a stagnation or even in a decrease of economic growth.

Other factors that influence this social indicator are the lack of policies set in place in order to protect the environment, the probability of a natural disaster or a race for resources that comes hand in hand with land rivalry and aggression.

### 2. Refugees and IDPs<sup>16</sup>

Another demographic pressure arises when an uncontrollable or non-quantifiable number of refugees or Internally Displaced Persons require basic necessities from the state system. This can contribute to the destabilisation of a country. The reason for this arises in the system overload of humanitarian aid, which has to not only provide shelter, but also food, water and hygiene products. Notwithstanding, the reasons for a displacement can range from economic motivators to natural catastrophes, violence or other catastrophes.

### 3. Group Grievance<sup>17</sup>

A high amount of group grievances does not only indicate everlasting past conflicts, but also human suffering of those who become victims of violent actions. Dominant

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p.5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p.7.

groups can become very powerful within the society and usually influence the lives of many. Also, a group grievance can peak in ethnic cleansing and extremism.

The battle against group grievance requires time and a broad scope of reintegration strategies. All in all, this indicator specifies the amount of danger, human suffering and the cost of human life in depth.

#### 4. Human Flight and Brain Drain<sup>18</sup>

While a “Brain Drain” suggests a fear amongst professionals of being prosecuted based on their intellectuality or their political opinions, “Human Flight” covers the deliberate exodus of the middle class due to economic motivators. Consequently, this scenario leads to further deterioration of the country's economic and/or social stability and peaks in a downward spiral. Accordingly, the score 0 would imply that people from other countries are attracted to contribute to the country's intellectual landscape.

### ii. Economic indicators

#### 1. Uneven Economic Development<sup>19</sup>

The first pillar of economic indicators is that of uneven economic development. This indicator aims at showing group inequality in economic and/or educational backgrounds and enables a conclusion on potential social growth. It is equally important to underline that nationalist tendencies are taken into the equation when calculating this indicator. As a consequence of a lower economic status, people are more likely to have a curtailed level of education and are more prone to be economically motivated to join criminal groups. Policies that introduce free education or try to reduce the formation of ghettos by lowering the cost of living by subsidising living costs, can be suitable for improving and ideally redirect an uneven economic development towards more stability.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p.9.

## 2. Economic Decline<sup>20</sup>

The second pillar is the economic decline that comes along with either one or two other variables. Whilst the first variable focuses on inflation, the second one provides information about the GDP. Without doubt, the reasons for inflation can vary and range from black money circulating within hidden economies or even criminal groups to political corruption and unlawful transactions. In order to improve the economic strength of a country, it is first and foremost important to recognise and admit that the economy is declining. Then, it is beneficial to increase confidence among the population, adapt the inflation and interest rate and lastly, reduce unemployment. The reduction of official unemployment helps to decrease unofficial and hidden transactions among the people, but also improve the state budget. Once trust is increased, it is very likely that entrepreneurship and innovation will recover and boost as well.

### iii. Political and Military Indicators:

#### 1. State Legitimacy<sup>21</sup>

A high amount of political corruption leads to a decrease of trust when it comes to state legitimacy. The lack of mechanisms such as checks and balances within the government, make it very simple for political elites to rule the country exclusively representing and implementing their personal interests. Furthermore, it is certainly beneficial to look at the amount of peaceful protests that are taking place within a country. In case protests are immediately interrupted by violent state actions, it can be an indicator of a bad state of affairs within the country.

Another variable entering this equation is the quality of the election process. An election process that is not taking place in a transparent, free and anonymous manner, indicates grievances within state legitimacy. In order to improve state legitimacy it is of utmost importance to regain the people's trust by providing transparent and fair processes, allowing free journalism and supporting the right of free speech. Consequently, this should foster a state to create a government representing its

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.11.



citizens and not personal interests of the (ruling) elite.

## 2. Public Services<sup>22</sup>

To ensure functioning supply chains, the state has to focus on public services and infrastructure, e.g. reliable public transportation and public health. Not only do public services facilitate daily life, but they can even be life saving. The construction of roads or motorways between rural and urban areas can be in some cases necessary to ensure the citizens survival when in need of medical care in a hospital. Infant mortality and sanitation, drinking water and clean environment are suitable indicators to assess if a country has well functioning and stable public services or not.

## 3. Human Rights and Rule of Law<sup>23</sup>

The next point that is taken into consideration when looking at the political and military indicators is the value of human rights and the rule of law. The legal context is certainly valuable when looking at the fragility of a country as it helps to understand under which legal premises and values the country is (not) functioning. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights is a widely accepted framework and will be taken as the basis in the scope of this thesis.<sup>24</sup> Art 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “*no distinction shall be made*” between people when granting Human Rights. This targets not only their origin, political opinion, property but also their sexual orientation, religious belief and ethnic background.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, this implies that the lower the political, judicial and legal acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, the higher the country's fragility. This applies to an abundance of situations such as the conditions in prison, at workplaces or in a judicial trial. Sudden, unpredictable and violent detentions and public repressions do not only evoke fear among the citizens, but also make them lose trust in the government and the political landscape. To improve this political indicator, it is advisable for the government to take a strong position in favour of human rights and ensure legally correct and fair legal procedures without disregarding human rights. Equally as in the other indicator factors from above, an increase in transparency will not only impede corruption massively but

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.12

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p.13.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Article 2

will also boost trust and hence the state's stability. The combination of the application of a widely accepted legal framework and transparency of governmental actions are key to less fragility.

#### 4. Security Apparatus<sup>26</sup>

The fourth indicator provides information on security menacing actions such as bombings, shootings, terror attacks or organised crime.<sup>27</sup> Within this indicator there are two scenarios that are taken into account, one being non-governmental security threats, the other governmental security threats against the population.

The existence of additional military organisations, guerilla forces, private forces or paramilitary troops indicates an increased level of violence within a country. Lastly, if there is a higher level of the use of force and violent actions by the government, fewer private military organisations that follow their own agenda can exist. If a state is qualified with the number „10“ within the CAST system, it is most likely a country led by a violent dictatorial or absolutist regime.

#### 5. Factionalised Elites<sup>28</sup>

Factionalised Elites ruling the country in a repressive way, blocking or forbidding democratic processes, usually can be taken as a reliable indicator for an increase of instability and fragility within a country. Elements such as strong nationalism or an unfair distribution of resources increase the grievances between the government and the people and can further result in a political turmoil or even a civil war. Additionally, a low representation of the people within the judicial system or even in the written law creates a feeling of misunderstanding and overall lack of happiness and trust of the people about the security environment.

#### 6. External Intervention<sup>29</sup>

The last indicator in this section addresses the issue of external intervention. In case an external actor takes over the power of the country and its governmental institution,

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<sup>26</sup> Fund For Peace (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual (2014 Reprint). p.14.

<sup>27</sup> Global Economy (2022). France: Security Threats Index. [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/security\\_threats\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/security_threats_index/) (last accessed: April, 17th 2022)

<sup>28</sup> Fund For Peace (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual (2014 Reprint). p.15.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.16.

it implies that the country is extremely fragile. There are three types of external intervention (a) military, (b) economic and (c) political. All three types of external intervention come along with a certain dependency on the external intervenor. The higher the dependency on the external intervenor, the higher the chance for an internal conflict to escalate is. In other words, a country is more stable the less external intervention takes place.

### c. Target

Having explained how the Fragile States Index operates, which indicators are used as the basis for the assessment and how these are classified, it is certainly necessary to now have a look at the objectives of the index. The Fund for Peace names multiple applications when it comes to the Fragile States Index. While this section will only describe the official targets that are highlighted by the Fund For Peace, the next chapter will also address the downsides that can potentially result from the functioning of this respective Index. According to the Fund for Peace, the Fragile State Index is supposed to be used as an early warning mechanism and not only serve the public, but also the private sector.<sup>30</sup> More precisely, it can be said that by *public sector* the government and international organisations are encompassed. On top of that, administrative state agencies and the military organisations and forces count towards the latter as well. The term *private sector* encompasses private corporations and single private actors. In some cases there are hybrids that do neither fully count towards the public, nor the private sector. Examples that can be named in such a scope are media channels such as television, newspapers and telecommunication policy groups.<sup>31</sup>

The ultimate purpose of the Fragile State Index as defined by the Fund for Peace is to recognise a state that is progressively becoming weaker in advance, and cause the affected sectors to act, take suitable measures, implement policies or even ask other states for economic or political help, so that an increase of fragility can be prevented.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*(Communication, Society and Politics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.181.

<sup>32</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

Therefore, the Fragile State Index serves as a diagnosis, indicating which exact indicators are weak and require improvement, so that the affected state can act in advance. Also, the comparative factor given by the high number of states that is listed in the Fragile State Index, can help countries to navigate and bring their strengths and weaknesses into relation with others.

#### d. Reception

In the past years the Fragile State Index has faced numerous critics. Whilst by some the Index is considered as a highly valuable and practical tool, others question the lack of transparency of the data collected and therefore have objections towards the accuracy of the index. For instance Henning Melber, from the University of Pretoria, challenges the basis of the Fragile State Index heavily.<sup>33</sup>

Firstly, H. Melber argues that external intervention is not necessarily contributing to a state's fragility, but can actually help and reduce the fragility in the long run.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, there are cases where external intervention leads to destruction, economic collapses, misery or other negative outcomes but both types of interventions should be concluded under one roof.

Secondly, Melber indicates faults in the subject of state legitimacy within the Fragile State Index. According to Melber, the Fragile State Index idealises European democracies and takes these as a model example for the assessment of countries. In other words, the closer a country gets to the western democracy, the less fragile it is considered. However, not only Melber, but also Christoph Michael sees this as a weakness in European democracies.<sup>35</sup> The state legitimacy and democratic processes in Europe have been subjected to discussion and heavy critique in the last few years. Therefore, it is highly problematic that the Fragile State Index still uses European democracies as a point of orientation and perfection without taking a stance against the critiques or commenting on this matter. The romanisation of European

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<sup>33</sup> Melber, H. (2016). Is the Fragile State Index "Fatally Flawed"?. In: The Conversation published on July, 6th 2016. <https://theconversation.com/is-the-fragile-states-index-fatally-flawed-62057> (last accessed: April, 12th 2022).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Michael, C. (2022). Migration and the Crisis of Democracy in Contemporary Europe (Europe in Transition: The NYU European Studies Series).

democracies is therefore also a highly questionable aspect. All in all, the Fragile State Index appears to lack transparency in these two points. In order to provide a critical assessment within this thesis, it will be important to keep these critiques in mind when conducting the case study in Chapter Three.

