CONTEMPORARY POPULISM
AND ITS POLITICAL
CONSEQUENCES
Discourses and Practices
in Central and South-Eastern Europe

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STUDIES

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Haris Dajč, Isidora Jarić, Ljiljana Dobrovšak (eds.)

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Contents

ⅠⅠⅠ DISCOURSIVE PRACTICES

Introduction

This book is the result of papers that were presented during the first conference organized within the scope of the Poprebel project — *Populist rebellion against modernity in 21st-century Eastern Europe: neo-traditionalism and neo-feudalism*. Poprebel is a Horizon 2020-funded research project that analyses the rise of populism in Central and Eastern Europe and is run by a consortium of six universities: UCL (coordinator), Jagiellonian University, Charles University, Tartu University, Corvinus University of Budapest, Faculty of Philosophy Belgrade University, and thinktank Edgeryders. A conference entitled *CONTEMPORARY POPULISM AND ITS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES: Discourses and Practices in Central and South-Eastern Europe* was held in Belgrade in December 2019 and, apart from colleagues from the Poprebel project, it gathered scientists and experts interested in populism in Central and South-Eastern Europe.

Populism is one of the most frequently used terms in contemporary political and public debates. In many ways, it frames the public understanding of our current personal and collective political experiences. The use of this (almost magic) word became increasingly popular after Brexit and Trump's election in 2016, but in Central and South-Eastern Europe it was already present and growing for quite some time. However, until then, it didn't provoke enough curiosity as it was observed as a kind of local anomaly. The socialist post-1945 experience of former Warsaw Pact countries and socialist Yugoslavia led to the establishment of a system that was dominated by a single party and powerful party politburos. The collapse of communism and the demise of the Warsaw Pact led to a transition that, in the cases of some countries, still hasn't finished. Some former communist states like Poland were considered the champions of transition while others like Yugoslavia broke up in bloody wars that lasted for 10 years.

All the countries that emerged since the end of the Cold War are considered democracies, yet they cannot be defined as consolidated democracies, but at best as democracies in the process of consolidation or even backsliding and de-consolidation (Greskovits, 2015). In these countries, populism has developed in parallel with the building of democratic institutions and has become the mainstream (Lutovac, 2017: 61; Beslin et al., 2020: 7).

While populism in Western Europe has emerged because of a slow-burning crisis of political representation, growing alienation between elites and citizens, and challenges such as social inequality, migration, and multiculturalism (Mudde 2016),

in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, the situation is quite different. It would be a grave mistake to address those former socialist countries as homogeneous, as there are significant differences in their experience in the development of democracy after the fall of communism (Kubik, 2013). Both Serbia and Croatia, the biggest states of the former Yugoslavia, in the post-2000 period provided very fertile ground for the development of populism due to the dominance of catch-all parties that incorporates both left and right ideological messages so they could appeal to the widest possible groups in the electorate (Beslin et al., 2020: 8).

One of the constitutive ideas in various countries of the former Yugoslavia was that the nation was exclusively an ethnically homogeneous group, and the only legitimate political framework within which individuals can act. Consequently, leaders should be nationalistically oriented and insist on a rhetoric aimed at preserving national consciousness, national values, internal coherence, etc. The foundation of such values and policies was perfectly conducive to the development of authoritarianism and the rise of populist leaders who would make discursive distinctions between "us" (Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks) and "them" (those who are not 'our nation') (Dajc et al., 2022:5).

The situation in Poland and Hungary, on other hand, was very different. Apart from not experiencing the so-called socialism with a human face, their post-socialist transition was not affected by the violent dissolution of the former state.

Characteristics of populism in CE countries (like Poland and Hungary) are different in some aspects when compared to the Western Balkans. Poland illustrates what Krastev (2007: 58) defines as "the Central European paradox", where the rise of populism is "an outcome not of the failures but of the successes of post-communist liberalism". (Beslin et al., 2020: 8)

In Poland, populism is led by parties and organizations on the right side of the political spectrum. Their favorite rhetoric is anti-elite (both internally and externally), and their claim to represent the "the people" — these features make Polish populists not only Eurosceptic but also Europhobic (Beslin et al., 2020: 9).

Populism in Hungary is dominated by Fidesz, and its central feature seems to be an anti-Western rhetoric that paradoxically has no roots in Hungary pre 1989 (Beslin et al., 2020: 9). The frustration of Hungarian society caused by the economic lagging behind the West can be seen as one the main *spiritus movens* for the successful flourishing of populism steered by Fidesz.

As there is no generic model of post-communism in Central and South-Eastern Europe, it is important to have collections of papers that can compare the very different causes and consequences of contemporary populism in this part of Europe.

II

The book is divided into three sections that examine the populist impact on three aspects of societal reality — economy, politics, and various discursive practices that chart and reshape our everyday experiences.

In the first section of the book — entitled economy — three papers are presented. In the first paper, Ljubomir Madžar analyzes the convictions of public opinion relating to the alleged superiority of the socialist institutional order in the contemporary development of the Serbian economy. He argues and proves, in the Serbian case, how the collectivist system of the socialist past has its destructive legacies. In the second paper, Paulina Lenik identifies several policies introduced under the Fidesz government in the years 2010-2019, which were supposed to advance wealth redistribution and assist the poorest strata of society in Hungary. She concludes that the politics behind state interventionism in the country seemingly follows the populist narrative of the governing party. However, the long-term economic rationale of such a centralisation of market power may have detrimental effects on the competitiveness of the country, essentially reducing its potential for economic growth. In the third paper, the authors Ognjen Radonjić and Rosana Antoni Kotorchevikj focus on providing a clear definition and political classification of the term populism in a political and economic sense on a global scale. Likewise, the authors also focus on a comparison of the populist experience between the EU and the Western Balkans. Authors refer to the concept of economic neo-feudalism understood as "a distinct pattern of capitalism, which describes the emergence of personal dependencies providing security, that occurs alongside the capitalist mode of production" (Benczes et al., 2020: 9).

The papers in the central part of the book — entitled politics — trace the roots of populism and its contemporary political consequences in the Western Balkan region. Authors analyze populism focusing on a longer period — since the 19th and 20th centuries — and explain how specific historical circumstances accompanied by other social factors led to the success of populists in the region. The first paper by Milivoj Bešlin and Petar Žarković focuses on the continuity of populism in Serbia from the late 19th century until the present time. They explain the transformation of leftist and pro-Yugoslav populism into a predominantly right-wing Serbian populism with an ultranationalist content. The second paper, by Nikola Samardžić, addresses Russia and the Western Balkans in the first two decades of Vladimir Putin's rule and explains the rise of populism and hybrid warfare, and its consequences not only for the Western Balkans but also for the EU. Samardžić analyzes the failure of EU politics in the containment of Russia, especially after the First Ukrainian war in 2014 that contributed to the rise of populist politicians in the Western Balkans and in the EU. He explains the methods there were used in Russian hybrid warfare and the main collaborators and beneficiaries in the Western Balkans. Since

III

February 2022 and the newest Russian aggression on Ukraine, the conclusions of the author provided to be farsighted. His work on this topic in the Poprebel project contributed to the working paper published in December 2021 that showed Russian (hidden and overt) economic, political, and cultural influences in Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Montenegro (Dajc et all 2021: 4). The next paper written by Haris Dajč and Nataša Jovanović Ajzenhamer explores the populist left and populist right through socio-economic programmers of mainstream parties in Serbia and Croatia. The authors analyzed the main legal documents of four parties in Serbia and Croatia, with the of examining whether the hypothesis constructed for Western European countries can be applied to former socialist countries like Serbia and Croatia. This research also shows that there are no major discrepancies between the economic programmes of left-wing and right-wing parliamentary parties in Serbia and Croatia, and that these are in fact catch-all parties. In the fourth paper of this section, the author Alexander Mesarovich uses a Social Network Analysis to analyse the coping strategies of national minority parties within Serbia and Croatia, attempting to understand how these parties view their political space and under what conditions they cooperate with populists and sometimes even oppose populist politicians. Branka Galić is the author of the next paper that examines some sociological elements of neoconservative politics in populist movements in Croatian society. She also analyzes the very important phenomenon of clericalism in the Croatian educational system, giving a new awareness of what attempts were made to impose clerical influence on the educational system and secular society in Croatia, with a special focus on the University of Zagreb and the imposed integration of the Catholic Faculty of Theology and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences that eventually failed. Aleksandar Weisner is focused on Serbia and proposes a new theoretical perspective, arguing that state capture should be replaced in modern theory by a new term that better explains the real political and socio-economic situation — contaminated society. As a case study, he examples the militarization of public space. In the last paper of this section, Marko Tmušić shows how the pursuit of political identity in Serbia, especially after the beginning of the transition process, influenced the inability to create a long-term sustainable growth model. The author concludes that the authoritarian dimension of politics — and consequently of the economy — has withstood the numerous changes that have accompanied the historical development of the political and economic system of Serbia and, as such, has provided fertile ground for the flourishing of political and economic populism.

