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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of Political Studies  
Department of International Relations

**The US withdrawal from UNESCO – sign of  
politicization of the agency?**

Bachelor's Thesis

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is focused mainly on the case of US withdrawal from UNESCO, which was announced in October 2017 and took effect in December 2018, especially on finding the motives for this move. In order to identify them, it introduces in the first section the legal and historical overview of withdrawals from international organizations (IOs) in general. This paper gives attention to examples of departure from UN specialized agencies, respectively from UNESCO. Further it presents the Principal-Agent theory, as applied to relationship between States and IOs, and the issue of politicization of IOs, for a better understanding of reasons for the US decision to leave UNESCO. The main method for detecting them used in the following section consists of a content analysis of statements of US officials, other governmental documents and media outputs from 2003 to 2018, in which the USA levelled any criticism towards UNESCO. The analysis distinguishes between the accusations of technical organizational mismanagement and politicization. It also differentiates between the two levels of its occurrence, concretely the supranational (in the independent bodies with delegated authority) and intergovernmental (in the bodies with pooled authority) level. The connection of the any supposedly politicized issue to Israel is also examined. The results of the analysis showed that accusation of politicization was indeed the most frequent criticism, whereas the intergovernmental level prevailed over the supranational. This thesis concludes that the US decision to withdraw from UNESCO was often to the public explained as the sign of American diplomatic support to Israel.

## **Abstrakt**

Tato práce je především zaměřena na případ vystoupení USA z UNESCO, které bylo oznámeno v říjnu 2017 a jako takové nabylo efektu v prosinci 2018, zejména na

nalezení motivů pro toto vystoupení. Ve snaze identifikovat tyto motivy je nejprve představeno právní a historické ukotvení problematiky vystupování z mezinárodních organizací (MO), přičemž pozornost je zaměřena na příklady odchodů ze specializovaných agentur OSN, respektive z UNESCO. Následně je představena teorie Principal-Agent, tak jak byla aplikována na vztah států a MO, spolu s tématem politizace MO, a to kvůli lepšímu pochopení pohnutek vedoucích USA k rozhodnutí vystoupit z UNESCO. Hlavní metoda, jak je odhalit, použitá v další sekci, se sestává z obsahové analýzy stanovisek amerických představitelů, dalších vládních dokumentů a mediálních výstupů od roku 2003 do 2018, ve kterých byla z americké strany vznesena nějaká kritika směrem k UNESCO. Je rozlišováno mezi obviněními ze špatného technického managementu a politizací, která se může vyskytovat na dvou různých úrovních, a to na supranacionální (v orgánech s delegovanou pravomocí) a mezivládní (v orgánech se sdílenou pravomocí) úrovni. Je rovněž zkoumána spojitost jakéhokoliv údajně politizovaného tématu s Izraelem. Výsledky analýzy ukázaly, že obvinění z politizace skutečně bylo nejčastější kritikou, kde její mezivládní úroveň převažovala nad supranacionální. Bylo také usouzeno, že rozhodnutí USA vystoupit z UNESCO bylo veřejnosti často vysvětlováno jakožto projev americké diplomatické podpory Izraeli.

## **Keywords**

US Withdrawal from UNESCO, Withdrawals from IOs, Politicization of IOs, Principal-Agent theory, Motives for withdrawals, US criticism towards UNESCO, Anti-Israel bias of UNESCO.

## **Klíčová slova**

Vystoupení USA z UNESCO, vystoupení z mezinárodních organizací, politizace mezinárodních organizací, Principal-Agent teorie, motivy pro vystoupení, Americká kritika UNESCO, proti-Izraelské zaměření UNESCO.

**Length of the Thesis: 98 369 characters.**

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2019

Jan Dostál

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## **Introduction**

The US Department of State has announced the intention of USA to withdraw from UNESCO in October 2017, expected to take effect on December 31, 2018. This topic was selected mainly because of my academic interest in the issue of withdrawals from international organizations (IOs), especially from UN specialized agencies. The US example stands out of all the others, not only it is the case of world superpower and the largest contributor to the budget of IOs, but also due to the fact that the relationship between USA and UNESCO has always been complicated and the agency has been accused of politicization repeatedly. Already in 2011, USA decided to, on protest of admitting Palestine as a Member State, withhold all its contributions to the organization. It was not for the first time, in 1974 USA suspended their funds for two years and in 1984 they even withdrew from the agency and it lasted for 19 years till they came back (that happened in 2003). All critiques from the American side is concerned on one common motive: allegation of politicization and anti-Israel bias of the organization.

## **Aims of the project**

An effort will be made to identify all possible motives for the current US withdrawal from UNESCO, either in the domestic, in the foreign policy, inter alia including the influence of Israel lobby in it, or in the politics inside the international organization. The key question of the research is, whether the alleged politicization is or is not related to the American decision to withdraw from UNESCO, in other words whether UNESCO is or is not politicized from the American point of view and whether that lead or did not lead them to refusing to participate in its activities. If that hypothesis would prove itself as right, next step would be to focus on towards whom was the critique of UNESCO aimed – towards the organization itself (as an independent supranational agent), or towards so called pooling, where the decision-making role is taken by an interstate body (e. g. Execute Board), to which the States has transferred the authority to make binding decisions from themselves and within which they may exercise more or less influence (Hooghe & Marks, 2015). The findings could be beneficial for understanding the trends of American foreign policy, the work of UN specialized agencies, the motives for withdrawals from IOs and the decision-making process inside UNESCO and it could contribute to understand its critique.

**Research question:** What are the American motives for their decision to withdraw from UNESCO in 2018?

**H0:** The American decision to withdraw was not primarily motivated by the alleged politicization of the agency, but other factors played a bigger role.

**H1:** The American decision to withdraw was primarily motivated by the alleged politicization of the agency, which was the essential factor.

**H2a:** The decision to withdraw was more influenced by perceiving politicization on the supranational level of the agency structures, in the meaning of bureaucracy politicization.

**H2b:** The decision to withdraw was more influenced by perceiving politicization in the decision-making process on the intergovernmental level, in the meaning of pooling.

### **Current state of knowledge**

There is not a great amount of literature concerned with the topic of withdrawals from IOs, since it is quite a rare phenomenon. However, with a growing number of historic precedents, the amount of knowledge has increased, which has also been the case of UNESCO. The following could all prove themselves as useful for my research: case studies of the 1984 situation (e. g. Dutt, 1995) as well as (especially for finding the motives) the inside view into UNESCO in the period before (as Hoggart, 1978) and summary of US policy towards UNESCO in that time (U.S./UNESCO Policy review, 1984), or attempts for a comparative analysis of US withdrawals (or boycotts) of UN specialized agencies in the 1970s and 1980s (Imber, 1989).

On the other hand, politicization has been a widely discussed topic. For the purposes of my work, specific attention will be paid to the outcomes of the research on the UN specialized agencies politicization (e. g. Lyons et al., 1977, or Ghebali, 1985). Imber (1989) in his comparative analysis develops a typology of politicization according to the legitimacy of the term usage. He generally includes into the meanings of the term these examples: dealing with irrelevant or extraneous issues, or issues beyond the mandate of the organization, among others he mentions political favouritism within the secretariat (as well as mismanagement), or abusing of voting majority to enforcing other interests, or even harassment of a member state's right to participate. I will consider more

important the perception of bureaucratic politicization generally, as was defined e. g. in Bauer and Ege (2012) work on European Commission.

The principal-agent model, which has significance for understanding relationships between states and IOs, as it was introduced by Hawkins et al. (2004), would be applied to the relationship between USA and UNECSO, where withdrawal could be interpreted as one of the control mechanism of the state over the organization (rather extreme, but it has worked). In distinguishing between the criticism towards the agency and pooling the Hooghe and Marks' article (2015) should be mentioned. They see pooling as consisting of these three elements: the rules under which member states make decisions, the procedure by which those decisions are ratified, and the extent to which they are binding. I will try to find the nonnegligible influence of politics in all these three rather technical dimensions.

### **Conceptual and theoretical frame**

I shall deal mostly with the concept of politicization, respectively the politicization of bureaucracy. Politicization generally could be understood as the act (or the demand for it) of moving issue into the field of politics, making previously unpolitical matters political (Schmidt, 2004). Politicization of bureaucracy then means to substitute the neutrality by bringing political (i.e. non-meritocratic and non-objective) considerations into the decision-making process (Bauer & Ege, 2012). The reasons for the US withdrawal will be mapped with the help of this scheme, whereas it should be pointed out, what role played the accusation of mixing political affairs with the merit of UNESCO work (otherwise unpolitical).

In distinguishing towards whom the American critique was aimed, the principal-agent model will be used, ergo that Member States delegate powers to IO's organs, equip them with certain amount of autonomy and entrust them certain functions to simplify international cooperation. On the other hand, the States also keep some control mechanism over them, with which they can sanction the organization for deviating from expected behaviour, e. g. by withholding their funds to the IO. If the hypothesis of politicization being the main reason for the withdrawal will prove as right, the US discontentment with management of UNESCO from its administrative would be taken into account as first option. Hawkins et al. (2004) call it agency slack, which means

*“independent action by an agent that is undesired by the principal.”* It occurs in two forms: *“shirking, when an agent minimizes the effort it exerts on its principal’s behalf, and slippage, when an agent shifts policy away from its principal’s preferred outcome and toward its own preferences.”*

USA blaming not the UNESCO apparatus, but the decision-making process within it, also known as pooling will be considered as second option. That would involve more frequent complaints on overvoting by majority in certain controversial issues, on the abstention of veto power, or on the binding character of certain provisions. The outcome could help set the scale of UNESCO politicization – whether, according to USA, only pooling was present, or that it also lead to political favouritism of the majority within the organization itself, or, besides pooling, an independent political favouritism (initiated from the secretariat) was present. Null hypothesis claims that American official did not distinguish between these two options when criticising UNESCO.

### **Methodological frame**

The thesis would be an instrumental case study, which will examine the example of announced US withdrawal from UNESCO, in particular its motives and their connection to the concept of politicization and principal-agent model. In the frame of the case study the current situation will be compared to the similar one in 1984 and also to other historical precedents of withdrawals from different IOs, including comparison between the contemporary withdrawal and the move of withholding funds in 2011. As a tool for findings the motives for the US withdrawal I will use a descriptive analysis of data from qualitative content analysis of speeches and appearances of American officials from various sources from 2003 (year when USA re-joined UNESCO) until today (2018). When an attempt to refute the hypothesis will be made, I will try to find the motives in the domestic and in the foreign US policy elsewhere than in the relationship to UNESCO, like in the influence of Israel lobby in US foreign policy, about which Mearsheimer and Walt (2006) referred.

For the analysis of the motives I should not miss out the verification of possible public pressures (public opinion). For the purpose of that, I will select data from the content of biggest American newspapers (as The New York Times or Washington Post) and their articles concerned on the problematic of UNESCO. And because the data will cover

longer time period, changes of the critique could be traced, specifically the intensity of the accusations of politicization (measurable by the total amount of outputs and by the extent of the decisions of the agency seen as politicized). Based on that I could determine if the current situation has in this sense the highest intensity and if there is a rational explanation for such a severe move as withdrawal.

If the null hypothesis will be successfully refuted, which would mean the withdrawal has some connection to politicization, it will be essential for further considerations, whether in the outcomes of the content analysis prevails the discontentment with not neutral and not objective decisions taken by the administrative of UNESCO (with the speeches of its officials, with the distribution of the money on the projects, or with the political favouritism of certain state), or on the other side discontentment with the outcome of intergovernmental negotiation and the voting results in different organs of the organization (General Conference, Executive Board and Committees, especially the World Heritage Committee). In the other case, both elements would be represented equally.

### **Data**

The content analysis of speeches given from 2003 until 2018 by the American representatives by UNESCO on meetings of its organs (Conference, Board and Committee), in particular statements by the US Permanent delegate Hegadorn (available from the US mission to UNESCO site), will be used when finding possible US motives for their withdrawal. I will also examine the outcomes of the National Commission on UNESCO, reports of the Congressional Research Centre (e. g. Blanchfield & Browne, 2013), speeches of other political representatives on this topic in the Congress (e. g. in the Subcommittee on International Organizations), in the main medias (as CNN, NYT and WP) and other government materials.

The content analysis of declaration and recommendations of the General Conference and decision taken by the Executive Board, as well as influence of states on the inscription of sites on the World Heritage Sites List will be applied when investigating the politicization in the meaning of pooling, again in the period from 2003 till today. In particular, the difference between the recommendation of the Advisory bodies and the final outcome will be considered.