## e. The countries of assessment: France and Poland

In the scope of this section the positions of France and Poland within the Fragile State Index will be assessed and compared. Sharing similarities in history, culture and mindset, it is of high interest to assess these two countries in depth. To be able to provide an accurate evaluation of their ranking, it is necessary to look at the social, economic, political and military indicators. One thing will become apparent, both countries can learn from each other and should be able to face their challenges with the new given tools in an easier way. While this section will put more focus on the two countries within the Fragile State Index, Chapter Three will provide more opinions, options and information outside of the ones given by the Fund for Peace.

In the Annual Report of the Fragile State Index 2021, the development of the assessed countries is generally divided into ten categories.<sup>36</sup> The ten categories are the following: (1) very sustainable, (2) sustainable, (3) very stable, (4) more stable, (5) warning, (6) elevated warning, (7) high warning, (8) alert, (9) high alert and (10) very high alert.<sup>37</sup>

### i. Poland

Firstly, looking at the position of Poland within the ten categories, Poland is one of the countries that falls into the category of (4) more stable.<sup>38</sup> Improving its position by two places compared to the year 2020, Poland took the 147th place in 2021.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, examining the indicators in depth, Poland has experienced an increase of total points, from 40 in 2020 to 43.1 in 2021, which therefore implies a slight increase of fragility.<sup>40</sup> Evaluating the development of the average number including all given indicators, it has decreased from 3.1 in 2020 to 2.8 in 2021. The misleading use of the arithmetic mean will be discussed in the assessment of France, as it will again show its spurious nature.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. and Messner De Latour, J.J. "Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report." The Fund for Peace, May 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Israel, D.. (2009). Data Analysis in Business Research. p.23.

However, the increase of the total number leads to the further interpretation that Poland has not necessarily improved in stability, but other countries have experienced a harsher decrease of stability than Poland. Relatively speaking this results in an alleged improvement and decrease of fragility, but appearances can be deceptive. Having a closer look at the indicators all numbers have remained close to or exactly the same except for one indicator. The demographic pressures indicator has experienced an extensive increase from an average rate of 2.55 between 2017 and 2019 to 3.6 points in 2021.<sup>42</sup> As explained previously, the indicator “demographic pressures” encompasses a large number of scenarios which can be the cause for the development. Therefore, the reason for this development deserves to be explored in depth. However, having a brief look at Census data, a significant development can be noted. According to Census data, the Polish population dropped by almost one percent within the last ten years.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore the Polish population is also ageing and therefore expected to decrease even more within the next ten years.<sup>44</sup> This development certainly affects the demographic pressures a lot, and will most likely cause it to increase even more in future. Nevertheless, this development does not appear at all in the ranking and will most likely only become apparent when it is too late or highly difficult to be reversed. Also, the Annual Report 2021 does not specify the development of the demographic pressures indicator at any point. This could lead to the questioning of the claimed competence by the Fund for Peace to be able to predict tendencies within the Fragile State Index. It can be said that the Fund for Peace fails to provide an early warning mechanism that has potential to serve as a helping hand to the respective institutions and authorities to redirect the current development.

All in all, the Fragile State Index is misleading in regard to alleged improvement of positions as it does not explicitly specify the relative and absolute improvement or deterioration of a county. Also, the increase of one single indicator is able to change

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<sup>42</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). “Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021”, the Fund for Peace, May 2021. and Messner De Latour, J.J. “Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report.” The Fund for Peace, May 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Stat.gov. (2022). Dane Historyczne Struktura Ludności. <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/ludnosc-piramida/> (last accessed: April, 13th 2022).

<sup>44</sup> Stat.gov. (2022). Prognoza Ludności. <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosci/> (last accessed: April, 13th 2022).

the relative average number so much that it falsifies the overall picture of the development of the indicators. The most problematic point in this case is however that the vast increase of one indicator is neither specified nor reasoned which impedes the aspect of predictability significantly.

## ii. France

Secondly, France is one of the eleven countries belonging to the category (3) very stable.<sup>45</sup> Climbing up one place from the 160th in 2020 to the 159th in 2021, France's fragility has therefore experienced a slight increase.<sup>46</sup> The amount of total points of the indicators has increased by two compared to the previous year and is standing at 32 points in 2021. Looking at the development of the indicators, the average number declined from 1.2 in 2020 to 0.9 in 2021 by 0.3 points, which indicates an improvement. Even though the indicators (a) "Uneven Economic Development" and (b) "Demographic pressures" have significantly increased for (a) 3.4 in 2020 to 4.2 in 2021 and for (b) 1.9 in 2020 to 3.9 in 2021, some indicators have remained the same or even decreased which naturally helps to balance out the average number when using the arithmetic mean.<sup>47</sup> However, the use of the arithmetic mean falsifies the rankings of the indicators significantly.<sup>48</sup> As in the previous case of Poland, the numbers that indicate a certain development get blurred.

Therefore, it would be advisable for the Fragile State Index to use the median in order to express the mean of the indicators in order to not only impede stray bullets to crucially influence the mean, but also to avoid providing misleading information.<sup>49</sup> Then, one could look closely at the stray bullets and try to explain them in depth. The Annual Report 2021 does not explain France's development of fragility at all and is again remaining silent when it comes to straying numbers.<sup>50</sup>

However, the Annual Report 2020 mentions France as one of the European countries that has suffered the most from the Covid-19 health crisis. Not only was the number

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<sup>45</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021. p.2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. and Messner De Latour, J.J. "Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report." The Fund for Peace, May 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Israel, D.. (2009). Data Analysis in Business Research. p.23.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.



of people that were infected by or died from the virus significantly higher than in other European countries, but also the imposition of rules and strict lockdowns severely impeded the lives of many.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it can be assumed that the Covid-19 health crisis had an impact on the indicators *Public Services and Uneven Development*. To conclude, even though it might seem as if France shifted one position up in the ranking and hence increased in fragility, the mean number of the indicators declined and it appears that France experienced a decrease in stability. However, when assessing the reasons for the increase in stability it can be said that they will most likely not remain and fade out in the next few years. As in the Polish case, the Fragile State Index does not show high quality assessment skills as it did not specify the development and in depth and the ranking is misleading as well.

### iii. Takeaways

In the course of this brief evaluation on the two countries within the Fragile State Index, it has become clear that the Index has indeed got a misleading nature to it. Whilst on the one hand, the ranking appears to speak for itself, the indicators speak another language which consequently leads to confusion. The use of the mathematical mean creates an accurate average number by taking all classifications into account and dividing them through the total amount of the indicators. However, outlying or extreme indicator values can unduly influence the mean and cause the average number to move towards the outlying indicator.<sup>52</sup> It would certainly be more beneficial to use the median in order to explore the mean and the development of the indicators in total. Further, it would then be interesting to pick up and assess the straying indicators in depth.

Moreover, the Fragile State Index proved to be less of an early warning mechanism than a description of the status quo. The lack of information on outlying indicators, major changes of fragility in one of the categories or indicators and reasoning behind developments within the annual reports causes a deficit in the given literature by the Fund for Peace. Consequently, a glimpse into the future is almost impossible by relying

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<sup>51</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021. and Messner De Latour, J.J. "Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report." The Fund for Peace, May 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Israel, D. (2009). Data Analysis in Business Research. p.23.

alone on the data given by the Index. Only by researching the reasons for certain developments outside of the literature given by the Fund for Peace diligently, reading national newspapers or studying governmental publications, an explanation of certain processes is made possible.

All in all, an overall improvement of both countries, Poland and France, can be observed. Whilst Poland has improved its position in the ranking, France has improved its average number of the indicators. However, as already explained above, other factors that fall into the equation can change the result massively. Also, the relative position towards other countries should not be disregarded, as a higher increase of fragility in one country can make another seem more stable in the overall ranking. It would be desirable for the Fund for Peace to elaborate on developments or even publish the proceedings conducted that allowed them to process the data in a certain way, in order to better understand how they act and operate. Unfortunately, these processes seem rather intransparent, and the results remain confusing and even misleading. Therefore, the concept of the Fragile State Index by the Fund for Peace is in the explained regards unsuccessful.

## II. Theories of State Fragility beyond the Fragile State Index

Having elaborated on the general concept of the Fragile State Index, its aspects, its criteria, its objectives and effects, there is still one more fundamental facet that needs to be assessed. All in all, it appears that the Fragile State Index and its criteria are clearly defined and well-founded. However, when diving deeper into the substance of the notation of fragility, a fundamental element in the Index's foundation can be found.

This chapter analyses the problematic character of the index. Its subjective character and strongly influential nature are severely underestimated and often left unaddressed by the literature. Institutions such as the World Bank, the OECD and the European Union have all contributed to the development of the concept of a Fragile State.<sup>53</sup> However, the concepts and definitions vary considerably from one region of the world to another, as well as from one country to another. The subjective nature of the term „*fragility*” is therefore extremely problematic. Even within the European Union there is no clear definition of a “*fragile*” state, which comes along with further internal implications and ambitions.<sup>54</sup> Some scholars would go even so far to say that the notation of a fragile state is a “*political invention*”<sup>55</sup> that influences intergovernmental dynamics, a state's internal situation and last but not least the people's lives.<sup>56</sup>

Not only will this chapter examine the concept and definition of the term “*fragility*”, but also it will discuss the usefulness of *labelling* a country as fragile and how it could potentially be used as a *political weapon*. The examination of its usefulness will be conducted by using the theory of institutional liberalism combined with a positivist interpretation method. Thus, the implications of a state labelled as *fragile* are far reaching and can also be highly emotional. The term “*fragile*” does not have a neutral connotation. This is why it will be examined in terms of how it is applied and why this emotionally charged concept has been adapted, even though there are other terminologies in this conundrum with the same meaning but are less emotionally afflicted. It is therefore of utmost importance to discuss the meaning and implications of “*fragility*” as it relates to the Index.