The papers presented in the third section of the book try to rethink different discursive practices mostly related to (both old and new) media which in various ways support the rise, launch and promotion of populist narratives within different societies and media systems. The authors Isidora Jarić, Danica Balaban, and Sneža-

IV

na Bajčeta examine the usage of a classic journalist tool — unnamed sources — in contemporary journalistic practices in Serbian print media. The research shows how unnamed sources are misused in the promotion of populist political discourse among the ruling party and the political discrediting of opposition leaders.

The next three papers explore the consequences of media practices that promote particular discourses that question LGBT human rights in different cultural and societal contexts. In her paper, Caroline Hill examines morality policy-framing strategies employed by officials of the Russian Orthodox Church related to LGBT Rights and contemporary debates in Russia and the interplay between church and state morality policy concerning the same issue. Slobodanka Dekić aims to contextualize the contemporary same-sex partnership advocacy efforts of Serbian LGBT activists within the wider context of family policies and family reality in contemporary, neoliberal, conservative Serbian society with a populist political elite in power that promotes "anti-gender" narratives on the family. Olena Yermakova examines the way how the current ruling Polish party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc), frames its anti-LGBT rhetoric and uses it for its political gains.

Two papers rethink populist reactions to contemporary migration flows. Teodora Jovanović analyses the structure of the arguments within contemporary anti-migrant rhetoric, and shows that they are intellectually rooted in the European New Right and cross-national far-right networks. Elodie Thevenin discusses parliamentary debates of members of the parliament from the ruling Law and Justice party in Poland, and shows how the migration issue is politicized and mediatized in the Polish parliament. The research points to different layers of critique, as well as their articulation used by Law and Justice MPs as a strategy to construct their vision of what they want for Poland and of what Europe ought to be.

In the last paper, Péter Molnár and Gyula Balázs Csáki-Hatalovics examine the role of social media in the Hungarian elections in 2019. The authors compare the results from the 2019 elections in Hungary with the use of social media during the campaign by the various political forces in order to understand the effective influence of social media on the electoral results.

Since early 2020, we experienced several waves of the Covid-19 pandemic that showed how incompetent populist and authoritarian leaders are despite their image of strongmen. And when one of the many waves of the Covid-19 pandemic seemed to lose strength, we witnessed a new full-scale war declared by Russia against Ukraine in February 2022. Since the war started, we have analyzed and read numerous articles and reports concerning the causes of the war — in particular, the diabolic speeches of the Russian president to his scared and silent audience at home. He has shown that he believes himself to be a historian and sees himself suitable for a messianic plan of rewriting history. He has omitted not only security

V

guarantees that Russia gave to its neighbor Ukraine but to the international community, too (which he's violated without much punishment in the last two decades) and has also shown that the time of Catherine the Great and Peter the Great belongs only to trained historians, and not to statesmen that believe themselves to be a messiah.

All these world-changing processes have also contributed to the publication only being published now.

Haris Dajč

Belgrade, September 2022

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I
ECONOMY

SOCIALIST LEGACIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERBIAN ECONOMY

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A b s t r a c t

On account of many impressive but unsustainable results, the public developed the belief that the old collectivist system was superior and that reforming economies towards decentralised structures and market coordination might have been a big strategic mistake. Public opinion surveys reveal a high evaluation of the old socialist order and intensive yearning for bygone ways and means of going about material whereabouts and necessities of daily life. This paper comes to grips with the convictions relating to the alleged superiority of the socialist institutional order. The main point in proving that the old systems had in fact been inferior consists in underlining their *unsustainability*. The high rates of growth achieved in some past periods are not true indicators of the old systems' efficiency because they could not be maintained permanently. The very fact of the massive breakdowns of socialist arrangements is the best proof of their inferiority. It is shown that formerly prevailing extensive growth unfolds through mechanisms which inevitably lead to irreparable deceleration and would ultimately end with secular stagnation. As stagnation is not acceptable as a systemic option, the arrangements ruling in socialist societies had to be replaced in lump. The important fact is that a dramatic slackening of development trends began while socialist systems were in full operation and that low rates of growth cannot therefore be ascribed to institutions which were introduced visibly later. Historic institutional turnaround pulling the economies out of centralist shackles *came as a consequence* of the already languished and developmentally blocked and conspicuously paralysed socialist systems; institutional innovations are not the cause but the result of the previously disabled and hopelessly stopped socialist development. The inefficiency of socialist systems is analysed on an additional plane. Having been based on coercion and terror, such systems have, generally speaking, imposed enormous costs in terms of human sufferings, annulment of human freedoms, impairing dignity and trampling on citizens' rights which constitute an indispensable pillar of civilisation. The prototype of the collectivist system is estimated to have, in one way or the other, annihilated between 12 and 15 million people, most of them representing nonsensically destroyed innocent lives. A system imposed and operating with such high and *such* costs cannot be sustainable and has to meet its historical debacle. With unbelievable waste in all principal walks of life it cannot survive. And, if it could, that would be a pity: a veritable evil course in the unfolding of civilisation.

Key words: *institutions, rhythm of institutional change, revolution vs. step-by-step change, reforms, centralism, decentralisation, socialism, collectivism, self-management, coercion, political power as a source of inequality, breakdown of the systems, economic development, extensive development, economic efficiency, rate of technical progress*

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Introduction

The ancient Greeks are reputed for allegedly having said that even gods cannot change the things that have already occured — the happenings which have become a part of the irrevocable past. It seems that this idea has general significance: the past is given and unchangeable and much of what it implies has to be accepted and life has to adjust to it. As is the case with other ex-socialist countries, Serbia has undergone an extended, half-century long, socialist past, perhaps with more commitment and more numerous and deeper consequences. The traces of that past are important and consequential if not readily visible and easily recognisable. The socialist past has left lasting imprints on the structure of the economy, on its institutional framework, behavioural patterns and the comprehensive, vastly heterogenous and not-easy-to-erase set of collective values and communal preferences which, for the lack of a better term, can be named "ideology". The purpose of this paper is to indicate some of these features of the socialist past with which we are confronted and have to deal with and to examine their numerous and far-reaching implications.

The Shadowy Side of the Socialist Growth Miracle

The impressive development performance of socialist economies is thoroughly researched and well known. But there were and continued to reemerge increasing doubts and shadows. Nutter (1983 [1968]) found that, however impressive, Soviet growth had not been visibly faster than the growth of tsarist Russia in the couple of decades immediately preceding the 1917 revolution. He also compared Soviet growth with the USA's growth in the period which, regarding the stage of development, had been comparable to the observed Soviet growth. He did not find a significant difference. He endeavoured to isolate more than simple institutional determinants of the tempo of development and found out that the peculiar and unprecedented institutional innovations of the Soviet economy had in reality, as far as the pace of development is concerned, not made any difference.