Data will be chosen to cover especially following events: USA re-joins UNESCO (2003), the General Conference admits Palestine as a Member State (October 2011), president Obama attempts to restore US funds to UNESCO (fiscal year 2013 and 2014), USA loses its voting rights (November 2013), UNESCO cancels exhibition on Jewish presence in land of Israel (January 2014), UNESCO (WHC) designates Jordan's baptismal area on the eastern bank of the Jordan River a World Heritage site that is "believed to be" the location of Jesus' baptism (July 2015), the World Heritage Committee passes a resolution that disregards any Jewish ties to the Temple Mount (October 2016), the Executive Board passes a resolution critical of Israeli conduct in Jerusalem and Gaza (May 2017), WHC recognizes Hebron, Tomb of the Patriarchs as Palestinian heritage site (July 2017).

### **Estimated structure of the thesis**

1. Introduction
2. The issue of withdrawals from IOs
  - 2.1 Generally (according to international law)
  - 2.2 From UN
  - 2.3 From UN specialized agencies
  - 2.4 From other IOs
3. The issue of politicization
  - 3.1 The many meanings of the term
  - 3.2 Politicization of bureaucracy
4. Principal agent model
  - 4.1 Introduction of the concept
  - 4.2 Delegation vs. pooling
5. The issue of withdrawal from UNESCO
  - 5.1 Historical precedents
  - 5.2 The 1984 situation – motives, aims
  - 5.3 The 1974 and 2011 situation – financial dimension
6. The 2017 situation – motives, aims

- 6.1 The analysis of American official's speeches
- 6.2 Public opinion (media perception)
- 7. Politicization of UNESCO in years 2003-2018
  - 7.1 Declarations and recommendations adopted by the General Conference
  - 7.2 Decision taken by the Executive Board
  - 7.3 Politicization of committees (World Heritage Committee)
- 8. Findings
- 9. Conclusion

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# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1 WITHDRAWALS FROM IOS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Withdrawal from UN.....	7
1.2 Withdrawals from UN specialized agencies (except UNESCO).....	8
1.2.1 The US withdrawal from ILO .....	8
1.2.2 The withdrawals from UNIDO .....	9
1.3 From other IOs – Brexit example.....	10
1.4 Withdrawal from UNESCO – precedents .....	11
1.5 The financial dimension of withdrawal from UNESCO .....	12
1.6 The 1984 US withdrawal from UNESCO – motives, aims .....	14
1.7 The 2017 US withdrawal from UNESCO – general overview.....	16
<b>2 PRINCIPAL-AGENT MODEL OF IOS AND THEIR POLITICIZATION .....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Principal-Agent (PA) model.....	18
2.2 Politicization vs. mismanagement, different levels of politicization .....	19
2.3 Politicization of UN specialized agencies and UNESCO.....	21
2.4 Politicization of bureaucracy.....	23
<b>3 ANALYSIS: AMERICAN CRITIQUE TOWARDS UNESCO IN YEARS 2003 – 2017 AND MOTIVES STATED IN 2017 AND 2018.....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 Setting of the analysis.....	27
3.2 Organizational mismanagement .....	29
3.3 Mounting arrears? .....	32
3.4 Politicization.....	33
3.4.1 Supranational politicization .....	36
3.4.2 Intergovernmental politicization .....	37
3.4.3 The anti-Israel bias? .....	39
3.5 Overall findings.....	42
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>51</b>

## Introduction

The Department of State of the United States of America (USA) announced its decision to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2017,<sup>1</sup> which took effect on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2018.<sup>2</sup> After the victory of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election, the USA also pulled out of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Paris climate accord and threatened to leave the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and even the United Nations (UN). The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is most likely leaving the European Union (EU) this year. The issue of withdrawal from international organizations (IOs) could therefore be considered as currently trending and attractive for researchers to investigate. One of the crucial questions of the inquiry into this topic stands: What could motivate, or drive the states to withdraw from an IO they themselves became member of? The central focus of this thesis is to determine in the specific case of USA exiting UNESCO the reasons that were used to explain the move.

The US example was chosen mainly due to its exceptional character, for it is the case of a world superpower and the largest contributor to the budget of IOs, but also due to the fact that the relationship between the USA and UNESCO has always been complicated. A lot of the critique from the American side is concerned on one common reason: allegations of politicization, specifically on the anti-Israel bias of the organization. The effort to find out whether UNESCO is or is not politicized from the American point of view and whether that lead or did not lead them to refusing to participate in its activities forms the substantive core of this thesis. If that hypothesis proves itself as right, the next step would be to focus on whom was the critique of UNESCO aimed – towards the organization itself (as an independent supranational agent), or towards the so called pooling. The decision-making role in the latter case is taken by an interstate body (e. g. UNESCO Executive Board), to which the Member States have granted the authority to make binding decisions from themselves, on which they may exercise more or less influence.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the supposed anti-Israel bias (at

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<sup>1</sup> The official US Department of State press release made the decision public on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October; however, the UNESCO documents state the notice was provided already on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. Despite of an inquiry at the UNESCO Archives, the official notification letter has not been found (respectively it is not available to public), therefore the date of notice cannot be verified.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Article II, paragraph 6 of the UNESCO Constitution.

<sup>3</sup> Lake, D. A. (2007), pp. 220

any level) of UNESCO is watched closely to determine if the US support for Israel played a distinctive role.

In the beginning, the issue of withdrawals from IOs will be tackled with in general, then specifically from UN and UN specialized agencies. An historical overview of other precedents of withdrawal from UNESCO, most notably the 1984 case of USA, will be considered in the next step, focusing again on the motives that lead to that situation. Secondly, the Principal-Agent model, one of the essential components to comprehend relationships between states and IOs, will be deployed in order to provide a theoretical framework for the US relationship with UNESCO. The focus will also aim at the issue of politicization and all the different meanings of the term, with specific attention paid to the different levels on which it can occur. The crucial distinction would be between the supranational level of it, in the understanding of the politicization of bureaucracy of IOs, or the intergovernmental level. Thirdly, at the substantial core, the context analysis of various data from September 2002 (when George W Bush announced US renewal of full membership in UNESCO) until December 2018 (effective date of the US withdrawal) will be presented as a tool of finding American critique towards UNESCO in this period, which provides a justification for the departure decision itself. Finally, the most important findings of the analysis will be summarized and at the end a conclusion will be made.

Regarding the methodology used for this case study, as mentioned above, the content analysis was chosen. The range of data incorporated varies from speeches given from 2003 until 2018 by the American representatives by UNESCO on meetings of its organs,<sup>4</sup> in particular statements by the US Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, through reports of the Congressional Research Centre and other governmental materials to relevant articles in the main medias (as The New York Times and Washington Post). The topics concerned involve declarations and recommendations of the General Conference and decision taken by the Executive Board, as well as the inscription of sites on the World Heritage Sites List by the World Heritage Committee. The research question asked in the analysis will search for the different points of American critique aimed at UNESCO, respectively it will try to identify the very motives driving the withdrawal, which were listed after it was announced.

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<sup>4</sup> The main organs of UNESCO are: the biannual General Conference, where all members are represented, the 58-member Executive Board, meeting usually twice a year and various Committees, such as the World Heritage Committee.

The scope of the analysis presented in the third chapter accounted for 115 different sources, which were divided into 1348 paragraphs, out of which only 259 contained some code from the coding scheme created based on the research question and its possible answers. Specifically, the US objections to bad management of UNESCO, the issue of US mounting arrears (the individual category of which could be disputed) and the alleged politicization of UNESCO were examined closer. The analysis considers not only the different levels of its appearance, but also the matter in which it supposedly took place. In particular, any connection of the topic, which was declared to be politicized, to Israel was noted.

The results showed that over the time period examined 72 cases of criticism towards mismanagement (28 %) and 191 of towards politicization in general (74 %) were found, out of which only 13 cases were supranational (7 %) and 141 intergovernmental (75 %) – the rest was unclassified. 124 examples of the politicization cases were somehow connected to Israel (about 65 %), but the number more or less rose as time advanced, accounting for the percentage of almost 95 % between the Octobers of 2011 and 2017 and nearly all the American criticism from 2015 to 2017. There were differences between the various sources used, as it will be demonstrated, but the basic fact remained unchanged.

The answer to the research question provided at the end of this thesis includes the conclusion that the US withdrawal from UNESCO was to a certain extent motivated by the purported politicization of its Governing Bodies, e.g. in the nature and language of the resolutions adopted by it, which often were seen as biased against Israel. The move could thus symbolize a sign of American diplomatic support to Israel, however other contextual factors (like the general inclination of Donald Trump towards the policy of unilateralism), not visible from the content analysis could also play a role.

## 1 Withdrawals from IOs

Firstly, the issue of withdrawals should be addressed in general. Withdrawal is considered to be a unilateral action of termination of membership in the IO, voluntarily executed by the Member State. This action means consciously resigning on the position of Member of the IO, with all its rights (most notably participation in decision-making processes), but also with all its duties (most notably paying contributions). When defining the term, it should be distinguished between voluntary withdrawal and forced withdrawal, or expulsion. That means the Member State in question has not willingly decided, or agreed to leave the organization, but the leadership of the IO, or other Member States have compelled it to do so, when they conclude it has for example violated certain principles.<sup>5</sup> In addition, withdrawal is considered to be a solely unilateral act, thus no consent or approval from other Member States is required.<sup>6</sup> Withdrawal also differs from only refraining from participation, when the State remains officially represented in the IO's organs, but chooses not to take part in its activities, like when the U.S.S.R in 1950 have abandoned their seat in the United Nations for more than six months.<sup>7</sup> The motion of withdrawing therefore inherently includes a formal step of announcing cessation of membership.

Regarding the general principles for withdrawals under international law, "*withdrawal is permitted only if it is expressly provided for or can be inferred by implication, ... from the contents of the treaty, from the preparatory work in its drafting etc.*"<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Vienna Convention on Law and Treaties (specifically its Article 54), which was adopted in 1969 and to this date has 116 parties and 45 signatories,<sup>9</sup> provides an opportunity to withdraw from any treaty (including the ones constituting IOs), even if it does not provide an opportunity for that move.

Withdrawals together with boycotts are sometimes believed to be very extreme measures and are regarded as the most severe sanction that a not satisfied state can exert against an international organization.<sup>10</sup> Such a move can undoubtedly result in a various kind of consequences, which can be summed up in the fact that it "*radically alters the*

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<sup>5</sup> For more details see e. g. Sohn, L. B. (1964).

<sup>6</sup> Borzykowski, I. & Vabulas, F. (2018), pp. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Feinberg, N. (1963), pp. 192.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 218, 215.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection. (2019). Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

<sup>10</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. IX.

*status which it (the State) had vis-a-vis that organization.*”<sup>11</sup> Question is how radically the status change, in other words, whether the State stays involved in the IO or not, like in the case of the UN system, where the possibility of Observer status arises. The loss of the privileges and rights of the withdrawing country may decrease also its ability to persuade others at the body, even if it remains represented, simply because an Observer is not perceived to be in the same position as a regular member, i.e. *“the withdrawing state will lose ... a forum in which it might influence the behaviour of others.”*<sup>12</sup> It can decrease the “soft power” of the State, which emerges when one country gets other countries to want what it wants.<sup>13</sup>

On the more practical level, a specific contribution of each participant to the IO’s budget is usually assessed. With withdrawing from the organization, the State understandably does not continue to be a contributor to the budget, or a recipient of it. This fact can be harmful to either the State or the IO depending on the degree of the institutionalization of the organization, or the depth of integration, or on the other hand on the size of the contribution. For example, the United Kingdom economic growth is expected to slow down after the country would leave the EU,<sup>14</sup> but reversely UNESCO lost significant part of its budget, when some big contributors to it withdrew, as it will be discussed further. In contradiction to the former some scholars argue that because of strategic substitution countries withdrawing from highly institutionalized IOs actually experience strong economic boost in GDP growth, but are instead confronted with political costs, such as diminishing trust of international investors of holding up to other commitments.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, withdrawal by a member from a universal organization (like the UN) could have a negative impact on its aim of universal membership, whereas withdrawal from a closed organization would weaken the organization as a unit comprising a specific group, unless the state also sees itself as not belonging to the group.<sup>16</sup> With that being said, the issue of withdrawal from the United Nations itself will be discussed.

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<sup>11</sup> UNESDOC. (1985). Consequences of the withdrawal of a Member State (4 X/EX/2), pp. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Weiler, J. H. H. (1985), pp. 283.

<sup>13</sup> Nye, J. S. (1990), pp. 166.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates the U.K.’s 2018 economic growth will be only 1.6% in comparison to the pre-Brexit vote expectation of 2.1%. See CNN (2017). What Brexit will cost Britain: More debt, weaker growth and a final bill.

<sup>15</sup> Borzykowski, I. & Vabulas, F. (2018), pp. 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> Schermers, H. G. & Blokker, N. M. (2011), pp. 98-99.