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<sup>53</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016) . The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas. p.2.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p.60.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Lastly, this study intends to compare and contrast the outcomes. The conclusion of this chapter will draw a clearer picture and will serve as a fragment of the answer to the research question.

### a. Why the notation of fragility is problematic

First of all, the notation and the wording of the word fragility has to be assessed. In the last few years, the use of the word „*failed*“ has been superseded by the term „*fragile*“. However, this development is questionable as the terms „*failed*“ and „*fragile*“ do not have the same meaning. The Fund for Peace defines the term „*fragile*“ by naming attributes that can potentially lead to a state's fragility, such as the loss of an authoritarian figure or a non-function or weak-functioning of public services.<sup>57</sup> This is certainly not a satisfying definition of the given term as it is very imprecise and partially inaccurate.

Looking at the Oxford English Dictionary, it defines the term fragile as “something easily broken or damaged; china/glass/bones; be careful not to drop it, it’s very fragile”<sup>58</sup>. In the context of a state, the word „*fragile*“ would therefore describe it as a state whose functioning is not ensured and is therefore under external pressure that it cannot maintain without easily breaking.

To complete, Albrecht and Engberg-Pederson conclude that the notation of state fragility is relative as there are “higher and lower levels of fragility”<sup>59</sup> that can show on a territorial degree but also within society.<sup>60</sup> In short, the quantity of definitions for the term „*fragile state*“ is high and the differences between each of them always leave a gap that needs to be filled. Therefore, the definitions are rather unsatisfying as there is no consolidated definition of state fragility that includes all the necessary factors that have to be encompassed by it.

On the one hand, a common denominator of fragile states is the presence or high likelihood of conflict, lack of control and/or violence.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, states that have experienced conflicts and violence in the past and are in a reconstruction phase are still considered as „*fragile*“. Moreover, the simple classification of a state as

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<sup>57</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). “Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021”, the Fund for Peace, May 2021. p.2-3.

<sup>58</sup> Oxford University Press. (2022) "Fragile". OED Online. [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/fragile](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/fragile) (last accessed April 14, 2022).

<sup>59</sup> Albrecht, P. (2015). Building on what works: local actors and service delivery in fragile situations. In: Handbook of International Security and Development. Edward Elgar Publishing.

<sup>60</sup> Naude, W. et al. (2011). Fragile States: Causes, Costs and Responses. p.5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p.5-6.

„*fragile*“ comes along with far reaching consequences that will further be discussed in depth in the following sections.

## b. Different definitions as a means for different targets?

In this section it will be evaluated how different definitions lead to different outcomes. Not only the World Bank and the OECD, but also the European Union each follow their own agenda when it comes to fragile states. In other words, the World Bank, the OECD and the European Union have created their own conceptualisation of the term “*fragile*”. Given this circumstance, their theories might potentially be used as a political instrument. Consequently, the views behind a very own conceptualisation of the term “*fragile*” and the targets deserve to be assessed.

Firstly, the World Bank had a particularly high influence on the formation of the definition around the term “*fragility*”. The purpose of the introduction of this term into the political agendas in the western hemisphere follows a particular target - to legitimise international assistance.

Secondly, the OECD provides a clear definition of the term „*fragile*“ as follows:

*“the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, systems and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, poverty, inequality, displacement, and environmental and political degradation.”*<sup>62</sup>

This particular definition emphasises the significance of state legitimacy.<sup>63</sup> However, the perception of „*legitimacy*“ can vary notably.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the resulting measures or policies are nothing different than the idealised understanding of state builders, which differ remarkably as well.<sup>65</sup> Mathieu and Lemay-Hébert approach this topic by classifying „*legitimacy*“ into two categories: (1) institutionalist and (2) social approach.<sup>66</sup> Whilst the Weberian (neo)institutionalist theory underlines “*institutional*

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<sup>62</sup> OECD Library. (2022). States of Fragility 2022 Executive Summary. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/ba7c22e7-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/ba7c22e7-en> (last accessed: April, 25th 2022).

<sup>63</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016). The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas p.7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Lemay-Hébert, N. et al. (2014). The OECD's discourse on fragile states: expertise and the normalisation of knowledge production. p.232-251.

*reconstruction*<sup>67</sup>, the social approach highlights the importance of “*social cohesion*”<sup>68</sup>. Both categories need to be satisfactorily fulfilled in order to ensure a stable, well-functioning, non-fragile state.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, the OECD plainly lays its focus on the institutionalist viewpoint. In other words, viewing the term „*fragility*“ through an institutional lense, the OECD solely focuses on the construction and functioning of the institutional instances within the country. Consequently, the just as important social aspects are not taken into consideration by the OECD when questioning „*legitimacy*“.

Thirdly, the European Union does not officially specify or formalise its understanding of the term „*state fragility*“. Only in the *2007 Communication from the Commission*, the European Union describes proceedings and cooperations in order to prevent or protect fragile states.<sup>70</sup> Following this, it is rather questionable why the European Union does not mention this term in other documents. Analysing European Reports or Papers, the preference for euphemistic language becomes apparent. For instance, the terms „*challenge*“, „*menace*“ or “*weakness*” are evidently preferred over the term „*fragile*“.<sup>71</sup> The focus of the European Union clearly lies in the reaction to any potential fragilisations on a global, national or regional level.<sup>72</sup> However, it is not the sustainable strategy against an increase of fragility that stands in the foreground, but the security concerns that such a development can cause within the European Union.<sup>73</sup> Even though the European Union offers a broad range of instruments and toolboxes to ensure a reasonable solution management in case of instability, it does not mention the approach that is used to diagnose a state as fragile.<sup>74</sup> The absence of a functioning governance is considered to be an absolute indicator and therefore deal-breaker to recognise a *fragile state*.<sup>75</sup> However, this is not a definition nor a satisfying demarcation of the subject area. As a result, it would be not only beneficial but also

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<sup>67</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016). *The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas* p.7.

<sup>68</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016). *The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas* p.7.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 25 October 2007 – Towards an EU response to situations of fragility – engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace [COM(2007) 643 final – Not published in the Official Journal].

<sup>71</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016) - *The Political Invention of Fragile States: The Power of Ideas* p.65.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p.63.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p.65.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p.63.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p.66.



highly recommendable for the European Union to introduce a clear cut definition of the subject area in order to translate different fragile scenarios into efficient policy recommendations. This would not only improve their political stance and systemic role but also increase transnational cooperation.<sup>76</sup>

All in all, it is not always clear if the institutions follow a particular agenda with their definitions or not. In the case of the European Union, who does not provide a specific or explicit definition of the word „*fragile*“, it is rather questionable if it simply avoids using this particular term or if it utilises other terms in favour of a particular, different reason following another agenda. However, the OECD, by placing its focus on the term “legitimacy” draws a clearer line. Nonetheless its interpretation of the word legitimacy using Weberian neo institutionalist theory, disregards social aspects. In other words, it views institutional legitimacy as the key factor to draw conclusions about a state's fragility.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

### c. Purpose and Critique

Having elaborated on the contrasting definitions it is now necessary to find arguments for the Index's purpose. This section elaborates on the usefulness (or lack thereof) of the Fragile State Index. For this reason, the actors behind the notation of fragility have to be identified and analysed. Subsequently, it will be of utmost importance to critically assess the institutions behind the scene and elaborate on their respective approaches. Lastly, the implications of labelling a state as „*fragile*“ will be addressed.

First of all, the Fragile State Index does not analyse and classify every country in the world. In fact, the Fragile State Index only evaluates the fragility of those countries, who fulfil the prerequisite requirements laid out by the Fund for Peace. Therefore, several regions and countries such as the Vatican, Taiwan or Puerto Rico do not undergo this particular assessment process.<sup>77</sup> The exclusion of these countries certainly makes the Index incomplete.

It has to be underlined that the vision of the Fragile State Index is problematic. As the previous section has shown, the definitions and the understanding of the word „*fragile*“ vary, and they all come along with different agendas and backgrounds. On top of that, the Fund for Peace does not provide an accurate definition of the term, it conveniently produces an entire Index for. This evidently leaves a wide spectrum for disagreement but also speculation.<sup>78</sup> Perceptions certainly differ between the various regions in the world. Without doubt, the Fund for Peace idealises western standards and sets these as a measuring tool to evaluate how fragile states actually are. As a result, countries that do not necessarily follow a western-value oriented agenda, end up with a high Index number and hence are considered as more fragile within the Fragile State Index.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, it would be beneficial to introduce a tool that is either entirely objective or that puts not only western, but also all other standards and point of views into consideration when assessing the fragility of a state.

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<sup>77</sup> Fund For Peace. (2022). Coloured World Map. <https://fragilestatesindex.org> (last accessed: April, 27th 2022).

<sup>78</sup> Schmied, N. (2017). Fragile Staaten in Post Konflikt Situationen. Abschnitt 9.

<sup>79</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

Next, the Fund for Peace's intransparency of assessed data and sources makes it almost impossible to trace how conclusions are drawn and how countries are classified. The Fund for Peace excuses this lack of openness by the impossibility to publish such a vast amount of data that is used for analysis.<sup>80</sup> However, this is an unsatisfying answer and further caused the author to attempt to get in touch with the Fund for Peace in order to find an explanation or even a list of sources used. Unfortunately, the Fund for Peace did not respond to any emails addressing this concern. Therefore, this aspect lowers the quality and trustworthiness in the Index itself massively and their inability to reply to direct questioning from the public further highlights the intransparency of the Fund for Peace.