Other observations amounted to casting serious shadows on the Soviet growth performance. It was quickly observed that the Soviet system contained an inherent tendency to overestimate development results. The planning bodies are known to have been prone to impose overambitious and unrealisable objectives and that the managers of socialist enterprises faced serious risks in cases of underperformance. The false reporting was a predictable and inevitable result. Geler and Nekrics (YEAR, 433) state that lying had become a lifestyle and that statistical information had become extremely unreliable. Setting aside the ethical implications of this scandalous reporting, the tendency and the imperative of falsifying production reports

10

was found to change over time and some correlation between this tendency and the officially reported rate of growth was observed.

More importantly, the technical (input-output) coefficients were notoriously high in the Soviet economy. This means that the coefficients of value added were sadly low and that huge physical quantities contained a low proportion of the value added, which is the only component having some meaningful welfare content. Simply put, steel ate up coal, coal absorbed too much electricity, the electricity production devoured too much coal, etc. so that relatively little remained which could satisfy final use — mainly personal consumption as a counterpart of standard of living and investment as a means of expanding production capacity. Huge production figures, apart from war production, did not provide a basis for a decent living for the populace. The less so as a huge proportion of the modest national income, as one of the conventional measures of value added, was extracted for the purpose of implementing a steadily increasing volume of investment.

A study made half a century ago (Madžar 1968, 347-362) found that socialist economies have incomparably higher inventory-output ratios with notoriously inferior performance in serving the consumers (long queues, supply interruptions, protracted scarcities or even unavailability of many commodities including those essential ones...). The message of this finding is clear: collectivistically institutionalised economies are considerably less efficient and, behind large quantities, there is a low and inadequate level of satisfying consumer needs.

The only thing the collectivist system has over centralised systems, including of course the Soviet system as the protagonist and the forerunner, is the above-emphasised mobilisation of resources. In authoritarian systems with an untouchable Party monopoly of political power and without having to face the critical confrontation of the general public — i.e. without political competition of other parties — there is an extremely broad manoeuvering space in the division of national income into various types of final use. The government owns the bulk of productive capacity, but even independently of that, it relies on brute force and unrestrained coercion, and can therefore take for the purpose of "social accumulation" practically as much as it finds fit. Labour was also easy to mobilise: an abundant quantity of rural labour in agriculture made it easy to commandeer the needed numbers and the direct compulsion made it possible to allocate labour according to whatever plans happened to be adopted. Regimentation of labour was a part of the ruling institutional framework so that reallocation of labour was possible and actually practiced even when it came down to individual enterprises and to satisfy their daily needs for labour. In short, the government had all possibilities to increase both capital and labour in the modern sector of the economy, the one fostered and for some time rapidly expanded in the process of industrialisation.

Thus, development could have been rapid, here and there spectacularly accelerated through massive commandeering of both capital and labour. This was the pattern and the essence of so-called *extensive growth*. The strategy of extensive growth can produce miracles but, alas, just for a limited time period. The fatal trouble with extensive growth consists in the fact that *it is not sustainable*. It is an elementary proposition of the theory of economic growth that a sustainable and stable (lastingly maintained) rate of growth is achievable only on the basis of permanent technological progress. Technological progress is a process of steady increase of the production relevant knowledge which makes it possible to increase value added without a simultaneous increase in the quantities of production factors. It is measured by the rate at which the economy would grow with given and fixed quantities of the factors of production.

For technological progress to proceed regularly and as rapidly as in the advanced economies *the system has to learn permanently*. And for that to happen, it must have the following inseparable feature: the autonomy of economic agents, based on economic freedom. Only with economic freedom and institutionally-secured autonomy will the system include broad masses of agents into the decision making and thus augment and continue to keep its *decision making capacity* at a high level. Economic freedom, at the same time, conditions the necessary motivation and makes it possible for the system to develop a rich cloud of interactions and thus generate large amounts of necessary and unfailingly precious information. Economic freedom and technical progress go hand in hand. Through centralised, administratively run and politically steered processes of management and control, with next to an exclusive reliance on compulsion and prohibitions, the system was deprived of any possibilities of generating satisfactory technical progress and was thus doomed to long-term stagnation. The alternative of exploiting technical innovations generated in market economies was available, but the administratively structured system was extremely hostile to major changes and thus to initiatives and adjustments implied by advancements of technology.

The key failing of extensive economic growth boils down to a fundamental structurally determined property of its pace of expansion: the system as a whole tends (and ultimately hits in the sense of equalising) to the rate of growth of the slowest growing factor of production. If the slowest growing factor happens to be labour vis a vis population, then economic stagnation, as defined via *per capita* income is the long run destiny of the extensively growing system. If some other factor appears to grow the slowest, then the long run steady rate of growth, again defined through *per capita* income will turn out to be negative. The collectivist, politically domineered and economic freedom-annihilating system of Soviet and other socialist economies could not generate the needed technical progress conceived in

the broadest way and was therefore destined to be trapped into a state of long run indefinite stagnation. Empirically speaking, that is in fact what happened to socialist economies and that is the prime cause of their inevitable collapse. Such a collapse has as a rule been followed by the collapse of the real economy as evidenced by dramatic breaks of the trends of major macroeconomic aggregates; only those economies that were able to avoid such a debacle were those that managed a timely to shift to a fundamentally different market or, as some would say, the capitalist system.

The collectivist system under observation proved extremely irrational. The imposing of a priori reasons for its inevitable irrationality have been dealt with here to some detail. Another reason supporting this conclusion is its historical demise; in most countries it simply suffered dramatic collapse, while in some other countries (China) it was smoothly replaced with spectacular results due also to well taken macroeconomic policies. There is a third reason supporting the same conclusion. There have been invisible but huge costs accompanying very conspicuous but not repeatable results of the greatly hailed stage of rapid extensive growth. There are estimates according to which the not quite visible losses in agriculture accompanying the erection of huge and impressive projects, such as a gigantic power station and steelworks, overweigh the value of these projects — a glaring example of the pattern of politically initiated and administratively steered projects: the results are overly visible and the costs are invisible, hidden in some deep background (Geler and Nekrics 2000 [1986], 213).

Beside the structural reasons contributing to this epochal failure there is one overwhelming political reason. Namely, among the fundamental economic propositions, one immediately runs up against the requirement that in a rationally structured economic (and social for that matter) system *the consequences of decisions have to fall on the points of authority, i.e. on those agents and bodies who have taken the said decisions.* That elementary principle was drastically broken on a grand scale — in fact, at the highest imaginable level, the level of the society as a whole. The Communist Party was the holder of all power and ultimately decided on everything associated with key social changes, i.e. on everything that mattered. It, however, carried no responsibility whatsoever (Geler and Nekrics 2000 [1986], 675-678). Responsibility had been regularly shifted onto the operative bodies which most of the time were simply unable to implement decisions of party bosses that were arbitrarily taken and carried imprints of ignorance. Economic policy was replete with gross mistakes. For example, the fiscal obligations imposed upon various kolkhozes were frequently unbearable because those deciding about them had no idea of the fiscal capacity of various sectors of the economy and of their operation organisations. The state therefore frequently took almost everything, not even

leaving quantities necessary for sowing in the next year (seed). The result was that better-to-do kolkhozes had to assist those unable to fulfill obligations with the end result that a motivation structure had been practically eroded: what people were able ultimately to reap on the basis of their effort had no relation to the effort and accompanying skill itself (2000, 481).

The unsatisfactory end results are predictable and easily explainable. Russia is in fact an underdeveloped country with the structure of a backward economy. That structure is dominated by the production of raw materials, particularly oil and gas. Every significant change of the world market prices of these products strongly affects the Russian economy in one way or the other. The country is disturbingly similar to Saudi Arabia, with the difference that the per capita availability of exportable natural resources is considerably lower. With the exception of a limited number of traditional products (caviar, vodka…), one is unable to find any new, sophisticated product launched from there to the world market. Compared to China, Russia is technologically and economically abysmally inferior. Armaments production does represent an exception, but it is clear that it does not contribute noticeably to living standards. Once agriculturally rich and widely known with huge exports of wheat and related products, the country is unable to feed its population and relies heavily on food imports.