## 1.1 Withdrawal from UN

The United Nations, as the only universal IO, represents a special case among others in terms of the possibility of withdrawal, in particular due to several aspects: the character of the organization, emergence of no precedence (de facto) and the existence of technically independent, but legally connected specialized agencies. To the latter it should be added that (non)membership in them does not influence the States' status in the UN itself, but reversely their position in UN does have implications on their stature in specialized agencies (every member of UN inherently receives the membership rights in its agencies). The examples of withdrawals from them will be discussed later.

In the beginning, it ought to be emphasized that a provision which would directly in the Charter of the United Nations regulate the process of withdrawal from it (either to allow it or prohibit it) is missing. This fact has caused confusion, uncertainty and controversy.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding, the First Commission of the San Francisco Conference in 1945 in its commentary articulated that in exceptional circumstances “*it is not the purpose of the Organization to compel*” any “*Member to continue its cooperation in the Organization*”, if that Member “*feels constrained to withdraw.*”<sup>18</sup>

These theoretical conclusions were put to test only once in history, namely in January 1965, when Indonesian government decided to notify the UN Secretary General U Thant of its intention to withdraw from the United Nations (and its specialized agencies, like FAO, UNICEF (!) and UNESCO).<sup>19</sup> This move reflected Indonesian disagreement with the situation of “neo-colonialist” Malaysia gaining a seat in the UN Security Council.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, Thant officially accepted the withdrawal letter and determined that the effective date of the country secession would be March 1, 1965, even though this situation is not foreseen by the UN Charter.<sup>21</sup> Views on the question whether Indonesia de facto, or de jure remained member of UN differ. It was resolved for good not sooner than in September 1966, when the Indonesian delegation informed the UN of its wish to “*resume full co-operation with the United Nations.*”<sup>22</sup> The formulation of this document was interpreted in a way that Indonesia's action formally

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<sup>17</sup> Schwelb, E. (1967), pp. 661.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Indonesia: Letter on Withdrawal from United Nations, 4 I.L.M. (1965), pp. 364. UNICEF is not an agency, but UN programme.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> The Yearbook of the United Nations: Matters Pertaining to Indonesia's Membership in the UN. (1964), pp. 189-92.

<sup>22</sup> The Yearbook of the United Nations: Indonesian's Resumption of Participation in the Work of the UN (1966), pp. 207-8.

constituted only an absence from the organization and as such should not be regarded as withdrawal.<sup>23</sup> Based on this experience it could be suggested that the Indonesian case has not met the criteria under which withdrawal from UN is permitted, most likely because the reasons given have not constituted the “*exceptional circumstances.*”<sup>24</sup>

## **1.2 Withdrawals from UN specialized agencies (except UNESCO)**

The 15 specialized agencies on the other hand portray a substantially different story. Not only are they legally independent from the UN itself, but also each of them is based on its own Constitution. For brevity focus will be directed at cases with greater significance, respectively at cases somehow connected to the subject of this thesis, concretely two following examples will be examined: The 1977 US withdrawal from International Labour Organization (ILO) and several recent withdrawals from the United Nations Development Industrial Organization (UNIDO).

### **1.2.1 The US withdrawal from ILO**

To begin the case studies in chronological order, the situation in ILO in the 1970s will be addressed. It all started in July 1970, when a new Director-General C. Wilfred Jenks appointed Pavel E. Astapenko, a Soviet citizen, as his assistant. This event played a key role due to two factors: Cold War and the character of the agency. ILO, unlike other UN specialized agencies, has been created already in 1919, but moreover inherently with a political purpose, concretely to promote social justice, improve working conditions and prevent unemployment, all of that out of fear of Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 spreading into rest of Europe.<sup>25</sup> It is thus not surprising that in 1970 the US Congress decided to reduce the financial contribution of USA to ILO by 50 %, which resulted foremost in a decreased effectiveness of the organization.<sup>26</sup>

The decisive moment came in June 1975, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was granted the right to participate in the activities of the International Labour Conference (ILC). In addition, already the 1974 Conference adopted a resolution criticizing Israeli policy of racial discrimination and violation of trade union freedom.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, on 6 November 1975, the US Secretary of State

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<sup>23</sup> Magliveras, K. D. (1991), pp. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Schwelb, E. (1967), pp. 671.

<sup>25</sup> Beigbeder, Y. (1979), pp. 224.

<sup>26</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 54.

<sup>27</sup> Beigbeder, Y. (1979), pp. 227.

Henry Kissinger sent the official notification of withdrawal from the agency, which legally took effect after two years.<sup>28</sup> This decision caused also a reduction of 36 million USD in the 1978-79 ILO biennium (almost 22 % of the whole amount) and a significant cut in its programmes and staff (a loss of about 230 posts).<sup>29</sup> The financial consequences made it almost impossible for the Secretariat, the Governing Body and even the Member States to ignore.

Eventually, another resolution aimed at condemning Israel failed to gain support on the 1978 ILC, after several Member States objected that this not an appropriate place to deal with this matter (in other words the body has become politicized), which has been one of the main reasons that lead USA to leave it. In addition, on the 1979 Conference, any new attempt to address the Israel-Palestine conflict was not made, as well as no abuse of due process was happening (which also has been criticized).<sup>30</sup> As a consequence, USA then resumed full cooperation with the agency in February 1980.

### **1.2.2 The withdrawals from UNIDO**

From 1993 until 2017, in total 12 states (mostly Western) departed from UNIDO, established in 1966 under the purpose of supporting the industrialization of developing countries. Among these 12 states are (in chronological order of withdrawal date): Canada, United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Lithuania, New Zealand, France, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Slovakia.<sup>31</sup> The Dutch government and parliament are also considering the country withdrawal.<sup>32</sup> The effect of so many members exiting is clear: it would undermine UNIDO authority and credibility worldwide, even though its notable distinction from the most of UN agencies is, that it have comprised of all UN members from the very beginning.<sup>33</sup> The more important question is, what lead to this situation?

The explanations given from the delegations did not significantly differ from each other. The United States government criticized the agency of not being able to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp. 228.

<sup>29</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection. (2019). Constitution of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

<sup>32</sup> As reported in November 2016, e.g. in Cnsnews.com (2016). UN Agency Turns 50 – and Continues to Shed Western Donors.

<sup>33</sup> A number of states have never been members of UNIDO, such as Estonia, Iceland, Kiribati, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Singapore and Solomon Islands.

define its function and not effective in its programmatic activities,<sup>34</sup> the United Kingdom conducted a review of multilateral aid in 2011, which e.g. found no evidence of UNIDO programmes having significant impact on eliminating poverty, or listed several organizational weaknesses, like shortcomings in financial management, results reporting and transparency.<sup>35</sup> To summarize, it seems as the abovementioned states have evaluated that the costs of participation in the agency outweigh the benefits and its activities could be more efficiently supplemented in other forms of multilateral cooperation.

This example is worth mentioning especially on the account of the later discussion on possible drives for withdrawal. In spite of still showing division between developed and developing countries and denying any kind of misconduct from the Secretariat, it might not be subject to political influences as much as it shows dissatisfaction with management practices.

### **1.3 From other IOs – Brexit example**

Although it might look like the presented cases are pretty unique, some data suggest that from 1980 to 2015 there have been around 200 Member State withdrawals from IOs in total.<sup>36</sup> It would not therefore be reasonable to analyse all of them and given the fact that some of the most relevant were already introduced, the following section will provide a brief overview over the recently most discussed exit from an IO: the United Kingdom withdrawal from European Union (“Brexit”).

The opportunity for EU Member to leave it in accordance with the primary law was first offered not sooner than by the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Nevertheless, that did not stop the UK to hold a referendum on the issue of departing from the EU already in 1975. It ended up as a victory for the supporters of remaining, hence it did not result in any consequences in terms of cooperation with the rest of Europe, unlike the other referendum in July 2016. The results of the latter are known: 51.9 % for leave against 48.1 % for remain.<sup>37</sup> As a direct consequence, British Prime Minister David Cameron resigned and the future course of events got significantly impacted. The first necessary step to make was officially invoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty in March 2017 by informing the European Council of the intention to

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<sup>34</sup> Cnsnews.com (2016).

<sup>35</sup> Department for International Development. (2011), pp. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Borzykowski, I. & Vabulas, F. (2018), pp. 4.

<sup>37</sup> BBC. EU referendum results.

withdraw, thus triggering the two years period, which provides time for negotiating a withdrawal agreement. If such a document is not agreed upon, the State would simply cease to be bound by all the Treaties.<sup>38</sup>

Several reasons were cited as decisive for the referendum outcome: firstly a belief that various claims of negative economic consequences were false, thus it was assumed that the costs of EU membership outweigh the benefits; secondly the motive of “taking back control” over legislation or the selection of incoming migrants was spread; and last but not least the long-lasting scepticism to EU policies should not be forgotten.<sup>39</sup> But since great uncertainty presently surrounds the process of UK leaving the EU, the following section will address the issue of withdrawal from UNESCO.

#### **1.4 Withdrawal from UNESCO – precedents**

The current version (as in 2018) of UNESCO Constitution in Article II, paragraph 6 states, that “*any Member State ... may withdraw from the Organization by notice addressed to the Director-General*”, which “*shall take effect on 31 December of the [following] year.*”<sup>40</sup> However, this right was not given from the establishment of UNESCO in 1945, it was adopted by the General Conference at its 8th session in 1954 as a reaction to decision taken by several states of the Eastern bloc, as described below.

Even before the withdrawal provision was amended into the UNESCO Constitution three Member States (Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia) undertook this process. The Polish and Hungarian officials informed about their intention in December 1952 and the Czechoslovak Ambassador in January 1953.<sup>41</sup> All of these states were by that time under the Soviet sphere of influence and the Soviet Union itself did not have at that time an ideal relationship with the UN or the UN specialized agencies (it e.g. boycotted the WHO). The geopolitical situation as the main motive for the move is confirmed by various sources, most importantly in the Polish letter of withdrawal notification it was clearly expressed that in the country’s view UNESCO has “*become a docile instrument of the Cold war.*”<sup>42</sup> As the legal effects are concerned, the matter was dealt by following

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<sup>38</sup> This situation is sometimes called “hard Brexit.” At the time of writing it is not sure which situation eventually happens. For the exact wording of the provisions see EUR-Lex. (2012). Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union.

<sup>39</sup> BBC. (2016). Eight reasons Leave won the UK's referendum on the EU.

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO Basic Texts, 2018 edition including texts and amendments adopted by the General Conference at its 39th session (Paris, 30 October – 14 November 2017) – hereinafter “UNESCO Constitution” – Article II, paragraph 6.

<sup>41</sup> UNESDOC. (1985), pp. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

sessions of the General Conference, which having taken note of the communication, rejected the accusations as being entirely unfounded and asked the countries to rethink their decisions.<sup>43</sup> That eventually happened in 1954, when all three countries re-joined UNESCO. This unprecedented situation led subsequently to the incorporation of the provision for withdrawal in UNESCO Constitution.

That was put to test in less than a year after the beforementioned issue was settled, concretely in April 1955, when South Africa left UNESCO over its alleged “*interference in South Africa’s racial problems.*”<sup>44</sup> Although in this case it could be disputed whether it should be regarded as voluntary or forced, if we take into consideration that South Africa was expelled of several other UN agencies, like WHO, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Universal Postal Union (UPU), so it seems rather as pre-emptive move to avoid expulsion.<sup>45</sup> Subsequently, South Africa ceased to be Member of UNESCO on 31 December 1965 and resumed its place not before the end of the apartheid regime in 1994.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, Portugal in June 1971 also reached a conclusion that it wants to exit UNESCO, because it felt some of the resolutions adopted by the General Conference about the Portuguese colonies (such as Angola or Mozambique) were “*outside its terms of reference*” (in other words politicized).<sup>47</sup> This dissatisfaction did not last long, Portugal re-joined again in September 1974. Other examples of withdrawals from UNESCO (respectively the American ones) are analysed in following sections. The significance of the American withdrawals lies specifically in one aspect: money – how influential was the position of USA as the biggest contributor to the agency budget?

## **1.5 The financial dimension of withdrawal from UNESCO**

Before the individual cases are introduced, a general observation about the financial effect of withdrawal should be made: as itself it is not immediate. On the contrary, the withdrawing state is in theory bound to fulfil its commitments until the effective date of withdrawal.<sup>48</sup> However, this duty does not apply to the cases of Member States, which

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<sup>43</sup> UNESDOC. (1952). Records of the General Conference, seventh session, Paris, 1952: Resolutions, pp. 11.

<sup>44</sup> UNESDOC. (1985), pp. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 7.

<sup>46</sup> UNESCO. South Africa.