Moreover, the implications of characterising a country as fragile are far reaching. By giving a country the notation of being fragile, it faces a broad range of additional problems that can impede potential processes of improvement.<sup>81</sup> In 'the political invention of fragile states', Sonja Grimm elaborates on the political implications of the term in question and analyses its potential to manipulate in world politics.<sup>82</sup> The simple categorisation of a country as „*fragile*” or „*unstable*” does not only impede such countries from being part of corporations or unions, but it also locks them in a downward spiral.<sup>83</sup> In fact, it is considerably more difficult for a country to break out of such a spiral and find its way to being a potential partner for the global community again.<sup>84</sup> Emphasis on an Index such as the Fragile State Index, makes this process even more difficult than it already is. As the alleged weaknesses and stability matters get projected in numbers yearly, it most likely discourages the fragile country to grow even more. On top of that, countries that are considered stable might not necessarily want to become a trading or economic partner of a state that is classified as fragile. Due to this isolation, the country is not only hindered in expanding its economic power, but it also is excluded from exchange on a transnational level. As a matter of fact, transnational exchange is highly important in order to keep up with the standards of the global community, which is a fast paced environment and to have a common

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<sup>80</sup> Fund for Peace (2018). Does the Public Have Access to the Data in this Index? <https://fragilestatesindex.org/frequently-asked-questions/does-the-public-have-access-to-the-data-in-this-index/> (last accessed: April, 29th 2022).

<sup>81</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016). The Political Invention of Fragile States. p. 60.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> World Bank (2020). Breaking out of Fragility: A country economic memorandum for diversification and growth in Iraq. p.63-89.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

ground for further communication. The lack of this common ground, leads to a political, social and decrease of a country and hence leads to an additional increase of fragility within the ranking of the Fragile State Index.

In addition, the broad theoretical framework that exists around the term „*fragile*” is undoubtedly neglected and mostly even entirely ignored in the assessment of the scope of the Fragile State Index. The Fund for Peace does not mention at any point upon which theory the Index is based on. Only assumptions and point of views by various institutions such the European Union or the OECD implicitly provide their perceptions of the topic. This is unquestionably highly problematic as this fosters an unclear reception of the ideas surrounding the Index as well as leaving too much potential for disagreement. The Fund for Peace would significantly increase the value of the Index if they offered an explanation of the theoretical framework used and explicitly outlined a definition or their clear perception of the terms in question. According to Grimm, different conceptions of fragility lead to different outcomes in the assessment.<sup>85</sup> Making use of the institutional approach, one is quickly confronted with certain limits and imprecise placements.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, Weber suggests a concretisation of the institutionalist theory.<sup>87</sup> According to Weber, the attention could be laid on institutional restoration and on the domination of a single, lawful and appropriate power.<sup>88</sup> To draw the final picture, it is also valuable to go the extra mile and include the social political approach and view on the state's fragility through an anthropological and ethnological lense.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, the author's critique about the Index is legitimate. One can only assume which values the Fund for Peace stands for and how it consequently categorises a country. However, in the course of this study it has been shown that western standards and morals are undoubtedly idealised. The exclusion of some countries is also troublesome as it leads to a fragmented and deficient Index. Furthermore, countries that are categorised as fragile have to undergo a long and painful process to be able to get out of a downward spiral. The simple categorisation leads to further problems

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<sup>85</sup> Grimm, S. et al. (2016). The Political Invention of Fragile States. p.44.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p.48.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p.49.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

and destabilisation. Consequently, the Fragile State Index does not appear to fulfil a higher purpose that helps countries to pull them out of misery, or grievances.

Therefore, it is now clear the Fragile State Index needs improvement. In order to ameliorate the overall appearance and give the Fragile State Index more purpose, it would be beneficial to upgrade its transparency and to develop an open and above all understandable assessment theory. Furthermore, it would be wishful for the Fund for Peace to offer some recommendations in their Annual report or to appeal to the respective institutions to work towards an improvement within the weak areas. Also, the theoretical framework needs to be widely expanded and matters have to be assessed not only through the traditional institutionalist lense, but also through the Weberian view and an additional social legitimacy approach. These factors would surely improve the quality of the Index and give it more purpose. Without doubt, it is certainly highly complex to provide recommendations in favour of countries' improvement of stability.

The next chapter will offer a case study where Polands and Frances stability could be improved by policy recommendations. For this reason, this study will need to take institutionalist theories and the explained CAST system by the Fund for Peace into consideration.<sup>90</sup>

In the course of the exploration of all the indicators in the first and the theoretical viewpoints in the second chapter one can draw the conclusion that most indicators will be most likely interconnected and have the potential to influence the development of one another. Therefore, one legal amendment can go a long way and could not only carry benefits towards the cohesion, but also towards the political and social indicators. In addition to that, it has become clear that trust is one major component that plays an important role in each indicator. Consequently, the improvement of general trust can also produce a positive outcome in all categories and should lead to a decrease of the overall fragility. In an ideal case, these policy recommendations are most likely to improve each country's stability sustainably.

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<sup>90</sup> Fund For Peace (2014). Conflict Assessment Framework Manual (2014 Reprint).

### III. Case Study: Poland and France

In the third and last chapter of this thesis, an in-depth fragility assessment of the most affected indicators in the two countries Poland and France will allow the author to evaluate the reasons behind the developments and movements of the indicators. This analysis will form the basis for policy recommendations that are in favour of an overall improvement and a decrease of fragility of the countries in question. As already explained above, the indicators are interconnected and united by certain attributes such as public trust in the government and its institutions.

First of all, to point out the existence of external factors and recent developments, indicators that have experienced a sudden steep increase will be presented and policy recommendations towards these will be given. Secondly, indicators that have a stagnating or a constant downwards trend will be assessed and given policy recommendations for. This will allow the author to demonstrate the broad range and difficulty for states to provide accurate and functioning solutions in favour of a stability increase to the reader. Thirdly, in the scope of the explanations of reasons for certain developments, the inaccuracy and lack of efficiency of the Fragile State Index will be underlined. Therefore, this chapter will provide constructive critique not only for the Fund for Peace, but also for each of the countries.

Whilst the policy recommendations should lead to an improvement of the indicators and the overall states fragility, the outcome can of course not be determined at this stage. For instance, external or uncontrollable factors such as a war, a nuclear catastrophe or a natural disaster can overshadow and dilute certain results induced by policy amendments.

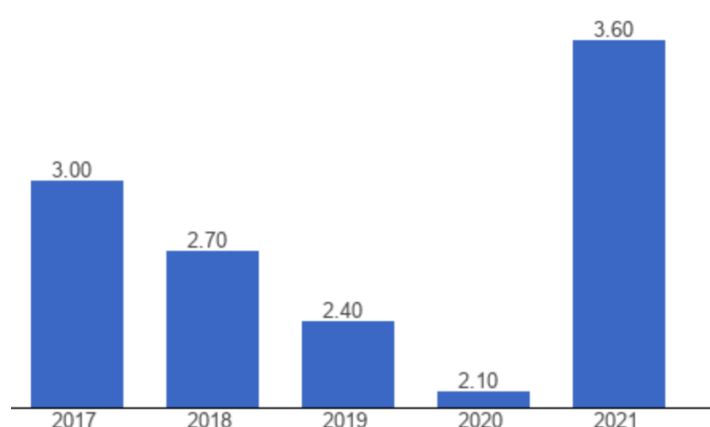
## a. Poland

In the last few years, Poland has experienced a broad range of pressures that consequently influenced several indicators within the Index. As the report published by the Fund for Peace does not provide specifically outlined reasons for the developments that will be discussed in the following, it is necessary to include sources other than the annual report.

### i. Demographic Pressures

Firstly, Demographic Pressures project a steep increase, in particular between the years 2020 and 2021.<sup>91</sup> Although between 2017 to 2020, the indicator suggested a downward trend and therefore less fragility, demographic pressures drastically increased in 2021.<sup>92</sup> However, in reality Poland has been experiencing demographic pressures for some time already and the causes are deeper rooted than the Fragile State Index shows.<sup>93</sup> Whilst some of the reasons can not be combatted directly, some others can be reversed and ideally eliminated. Therefore, different causes require different solutions in order to be able to solve them not only for the time being, but also for the future and to finally cause a decrease of fragility in the Fragile State Index.

**Poland: Demographic Pressures Indicator (2017-2021)<sup>94</sup>**



<sup>91</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

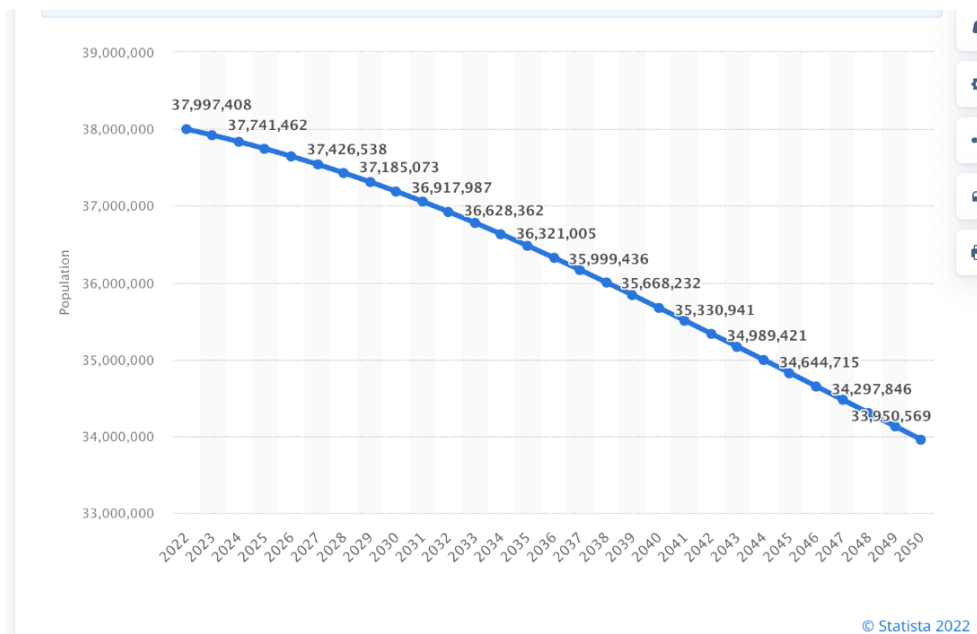
<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> OECD (2020), OECD Economic Surveys: Poland 2020, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/0e32d909-en>. (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