The Scars of Socialist Institutional Heritage

Vladan Desnica, a prominent Serbian writer from Croatia, has, among a considerable number of highly praised works, a very strange story. The story runs as follows. The person — N.N. — left his home in the evening of a bright, sunny day and never came back. The writer adds that *nothing else* was heard of him. *Nothing*. Leaning on the mere known and verified facts, nothing else can be reported about the destiny of N.N. But how could a story consist of a single sentence, the writer asks himself — and the reader. Since such a story would be truly queer, the writer concludes that the story *must be continued somehow*. And only then the story begins in truth and a series of almost unthinkable events starts unfolding. It comprises quite a few "sentences", it is a deep and far developing narrative.

This author is in a position which is very similar to Desnica's. The system which happened as a result of the socialist revolution, with World War II as its deep background, was an authoritarian, collectivist social order based on coercion, violence and threats — physical and others — which gained considerable credibility because they were with sufficient frequency brought about in practice. Two fundamental pillars of contemporary civilisation, and perhaps of civilisation in general — private ownership in the economy and a pluralistic, multi-party political system in the general public domain —, were destroyed. No mention could have been made

about the rule of law. Legal certainty was eliminated, with individual rights and freedoms swept away.

Belonging to the family of collectivist authoritarian arrangements, the system in Yugoslavia and inherited in Serbia developed in a number of varieties and possessed the basic features of such arrangements, which means that it fell rather deep into *pre-civilisational stages of broadly conceived social development.* Decades and centuries of evolutionary — uncertain and haphazard yet successful and positive — development were simply done away with. This monumental destructive performance had to mean that the system was bound to be *ultimately* unprecedently harmful, wasteful in handling resources, unfree and violent with high costs not only in terms of material means but also in terms of human sufferings and human lives themselves. It also meant that the system was unsustainable and that its spectacular upswings could not be long lived and had to terminate, with collapse and stagnation, the amazingly high cost of periodic accelerations of economic and overall development. Since life does not stop, the debacle of the system meant its replacement by a different one, with its structure diametrically opposed to the construction of the run out system. *As it turns out, the story of unsustainability gives a complete, though quite general and exceedingly broad, answer for the post-socialist collapse.* This could be the end of the diagnosis and the analysis of the socialist system which unexpectedly and for some indeed unhappily happened to people in these lands, much as it looked that a strange sudden end was about to happen in the queer narrative of V. Desnica. But, again similar to Desnica's unusual setting, how could an entire section of a professional paper be resolved in and with a single statement? The show must go on.

Memories of Socialism: Perception of the Electoral Body as a Colossal Political Obstacle

As a preliminary, the mistaken perception of the dynamic capacity of the socialist system — of its propulsive potential — remains unshakable among the broadest social strata: as the saying goes, among "the large masses" of the population. This is confirmed by many surveys of public opinion. Thus Mihailović (2010, 24-26) finds that, in answer to the question what period was the happiest for the citizens of Serbia — the alternatives having been the period before the Second World War, the last decade of the past century, the first decade of the current century and the period of socialist development —, no less than 81% thought that the socialist period had been the most agreeable! To the question of credibility of institutions, the alternative answers being those of the times of Milošević, Đinđić, Koštunica and institutions of the demised socialist society (Tito's times), the last option won 45% of

the share of answers, while the next answer (Đinđić's times) won only half of the pro-socialist figures — 23%. There are plenty of similar surveys, all demonstrating — in the eyes of the citizens — the superiority of socialist times and their ruling institutions. Indeed, many papers and books have been written on the superiority of socialism in the memory of the broad public. However, the cited figures are sufficient for this purpose.

A far-reaching conclusion drawn from surveys indicating massive desirability for socialism among such an overwhelming majority of citizens concerns the forbidding magnitude of a *political problem deriving therefrom*. With so many citizens yearning for socialism it is next to impossible to build a political platform which would be sufficiently attractive to the electorate and at the same time secure a sequence of institutional changes leading to a successful modernisation of society. Such sequences, no matter how beneficial they might be from the point of view of future economic and social development — and how solid the reasons for its sustainability are — appear simply as a hard sell to the electorate. On the other hand, the conviction of the prevailing majority of the voting public being firmly tied to the would-be superiority of socialism offers ample space for political manipulation and all kinds of abuse, giving an almost insuperable advantage even to those political agents who — ill-informed and inadequately educated — sincerely believe in socialist ways of steering society and to lead the society astray without being conscious in their blessed ignorance of the huge damage inflicted on the country. It takes an Attaturkian political elite, one that will educate the society and simultaneously lead it. One does not need to develop long argumentative chains to prove that the likelihood of such an Attaturkian miracle appearing is negligible.

The lack of sustainability, not understood and not understandable to the voting public, is the key element of an answer to the question on the unsatisfactory development — or at least markedly less rapid than the one realised during the successful episodes of the socialist extensive growth — in the post-socialist development stage. However strange and not easily acceptable it may sound, the principal causes of the less-than-satisfactory *post-socialist development* are contained, and indeed hidden, in the preceding process of socialist development; the lack of preferable performance in the post-socialist — market oriented and, as theory undoubtedly suggests, decidedly more efficient — economy *appears to be ascribable to the system prevailing previously; it is far from impossible that the periods of the most rapidly growing economy contained the seeds of collapse, the determinants of future deceleration and even stagnation.* After all, economists from all over have for a long time been used to the effects of the time lags in economics. Economic phenomena are interdependent not only in a simultaneous cross section but also in the flows and sequences of time.

16

The burden of the socialist legacy seems to depend on the intensity and the sincerity with which socialist institutions and values were accepted and embraced by large masses of the population. It also seems that socialist ways of steering development at large have particularly deep roots in Serbia. The reasons for this phenomenon are hard to disentangle, but they probably stem from the distant past and peculiar collective memories; for peoples living under alien yoke for centuries collectively merging together might have been the safest and most efficient manner of preserving their identity. Be it as it may, the socialist heritage is not equally interred in all ex-socialist countries and Serbia seems to be among (or *is*) the most handicapped. Socialist legacies in Serbia are quite visible — a high share of the state-owned sector in production, aggregate value added, capital and other macroeconomic aggregates; a large spread of administrative price controls; conspicuous party allegiance as a criterion for selection of managerial personnel and other cadres in the public administration and the public sector; a fanatic preservation of the loss-making public sector giants; a disturbingly high share of nonperforming loans in the banking sector; the inefficiency and the sluggishness of the judiciary; a high presence of destructive ways of enlisting electoral support by judicial persecution of the businessmen, particularly those big and best known... — and it is their bewildering mass that is to be looked at in search for the causes of collective preferences causing slow development. As it turns out, in the recent decade or so there is only one ex-Socialist country with a lower rate of growth of GDP than Serbia. After all, an all too frequently used *ceterum censeo* of this author has to be repeated here, too: the ultimate, truly basic determinants of economic development are located far outside the economy.

Ascribing the present unsatisfactory development to the legacies of the demised socialist system will certainly be met with sharp controversies. That should be seen as no surprise because the facts and their interrelations are numerous and interaction among all these — not even all of which are visible — elements are highly variegated and in a way superimposed upon each other in thick layers. The difficulty of encompassing and clarifying the — in many ways — interdependent effects of extant legacies are perhaps best observed if one takes into account how unclear and poorly understood was the much simpler problem of ascertaining the effects and consequences of the collectivist system at the time of their existence and actual working. It took such a high class annalist as Nutter (1983 [1959]) to disentangle the real achievements of the system and the regularities of its functioning.