<sup>47</sup> UNESDOC. (1985), pp. 6.

<sup>48</sup> UNESCO Constitution, Article II, paragraph 6 and Article IX, paragraph 3.

are only withholding their funding to the organization, but still wish to participate in it. The three following situations thus differ from each other in this regard.

To start in the chronological order, the open dissatisfaction with UNESCO work from US side begun already in the 1970s, when the 1974 UNESCO General Conference adopted a resolution to condemn Israel for its alteration of the historical features of the City of Jerusalem and even the Israeli representation itself was denied to become a member of any regional group of the organization (the regional activities of UNESCO are based on them). US Congress reacted by withholding its financial contribution to UNESCO for a two-year period, which meant a major shortcoming to its budget, thus US part at that time amounted about 25 percent of it.<sup>49</sup> This decision and its consequences most likely made the 1976 UNESCO General Conference to change the earlier move and granted Israel participation in the European group. The Congress in response resumed the allocation of the funds for the organization. It is worth noting that this situation did not lead to US complete departure, but still resulted in the “desired” outcome.

The 1984 situation, with the US and the UK withdrawing, meant that a heavy blow to UNESCO budget was mounted, about 30 % of which was cut.<sup>50</sup> Even though it took place within planned budgetary biennium 1984-1985, the US have not contributed already from January 1985.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, USA established a permanent observer mission to UNESCO, therefore the only difference in its role then consists of losing its voting rights and non-existence of any legal obligations to finance its programmes (although USA still kept in paying voluntary assessments). It could be claimed that USA de facto remained involved in the work of the organization, the withdrawal as itself seems to be rather a symbolic gesture to express discontent. Nevertheless, lot of UNESCO’s activities (like development assistance programs and promotion of scientific research) cannot be replicated at any cost by unilateral or bilateral ways.<sup>52</sup> Besides that the US withdrawal weakened the organization’s finances, it lasted long 19 years before USA resumed its membership, which unlike other cases had long-term consequences.

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<sup>49</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 104.

<sup>50</sup> Coate, R. A. (1988), pp. 1.

<sup>51</sup> Hüfner, K. (2017), pp. 96.

<sup>52</sup> Joyner, C. C. & Lawson, S. A. (1985), pp. 60.

Again, in October 2011, after the admitting of Palestine as a Member State (with full rights) of UNESCO, pursuant to domestic law (PL 101-246 and PL 103-356),<sup>53</sup> USA has withheld its contribution to the organization. Since the US have usually sent the fee to UNESCO at the end of the calendar year, the step represented a loss of 75 million US dollars in the 2011 biennial budget of the agency, starting once more a financial crisis.<sup>54</sup> Taken together with the same move announced by Israel, UNESCO was forced to reduce its budget by almost 25 %, implying a cut in its activities by about 30 %.<sup>55</sup> And despite efforts of White House to resume the funding in every following year (until the elections in 2016), it was never restored until today, mainly due to the legal restraint. UNESCO Secretariat therefore needed to avoid the bankruptcy scenario with different measures, like the establishment of an emergency fund, cuts in travel and staff costs and increase in voluntary contributions.<sup>56</sup> This crisis meant also an opportunity to undertake fundamental reform (lack of which have been sometimes criticized), but the response to it on the side of Member States was too slow, undermining synchronized efforts.<sup>57</sup> Attention will now be turned to finding out what criticism led the USA to eventually withdraw from UNESCO in 1984 and in 2017.

## **1.6 The 1984 US withdrawal from UNESCO – motives, aims**

On 28 December 1983 US Secretary of State George P. Shultz addressed his letter to UNESCO Director General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow stating the intention to withdraw, which took effect on 31 December of the next year. He stated that *“trends in the policy, ideological emphasis, budget and management of UNESCO were detracting from the Organization’s effectiveness”* and that UNESCO has become *“a servant of one or another national policy.”*<sup>58</sup> Despite this fact, suggestion have been expressed, that there has been more general reduced American political capacity to influence events due to shifting power dynamic in the composition of UNESCO’s Executive Board and the Secretariat, in which the growing number of members is emphasized as a key factor.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The Foreign Appropriation Acts of 1990 and 1994 prohibit funding to any UN agency which PLO, respectively any worldwide unrecognized state (it would theoretically apply for e.g. Kosovo too), is member of.

<sup>54</sup> Hüfner, K. (2017), pp. 97.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp. 100.

<sup>56</sup> Eckhard, S.; Patz, R. & Schmidt, S. (2018), pp. 8-9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> UNESDOC. (1984). Communication from the Secretary of State of the United States of America concerning the withdrawal of the United States of America, Annex I.

<sup>59</sup> Joyner, C. C. & Lawson, S. A. (1985), pp. 44.

The escalation of this division between Third World and Western countries in UNESCO came in early 1980s, with the initiative to launch New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), which was supposed to enhance states' own communication capabilities and help to decrease their dependency on Western media, but was misused by some states for attempts to limit press freedom.<sup>60</sup> For Reagan administration this initiative represented the symbolic straw that broke the camel's back and therefore USA decided to walk away from the criticized UN agency. For some authors certain well-placed isolationists in the administration used it only as a proxy reason for coordinating their effort to realize their policy of unilateralism.<sup>61</sup>

However, the United States did not stand alone in their criticism of UNESCO. Several others Western countries also threatened to withdraw because of the same reasons, but eventually did not.<sup>62</sup> Only the United Kingdom and Singapore announced their withdrawal from UNESCO with one-year distance, in December 1984, effective from 31 December 1985. Interestingly, the US Permanent Delegate to UNESCO have supposedly lobbied for the British withdrawal in London in autumn 1984, despite the fact, that the prevailing view in Britain was not in favour of this initiative.<sup>63</sup> In addition, some of the British proposals of possible UNESCO reforms (such as to deal with secretariat mismanagement and end of "politicization" of the agency) were actually put in practice before the UK withdrawal.<sup>64</sup> In spite of the official explanation denying any connections with the American decision, it could be argued that the USA strongly influenced the UK.

Subsequently, working on reforms requested by USA was also launched immediately after the notice of withdrawal was given. For example, Director General and the Executive Board on May 1983 inter alia established working groups and committees which were to address the budgetary and personnel practices and coordination and overlaps of the programme.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, the new Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura put into force new reforms to address the alleged mismanagement in

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<sup>60</sup> Joyner, C. C. & Lawson, S. A. (1985), pp. 46.

<sup>61</sup> Wanner, R. E. (2015), pp. 49.

<sup>62</sup> West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark were threatening to withdraw from UNESCO and Japan and Canada also considered terminating their membership. See *The New York Times* (1985). *Western Efforts Thwarted at UNESCO Parley*.

<sup>63</sup> Dutt, S. (1995), pp. 246-247.

<sup>64</sup> UNESDOC. (1984). Communication from the United Kingdom Minister of Overseas Development to the Director-General concerning UK policy on UNESCO, Annex I.

<sup>65</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 113.

1990s and the United Kingdom re-joined UNESCO in 1998, the USA not before 2003, but eventually did. However, this did not mean an end to criticism of the agency.

### 1.7 The 2017 US withdrawal from UNESCO – general overview

In October 2017, the US Department of State, again, announced its decision to terminate the membership of USA in UNESCO, which took effect on 31 December 2018.<sup>66</sup> This case represents a specific one among the others, because of following factors: it did not lead to any financial consequences, or to any losses in membership rights, respectively voting rights of USA and it did not result in re-joining (yet). In 2013, in accordance with the UNESCO Constitution, USA lost its voting rights in the General Conference because of the mounting arrears from the 2011 funding cut.<sup>67</sup> What were there then the reasons to leave, what was USA trying to accomplish by it?

The official statement lists “*U.S. concerns with mounting arrears at UNESCO, the need for fundamental reform in the organization, and continuing anti-Israel bias at UNESCO*”<sup>68</sup> as the facts that influenced the most the decision. The individual reasons for withdrawal will be examined in the next chapters, but the context should also be taken into consideration, especially the different character of the Obama and Trump administration. The US State Department under Obama (respectively Hillary Clinton), has tried to persuade Congress to enact a waiver to the Foreign Appropriations Acts, which would allow to pay the assessments to UNESCO.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand the Trump’s move seems to be another sign of his rather unilateral approach (e. g. withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on climate change), as well as his better relations with Israel (e. g. decision to move US embassy to Jerusalem).

Moreover, as well as in the 1984 case, USA became an Observer State, thus it can be implied from the official sources, that the announced withdrawal was rather a noncommittal move, made out of mix of pragmatism (Americans were not anymore obliged to participate on the budget) and symbolism of alliance with Israel (which itself followed the US and announced its withdrawal from UNESCO in December 2017).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> US Department of State. (2017). The United States Withdraws From UNESCO.

<sup>67</sup> UNESCO Constitution, Article IV.C, paragraph 8(b) sets a rule that after two years of unpaid dues a Member State can lose its voting right in the General Conference after its confirmation.

<sup>68</sup> US Department of State. (2017). The United States Withdraws From UNESCO.

<sup>69</sup> Wanner, R. E. (2015), pp. 62

<sup>70</sup> It is probably worth noting that first announced was the US withdrawal, the Israeli one followed with two months delay (in December 2017). The question why remains unanswered.

To be clear, the “real damage” was done not by Trump but in 2011 when the US ceased to contribute financially, resulting in a 22 percent loss to the UNESCO budget.<sup>71</sup>

Still, even the withdrawal itself did not change anything technically, it could be seen as a signal of more general isolationism. Consider not only quitting from the Paris agreement, but from NAFTA, Iran deal, Trans-Pacific Partnership and others, in summary what is sometimes called Trump’s “withdrawal doctrine.”<sup>72</sup> Although the official statement claims the US will continue to be involved in UNESCO-related activities, it adds that only when it is in the US interest.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the withdrawal itself could: contribute to decrease the reputation of the state, its ability to lead and its capacity for bargaining; generate economic costs and set a precedent of normality.<sup>74</sup> The decision is not just an empty gesture, the fact that it will not have any major effect, should not hide the context in which it happened. After establishing the legal and historical framework, effort will now be made to identify all possible motives for the current US withdrawal from UNESCO, whereas the key question of this research is, whether the alleged politicization is or is not related to the American decision to withdraw from UNESCO. To explain the key concepts used, the next chapter elaborates on the topic of politicization and the principal-agent model specifically.

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<sup>71</sup> Mongabay. (2017). So long, UNESCO! What does U.S. withdrawal mean for the environment?

<sup>72</sup> The Washington Post. (2017). Ditching deals has become Trump’s main foreign policy.

<sup>73</sup> Mongabay. (2017).

<sup>74</sup> The Washington Post. (2017). Trump is pulling the U.S. out of UNESCO. The bigger pattern is the problem.

## 2 Principal-Agent model of IOs and their politicization

For a better understanding of mutual relationship between a state and an IO it is essential to look at the Principal-Agent (PA) model, first developed in the field of economy and American politics, as introduced to the realm of international relations by Hawkins et al. (2004). The concept will be subsequently deployed in order to differentiate towards whom the American allegation of politicization was aimed, if towards the UNESCO itself as an independent supranational agent or more at the outcomes of the collective will at the UNESCO forum. On the account of that, the topic of politicization will also be studied more closely.

### 2.1 Principal-Agent (PA) model

The substantial core of the PA approach entails a presupposition that States (as principals) conditionally grant part of their authority, limited in time or scope, to an independent IO (as agent) to act on their behalf.<sup>75</sup> The *raison d'être* behind this is to promote mutual cooperation by creating a specialized agent, which would e.g. facilitate the decision-making process, resolve disagreements, improve credibility, manage policy externalities, or preserve the policy bias of their creators.<sup>76</sup> However, the Principal indivisibly wields a right to revoke the contract, on which the authority to the Agent is given, at any time, whenever he sees it for example as not beneficial, or the Agent has deviated from expectations in any way.

The Principals' ability to monitor, control the Agents and if needed to retract what has been given to them is secured through several mechanisms: regulations versus discretion, ex post reporting of requirements, processes for screening and selection, system of checks and balances and sanctions.<sup>77</sup> The Agent could be punished for his deflectional behaviour in the last resort for example by financial means (concretely by lowering the budget). In this sense withdrawal could also be interpreted as one of the control mechanisms of the State over the organization (rather extreme, but it has worked). But what could lead to such a situation?