<sup>94</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Poland demographic pressures index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/demographic\\_pressures\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/demographic_pressures_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

Moreover, looking at Poland's most recent population forecast, it is expected to decrease significantly until 2050.<sup>95</sup>

### Population forecast Poland (2022-2050)<sup>96</sup>



There are several reasons that contribute to the explanation of this downward trend. Firstly, It is evident that emigration, the ageing population and lower rate of childbirth are the major factors contributing to this development.<sup>97</sup> For example, for the last twenty years, large swathes of young people have left Poland to look for better education or career opportunities. Even though this movement has become slightly weaker in recent years, it still is an important factor when assessing the reasons for a decreasing population.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Statista. (2022). Population forecast for Poland from 2022 to 2050. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/957308/poland-population-forecast/> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

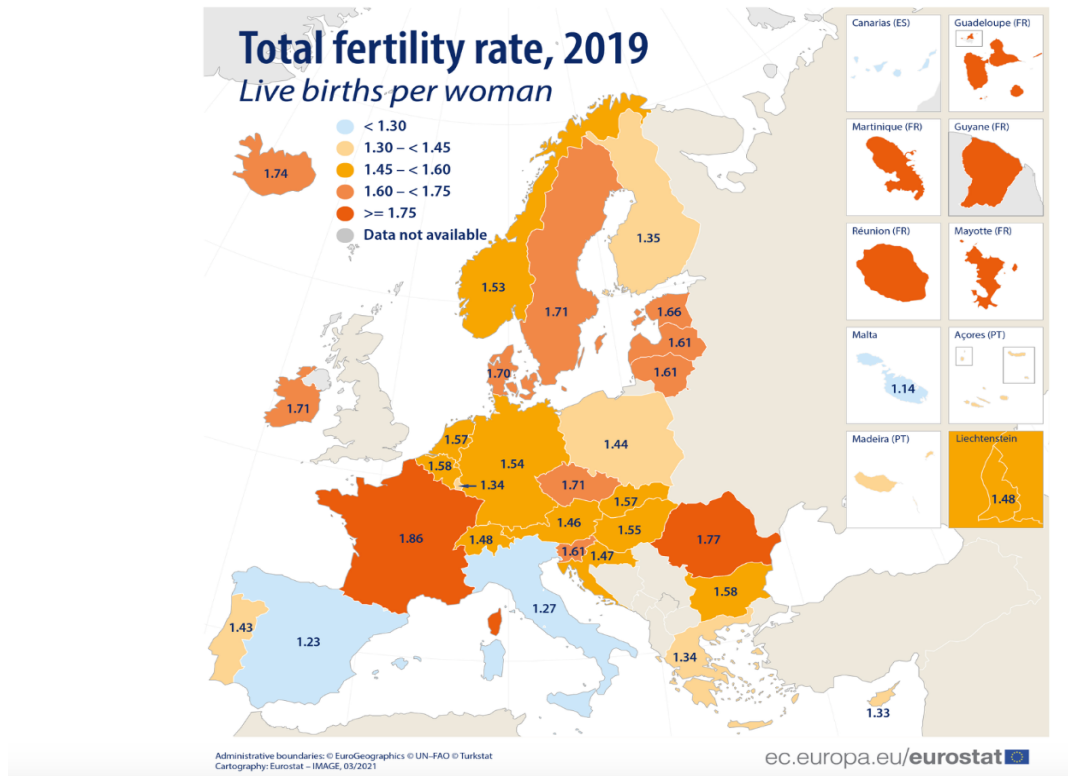
<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Judah, T. (2021). Poland's population imponderables. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/04/01/polands-population-imponderables/> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.



## Europe Total Fertility Rate, 2019<sup>99</sup>



Two, the lack of young Poles wanting children leads to a further population decrease.<sup>100</sup> Compared to its neighbour countries Germany, the Czech Republic, Latvia or Slovakia, Poland has a relatively low fertility rate with 1.44 live births per woman.<sup>101</sup>

In order to tackle this problem, the government introduced policies that were meant to increase the amount of young Poles having children.<sup>102</sup> The most controversial of

<sup>99</sup> Eurostat. (2021). EU births: decline continues, but not from foreign born women <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210323-2> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>100</sup> Judah, T. (2021). Poland's population imponderables <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/04/01/polands-population-imponderables/> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>101</sup> Eurostat. (2021). EU births: decline continues, but not from foreign born women <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210323-2> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>102</sup> Judah, T. (2021). Poland's population imponderables. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/04/01/polands-population-imponderables/> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

these laws was certainly the abortion ban in 2021.<sup>103</sup> Compared to the liberal approach in Europe when it comes to abortion law, Poland positions itself at an extreme and refuses the act of abortion leaning on arguments from the Catholic Church.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, Polish law allows abortion only under very specific circumstances and makes it not only theoretically but also practically extremely difficult to undergo the procedure.<sup>105</sup> However, the government's approach to increase the number of Polish children has failed on a large scale. The introduction of the strict abortion law, has in fact led to a wave of protests within Poland and increased the country's fragility even further.<sup>106</sup>

A better solution to the issue of fertility and to increase the Polish population, Poland could be to introduce a new tax regime, in which families with more children have to pay less taxes.<sup>107</sup> Another financial motivator could arise with a reform of the 'Rodzina 500+'<sup>108</sup> programme, by increasing the yearly financial help according to each family's individual situation. Lastly, an increase of the quality of education would benefit Poland's population sustainably.<sup>109</sup> For instance, investing in school infrastructure, fostering young researchers, or providing universities with funds to conduct research or exchange programmes on a global level would make Poland an attractive country to educate children in.

## ii. Economic Decline

Secondly, Poland's economic decline is increasing due to external factors that lead to economic stress.<sup>110</sup> Having a positive trend towards economic incline between the years 2014 and 2019, the Index depicts a steep decline in 2020 but a quick rebound

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> European Parliament. (2021). Poland: no more women should die because of the restrictive law on abortion <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20211108IPR16844/poland-no-more-women-should-die-because-of-the-restrictive-law-on-abortion> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Thomlinson, R. 1975. Demographic Problems: Controversy over Population Control.

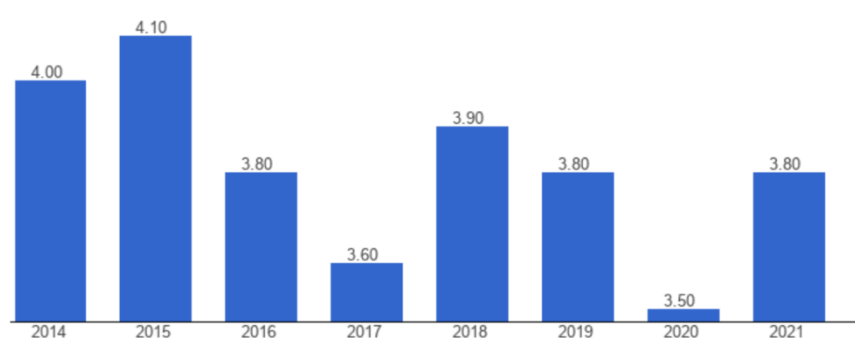
<sup>108</sup> Polish government. (2022). Rodzina 500 + <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/rodzina-500-plus> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>109</sup> Population Matters (2021). Solutions. <https://populationmatters.org/solutions> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>110</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

in 2021 to a similar level of 2019.<sup>111</sup> In other words, it appears that this particular indicator experienced a quick recovery. Despite the main explanation for this development being obvious, the Covid-19 pandemic, the Fragile State Index draws a misleading picture.

**Poland: Economic Decline Indicator (2014-2021)<sup>112</sup>**



The Covid-19 health crisis weakened the European economy drastically and will most likely influence not only the Polish but also the European economy even further.<sup>113</sup> The current inflation crisis in 2022 has its roots in the Covid-19 health crisis that is being further exacerbated by an on-going war in Ukraine and lockdowns in China. Therefore, it is very likely for the indicator level to increase again in 2022. EU member countries are facing this challenge together, and attempt to cooperate and fight inflation by introducing unilateral policy responses.<sup>114</sup> However, it has to be kept in mind that every action will cause a reaction and could be highly risky or even lead to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Economic decline index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/economic\\_decline\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/economic_decline_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022)

<sup>113</sup> Eurostat. (2022). Economic development. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/covid-19/economy> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

<sup>114</sup> Eurostat. (2022). Annual inflation up to 5.9% in the Euro area, up to 6% in the EU. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/14358239/2-17032022-AP-EN.pdf/7bd82074-c752-a9bf-dfce-8e9b4eaf666e> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

further economic damage.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it is recommendable to slowly introduce policies such as the *Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme* that help to counterbalance economic stress.<sup>116</sup>

In the particular case of Poland there is another factor that has to be taken into the equation when examining the economic development. The outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 has increased energy prices massively and will most likely hinder economic growth even further.<sup>117</sup> In this highly delicate economic situation a slow interest rate increase is a suitable way to outweigh the economic shock and come back to an economic balance again.<sup>118</sup> It has to be kept in mind that this process can take up to a few years.

### iii. Human Rights and Rule of Law

Thirdly, the Human Rights and Rule of Law indicator projects a constant upwards trend. This development is certainly concerning as it implies that the relationship between the state and its population shows a decrease of mutual respect. In its yearly report, Amnesty International criticises Poland's lack of protection of human rights and limitations regarding the fundamental freedoms.<sup>119</sup> The lack of respect and protection of these rights can be observed in public institutions, legislation and state authorities.