The ground-breaking work of Nutter produced a lasting shock not only within the profession but also among a much broader collection of concerned circles in society. The limited information and lack of comprehensive and systematic analyses made it impossible to see the Soviet realities of the time and greatly contribut-

ed to constructing an overoptimistic and unduly favourable picture of the alleged success stories of the "socialist miracle". The unfounded belief in the extraordinary development potential and unprecedented vitality of the new system continued to dominate professional thinking despite the fact that Nutter established firmly and irrevocably that tsarist Russia experienced more rapid growth than Soviet Union, and, indeed, within periods of approximately equal length (some 45 years; Nutter (1983 [1965], 182). Even more shocking was the discovery that Soviet growth had not been more rapid — the rates of growth are in fact almost equal — than the *comparable* U.S.A's growth. Namely, there are a number of *noninstitutional factors* affecting development which make for a higher or lower rate of growth and are unrelated to economic efficiency and the propulsive force of the observed system. Nutter took care to isolate such factors as far as possible, mostly by not observing contemporaneous growth and selecting *comparable periods* instead; these were the periods in which noninstitutional development determinants, such as the level of development and a number of exogenous factors, were close in the two countries if not exactly equal (1983 [1965], *passim*, especially pp. 173-177).

Two such evidently unusual findings — that tsarist growth was more rapid than the Soviet development and the higher than rate of growth accomplished by the U.S than in the USSR: in a comparable development stage and similar macroeconomic environment — should have shocked the public both professional and more broadly, but the myth of the Soviet Union's extraordinary capability lingered on and lasted almost up until the break-up of the Soviet empire. The point of this argumentation is that some truths do not become either easily or quickly accepted and, in fact, the most rigorous proofs don't contribute substantially to their acceptance. If the truth of tsarist Russia having been somewhat more rapid in its development than the Soviet Union did not get through for such a long time, it is obviously reasonable to expect even more resistance and more time until the relevant findings are accepted when it comes down to recognising the perilous influence of socialist *legacies*.

In comparing the Soviet and American rates of growth Nutter could not take into account the important fact that Soviet growth had been realised as an *extensive growth*, which means through mass mobilisation of production factors, through mere and spectacular *increasing quantities* of these factors rather than through a persistent increase of their productivity. The extensivity of growth is best seen through the relationships between the growth rates of employment and of output — the former being much above the latter. These two development episodes were in fact incomparable as Soviet growth, however rapid, was not sustainable and, on that account alone, was vastly inferior. The lack of comparability derives not only from the simple fact that extensive growth is short-lived if not ephemeral but also from

the fact that it generates pressing *constraints on future growth*. The sluggishness of the development in the future is, in this case, not due to the then-conducted development policies but due to the ways and means through which extensive growth had been realised in the past.

Accelerating development through mass mobilisation of the production factors while neglecting technical progress as the only source of sustainable growth means predetermining a perilous deceleration of future development, when factors of production, however abundant, simply exhaust their growth potential while the necessary pace of technical progress is not assured to take over the role of a driving force in the process of development. A more general statement can be developed here: on the eve of the socialist turnaround — and this happens to be true for any economy at any point in time — the economy had a number of once-and-for-all, temporarily exhaustible development opportunities; and consuming any of them meant that it would not be available in the future. Through extensive growth, but also in other ways — exploiting easy development options enabling the system to accelerate growth substantially for a limited time at the expense of accumulating all kinds of bottlenecks which necessarily dramatically decelerate growth in the future — opportunistic development policies depleted the fund of unrepeatable options and thus achieved marked effects for a limited time at the expense of imminent future slowdowns. The time interdependency of the growth rates makes it impossible to judge the efficiency of any development policy by weighing the simultaneously-realised results, registered at the times to which such policies directly applied. The crucially important, but unfortunately regularly missing, component in judging such efficiency is the dynamic potential which the observed policies bestow upon the future.

The Mechanics of Extensive Growth and the Inevitability of Deceleration

Considerable stress has been laid on extensive growth here. It is therefore necessary to provide a brief theoretical sketch of its dynamics and the factors determining the changes in its pace with ultimate deceleration as an unavoidable result of the nature of the underlying interrelationships. The most concise, the easiest and the clearest way of laying down the pattern of extensive growth is through a mathematical model which delivers definitive and easy-to-comprehend results. The insights provided by the model are exact, obvious and waterproof — of course, all that comes under a number of simplifying assumptions. As mathematics doesn't fit into this type of the paper, an effort will be made to reproduce the mathematical derivations in words.

The key element in this verbal interpretation of corresponding formulae is the rate of growth of capital. It is defined as a ratio of net investment (= accumulation),

i.e. national savings and the capital itself. As national savings are a multiple of the rate of savings and national income, the rate of growth of capital — in the model based on deducting the depreciation and dealing with net quantities — is obtained by multiplying the rate of savings with the national income and dividing this multiple by the value of capital.

Extensive growth is initiated by and boils down to a sudden and marked increase of the rate of savings. The new authorities forged through the revolution are development centered and their political monopoly — a part of their definition — enables them to raise the rate of savings abruptly and vigorously. Indeed, such a dramatic increase of the part of national income — taken aside for capacity expansion by the virtue of the definition — raises the rate of savings and, again by the very definition, the rate of growth of capital. Such an abrupt and strong increase of the rate of growth of capital induces the process of its gradual but sustained *decrease*. Yes, such a discrete upward shift of the rate of growth of capital becomes the cause of its subsequent continuous decline. This is the essence of the lack of sustainability of extensive growth: as *the rate of growth of the rate of growth of capital* is, for a newly fixed saving rate, equal to the difference between the rates of growth of the national income and that of capital; a discrete increment of the latter makes *the rate of growth of the rate of growth of capital* negative. That really boils down to the above mentioned statement that an abrupt, once-and-for-all increment of the rate of capital growth becomes the driving cause of its continuous decline. Extensive growth predictably tends to secular stagnation. All this happens in a set of circumstances in which capital is the fastest growing production factor, which also could be taken as a part of the definition of the extensive growth.

The model is transparently generalised by introducing additional factors of production, additional to the capital and labour which conventionally figure in most models of economic development. In further workings out of these models economists have introduced additional factors such as land — a summary variable for the versatile collection of natural resources. In such a generalised setting little is changed, but one insight comes forth as decisive: in the model of growth based exclusively on the expansion of the factors of production in the long run, a *steady state rate of growth of the national income comes out equal to the slowest growing production factor*. Taking roughly *per capita* income as a sort of indicator of social welfare and a general goal of development policy, the best long run (*steady*) state this generalised model can deliver is *stagnation of per capita income*. If the slowest growing factor is not population-cum-labour force, but any other factor, the steady state rate of growth will be equal to the rate of the slowest growing factor — that rate will be less than the rate of population growth and then one arrives at a macroeconomic set-up of long run or *secular regression*. The model turns into an

analytical picture of long run decline, with a permanent deterioration as the una-voidable destiny of the macroeconomic system (defined as the set of interconnect-ed parts making up the economy as a whole).

The next easy statement refers to the functional requirements appearing as the necessary conditions for sustainable, steady state *growth*. These consist in the ne-cessity for the system to secure a positive rate of technical progress defined as the rate at which national income would grow with fixed quantities of production fac-tors; clearly, such growth must be due to uninterrupted increasing efficiency in the form of equally continuous accumulation of productively relevant knowledge. For the sake of brevity, conditions of regular and continuous technical progress are ul-timately reducible to institutionally secured and a legally guaranteed economic free-dom of the largest possible number of economic agents — it being understood that the freedom must be guaranteed by the laws of the country and the legal system enforcing them and applying them to all individuals and organisations *equally*. En-trepreneurial undertakings will undisturbedly unfold only with economic freedoms secured and with a proper motivation for a large number of economic units to search for new products and processes and to constantly innovate. The system as a whole learns successfully only by and through the learning of autonomous units appearing as its elements.