Agents, equipped with certain amount of autonomy, are namely seeking their own interests, constituting thus a conflict of interests between them and Principals, who sometimes unsuccessfully attempt to constrain the Agents, thereby experiencing agency

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<sup>75</sup> Hawkins, D. et al. (2004), pp. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pp. 13.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, pp. 26-30.

losses.<sup>78</sup> This for the Principal undesired action, done independently by the Agent, is called “agency slack” and it could occur in two forms: “*shirking, when an agent minimizes the effort it exerts on its principal’s behalf, and slippage, when an agent shifts policy away from its principal’s preferred outcome and toward its own preferences.*”<sup>79</sup> For agency slack to emerge a certain level of uncertainty and unawareness on the Principal’s side about the Agents’ actions needs to exist. And greater uncertainty comes hand in hand with greater specialization, implying that the wider it is the higher opportunity for the slack to arise.<sup>80</sup> It should be noted in this place that this all relates to the actions performed by the Agent (here IO) itself, not by its various organs composed out of the Principals (here Member States).

The delegation of sovereignty substantially differs from pooling it, despite the fact that these two terms are often confused. In contrast with delegation to an independent agent, in pooling, the State cedes part of its authority to a collective body of States, which is by them then entitled to deliver binding decisions.<sup>81</sup> It consists of three elements: the rules under which decisions are made, the procedure of their ratification, and the degree to which they are binding.<sup>82</sup> It should be therefore distinguished between the Principal’s dissatisfaction with the Agent implementing its own agenda (agency slack) and the Principal’s discontent with the result of the joint decision-making among themselves (pooling). Hooghe & Marks, using summated rating scales, were in their analysis comparing 72 different IOs according to their level of delegation and pooling and they ranked UNESCO’s degree of pooling as ranging around 0.55 (close to WTO, among the highest of UN agencies) and delegation around 0.25 (like WHO or FAO, on the average compared to other UN agencies).<sup>83</sup> With that being said, one of the forms the agency slack could take, and which is in fact often levelled at IOs, politicization, is discussed in following section.

## **2.2 Politicization vs. mismanagement, different levels of politicization**

Politicization generally could be understood as the act (or the demand for it) of moving issue into the field of politics, thus making previously unpolitical matters

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<sup>78</sup> Hawkins, D. et al. (2004), pp. 24.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pp. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, pp. 24-25.

<sup>81</sup> Lake, D. A. (2007), p. 220.

<sup>82</sup> Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2015), pp. 307.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, Fig. 1, pp. 310.

political.<sup>84</sup> The term is used in various contexts, but for the purpose of this thesis the literature overview would be simplified on the pieces connected to the concept of politicization of IO's bureaucracy, alternatively to the subject of politicization of events and practices within an IO (respectively UNESCO). But first, a line needs to be drawn between that and mismanagement, an interconnected, but distinctive phenomenon.

Organizational mismanagement, in contrast with politicization, is generally accepted as a poor behaviour of the staff or its choices which can result into its poor performance.<sup>85</sup> There are several factors which can lead to organizational failure: absence of clear priorities (caused either by the lack of or inability to use performance information), bad relations within the managers, or civil servants, as well as poor condition of external partnerships and ineffective leadership.<sup>86</sup> In sum, all misconducts in this dimension are of no political significance, but they represent a failure of technical character. In context of mismanagement of IO's staff, the term concretely may comprise of: misuse of funds, or not effective programming and dislocation of money, bad staff practices, not enough transparency, lack of reforms etc. On the other hand, whenever any kind of political considerations are introduced into the process, which can also lead to failure, it signalizes politicization is in fact to blame.

Before the existing literature on the topic of politicization is presented, a remark should be also made about something what has not been largely covered in it (or has been mixed together), namely the differentiation of various levels, on which politicization could be observed. On one side, the IO as an independent supranational Agent (as the authority was delegated to it) can be subject to politicization itself, on the other side, the result of the intergovernmental negotiations inside the IO could also be politicized (as the authority is pooled among the Agents themselves). The former could mean e.g. an independent political favouritism (initiated from the IO's Secretariat) is present, the latter could involve more frequent complaints on overvoting by majority in certain controversial issues, on the abstention of veto power, or on the binding character of certain provisions. Hereinafter it would be thus referred to "supranational politicization" as in opposition to "intergovernmental politicization".

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<sup>84</sup> Schmidt, M. G. (2004), pp. 657.

<sup>85</sup> Andrews, R.; Boyne, G. A. & Enticott, G. (2006), pp. 275.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, pp. 276-280.

### 2.3 Politicization of UN specialized agencies and UNESCO

The research of politicization in UN specialized agency and UNESCO has come up with a lot of concrete examples, typologies, comparisons, phases and ideas, how to define it. Following the US withdrawal from ILO, in which the US Secretary State Henry Kissinger addressed the country's dissatisfaction with the issue, he noticed it could take form of: (1) preoccupation with political issues beyond the mandate, or competence of the agency in question, (2) the inappropriate agencies' attempts to be concerned with questions involving the relations of States, which should belong to some other forum, (3) selective concentration on certain issues, or (4) the abuse of due process.<sup>87</sup>

Imber in his comparative analysis develops a typology of politicization according to the legitimacy of the term usage, in which (1) the harassment of a member state's right to participate, (2) attempt to unseat representatives by not admitting them credentials, or (3) "*ultra vires actions*" by the IO are legitimate to use; (1) dealing with irrelevant or extraneous issues, or issues beyond the mandate of the organization, (2) the Member States' double standards and (3) political favouritism within the secretariat (as well as mismanagement) are seen as ambiguous and (1) abusing of voting majority to enforce other interests and (2) Anti-Western bias are viewed as contrived.<sup>88</sup>

To comment on the Kissinger and Imber's typologies, the question whether any of the US allegation of politicization in any way should be considered legitimate, or not is not taken into account and all beforementioned meanings of the term, except for the organizational mismanagement (not the same as political favouritism), are embodied in the analysis. However, they both seem to confuse the distinction between the two levels of politicization. Some of the categories could be classified as unambiguously supranational, as for example the case of political favouritism, in most of them it depends on the subject which is conducting the action, like dealing with the issues out of mandate (if the initiative comes from the IO's staff or from the Member States) and some of them could be clearly labelled as only intergovernmental, i.e. the abuse of voting strength. As for the application of the PA model, the out of mandate issues are typical examples of the agency slippage, where the shift of the Agent's preference is considered to be outside of its originally granted authority.

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<sup>87</sup> As quoted in Williams, D. (1987), pp. 55-73.

<sup>88</sup> Imber, M. F. (1989), pp. 29-30.

Turning to the case of UNESCO, an influential book from UNESCO former official Richard Hoggart documented from his personal experience that its politicization have not surfaced out of nothing, on the contrary “*politics, to one degree or another, have figured in UNESCO from beginning,*”<sup>89</sup> instead he argues that it has with time increased, exemplifying it on the rising amount of “*long, often-muddled, political resolutions*”<sup>90</sup> and on the fact that “*the bad practices within the Secretariat are very bad indeed.*”<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Dutt in his study defends the claim that politicization of UNESCO is inevitable, especially due to the inseparability of the political from the educational and cultural.<sup>92</sup> Other authors have supported that by going further comparison between UN agencies and having constructed a “*politicization continuum*” of them according to the likelihood of introduction of controversial issues in the agenda of the individual agency, where UNESCO ranked as the most politicized at all.<sup>93</sup> In other words, UNESCO potential for agency slack is greater than in other UN agencies because of its mandate, in which the Member States have given to it greater specialization in a wider range of issues – from uncontroversial supporting scientific exchanges to the more contentious protection of cultural heritage.

“Politicization Continuum”						
Most Politicized			Least Politicized			
UNESCO	ILO	WHO	FAO	WORLD BANK	IMF	IAEA

Apart from that, Dutt worked out three stages in which politicization can occur (and in the case of UNESCO did occurred): (1) in the debate over the agenda items, (2) as part of the State’s own approach to the subject together with the presentation of the resolution and (3) the process of the adoption of the resolutions (compromises, changes in it etc.).<sup>94</sup> Here it can be seen that this understanding clearly reflects only the concept of intergovernmental politicization, because all of the stages mentioned take place within the bodies with pooled authority – where Member States in fact decide, not the IO. But how does supranational politicization look like? The concept of bureaucracy politicization, used in the works on European Commission, could shed some light on this question.

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<sup>89</sup> Hoggart, R. (1978), pp. 66.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, pp. 75.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, pp. 120.

<sup>92</sup> Dutt, S. (1995), pp. 6.

<sup>93</sup> It should be noted that UNESCO is deemed to be the most politicized agency mainly due to its broad and pluralistic mandate. See Lyons, G.; Baldwin, D. A. & McNemar, D. W. (1977), pp. 88.

<sup>94</sup> Dutt, S. (1995), pp. 119.

## 2.4 Politicization of bureaucracy

Unfortunately, consensus has not been reached on either a theoretical definition of bureaucratic politicization, or on the criteria of its measurement in practice.<sup>95</sup> On the theoretical level, some scholars describe it as it can occur in three different forms: when (1) officials are taking part in political decision-making, (2) politics seizes control over the nominations and careers of the bureaucrats, or (3) civil servants are themselves politically involved.<sup>96</sup> Others regard as more important the distinction between formal (or direct) and functional (or professional) politicization, whereas the former refers to the top-down authority of the superior officials to take into consideration the non-merit characteristics when recruiting or promoting their subordinates and the latter to the bottom-up reactivity of bureaucrats to political aspects of qualifications for their jobs.<sup>97</sup>

Various attempts were made to operationalize the issue of bureaucratic politicization, either by examining the politicization of appointment or the politicization of policy-making itself.<sup>98</sup> The first is linked only to the human resource management's (HRM) influence over the public policy-making and the second to the more general connection between administrative and the policy output.<sup>99</sup> In practice, bureaucratic politicization may appear in the form of intra-organizational decisions about staff and self-censorship of the individual officials.

In summary, politicization of bureaucracy means to substitute the neutrality by bringing political (i.e. non-meritocratic and non-objective) considerations into the decision-making process inside the organization.<sup>100</sup> That was supposed to be technically specialized, but politics has somewhere stepped in and impacted the outcome. In the context of agency slack, the IO's (Agent's) own policy preference, undesired by the State (Principal) is in some way influenced by politics. The reasons for the US withdrawal will be mapped with the help of this scheme, whereas it would be pointed out, what role played the accusation of mixing political affairs with the merit of UNESCO work (otherwise unpolitical).

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<sup>95</sup> Bauer, M. W. & Ege, J. (2012), pp. 408.

<sup>96</sup> Rouban, L. (2003), pp. 312.

<sup>97</sup> Bauer, M. W. & Ege, J. (2012), pp. 408-409.

<sup>98</sup> Eichbaum, C. & Shaw, R. (2008), pp. 342.

<sup>99</sup> Bauer, M. W. & Ege, J. (2012), pp. 408.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Before the very results of the analysis are laid out, it should be emphasized that the judgement whether politicization itself happened or not in the analysed period (2003 to 2018) is also left out, instead it is attempted to demonstrate if such an action was perceived from the American side. In other words, whether UNESCO is or is not politicized from the American point of view and whether that lead or did not lead them to refusing to participate in its activities.

### **3 Analysis: American critique towards UNESCO in years 2003 – 2017 and motives stated in 2017 and 2018**

As a tool for findings the motives for the US withdrawal from UNESCO in 2017 a descriptive content analysis of data from various sources will be used. This method was chosen because motives for such a move are usually expressed publicly in texts, either in official statements, governmental reports, or in media reports. As a “*research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use,*”<sup>101</sup> it was in general considered to be the most effective in reaching the answer to the research question. There could exist some hidden drivers in the internal communication within the administration, these are not understandably included (only materials available publicly were incorporated). In addition, possibly no major reason would stem from it, inasmuch any democratic government needs public support for its action, and also if withdrawal is a sign of dissatisfaction with an IO’s policy, no concealment makes sense, if the State wishes to alter that policy.

Regarding the scope of data embodied in the analysis, mainly speeches given from September 2002, when USA decided to re-join UNESCO,<sup>102</sup> until 2018, specifically December 2018 – the effective date of US withdrawal, by the American representatives by UNESCO on meetings of its organs (General Conference, Executive Board and Committees), in particular statements by the US Permanent delegate to UNESCO (available from the US Mission to UNESCO site),<sup>103</sup> are used when finding possible US motives for their withdrawal. I have examined also reports of the Congressional Research Centre (e. g. Blanchfield & Browne, 2013), speeches, statements or letters of other political representatives (Congress members) on this topic, in the main medias (as NYT and WP, but also some statements of US officials were found in mainstream Israeli medias, such as The Jerusalem Post, or The Times of Israel) and other government materials (factsheets, briefings, letters). Two sources are actually dated before September 2002 (The Heritage Foundation article and Additional views in

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<sup>101</sup> Krippendorff, K. (2004), pp. 18.

<sup>102</sup> The move was announced by President George Bush on 12 September 2002 in his speech in UN General Assembly, it took effect on 1 October 2003.