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<sup>115</sup> Bivens, J. (2022). Inflation and the policy response in 2022 in: Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/blog/inflation-and-the-policy-response-in-2022/> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022)

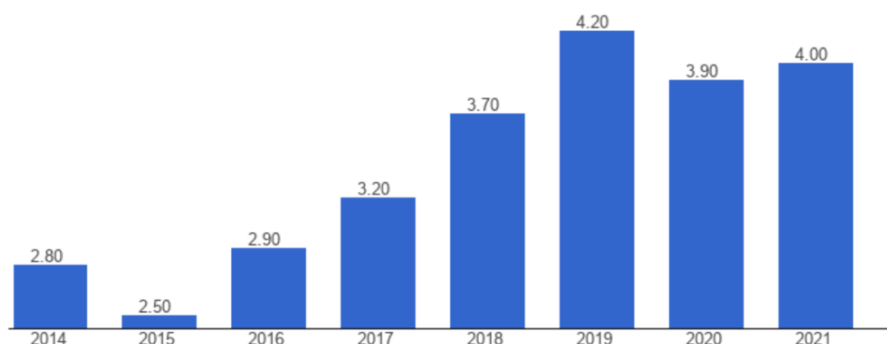
<sup>116</sup> European Central Bank (2022). Monetary Policy Decisions. <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2022/html/ecb.mp220414~d1b76520c6.en.html> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

<sup>117</sup> Bartyzel, D. (2022). Poland to hike again as prices hit double digits: Decision guide. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-06/poland-to-hike-again-as-prices-hit-double-digits-decision-guide> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

<sup>118</sup> Bartyzel, D. et al. (2022). Poland attacks inflation with World's First 2022 Rate Hike <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-04/poland-kicks-off-2022-with-world-s-first-rate-as-inflation-soars> (last accessed: April, 16th 2022).

<sup>119</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). Report 2021/2022 The State of the World's Human rights. P.59. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4870/2022/en/> (last accessed: May, 13th 2022).

## Poland: Human Rights and Rule of Law indicator (2014-2021)<sup>120</sup>



Against several efforts made by European institutions, Poland has been repeatedly trying to overrule the independence of the judiciary and hence committed a breach of Article 6<sup>121</sup> (right to a fair trial) European Human Rights Act.<sup>122</sup> This has caused one of the biggest crises in rule of law that the European Union has ever experienced.<sup>123</sup> Poland argues that the constitution and judicial policies were not compatible with the right to a fair trial as foreseen in the European Human Rights Act.<sup>124</sup> As a consequence, Poland has been banned from the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ).<sup>125</sup> In order to increase state stability in this regard, it would certainly be beneficial for Poland to comply with the European Human Rights Act and defend the independence of the Judiciary. As a result of Poland being more in accordance with European values and European law, the relationship between the

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<sup>120</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Economic decline index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/human\\_rights\\_rule\\_law\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Poland/human_rights_rule_law_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>121</sup> European Human Rights Act. (1958). Art 6 Right to a fair trial.

<sup>122</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). Report 2021/2022 The State of the World's Human rights. P.60. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4870/2022/en/> (last accessed: May, 13th 2022).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Tielles, D. (2021). Polish judicial policies violated right to fair trial, finds ECHR, paving way for compensation claims. in : Notes from Poland <https://notesfrompoland.com/2022/02/04/polish-judicial-policies-violated-right-to-fair-trial-finds-echr-paving-way-for-compensation-claims/> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>125</sup> ENCJ. (2021). ENCJ votes to expel Polish council for the judiciary. <https://www.encj.eu/node/605> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

European Union and Poland should improve.

Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Poland has repeatedly proclaimed states of emergency which did not only lack in compliance with international standards but also impeded journalist or media activity.<sup>126</sup> Even though Article 14<sup>127</sup> and Article 54 of the Polish Constitution<sup>128</sup> aiming to protect freedom of speech, Poland saw the state of emergency under Covid-19 as an opportunity to impede critical thinking opinions from spreading.<sup>129</sup> This has certainly caused an outcry on an European Level in accordance with the Articles 67<sup>130</sup> and Article 73<sup>131</sup> of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. However, this is not a new tendency, as Poland has been implementing policies aimed at subjecting the media to censorship since 2015.<sup>132</sup> This is a breach of Article 10<sup>133</sup> (freedom of speech) and Article 11<sup>134</sup> (freedom of expression) European Human Rights Act. To stop this development, and hence a further incline of this particular indicator in the Fragile State Index, a strong respect of the Human Rights, the European values and the people's freedom are highly recommended. The longer the people's opinions are ignored, the more mistrust towards the government and its actions will develop.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). Report 2021/2022 The State of the World's Human rights. P.59. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4870/2022/en/> (last accessed: May, 13th 2022).

<sup>127</sup> Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (1997). Art 14 Zasada wolności mediów.

<sup>128</sup> Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (1997). Art 54 Zasada wolności poglądów.

<sup>129</sup> Amnesty International. (2022). Report 2021/2022 The State of the World's Human rights. P.59. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/4870/2022/en/> (last accessed: May, 13th 2022).

<sup>130</sup> The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2009). Art 67. (ex Article 61 TEC and ex Article 29 TEU).

<sup>131</sup> The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2009). Art. 73 TFEU.

<sup>132</sup> Henley, J. (2021). The Polish government's media bill is latest move to silence its critics. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/11/polish-government-media-bill-latest-move-silence-critics> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>133</sup> European Human Rights Act. (1958). Art 10 Freedom of Speech.

<sup>134</sup> European Human Rights Act. (1958). Art 11 Freedom of Expression.

<sup>135</sup> Human Rights Watch. (2021). Covid-19 Triggers Wave of Free Speech Abuse. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/11/covid-19-triggers-wave-free-speech-abuse> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

#### iv. Takeaways

The evaluation of these three indicators has proven the inaccuracy and lack of information within the Fragile State Index and its annual report. Whilst the development and interpretation of the indicators can point towards a positive progress, an in-depth analysis of the current situation and circumstances within the country can point towards a completely different direction. Therefore, the simple takeaway of the index and Poland draws a contrasting picture to reality and does not predict trends reliably or even at all. Also, the Annual Report to the Index, only offers very limited explanations to tendencies, happenings or future developments.

Moreover, it cannot be forgotten that the indicators are interconnected and that an improvement in one area leads to an implicit improvement in another area. For instance, the introduction of economic programmes that are targeted to boost economic development also raise the trust of the population towards the government. This trust could further lead to an improvement of the demographic pressures, as young Poles, seeing an economic improvement, could be motivated to have children. Also, the governments granting more freedom rights, can raise the population's trust even further and can result in an overall decrease of fragility and strengthening of stability in Poland.

All in all, the provided case study analysed above has helped to understand the reasons behind the numbers and presented policy recommendations that could potentially lead to a decrease in the overall fragility. The interconnectivity of the indicators does not cause a linear but a close-to quadratic improvement of stability.

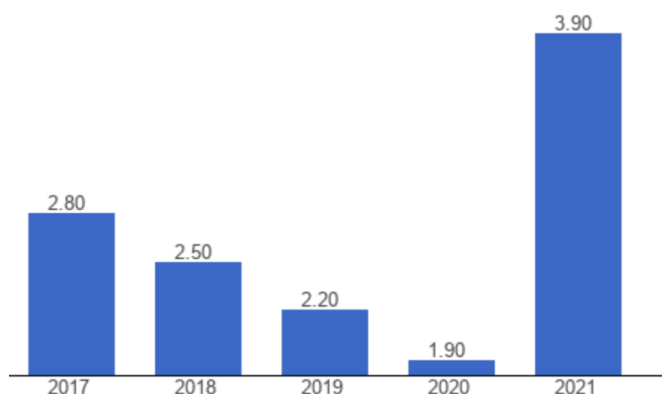
## b. France

In France there are several indicators that have been continuously increasing over the last few years. Even though this might appear complicated, the example of Poland has already proven the effect of interconnectivity between the indicators.

### i. Demographic Pressures

Firstly, just like for Poland, the demographic pressures indicator shows a relatively high increase compared to the last few years. Between 2017 and 2019 the ranking of the indicator was between 2.8 and 2.2 and had a declining trend. In 2020, the demographic pressures decreased further to 1.9.<sup>136</sup> However, in 2021, the indicator was boosted up by 2 points.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the reasons for the development of this particular indicator deserve to be discussed and analysed in the following.

**France: Demographic Pressures Indicator (2017-2021)<sup>138</sup>**



Even though both countries, Poland and France, experience demographic pressure, the reasons behind their upshots in the Index vary. Whilst Poland faces the issue of a

<sup>136</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Global Economy. (2022). France demographic pressures index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/demographic\\_pressures\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/demographic_pressures_index/) (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).



very low birth rate, France has one of the highest live births rates in Europe with 1.86 live births per woman.<sup>139</sup> This certainly illustrates the broad scope of factors that can resonate within the democratic pressures indicator.

The Annual Report to the Fragile State Index in 2020, announced an increase in demographic pressures for countries that have been strongly affected by the Covid-19 health crisis.<sup>140</sup> However, this prediction was highly imprecise as it did not elaborate on the deeper ingrained reasons leading to this development. Indeed, France has been hit heavily by the pandemic and this shock came along with a wide range of consequences.<sup>141</sup> In 2020 and 2021, the mortality rate in France was on average 8.2% higher compared to 2019.<sup>142</sup> Whilst the lockdowns decreased the likelihood of dying for instance in an accident and hence had a protecting effect on the French population under the age of 35, the mortality rate for people over 75 increased significantly.<sup>143</sup> In fact, in 2020 and 2021, the mortality rate for the French population increased by 11%.<sup>144</sup>

As a result, life expectancy declined by 0.6 years for women and by 0.5 years for men.<sup>145</sup> It has to be said that even though France has been heavily affected by the Covid-19 health crisis, it maintains its fertility rate at pre-Covid level.<sup>146</sup>

Due to the high amount of people infected by the Covid-19 virus, there has been a sharp increase in hospitalisations. However, there have not always been enough intensive care beds available, and France relied on the help of other Member States. As a consequence of the system overload in the health department, the French

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<sup>139</sup> Eurostat (2021). EU births: decline continues, but not from foreign born women <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210323-2> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>140</sup> Messner De Latour, J.J. "Fragile States Index 2020 – Annual Report." The Fund for Peace, May 2020. p.12.