When the rate of technical progress enters as an additional term into the for-mula for the rate of national income growth — the remaining part of the formula consisting of the weighted average of the rates of growth of labour and capital, with the weights equal to the elasticities of the national income with respect to those production factors — the possibility of a steady sustainable increase of income *per capita* props up and one arrives to a configuration of dynamic components diamet-rically and fundamentally different from an analogous configuration of development trends typifying the extensive development. The rate of growth of *per capita* in-come generated by this model containing technical growth is equal to the rate of technical progress itself divided by the share of labour in the functional distribution of income, i.e. the elasticity of the national income with respect to labour. It turns out that the rate of *per capita* growth — i.e. per worker or inhabitant (the share of the workforce in population being assumed constant) — is an inverse function of the share of labour in the functional distribution of income. This result would be beautiful even if it were incorrect: in a dynamic context, labour is better off the less it participates in the distribution of income, assuming that all non-labour income is entirely invested into the expansion of productive capacities. Under these admitted-ly restrictive assumptions, the genuine interest of labour, exemplified by the *speed* with which its income grows in time, is best served with its low — as low as pos-sible — participation in the distribution of current income.

Going back to extensive growth, its tragedy consists in the absence of technical progress due to the lack of economic freedom(s). With an over-centralised economy and its predominant, if not exclusive, administrative guidance, economic units do not have manoeuvering space for independent deciding, an enormous mass of agents are excluded from creative experimenting and the accompanying generating of new technological solutions, so the system is doomed in the sense of having to rely only on mobilisation of productive factors as a source of growth and, at the same time, doomed to a development deceleration in the somewhat longer run. Moreover, such a system generates forbidding constraints on future development, even when it unfolds within a completely reformed institutional order. The public at large, and even a large part of the profession, ascribes development deceleration to this new, market-oriented set of institutions, thus blocking the change and making it politically difficult to continue developing the long-awaited truly decentralised order with its yet unrealised development potential. Mistaken diagnoses and erroneous analyses are not the only and probably not the most important determinant of the mistaken policies but they certainly contribute a lot to them, more indirectly than directly. A detailed analysis of the limitations of extensive socialist growth — spelled out by the models belonging to different classes, those with fixed coefficients and the ones with possibilities of substitution between the production factors — is provided by Madžar (1990, 320-335).

Socialist Heritage Revisited: The Scars in the Collective Memory

A market economy cannot rely on a centrally initiated action and the role of the government in the cardinally important mobilisation of economic resources. At least that reliance cannot be, not even approximately, comparable to the governmental contribution to the mobilisation in the past dominated by the socialist state. The primary movers of resources and key agents in their mobilisation have now become private entrepreneurs with their expectations, ambitions and, to use the well-known Keynes's term, *animal spirits*. Entrepreneurship is a deadly hazardous business by and in itself. It calls for special imagination, extraordinary courage, the affinity towards risky moves and the ability to select wisely from among a vast number of unclearly observed and only partly knowable, never wholly understood options. On top of all that, the choices have to be made quickly and energetically: life never stops and opportunities come and go, with little prospects to reemerge. Few people have entrepreneurial abilities — according to most estimates less than 2%. By performing their function, entrepreneurs contribute an awful lot to the rest of the society: by undertaking their hazardous ventures the visionary individuals em-

22

ploy and assure the existence of the hundreds and thousands of other, "ordinary" people.

Because of the inevitable objective exposure to risk and all kinds of uncertainty — initiating the new businesses is neck breaking in and by itself — entrepreneurship cannot successfully flourish and smoothly develop if it is additionally exposed to the institutional and policy risks. The basic, indispensable condition for the tolerable development of a market economy is stable, predictable and within the limits of a possible *rule based economic policy* so that at least institutional and economic policy hazards are minimised if not entirely removed. The top economists of the world have persuasively been explaining the actual weakening of developed economies and the malaise of unstable and insufficient growth by the volatile, reactive — here and there whimsical — acting of economic policy, particularly monetary policy, and have pleaded for the introduction of rules in carrying out of most policies, so that economic agents can within reasonable limits predict policy moves as responses to various exogenous events (Metzler 2014; Epstein 2015; Hanke 2016). Let it be added that only a stable, algorithmically clean economic policy can provide a valuable service in coordinating flows of decisions and resources in a decentralised economy.

Not much has to be elaborated regarding the series of fatal blows administered to entrepreneurship by the often discussed series of socialist revolutions. Lives were annihilated and properties confiscated. After undergoing risks and anxieties, upon investing so much effort and thought, following the careful and painstaking considerations of options and alternatives, the happily-acquired results were simply taken, mercilessly confiscated in one single coercive sweep. One should recall that successes in entrepreneurship are incomparably rarer than reflected in the popular perception: the *failed* entrepreneurial undertakings are not seen and the public is generally not even aware of their existence and exact data on failed business ventures will never be available. If on average, say, only one out of a hundred succeeds, it is easy to imagine what a personal blow every confiscated entrepreneur suffers.

Entrepreneurs do *not* carry out their activities just for money; entrepreneurship is the field of their creative activity. By founding and expanding new businesses they *create*. Taking away their wealth would in a sense be the equivalent to somehow wiping = out books and articles produced during a good part of the lifetime of a writer. Attack on private wealth is tantamount to an encroachment on a person and their dignity because the accumulation of property for a successful entrepreneur is the true and only manner of self actualisation, an evidence of having created something of value in their productive life. As owning various things is undeniably an important aspect of the existence of every individual — and since even

moderate size holdings and other forms of wealth were hit by confiscation — it is evident that millions of people were affected and this institutionalised plundering must have left unalterable and irreducible marks in the collective remembering; it is destined to figure as a highly relevant social fact for a long-lasting future.

Confiscation of properties was therefore a mortal blow to entrepreneurship. Along with being an act of destruction of one of the fundamentally important pillars of civilisation, it was a trauma never to be forgotten. Because of the aforementioned deep imprints on the collective memory, society as a whole will remember the horrible downfall into a sub-civilisational abyss and remain conscious about meagre prospects — better to say hopeless perspective of pulling itself out of that barbaric precipice. This historical destruction of property as the institutional carrier of a market economy must have so deeply impressed the population that it clearly appears to be bound to make for a stupendous constraint on all forms of entrepreneurship for a very long time to come.

We are again confronted with a formidable legacy of the socialist order, with an element which originates in the socialist past but generates its deleterious impacts on the post-socialist present. Concrete actualisations of institutional systems in post-socialist countries do and have to differ among themselves, but this effect of the socialist heritage is common to all; it cuts across different systems and remains working and vigorous in time. This is the account on which the performance of all post-socialist systems comes out inferior but, again, the failing is not due to the deficiencies of these arrangements but to the doom of the socialist heritage.

The second powerful component of the socialist heritage in Serbia is a sort of a weird phenomenon which in this analysis will be called *hysteresis*. For the purpose of these considerations *hysteresis* can be defined as a phenomenon of a macroeconomic variable not being able to return to the original position after having deviated from it under external pressures or for some other reason. The subject of these reflections is hysteresis in aggregate consumption which had, for a number of several coinciding factors (some of which are policy driven and other exogenous as far as economic policy goes), been augmented markedly above the level consistent with resource endowment and productive capacity of the country. The principal reason was the abundant inflow of supplementary resources from abroad made possible and in fact conditioned by the courageous and worldwide acclaimed political break of Yugoslavia from the then powerful block of socialist countries dominated by the Soviet Union.

The supplementary inflow of resources was referred to as abundant as it, while oscillating from year to year, reached in certain years no less than 5% of the then used GSP (Gross Social Product). That flow was particularly large in the 1952—1960. period, but continued in some forms in the following years, too. However, when

24

these flows substantially waned after 1960, Yugoslav workers started taking jobs in developed western European countries — primarily in the then-existing West Germany, France and Austria and, somewhat less, in Scandinavian countries. Such an — at the time — unorthodox export of human capital triggered the continuing guest workers' remittances which substituted for the unilateral transfer from before. Another opulent flow of additional means set in. Then came the 1970ss with the flood of euro-dollars all over Europe and with easy and rich options for raising credits, which the country helped itself of in numerous ways and plentiful quantities. The foreign debt crisis developed after 1980 and only then the supplementary resources inflow thinned. This phenomenon was studied and intensely discussed on several occasions (Madžar 1992a, 1992b).