<sup>103</sup> After 1 January 2019, the US Mission to UNESCO’s website was shut down and had to be accessed through archived captions of it (through Wayback Machine), as taken on 27 April 2017. There were actually few statements made after this date, which due to the unavailability of the site were not included in the analysis.

the Foreign Appropriation Act on FY 2003), which consist of alternative views, opposing the decision to re-join UNESCO (thus were selected thematically).

The process under which the data were chosen was guided mainly by the statements available at the US Mission to UNESCO's website – out of which were picked only those with some element of critique or dissatisfaction present. The specific setting of the coding is discussed in detail below, but regarding the process, the topics of the selected statements were further looked up in the media (NYT, WP) articles about UNESCO, which often cited an official statement, or other governmental document, and that was subsequently also examined.

The data concretely cover following events: USA re-joins UNESCO (2003); the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expression (hereinafter “Cultural Convention”, 2003-2005); resignation of Peter Smith, UNESCO's highest-ranking U.S. official (2007); awarding of the Obiang International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences (hereinafter “Obiang Prize”, 2010); the General Conference admits Palestine as a Member State (October 2011); president Obama attempts to restore US funds to UNESCO (fiscal years 2013-2016); UNESCO's response to the intensification of Syrian civil war (2012); USA loses its voting rights (November 2013); but especially the adoption of various resolutions supposedly condemning Israel at almost every Executive Board meeting since October 2010, most notably at its 185<sup>th</sup> (October 2010), 187<sup>th</sup> (October 2011), 192<sup>nd</sup> (October 2013), 194<sup>th</sup> (April 2014), 195<sup>th</sup> (October 2014), 197<sup>th</sup> (October 2015) and 200<sup>th</sup> (October 2016) session. Few World Heritage Committee decisions are also included: the inscription of Nativity Church in Bethlehem (June 2012), resolutions “attacking” Israel (June 2013) and the recognition of Hebron and Tomb of the Patriarchs as Palestinian heritage site (July 2017). Full list of the 115 sources used (with references to the original) is available in Appendix no. 1 of this thesis.

After the text was chosen, it was given a unique id for identification, under which it figures in the analysis, and then it was divided into paragraphs. Those are the basic units for coding; most usually the division into paragraphs was left as it could be found in the source. A few exceptions occurred, e.g. in the case of the Department of State briefing on 12 October 2017, with around 5 stand-alone simple sentences with the same thought merged together into one unit. Each paragraph was then numbered, in total amounting for 1348 coding units. All of the analysed texts were dated, more or less sorted chronologically according to their publishing date (some exceptions are sorted

thematically) and divided by the character of their sources into four categories: First type (1) are direct statements of US officials (President, Secretary of State, US Ambassador to UN/UNESCO, or their spokesperson), second (2) are other governmental documents (letters, reports, factsheets), third (3) are media outputs (with no opinion of the author) and fourth (4) are opinions of prominent Americans (Representatives, Senators, commentators) published in the media, or in statements, or by letters.

### **3.1 Setting of the analysis**

Each content analysis has to comprise of several components: a body of text, which is examined; a research question, sought to be answered by it; context within which texts make sense; analytical construct operationalizing the knowledge in the context; inferences intended to answer the research question and validating evidence (making it replicable).<sup>104</sup> The scope of data used was described above, as well as the context for it and the definitions of concepts used in it (historical overview, issue of politicization and mismanagement), left is to ask the research question and provide possible answers on it.

The research question, which the data should reveal an answer on, stands: What were the main points of American critique towards UNESCO, that could contribute to the withdrawal decision? Respectively, what were the motives stated for their decision to withdraw from UNESCO? The first form of the research question is asked in data from 2001 to October 2017 (before the announcement of withdrawal), the second from October 2017 to December 2018. The presupposition of some connection between the withdrawal motives and the critique is built on the idea of the departure from IO being a sign of dissatisfaction with some type of agency slack occurring in it. Furthermore, because the data cover longer time period, changes of the critique could be traced, specifically the intensity of the different accusations (measurable by the total amount of them present in the concrete texts in each year). Based on that, it could be determined, if the current situation has in this sense the highest intensity of them, or not, meaning the withdrawal would be explained by surpassing certain threshold of tolerable agency slack.

Two possible answers were initially identified based on existing literature and the official US Department of State press statement announcing the intention to withdraw

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<sup>104</sup> Krippendorf, K. (2004), pp. 29-30.

(US Department of State, 2017), which served as a point of departure: on the one hand, the decision could be mainly driven by the purported politicization of UNESCO (at any level), on the other hand other, unpolitical reasons (above all some kind of organizational failure) could play a bigger role in it. Put in other words, whether the alleged politicization is or is not related to the American decision to withdraw from UNESCO. As was mentioned before, withdrawals are often caused by political motives; hence the distinction here is made between politicization and other reasons. Thus, two alternative hypotheses are formulated:

***H0:** The most criticized points by the USA were not connected to (or its decision to withdraw was not primarily motivated by) the alleged politicization of the agency, but other factors (like organizational mismanagement) played bigger role.*

***H1:** The most criticized point by the USA was (its decision to withdraw was primarily motivated by) the alleged politicization of the agency (at any level, concerning any issue), which was the essential factor.*

Politicization here refers to the introduction of irrelevant issues of political nature into the work of the IO's bodies, i.e. in the decision-making process inside either the Governing Bodies or the apparatus, either by Member States or Secretariat.<sup>105</sup> As it was explained, it is essential to distinguish between two levels at which politicization occurs, the supranational and intergovernmental level. If the alternative hypothesis would prove itself as right, which would mean the withdrawal has some connection to politicization, next step would be to focus on towards whom was the critique of UNESCO aimed – whether in the outcomes of the content analysis prevails the discontentment with not neutral and not objective decisions taken by the administrative of UNESCO (with the speeches of its officials, with the distribution of the money on the projects, or with the political favouritism of certain state), or on the other side discontentment with the outcome of intergovernmental negotiation and the voting results in different organs of the organization (General Conference, Executive Board and Committees, especially the World Heritage Committee). Two subsequent sub-hypotheses thus read as follows:

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<sup>105</sup> Based on the definition by Bauer, M. W. & Ege, J. (2012), pp. 408.

*H2a: The criticized politicization of the agency was perceived more (the decision to withdraw was more influenced by perceiving politicization) on the supranational level of the agency structures, in the bodies with delegated authority.*

*H2b: The criticized politicization of the agency was perceived more (the decision to withdraw was more influenced by perceiving politicization) in the decision-making process on the intergovernmental level, in the bodies with pooled authority.*

The individual coding units (paragraph) are therefore tested for presence of these types of code: code1 meant the organizational mismanagement of UNESCO's staff (misuse of funds, not effective programming and dislocation of money, bad staff practices, not enough transparency, lack of reforms, as defined in second chapter) was criticized in the text; code2 the US mounting arrears were mentioned when motives for withdrawal were listed (in purely pragmatic sense, as not officially owing money would account for the change of status from Member to Observer, this category will be problematized further); code3 that any kind of politicization (in the definition given above) was blamed. If the last was present, the next code4 meant the critique was levelled at the supranational level, which contrasts with the following code5, indicating the politicization was seen at the intergovernmental level (these two categories are mutually exclusive). In the coding process a necessity for one other code emerged: code6 represents a specific kind of politicization, where the political issues introduced were connected to Israel in any way (e.g. a resolution concerned Israeli heritage, or heritage with Israeli claims on it, or the (un)favoured State was Israel). The particular examples of this phenomenon are debated later. Attention is also paid to examples of USA praising good organizational management of UNESCO (of its specific programmes, reform and other general successes). This category is outside the coding scheme itself; it is watched for curiosity and for contrast with code1. The coding of all texts in their full length is presented in the table in Appendix no. 1 of this thesis. There were altogether 259 paragraphs with any code present, out of the 1384 paragraphs in total from the 115 different sources, results of which are presented below.

### **3.2 Organizational mismanagement**

Turning now to the first category, has American critique towards UNESCO focused on incapability of its apparatus? The data show that yes, but rather not

extensively. In general, there are in the whole covered period 72 paragraphs involving some accusation of the UNESCO's staff mismanagement, meaning its poor behaviour (or its choices) leading to its poor performance (such as misuse of funds, not effective programming and dislocation of money, bad staff practices, not enough transparency, lack of reforms etc.), accounting for about **28 % of the total amount** of coded units. But more importantly, 51 cases (about 70 % of the total number) occur in the data, which is dated before the admission of Palestine in October 2011, symbolizing sort of a turning point in the distribution of the individual categories. After this date, only few examples of mismanagement critique could be named (8 cases between Octobers of 2011 and 2017 and 13 after October 2017). The biggest discontentment with any type of organizational failure could be namely found in the first five years following the US re-joining UNESCO (2003-2008), 29 cases and if we take into account the two 2001 texts 47 cases, which constitutes an absolute majority, as *Table 1* signifies.

*Table 1: Evolution of US criticism of UNESCO mismanagement. Table is based on the data in Appendix no. 1, as well as any further tables, or graphs. The year 2017 is divided on period before/after 11 October 2017.*

Year	Mismanagement
2001	18
2002	0
2003	3
2004	4
2005	8
2006	4
2007	7
2008	3
2009	1
2010	3
2011	0
2012	0
2013	7
2014	0
2015	0
2016	0
2017_1	1
2017_2	10
2018	3

The only two texts, which actually predate the announcement of US resuming its participation in UNESCO in September 2002, were also included because they illustrate the main point of critique in this regard at the very beginning of the analysed time period. The Heritage Foundation article for example claims that the “*organization’s (UNESCO’s) ... attempts to restructure its management processes and bureaucracy have been superficial.*”<sup>106</sup> The main notion in this period emphasizes mainly the insufficiency of reforms implemented in the period of US absence, or the lack of them in effect or planned. This is the main reason some Americans were advocating that USA should not re-join UNESCO (e.g. 13 House members in the debate over appropriations for UNESCO in the 2003 budget),<sup>107</sup> but the official standpoint held the view that “*the organization has been reformed.*”<sup>108</sup>

*Table 2: US criticism of UNESCO mismanagement by sources.*

Type	Mismanagement
1 - statements	39
2 - govt documents	11
3 - media	2
4 - opinions	20

*Table 2* redirects the attention to the difference between the various types of sources. 20 cases of allegation of mismanagement were found in the category of opinion pieces, but in reality, the number would be higher, because some other articles critical of UNESCO were actually not included due to their disproportionated number of critique focused on one issue – there were only 14 cases in the one mentioned Heritage Foundation article, hence no further text from the same source is contained (since they do not comply with the official view). In addition, another 11 cases detected in governmental documents often take form of Congressional Research Service (CRS) reporting some unspecified group is favouring some opinion. To quote: “*For example, many (experts) are concerned that UNESCO’s hiring and promotion practices have little transparency and lack consistent implementation.*”<sup>109</sup> To be clear, there are still **39 codes** in the category of official statements, which criticize some form of mismanagement, that fact should not be neglected. Although some of them faced

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<sup>106</sup> Appendix no. 1, Heritage\_1.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, FRAA\_FY03.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, Factsheet\_1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, CRS\_2.

difficulties in categorization, like this one: “UNESCO struggles to deliver effective programming within the scope of its core mandates because Member States (!) insist on expanding the organization’s work outside that scope.”<sup>110</sup> It is not merely a fault of the Secretariat that UNESCO delivers poor results, but also Member States, which are granting it authority outside the mandate. This case was still considered an example of mismanagement, but for the purpose of clarity, the UNESCO’s staff is not always to be blamed for it.

For media outputs, **almost none** (only 2 out of 72 paragraphs) have reported of US critique of UNESCO organizational failure. Probably because this was not seen as not medially interesting enough to mention, but it could be also a sign of something – that mismanagement was not such a big issue; hence it was not publicly expressed in media. But this idea would be left in the level of speculations, since no supporting evidence emerged.

Nevertheless, the conclusion still can argue that mismanagement was **not very common** point of critique, especially after reforms were introduced in the period following the US re-joining UNESCO. That is underlined by the “good management” category, showing the US praised UNESCO of undertaking reforms to address the organizational issues, 67 cases of which are found from 2001 to 2011. But that was watched outside the coding scheme, unlike the next category, US mounting arrears.