<sup>141</sup> The Lancet Public Health (2021). Covid-19 in France: Challenges and opportunities. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(21\)00054-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00054-2/fulltext) (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>142</sup> Blanpain, N. et al. (2021). Décès en 2020 et début 2021: pas tous égaux face à la pandémie de Covid-19. In: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5432505?sommaire=5435421> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Papon, S. (2021). Bilan démographique 2021. In: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6024136> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

population shows a decreased trust in governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Health (Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé).<sup>147</sup>

To balance out these demographic losses, there is one natural factor and one unnatural factor that enter into the equation. The natural factor was the pandemic, which is expected to slowly fade out over the next few months or years.<sup>148</sup> This will further decrease the mortality and ideally will even ameliorate compared to pre-covid level as the medical opportunities to prolongate life will most likely have improved by then. The unnatural factor of trust will require more action taken by the government. It would be beneficial to introduce reassuring system changes and research initiatives within the health department.<sup>149</sup> Following this, the population would most likely regain trust in the government. However, in case the population's trust decreases further, it could potentially lead to a stagnation and then to a gradual decline of birth rates.<sup>150</sup> The combination of the unnatural and the natural factor would lead to a decrease in demographic pressures in France, which is in favour of an improvement of stability and hence a decrease of fragility.

## ii. Economic Decline

Secondly, France has experienced a steep economic decline when comparing the years 2020 and 2021.<sup>151</sup> However, analysing the precedent years, it becomes clear that the French economy has proven a slow but constant upwards trend.<sup>152</sup> In 2021, one year after the Covid-19 crisis hit the country severely, the economic decline increased by 2 whole points.<sup>153</sup> Again, the Annual Report to the Fragile State Index does not mention any reasons for this development.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, this section will point

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<sup>147</sup> Sciences Po (2022). Attitudes des populations faces au Covid-19.

<https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/fr/content/attitudes-des-populations-face-au-covid-19.html> (last accessed: April, 17th 2022).

<sup>148</sup> The Economist (2022). Covid-19 is likely to fade away in 2022. <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/covid-19-is-likely-to-fade-away-in-2022> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>149</sup> Gille, F. et al. (2015). Why public trust in health care systems matters and deserves greater research attention in: *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy* 2015, Vol. 20(1) 62–64.

<sup>150</sup> Kim, S. (2019). Does Quality of Government Matter in Public Health?: Comparing the Role of Quality and Quantity of Government at the National Level In: MDPI.

<sup>151</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

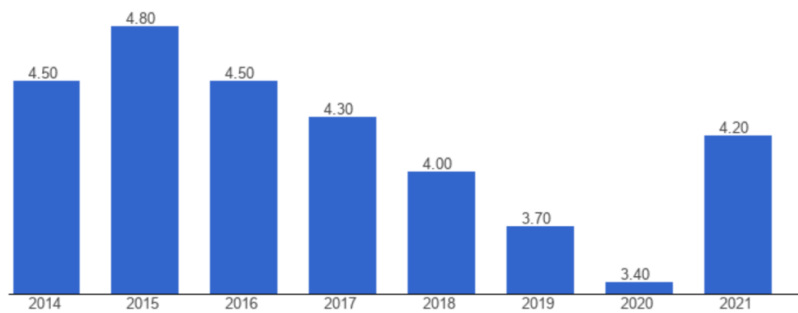
<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

out the factors that triggered or influenced the economic decline and further provide solutions in order to redirect this development towards a positive trend again.

### France: Economic Decline Indicator (2014-2021)<sup>155</sup>



Similar to Poland, France has been experiencing an increase in inflation and hence a devaluation of the national currency. According to the Bank of France, inflation increased after the Covid-19 health crisis, especially after 2021.<sup>156</sup> Since 2022, inflation has risen even further and hit 4.5% in March 2022.<sup>157</sup> Even though inflation was expected to decline by the end of 2022, another crisis has entered the global stage.<sup>158</sup> The war between Ukraine and Russia has put the European Community into another exceptional situation.<sup>159</sup> This particular geopolitical situation has also increased monetary pressure in France and finally caused another wave of inflation.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, the Bank of France is introducing monetary policies aiming for a normalisation of the inflation rate by 2024.<sup>161</sup> This implies that inflation will most likely

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<sup>155</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Economic decline index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic\\_decline\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic_decline_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>156</sup> Andaloussi, E. et al. (2022). Projections macroéconomiques - Mars 2022. For: Banque de France <https://publications.banque-france.fr/projections-macroeconomiques-mars-2022> (last accessed: April, 20th 2022)

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

increase even further by 2023.<sup>162</sup> Facing this particular situation, the majority of the population is confronted with price increases in food and beverage but also in oil and gas.<sup>163</sup> As a result, uncertainty towards the government and its actions are rising. As a community, the European Union should enter into a dialogue and work together on a suitable solution that will not only help each of the member states but also strengthen the European Union as a unit for the future. In accordance with Article 127 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Central Bank has to introduce policies, helping to combat this financial crisis.<sup>164</sup> The European Central Bank predicts a moderate growth of the economy as it is hindered by the Ukraine crisis.<sup>165</sup> However, the post-Covid reopenings undeniably reinforce the European economy again, which will help to power through this crisis.<sup>166</sup> Following the functioning of the Fragile State Index, the economic decline indicator will most likely increase further in the year 2022 and 2023. However, in this case it does not imply a country's higher fragility than before. The actions taken and the sensibility of 2020 influenced the situation of two years later. Nonetheless, that aspect is not taken into consideration by the index. Therefore, it could be concluded that a higher fragility might have been given in 2020, but the actions taken lead to stability and a more reliable and stable preview for the years to come.

Nonetheless, inflation is not the only component causing economic decline. In February 2022, France's unemployment rate was at 7.4% and therefore the fifth-highest in Europe.<sup>167</sup> An explanation for the relatively high unemployment rate can be given through two main factors. Firstly, a slow GDP growth hinders the market from expanding and offering vacancies.<sup>168</sup> Secondly, due to the high employment costs

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2009). Art 127.

<sup>165</sup> European Central Bank. (2022). Our monetary policy statement at a glance April 2022.

[https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pressconf/visual-mps/2022/html/mopo\\_statement\\_explained\\_april.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pressconf/visual-mps/2022/html/mopo_statement_explained_april.en.html) (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Statista. (2022). Unemployment rate in the European Union as of February 2022, by country.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1115276/unemployment-in-europe-by-country/> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>168</sup> Giuliani, J. (2020). Quelles sont les causes du chômage?.

<https://www.mouvementpourundevveloppementhumain.fr/nos-fondements-theoriques/en-finir-avec-le-chomage-un-choix-de-societe/combien-y-a-t-il-de-chomeurs/quelles-sont-les-causes-du-chomage/> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

(social benefits + minimum wage), companies try to avoid hiring more staff than absolutely necessary.<sup>169</sup> Also, the Salaire Minimum de Croissance 'SMIC' which is the minimum wage per hour, hinders companies from expanding.<sup>170</sup> Therefore, the job market stays smaller than in most other European countries.<sup>171</sup> Consequently, in favour of a reduction of the employment rate it would be recommendable to reduce the high employment costs combined with an increase of productivity.<sup>172</sup> Another recommendation would be to *Okun's law*<sup>173</sup>, trying to keep the GDP higher than 4% a year, which would lead to a decrease of the unemployment rate by 1%.<sup>174</sup>

### iii. Security Apparatus and Internal Security

Thirdly, France has been facing security threat issues for several years. The Fragile State Index depicting the indicator for France's security apparatus, shows a steep increase between 2015 (2.3) and 2016 (3.0).<sup>175</sup> Since 2016, the indicator has experienced a yearly increase and is currently at 3.5.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, France's Security has decreased and faces more security threats than in the past. The Annual Report of the Fragile State Index does not specify this development at all.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Statista. (2022). Unemployment rate in the European Union as of February 2022, by country <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1115276/unemployment-in-europe-by-country/> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>172</sup> Grobon, S. (2013). Quels effets du salaire minimum sur le chômage ? In: Regards croisés sur l'économie 2013/1 (n° 13), pages 107 à 111 <https://www.cairn.info/revue-regards-croises-sur-l-economie-2013-1-page-107.html> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022)

<sup>173</sup> Okun AM (1962), 'Potential GNP: Its Measurement and Significance', 1962 Proceedings of the Business and Economic Statistics Section American Statistical Association, pp 98–104.

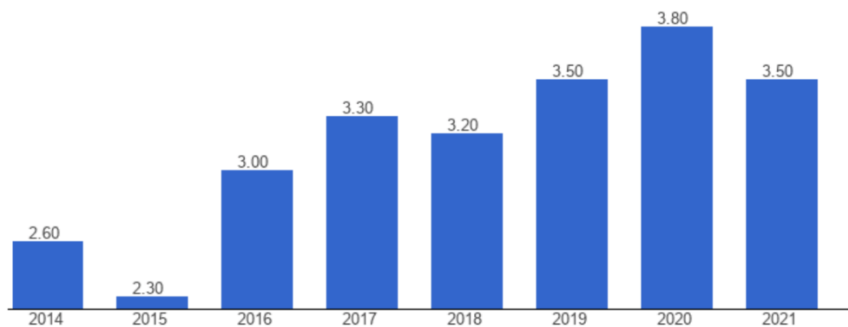
<sup>174</sup> Fuhrmann, R. (2020) Okun's Law: Economic Growth and Unemployment. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/12/okuns-law.asp> (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>175</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Security threat index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic\\_decline\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic_decline_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>176</sup> Fiertz, N. et al. (2021). "Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021", the Fund for Peace, May 2021.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

### France: Security Apparatus Indicator (2014-2021)<sup>178</sup>



The steep increase between 2015 and 2016 can be explained by the shootings at Charlie Hebdo in Paris on January, 7th 2015 and the terror attacks in Paris on November, 13/14th 2015.<sup>179</sup> Further, on the French national day on July, 14th 2016, Nice was shocked by a terror attack, where 86 people lost their lives and hundreds got injured.<sup>180</sup> These are only very few of the occurrences that have led to a security decrease in France and hence an increase in the index number.