However, despite the volatility of the inflows and reduction of some of them over time, in a long period lasting some three decades the population adjusted its consuming standards to levels much above what would have been possible had the own-resource constraints been operative. True, the rate of savings in those times was very high, but there remained sufficient room for raising consumption above what could be feasible with exclusive domestic spending potential. Raising consumption much above domestically-generated income and *especially above income that would be available on the basis of strictly taken domestic resources* — one should not forget that the inflow of additional resources made it possible to use much more fully domestic capacities in the structurally distorted socialist economy — greatly contributed to the singularly insufficient future rates of savings which plague permanently the post-socialist economies in most ex-Yugoslav republics.

This author estimated the rates of domestic savings for the 2000—2012 period and found them to be oscillating around zero with negative values in quite a few encompassed years. These were calculated as percentage shares in the GDP of gross investment minus the foreign *trade* deficit. Had depreciation charges been deducted, a horrifying picture would be obtained. Begović (2016, 9-10) cites the estimates of the World Bank for the 2001—2015 period resulting in an average savings rate of 4.8%. The difference strikes one as surprising, but is readily explained by the fact that the World Bank came up with the *national* savings rate whereas the formerly mentioned rate had been the rate of *domestic* savings. The difference between the two is equal to the share of the difference between the *foreign trade* deficit and the *balance of payments* deficit in the GDP. This difference in the case of Serbia has been and remains very high since it contains significant factor earnings mostly consisting of the difference between the worker remittances (a large positive quantity) and the interest paid on foreign debt (a much lower negative quantity).

Be that as it may, the inflows into Serbia of incomes *not generated in its economy have been and remain into the foreseeable future quite significant* and sub-

stantially contribute, actually condition, an extremely low accumulation rate indicating practical absence of domestic savings. This is a very serious long run constraint on economic development and, more generally, on the overall modernisation of society. It appears as an insurmountable development trap the ways out of which will probably not be identifiable for quite some time.

It is of some interest to contrast the case of Serbia with the diametrically opposite case of China. The latter had for decades been doomed to unthinkably low consumption standards and when, in 1978, the radical turnaround in its institutional order took place, a spectacular process of economic growth began and has continued now for some four decades. Income grew extremely rapidly but, due to hysteresis which clearly acted in the direction opposite to that of Serbia, consumption was *not* increasing *pari passu* with income. The result is a series of literally enormous rates of accumulation soaring in some years to an unbelievable 50% (Bergsten et al. 2011 [2009], 150) and persisting at such incredibly high levels despite the severe financial repression through monetary policy — repression which led to negative real interest rates in a considerable number of years (164-165).

Reverting to Serbia, an extremely important element of its institutional reality deserves mentioning. As Pejovich (1998 [1995], 200-204) explained with admirable clarity, a malignant opportunism has been built into the very structure, into the deep foundations of the self-managed institutional system. Namely, due to the fact that the employees, and especially elected managers, had extensive management rights but not property rights, their decision-making horizon had been limited and far from the horizon of infinite lengths implied by the very nature of the rights of ownership. Thus, the employees' horizon was determined by the *limited* expected length of stay in the organisation, which meant that they had extraordinarily strong incentives to raise as much credit as they could get hold of — with a strong motivation to bribe the managers of the banks — and leave the servicing of these debts to their successors getting employment following the current workers' retirement. With such a grave constructive error in the decisively impacting deep foundations of the system, it's no wonder that the Yugoslav economy stumbled from one financial crisis into another and never reached a state of tolerable financial health. Pejovich deserves much credit for illuminating such a shocking flaw in the construction of the system, the flaw which escaped many highly-reputed analysts.

The Backlog of Regional Adversities: The Untoward Consequences of the Collectivist Heritage

The principal proposition argued in this paper is about the belated effects of the demised socialist institutional order: the fall in the rate of growth of the leading ma-

croeconomic aggregates — having become strikingly visible with the institutional turnabout towards market and the associated regulating mechanisms — should not and cannot properly be ascribed to newly-introduced institutions and to the market as such. Rather, they linger on as consequences of the old demised regime. Two adverse (sets of) effects can be discerned here. The *first* one derives from the unsustainability of the old system: growth trends would be broken and the pace of development would surely plummet even further without the widely-advertised institutional shift. As a matter of fact, spectacular institutional change is not the cause of the flattening of economic trends — the causal relation runs the other way around. Political elites of the former socialist countries *would certainly not on their own and just like that abandon the system* in which they had been so comfortably placed. They scrapped it because the system exhausted its capacity for further development and even for normal functioning. The reform was *forced* upon the system and had not come out of the blue just to undermine it and wipe it out from the world's institutional landscape.

The *second* derives from the legacies of the old arrangements and policies. As it, somewhat unexpectedly, turned out, the adverse workings of the system did not stop with its historical demise. The system disappeared but deep scars left after its demise continue to produce shocks and disturbances. Unexpectedly, and maybe even shockingly to the non-professional public and surprisingly even to a significant number of (would-be) trained professionals, the location of causal factors is strikingly different from what it is widely held to be. As indicated above, the not-so-impressive rate of growth and level of other development indicators, registered since the new system came into being, is *not* the result of the functioning of that system but is safely ascribable to the old institutional order, the one which no longer exists!

The ultimate proof of any proposition is its correspondence to economic and social realities. The crucial question is whether it fits into the real sequences of events and interdependencies observed before and following the decisive institutional change. It turns out that legacies of the old system flow along several lines, partly crossing and partly coinciding, and yet clearly discernible and undoubtedly different. They are elaborated in the preceding subsection — in the present section only a few empirical details will be discussed in confirmation of the legacy proposition. The claim is that the socialist system of the former Yugoslavia exhibited some typical features of its *genus proximum* of systems deprived of private ownership as the determining component of their institutional base. The absence of clearly-specified and legally-protected ownership is the key reason why it underwent the same ruin-laden trajectory ending with an inescapable breakdown.

Systems, like people, can suffer a tragic end due to an unlucky series of tragic exogenous shocks. But in this case such an interpretation does not apply: the system faded out gradually — the decline having lasted for decades — and the final causes of destruction came from within. At the time of their demise there had been no wars or similar exogenous destructive shocks to which the ruin of the systems could be ascribed. Alternative and, in a way, competitive systems survived and — some for a certain time — even prospered while the socialist systems were undergoing the irreparable ruin.

As for the Yugoslav economic system, it shared defining traits with the family to whose *genus proximum* it belonged. *Firstly*, it was unsustainable — the proof of which is its historic debacle. *Secondly*, just like all other socialist systems, it was not amenable to any meaningful reforms — to any serious modifications worth speaking of. This is the result of a truly peculiar, probably not-yet-sufficiently studied feature of these revolutionary or forcefully-imposed creations (*NB* coercion is involved in both scenarios). The feature is the following: their defining characteristics are — to use a strange word — *extremistically exclusive*. They do not allow pragmatic combining with some other features suggested or urged by the requirements of practice. Socialism is, in some sense, *fundamentalist* — not being tolerable to the immixing of any ingredients which themselves are not elements of the same pure creed. Socialism cannot be, at least not to a sufficient degree, pragmatically modified while still staying *socialist*.

This is the root cause of another trait shared with all other socialist systems: reforms in these systems were frequent because the problems were frequent and more and more serious, but none of these reforms were allowed to touch what had been considered as essential to socialism. The reforms were, therefore, all over partial and superficial; they generated disturbances and complications of futile adjustments without solving anything. With the fundamental defining components remaining untouchable, the systems stayed in essence *unchanged* which prevented them from gradually and pragmatically evolving into more efficient and sustainable options. In other words, the unique way of their serious changing was a form of "revolutionary jump" and the jump could not have any other shape but a grand and spectacular departure from socialist sanctities. That would have been the only way of getting rid of huge costs and hosts of untoward legacies destined to obstruct the development process for an uncertain but certainly long future.