### 3.3 Mounting arrears?

The issue of US mounting arrears being a separate motive that could explain its withdrawal from UNESCO emerged from the fact that USA have not been paying UNESCO contributions for 6 years (from 2011 to 2017), by the time of announcing the withdrawal the sum was ranging around 550 mil. USD.<sup>111</sup> And since USA then subsequently lost its voting rights (enjoyed thus no direct benefits of membership), the rationale behind this claim would probably be that when the amount hit a certain threshold, USA just pragmatically decided to withdraw (respectively cease to be a Member, they would still be involved as an Observer), meaning they lose the obligation to continue in funding the agency. It could also reflect a deeper dissatisfaction with paying a disproportionated amount of money, which are not effectively spend in UNESCO programmes (suggesting possibly some bad management – but that would

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<sup>110</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_61.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, WP\_12.

overlap with the first category) and could be substituted by other means with greater benefit.

*Table 3: Mentions of US mounting arrears by sources.*

Type	Arrears
1 - statements	5
2 - govt documents	4
3 - media	7
4 - opinions	1

It therefore makes no sense to look for this reasoning earlier than October 2017, since there either were no arrears, or they did not reach the hypothetical threshold. But even after, none of the 17 identified cases (**7 % of all coded paragraphs**) have suggested neither rationale have been used. For example, according to some State Department official cited in the CRS report “*the accumulation of arrears also added to the U.S. decision to withdraw from UNESCO.*”<sup>112</sup> This and other sources imply that the mounting arrears explanation could be labelled as a side issue. Despite being attractive for the public (it was given most frequently at media and public statements, as *Table 3* shows – where it looks like saving money), it most probably could not be considered as the primary motivation. The second problem with the arrears lies in the history of their origin. Like it was said, USA stop their funding of UNESCO in October 2011, following the decision of the General Conference to admit Palestine as a Member State. And because it was politically decided over a “politicized” issue, it could not be of a purely pragmatical nature, thus **this category could not be counted** in the null hypothesis, because it is connected with the politicization of the agency. However, its absence would not much change the results, it would lower the number of coded paragraphs by 6, because in the 11 cases left some other code is present, e.g. accusation of politicization.

### **3.4 Politicization**

Considered that neither mismanagement, nor arrears could not sufficiently back up the US decision to withdraw from UNESCO, could the criticised politicization of the agency do so? The data indicate that yes, but to a certain extent. 191 out of 259,

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<sup>112</sup> Appendix no. 1, CRS\_3.

respective 253 paragraphs (**about 75 %**) seems like a big number, but it needs to be dealt with caution. Some examples state the critique very explicitly, in others it was implied from the context. Among the most debatable ones could be counted the case of adoption of the Cultural Convention, although some claim that it was “*by far the most politicized initiative to emerge from the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*”<sup>113</sup>

However, the US representatives have not articulated their concerns with this Convention in such an openly way. Instead, they claimed that it “*could conflict with the mandates of other international organizations, (and) could seek to legitimize restrictions on the flow of cultural information, or goods or services.*”<sup>114</sup> The first attitude suggest agency slippage was happening, meaning some UNESCO’s policy has shifted out of its initially given authority, but that does not necessarily imply politics has been involved. Nevertheless, it could still fit in the definition of politicization, because USA was only State opposing it (except Israel), and it was also seen as “anti-American” measure, that could “*too prone to abuse*” by its parties to some actions undesired by the US.<sup>115</sup> Any critique towards the Cultural Convention was therefore labelled as connected with politicization, accounting for the 20 cases found in 2005 (it was then discussed and later approved by the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference) and 5 codes in 2003 (when the preparation on it begun), as we could see in the *Table 4*.

*Table 4: Evolution of US criticism of UNESCO politicization.*

Year	Politicization
2001	2
2002	0
2003	5
2004	0
2005	20
2006	5
2007	6
2008	0
2009	0
2010	14
2011	18
2012	10
2013	21

<sup>113</sup> Singh, J. P. (2010), pp. 98. It should be noted that the book was written before the period of the highest politicization in the view of US officials begun.

<sup>114</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_2.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, WP\_2.

2014	4
2015	4
2016	19
2017_1	12
2017_2	45
2018	6

Other significant amount of critique towards politicization emerged not sooner than in 2010, with only few examples in 2006 (5) and 2007 (6) and none in 2008 and 2009. Some supposedly politicized issues arose even before the admission of Palestine in October 2011 (52 cases in total from 2001 to 2011, only a tight majority of 51 % of all coded units), but the number nearly doubled in the following 6 years, with 88 codes between the Octobers of 2011 and 2017, which accounted for **almost 94 % of identified dissatisfaction**. Moreover, after the announcement of withdrawal became official, 51 out of 64 paragraphs (nearly 80 %, 88 % if we eliminate the influence of the arrears) have suggested the alleged politicization was somehow connected to this matter. We can also see a fairly equally proportioned distribution among the various types of sources when it comes to the accusations of politicization, with the exception of very high ratio in media outputs (68 out of 72 cases and without the arrears it even appears in **every single** medial text). Despite being very medially attractive issue, in the official statements, documents and opinions the number reaches only between 60 % and 67 %, as we could imply from the *Table 5*. That statistics makes the claim, that **politicization most likely plaid a decisive role** in the US decision to withdraw from UNESCO, to sound more convincing. If that fact would be accepted, what kind of politicization was blamed?

*Table 5: US criticism of UNESCO politicization by sources.*

Type	Politicization
1 - statements	77
2 - govt documents	18
3 - media	68
4 - opinions	28

### 3.4.1 Supranational politicization

In accordance with the distinction between the two levels of politicization, clarified earlier, a critique aimed at UNESCO as a supranational independent agent is taken into consideration as first option. However, there is not much to cover, with only 13 codes (7 % out of the 191 objections to politicization) it even ends up on lower level of significance than the category of mounting arrears, not to mention that some of its uses could be contested. Concretely the 3 cases found in 2003 and 4 cases found in 2005 (as displayed in *Table 6*) are subject to the matter of the Cultural Convention, despite the fact, that other labelled critique in these years are categorized in the second, intergovernmental level of politicization. Of the 20 examples identified in 2005 16 occur at bodies with pooled authority, whereas only 4 at those with delegated authority.

*Table 6: Evolution of US criticism of UNESCO supranational politicization.*

Year	Supranational
2001	0
2002	0
2003	3
2004	0
2005	4
2006	0
2007	4
2008	0
2009	0
2010	0
2011	0
2012	0
2013	0
2014	0
2015	0
2016	0
2017 1	0
2017 2	2
2018	0

Before the adoption of the Convention the situation seemed to be clear: The Secretariat bears the responsibility for the drafting of it, therefore the act of bringing politics into the decision-making process could be ascribed to it (the 2003 texts were understood in this way, except one of the NYT articles suggesting France and Canada were actually pushing for the Convention even to be considered by the agency

structures).<sup>116</sup> But since the 33<sup>rd</sup> General Conference in 2005 almost unanimously voted in favour for it, the discontentment after it should be rather regarded as an intergovernmental issue. The only 4 exceptions were detected in a single opinion piece in The Washington Post, which claims the very idea of such a convention is “*pernicious*.”<sup>117</sup>

Furthermore, in March 2007, an Assistant Director-General of American origin, Peter Smith, resigned because of “*internal resistance to reforms*.”<sup>118</sup> This situation constituted to USA a clear, but almost unique case of supranational politicization, because Smith also condemned UNESCO for the “*demonization of America*.”<sup>119</sup> On the other hand he also faced accusations of corruption and the US government later disassociated from him, therefore **it can hardly represent a motive for withdrawal**. The same can be said about including the “Life and Works of Ernesto Che Guevara” on the Memory of the World program, criticized in 2012 and listed in 2017 among the contentious decisions of UNESCO in one article.<sup>120</sup> Originally classified examples of politicization at delegated level of authority also included the criticism of awarding a life sciences prize in the name of Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema by Director-General Irina Bokova in 2010, but later it was revealed that she acted only on the basis of the decision of Executive Board in 2008 to establish this initiative, which resembles most of the other points of American criticism towards UNESCO.

### 3.4.2 Intergovernmental politicization

The greatest dissatisfaction was expressed towards the UNESCO bodies with pooled authority, such as the General Conference (GC), Executive Board (EB) and Committees, especially the World Heritage Committee (WHC). Out of the 191 politicization codes 146 (**about 76 %**) were seen at this level. But most from the 17 % of unclassified cases would probably also belong to this realm (since only few supranational criticisms were found), but it was not clear enough from the context to categorize it.

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<sup>116</sup> Appendix no. 1, NYT\_2.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, WP\_1.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, NYT\_6.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, WP\_11.

Table 7: Evolution of US criticism of UNESCO intergovernmental politicization.

Year	Intergovernmental
2001	0
2002	0
2003	2
2004	0
2005	16
2006	3
2007	2
2008	0
2009	0
2010	12
2011	18
2012	10
2013	17
2014	4
2015	4
2016	19
2017 1	12
2017 2	23
2018	4

As for the evolution in time (presented in *Table 7*), the highest number understandably appeared in the year 2017, in connection with the withdrawal announcement (23), but a significant amount occurred already in the previous years. The matter of the 2005 Cultural Convention was already discussed; hence the focus will be aimed at the time period between 2010 and 2017. The admission of Palestine again symbolizes a turning point in this regard, with 35 cases dated before October 2011 and 84, respectively 111 (counting the examples connected to the withdrawal decision) after that. This single decision, considered to be “*premature*” and “*inappropriate*” to be dealt within UNESCO,<sup>121</sup> was mentioned in 15 paragraphs only in 2011. Apart from any matter connected to Israel (which was a majority, as it will be elaborated on further), significant criticism was caused by the mentioned Obiang Prize, by which UNESCO is supposedly “*associating itself with a dictator,*”<sup>122</sup> and the Executive Board response to Syrian human rights abuses in 2012, concretely the fact, that Syria has not been

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<sup>121</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_27.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, Letter\_2.

withheld a seat in the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations, causing American “*profound disappointment.*”<sup>123</sup>

*Table 8: US criticism of UNESCO intergovernmental politicization by sources.*

Type	Intergovernmental
1 - statements	62
2 - govt documents	14
3 - media	55
4 - opinions	15

As the distribution in the character of the sources (shown in *Table 8*) is concerned, the highest percentage of intergovernmental in comparison with all politicization was detected in governmental documents (14 out of 18), the lowest in opinion pieces (15 out of 28) and almost the same in media and statements (about 80 %). This reflects the reality that the distinction between the two levels of politicization is perhaps not very attractive to general public. Nevertheless, that should not hide the fact that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all American criticism towards UNESCO could be attributed to its supposed politicization, of which at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  **happened at the intergovernmental level.**

### **3.4.3 The anti-Israel bias?**

The question is now, when the allegation of politicization occurred the most, i.e. which issues have been affected by it? During the research the need for another category became apparent, specifically a code, that would allow for measuring to which extent the political issues introduced into the work of UNESCO bodies were connected with Israel. It largely overlaps with the previous category, because the USA have never questioned the neutrality of the Secretariat in terms of its relationship towards Israel. In fact, there are some cases of USA praising the staff for its attempts to depoliticize the decision-making process inside the UNESCO Governing Bodies (e. g. in April 2013).<sup>124</sup> In order to not duplicate, some of the particular examples of the general intergovernmental politicization are presented now.

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<sup>123</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_32.

<sup>124</sup> See e.g. Ibid, NYT\_12.

Table 9: Evolution of US criticism of UNESCO “anti-Israel bias”.

Year	Israel
2001	0
2002	0
2003	0
2004	0
2005	0
2006	3
2007	2
2008	0
2009	0
2010	5
2011	17
2012	6
2013	16
2014	3
2015	4
2016	19
2017_1	12
2017_2	36
2018	1

As Table 9 signifies, except for the fact of admitting Palestine, some issue with connection to Israel appeared at UNESCO already in 2006 at the 175<sup>th</sup> EB with the matter of “*Contribution to the reconstruction and development of Lebanon*” (after its war with Israel), in which the EB agreed to a resolution, which the Americans viewed as “*political*” and “*unacceptably biased*” (against Israel).<sup>125</sup> Apart from these two exceptions the greatest opposition was expressed in topics relates to cultural heritage either under the Israeli control, or with some Israeli claims on it. Specifically, it concerned the special plenary session in 2007 about the preservation of the Old City of Jerusalem, the inscription of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem by WHC in June 2012, WHC resolutions “attacking” Israel in June 2013, its inscription of the town of Hebron in July 2017, but most notably the repeated resolutions regarding the UNESCO’s work in the occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories, adopted at every EB session since October 2010 (185<sup>th</sup> EB).

The very fact that EB decided to response to the placement of Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem and the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron on the Israeli national heritage list

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<sup>125</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_12.

in February 2010 on its meeting met with the sign of disagreement of the USA, calling the agenda item *“focused only on one country.”*<sup>126</sup> However, the way in which the matter was handled in the EB sessions was also listed among the points of the US criticism. The content and the language of the resolutions have been over time regarded as *“one-sided”, “singling out Israel”, “highly politicized”, “directed at single Member State”, “counterproductive”,* of *“harsh”* nature, *“inflammatory”, “distracting from the positive work of UNESCO”, “counter to UNESCO mandate”* etc.<sup>127</sup> American officials also complained to the disproportionate number of passed resolutions, but also to the process of their adoption, namely its non-consensual base. That indicates the problem really lied in the intergovernmental level, in UNESCO organs with pooled authority. But why has the amount sometimes overcome the average?