As a consequence, France was confronted with a scared population and had to introduce measures to not only protect its population but also to avoid future security threats. In fact, the fight against terrorism has become one of the top priorities in French politics.<sup>181</sup> In particular extremism has led to several terror attacks and a decrease in national security.<sup>182</sup> The French response to the security threat was to

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<sup>178</sup> Global Economy. (2022). Security threats index (measure: index points, Fragile State Index). [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic\\_decline\\_index/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/France/economic_decline_index/) (last accessed: April, 18th 2022).

<sup>179</sup> Ouest France. (2016). Attentats de Paris en 2015. (<https://www.ouest-france.fr/attentats-paris/>) (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>180</sup> France Info (2016). Attentat de Nice <https://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/terrorisme/attaque-au-camion-a-nice/> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>181</sup> Blakemore, B. et al. (2013). Extremism, counter-terrorism and policing. 147-158.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

increase security measures and to introduce the state of emergency.<sup>183</sup> In order to increase national safety, several legislative projects were introduced and confirmed by the constitutional council.<sup>184</sup> There were several planned and attempted terror attacks, that were foiled by governmental authorities. In fact, alone in 2017, 20 planned terror attacks and 6 attempts were discovered and hindered by the French government.<sup>185</sup> However, 5 terror attacks could not be stopped from happening in 2017. As a consequence, France introduced several measures aiming to protect its population.<sup>186</sup> However, it was not always possible to entirely guarantee the safety of the French population.

In order to increase national safety and hence work towards a decrease of the security apparatus indicator, it would be beneficial to introduce policies. For example, more and more terrorist activities get planned and are communicated online beforehand.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, suspicious actions have to be tracked and localised by the authorities, so that further action or even a terrorist attack can be avoided. Introducing a legal basis allowing the tracking of such activities would certainly increase national security. In order to track such online activities, it would be necessary to infringe privacy rights which would be a breach of Article 8 of the European Human Rights Act.<sup>188</sup> However, individual rights such as privacy can be overridden by eminent public interests such as the people's lives or the safety of the nation.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Barbarit, S. (2021). Attentats du 13 novembre : quand l'état d'urgence s'installa en France <https://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/attentats-du-13-novembre-quand-l-etat-d-urgence-s-installa-en-france-190255> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022)

<sup>184</sup> International Forum TAC (2016). Assessments and prospects of security threat. <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/TAC-Report-2016-ENG-V3.pdf> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>185</sup> Statista (2017). Nombre de projets, de tentatives et d'attentats commis en France 2017. <https://fr.statista.com/statistiques/857284/nombre-projets-tentatives-attentats-france/> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022)

<sup>186</sup> Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères. (2022). Terrorism: Frances international action. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/security-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/terrorism-france-s-international-action/> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>187</sup> UNODC (2012). The use of internet for terrorist purpose. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Use\\_of\\_Internet\\_for\\_Terrorist\\_Purposes/ebook\\_use\\_of\\_the\\_internet\\_for\\_terrorist\\_purposes.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Use_of_Internet_for_Terrorist_Purposes/ebook_use_of_the_internet_for_terrorist_purposes.pdf) (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>188</sup> European Human Rights Act. (1958). Art 8 Respect for your Private and Family life.

<sup>189</sup> Münkler, H. et al. (2014). Gemeinwohl und Gemeinssinn im Recht: Konkretisierung und Realisierung öffentlicher Interessen. p. 68. ff.



New digital applications such as artificial intelligence should not only be used by terrorists, but also in counter-terrorism. Only if the authorities go with the spirit of time, learn the according languages and technologies, there can be efficient and reliable counter-terrorist action.<sup>190</sup>

Secondly, the French government has already introduced several projects targeting counter-terrorism. Looking at the history of laws implemented by the French president and/or government fighting terrorism, most of them were time-limited.<sup>191</sup> In fact, most laws were promulgated after a few weeks.<sup>192</sup> This led to a decrease of trust among the population as they felt less safe than before. Therefore, it would be better to promulgate these temporary laws by other laws that increase the people's trust in the nation's safety in a very similar way. Further, the quality of the dialogue between the government and the citizens would certainly increase trust and the feeling of safety among the population again.<sup>193</sup>

Thirdly, constitutional amendments in favour of the protection of the French population would provide a long term protection plan. Even though the French government under François Hollande attempted to introduce a constitutional project, aiming for the safety of the French population, the project failed. To ensure more stability and safety of the French population and hence decrease the indicator, it would be preferable to introduce legislative projects on a constitutional level, that do not only allow a closer tracking of potential terrorist or extremist groups, but also introduce a higher budget for the protection of the population.

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<sup>190</sup> UNICRI and UNCCT. (2021). Algorithms and Terrorism: The malicious use of artificial intelligence for terrorist purposes. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism/files/malicious-use-of-ai-unicri-report-hd.pdf> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>191</sup> République française (2022). Trente cinq ans de législation antiterroriste. <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18530-trente-cinq-ans-de-legislation-antiterroriste> (last accessed: April, 19th 2022).

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Kumagai, S. (2020). Building trust in government through citizen engagement. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/33346/Building-Trust-in-Government-through-Citizen-Engagement.pdf;sequence=1> (last accessed: April 19th 2022).



#### iv. Takeaways

The evaluation of the three indicators, (a) Demographic Pressures, (b) Economic Decline, (c) Security Apparatus has again proven the inaccuracy and lack of prediction capability of the Fragile State Index. In the case of France, the Annual Report to the Index, did not offer any explanations for certain tendencies, happenings or future developments which made the search for influencing factors particularly interesting. Also, the tendencies that can be concluded from the Index collide with the research outcomes. In fact, the indicator Demographic Pressures draws an entirely different picture to reality when it comes to future development. A short analysis has proven that the combination of two solution based factors will lead to a significant improvement and hence a decrease of this particular indicator.

The Economic Decline Indicator has proven to be notably affected by three key factors: (1) Spendings on Covid, (2) Inflation, and (3) Unemployment. To address and solve the issue of inflation, the cooperation between the Bank of France or the French government and the European Central Bank is of utmost importance. As a result, inflation is expected to normalise again in the near future. However, the main factor influencing Economic Decline is the high percentage of unemployment. This chapter has offered solutions leading to a decrease of unemployment and further positively influence the indicator towards less fragility.

Lastly, the state's Security Apparatus has proven to be one of the most demanding challenges France is facing. The traumatising events of the past years have led to an increased demand for safety. In order to provide a better prevention system to increase the safety of the population, it would not only be necessary to make constitutional amendments but also to introduce technological solutions.

All in all, the provided case study above has helped to grasp the reasons and the further development of tendencies. Finally, the suggested policies will not only raise stability, but also increase public trust towards the government. On top of that, this chapter has demonstrated the unreliable nature of the index to offer predictions as it does not include explanations. Once again, the misleading character of the Fragile State Index has been detected and shown beyond doubt.

## Conclusion

After having explored the Fragile State Index from multiple angles, it has become clear that its nature and its functioning are by far more questionable than expected. The vast amount of unconsidered information, lack of future predictability and interpretive framework, leaves a major gap that deserves to be filled with reliable information and interpretation. A simple assessment of the Index draws a contrasting picture to reality and does not predict trends reliably or even not at all. Also, the Annual Report to the Index, only offers very limited explanations to tendencies, happenings or future developments. It would be highly beneficial to include more in-depth assessments in order to increase the reliability of the predictions given and also draw a clearer overall picture of a current situation.

Within the scope of this thesis and its analysis, the position of France and Poland within the index have been analysed. Even though the theoretical outcomes of this research are not only exemplary but most likely also representative and hence applicable for other cases and countries within the Index, it would be wishful to fill this blank space further by conducting a broader research. Therefore, it would be necessary to assess multiple countries from all regions in the world each in order to draw an all-encompassing conclusion and provide a constructive critique to the Fragile State Index.

In the course of the evaluations, the differences between Index and reality have been detected and methodically analysed. In spite of their common problematic indicators, France and Poland mostly have different reasons influencing the latter. The first impression of looking at the matters of Human Rights in Poland and Security Apparatus in France, does not give a common denominator between the two. Nevertheless, after having carried out an in-depth observation of the indicators and the reasons in question, the two countries have more in common than one might at first suppose. In fact, the explanations to the indicator developments describe a decline of internal security and a nationwide incline of fear and distrust.

Both countries suffer from economic decline for similar reasons. The Covid-19 pandemic being the main reason for inflation, affects both: solutions on a national and

on a transnational or European level. Therefore, France and Poland would benefit from cooperating not only in the scope of the European Union, but also increase the dialogue on a bilateral level. Considering their cultural similarities, cooperation would certainly be beneficial for both countries. According to Hofstede's study, the countries show a high amount of cultural similarities, for instance in future orientation, institutional collectivism and performance orientation.<sup>194</sup> As the work ethics are alike, a cooperation would not only be beneficial but also very efficient. In case of difficulties that require immediate decision taking, this partnership would eventually lead to high value decisions having a positive impact.

All in all, this study was able to show long lasting and contemporary issues that both states are facing. Whilst some require immediate policy changes, others need time and slow changes in order to have a positive outcome. Moreover, this study has also proven that reality is not possible to be grasped solely by an Index and is mostly much more complex than one might have imagined. Over the course of this study, the use of this particular Index has turned out to be rather misleading than being an actual determining factor pointing towards a precise direction.

To conclude, this thesis embodies a pioneer of research and provides an educated opinion on the impacts, shortcomings and future of the Fragile State Index, as well as providing policy recommendations for the two states analysed.

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<sup>194</sup> Nowak, Marta. (2016). Cultural determinants of accounting, performance management and costs problems. A view from the Polish perspective using G. Hofstede's and GLOBE culture dimensions. PRACE NAUKOWE UNIWERSYTETU EKONOMICZNEGO WE WROCŁAWIU. 134-149.

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