The explanation for the high 2011 number is clear: first the EB has supported and then the GC has agreed to the Palestinian request for membership in UNESCO. That not only was deemed to be irrelevant, as the request has also been handled by that time inside the UN Security Council, but also to be *“counterproductive to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.”*<sup>128</sup> The 2013 peak could be largely ascribed to the publication of the CRS report (which contained itself 8 “Israel codes”), summarizing the objections to the Palestinian membership issue. As more interesting are considered the codes in 2015, 2016 and 2017, as immediately predating the withdrawal announcement. With the exception of one single paragraph, the **entire American criticism** in these three years is aimed at politicization, particularly happening at the intergovernmental level within the issues related to Israel. Concretely the agenda item “Occupied Palestine” at the 197<sup>th</sup> and 200<sup>th</sup> EB, condemning Israel for its actions in West Bank and Gaza and supposedly denying any Jewish ties to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which was also discussed by WHC in October 2016 has attracted significant attention (with 35 codes criticizing it) in all of the types of sources. The overall distribution of the discontentment with the “anti-Israel bias” ranged from 66 to 68 % of the politicization concerns, with the exception of opinion pieces, where it reached only 54 %, as it could be implied from *Table 10*. If we agree to the fact that the later criticism influenced the US decision to withdraw from UNESCO more than the earlier ones, then, as a logical consequence, it

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<sup>126</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_24.

<sup>127</sup> See e.g. Ibid, Statement\_38, 39, 40, 45, 48, and others.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, Statement\_29.

could be concluded, that the decisive role in it was played by the objections to politicization of its Governing Bodies in Israel-related topics.

*Table 10: US criticism of UNESCO “anti-Israel bias” by sources.*

Type	Israel
1 - statements	51
2 - govt documents	12
3 - media	46
4 - opinions	15

What does this perspective tell us about the US motives to leave UNESCO? Mearsheimer & Walt (2006) have talked in their famous article (later turned into book) about the influence of Israel lobby on the US foreign policy, that USA have provided Israel an exceptional level of diplomatic, financial and military support since 1967 until today, largely because of the great influence of the pro-Israel lobby on the key players in charge of the decision-making process in US foreign policy.<sup>129</sup> Has this been also the case of US withdrawal from UNESCO? Maybe, but it cannot be said with certainty. The continuous US objection to UNESCO’s resolutions unacceptable for Israel could tell us something about the degree of diplomatic support to this state, sign of which the very move could be, but the question if the Israel lobby was somehow involved in it remains for further inquiry. Nevertheless, that should not hide the fact, that the leading point of US criticism towards UNESCO was focused especially in recent years on its purported anti-Israel bias, therefore the decision to departure from it could to a certain extent reflect a sign of support for Israel.

### **3.5 Overall findings**

Taken together, the analysis, with about 115 different sources, divided into 1384 paragraphs, presented in the coding table of 1667 rows, has showed that out of the 259 paragraphs with some identified American criticism towards UNESCO a major dissatisfaction was expressed over the politicization of UNESCO in general (191 codes, 74 %), whereas other issues, such as organizational mismanagement were not mentioned that frequently (72 codes for mismanagement, 28 %, 17 for the disputed category of mounting arrears). Only minimum amount of the politicization cases was

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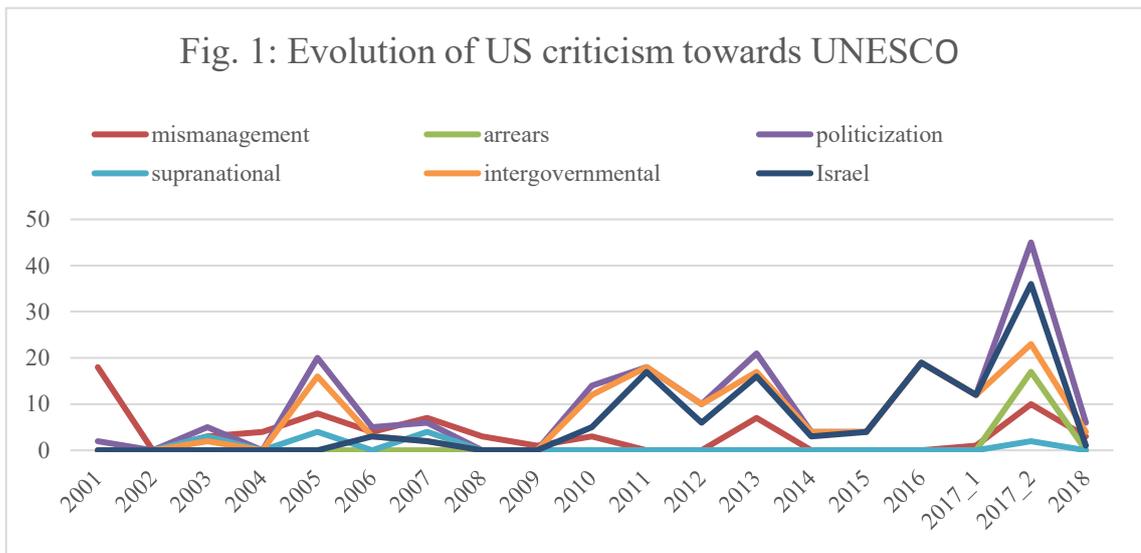
<sup>129</sup> Mearsheimer, J. J. & Walt, S. M. (2006), pp. 29.

perceived at the supranational level of UNESCO (13 codes, 7 %), whereas the majority of it was seen at intergovernmental level of UNESCO (146 codes, 75 %). A significant number of them were somehow connected to issues linked with Israel (124 codes, 65 %), as *Table 11* below displays.

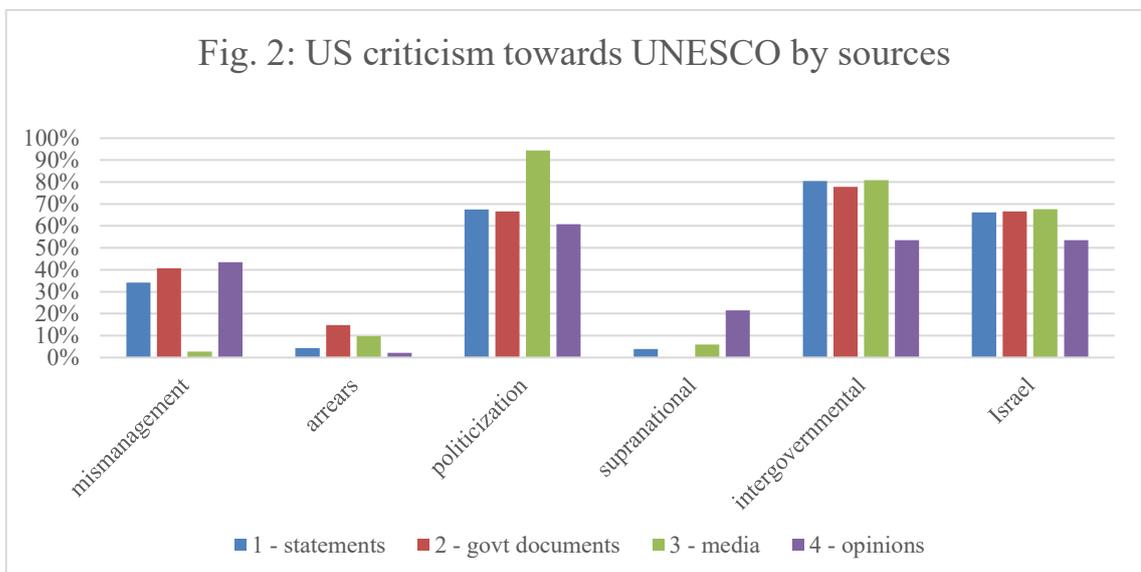
*Table 11: Overall US criticism of UNESCO.*

Type of Criticism	Total number	Percentage
Mismanagement	72	28 %
Arrears	17	7 %
Politicization	191	74 %
Supranational	13	7 % (out of 191)
Intergovernmental	146	75 % (out of 191)
Anti-Israel bias	124	65 % (out of 191)
All coded paragraphs	259	

The next two graphs (*Fig. 1 & Fig. 2*) represent the evolution of the American criticism towards UNESCO in time, respective its distribution among the various sources used. They also summarize what has been said before, concretely from the first one (*Fig. 1*) we could deduce the fact that only few examples of mismanagement critique could be named after October 2011, indicating that it was not very common point of critique, especially after reforms were introduced. It could also become apparent that the highest number of criticisms of politicization appeared in the year 2017, because of the withdrawal announcement, but a significant amount occurred already in the previous years. For example, between the Octobers of 2011 and 2017, politicization accounted for almost 94 % of identified dissatisfaction, where from 2015 to 2015 almost the entire American criticism is aimed at politicization, particularly happening at the intergovernmental level within the issues related to Israel.



The second one (*Fig. 2*) emphasizes e.g. the fact that almost none of the media outputs (only 2 out of 72 paragraphs) have reported of US critique of UNESCO organizational failure or that there is a fairly equally proportioned distribution among the various types of sources when it comes to the accusations of politicization, with the exception of very high ratio in media outputs. It also signifies the facts that the overall distribution of the discontentment with the intergovernmental was detected in governmental documents (14 out of 18), the lowest in opinion pieces (15 out of 28) and almost the same in media and statements and that the percentage of the “anti-Israel bias” ranged from 66 to 68 % of the politicization concerns, with the exception of opinion pieces, where it reached only 54 %.



## Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis revealed that withdrawals from IOs can generally show a state dissatisfaction with how they operate, where the accusation of politicization is often raised. This finding concurs with the outcome of the previous research, which has pointed out that most of the withdrawals have had political causes, in spite of the fact that majority included a departure from specialized, or technical organizations.<sup>130</sup> The content analysis of the statements of American officials, other governmental documents and relevant media and opinion pieces provided a closer look on the specific motives for the US withdrawal from UNESCO, where the decisive role could be ascribed to the objection to the politicization of the agency in contrast to other possible accusations, such as that of mismanagement. In particular, the criticism of introduction of political issues into the decision-making process inside the UNESCO Governing Bodies significantly prevailed over the politicization of UNESCO as a supranational agent, among which topics connected with Israel caused the most discontentment. To a certain extent it could be argued that at the declaratory level the US withdrawal from UNESCO sent a signal of USA supporting Israel, when it “*does get bullied*” at the international scene.<sup>131</sup> The possible question of the influence of the pro-Israel lobby on this decision is left to further considerations, as well as the more contextual factors, such as the more broad domestic and geopolitical dimensions. The factors like the general inclination of Donald Trump towards the policy of unilateralism, not visible from the content analysis, could namely also play a role.

Withdrawals could be utilized as a tool during elections if public opinion turns in opposition to increasing engagement in IOs – for example countries which had elections are more likely to withdraw from an IO in the following year.<sup>132</sup> Regarding the second factor, geopolitically powerful states (or big contributors to the IO budget) due to their stronger go-it-alone potential tend to be more likely to leave IOs than other states.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, GDP per capita together with the degree of institutionalization of the IO could also play a role in the explanation of withdrawal, specifically the higher GDP the lower chance of it happening, respectively in the second case medium and highly institutionalized institutions are less likely to witness an exit of one of its members.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Beigbeder, Y. (1979), pp. 231.

<sup>131</sup> Appendix no. 1, Statement\_63.

<sup>132</sup> Borzykowski, I. & Vabulas, F. (2018), pp. 14.

<sup>133</sup> Gruber, L. (2000), pp. 40.

<sup>134</sup> Borzykowski & Vabulas (2018), pp. 14.

Nevertheless, the issue of withdrawals and their motives remains one of the less scholarly covered topics, and thus the findings of this thesis contribute to it. They also could be beneficial for understanding the trends of American foreign policy, the work of UN specialized agencies, the motives for withdrawals from IOs and the decision-making process inside UNESCO and they contribute to understanding its critique. It also shed some light on the rather unusual decision to withdraw from IO in general, where other further research could also be conducted in its usage as a control mechanism of the State over the organization, in order to alter its slack and in the connected issue of re-joining after the behaviour is changed. Hopefully, the USA at some point of time will also find themselves returning to UNESCO, as was the case of many other precedents, because IOs do matter.

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## **List of Appendices**

Appendix no. 1: Texts for the content analysis (table), available in the electronic version