As for Yugoslavia, early signs of the predicaments of extensive growth appeared quite soon. As early as 1960, the steeply rising trend of GSP growth — exhibiting a rate of growth of some 8% — broke unexpectedly with the rate of growth plunging to below 6%. The authorities mistook this break as an ephemeral, stochastic deviation and continued planning the rate of growth of industrial production at

28

the earlier high levels (Horvat 1969, 26). As the slackened development persisted, the authorities became alarmed and formed a group of experts headed by B. Horvat. They produced the famous *Yellow Book* (Horvat et al. 1962) with a detailed analysis of various — aggregate and sectoral — components of currently observed movements and with diagnoses of the underlying causes as they saw them.

Two details in connection with this study stand out sharply. The *first* one is the fact that the government and the general public became seriously alarmed having observed the rate of growth of close to 6%; nowadays the authorities in Serbia yearn for a rate of 3% and proudly announce the prospects of realisation of such a "success". The unusual drought (2017) affected agriculture and the projection of the rate has been scaled down to 2.3%, with serious reservations in the profession about the prospects of achieving even this reduced rate. *Secondly*, no thought whatsoever had been given to the possibilities of this break having been caused by deeper structural causes — to the danger that deceleration might have been predetermined by the nature of the system centered on extensive development as the basis of the strategy of development. The other neglected component of this complicated nexus was the somewhat reduced inflow of free resources from abroad, sufficient to cause a serious stumbling of the economy which had been doped with supplementary means for some eight years.

The amazing thing is that Horvat was then — and remained as long as he lived — the best economist in the country; he taught all of us what economics is all about and the landscape of professional expertise would in Serbia, even today, be incomparably worse had it not been for Horvat's admirable educational work. With the benefit of hindsight, one can easily conclude that the constraints of knowledge and even of educational processes of further learning were much, much more serious than what all of us would be willing and able to admit at that time. Horvat himself has persevered in insisting on the standard of policy performance which, even from this retrospective, seems unattainable with his most recent writings (e.g. 2002), demonstrating a formidable distance between the realities of economic policy and his normative ideals. Excessively large, veritably vast distances are realisable only with comparable obstacles and difficulties — and with a commensurate taking of time. *Natura non facit salta.*

Later developments offered ample opportunities for diagnosing the untoward tendencies in economic development. Thus, they offered numerous possibilities for professional critics of economic policies and commentators of lacking institutional advancements. Horvat again was at the forefront of such critical analyses. As far as Serbia is taken as the standard of reference — and as far as the level of expertise in and around federal authorities is concerned — Horvat was a man of extraordinary knowledge and heretofore unseen analytical potentialities. He was also a man

of impeccable integrity and incredible courage. A long series of his writings, with some of them assembled (1984) and some others re-edited (2001), illuminated many aspects of the then-led economic policies and clarified with astonishing originality connections between institutional changes and policy moves, on the one hand, and changes in development trends, on the other. Those contributions were analytically sharpened and theoretically clarified, while making fascinating reading to such an extent that one could safely state that his popular writings on institutions and policies have been equally valuable and influential as his purely scientific contributions which have brought him wide international recognition.

Yet again with the benefit of hindsight, one could persuasively conclude that he overestimated the availability of knowledge and the difficulties and constraints on the rapidity and scope of its expansion. It is in the nature of things that the limitations of knowledge can only be seen *ex post*, after additional knowledge had been accumulated and thus opened new vistas on the reaches of scientific endeavors. Much of what could have been useful for understanding the relationships between institutional peculiarities and macroeconomic movements had simply been lacking and the amazing thing is that — occasionally with limited and even mistaken knowledge — useful policies can be conducted and considerable successes obtained.

In fact, many successful policies had been realised on the basis of concepts and insights which later proved to be outright mistaken. As Popper frequently emphasised, any scientific "truth" is temporary, until something different or even contrary is proven. Taking into account how many hypotheses and theories have been refuted, a good deal of various policies conducted in the long past have had false and subsequently refuted theories as their scientific base. It looks that even tentative policies, based on subsequently falsified theories, can ultimately be useful from a reasonably conceived social point of view. That will be the case if they serve as means of mobilising social actions which otherwise would not have happened and, along with that, as cognitive devices for coordinating decisions in the absence of other ways of securing coordination. After all, the geocentric astrophysical theory had for centuries served successfully as a fundamental scheme for long and complicated maritime voyages.

Returning to Horvat — the unique and unforgettable man —, nobody, not even he, could be blamed for lacking insights which only much later became available. But he provided many enlightening pieces of research, produced a more than respectable educational impact and acted as a steady source of pressure on the government and its public service to approach policy issues more seriously and to improve more effectively the analytical apparatus on which the policies had been based. After all, with this or that theory — later maybe refuted or just partly modi-

fied — there is always room for improving policies and minimising failings. It is well known that policy makers have their own preference functions that rarely coincide with, no matter how postulated, the interests of society at large; the "political arithmetic" diverges widely from economic calculation aimed at hitting *social interests*, whatever the italicised word might mean (Madžar 2011, 431). Exerting pressure, which Horvat did with admirable lucidity and extraordinary courage, pushes the government and its public service towards more productive activity and reduces the gap between what they find particularly profitable and more desirable or less damaging for the rest of the society.

Coming back to the defining theme of this paper, the numerous critical writings of B. Horvat pointing to the persistently weakening performance of development policies represent a vivid illustration and even an analytical illumination of the falling effectiveness of strategies of extensive growth and, as such, are unusually valuable irrespective of the fact that the time of his most intense engagement was not ripe for a fuller understanding of the ultimate unsustainability of then-implemented growth. It took considerable time to understand the limited scope of development primarily based on the physical mobilisation of production factors, without the ability and perhaps willingness to affect the changes needed for a lasting and unyielding generation of technical progress.

Summing Up

After the preceding lengthy elaboration, the main points of this text can be summarised in short. A strange and not easily explicable coincidence of unusually-combined phenomena has been witnessed in post-socialist times. The broken down and abandoned socialist system has been replaced with the fundamentally different market-based system which, according to precepts of the theory, represents an incomparably more efficient institutional creation. However, there are imposing pieces of empirical evidence that are strikingly inconsistent with theoretical postulates and corresponding derivations. In some not so short subperiods of socialist development, based on strategies of extensive growth, the rates of growth and other indicators of performance appear markedly superior in the socialist order as opposed to the constellation of post-socialist arrangements. This is a very intriguing and rather disturbing finding. The general public, and even a significant part of professional circles, is inclined to conclude on the basis of this mismatch that the demised socialist system is more efficient and endowed with greater development potential than the post-socialist market-based order which arrived after the big bang of the breakdown of the socialist order.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the just-adduced reasoning is incorrect. To begin with, the breakdown of the system is the most powerful argument

against any claims about its efficiency. The structural disproportions and hopeless retardation of development is not the result of the newly-inaugurated, decentralised private-property based order but, quite to the contrary, the grand institutional change came in the aftermath and as a consequence of major disruptions and blockades of the more or less collectively-steered real system. The irreparable disorder with an irreversible blockade of the complex array of its macroeconomic aggregates made it imperative to acknowledge the debacle of the system and to turn to a fundamentally contrasting alternative. Institutional change would not have happened had not the old socialist system led to an impasse out of which no way out of the collectivist trap could be found while preserving socialist sacred cows. The major reforms were not invented and freely engineered by post-socialist societies; they were forced upon them by persistent and protracted in-time economic crises with no remedies within collectivist institutions.

The systems proved to be burdened with a fatal failure. Their deadly deficiency is their unsustainability. The drastic declines in the rates of growth and other development indicators were built into the very structure of these systems; unsustainability means that they had to enter irresolvable crises and be replaced with fundamentally different institutional constellations or else undergo an even more spectacular catastrophe, with inestimable social costs and associated losses. In other words, the drastic fall in the pace of development was, because of unsustainability, predetermined and inevitable within the framework of the extant socialist system and, as such, cannot be meaningfully ascribed to the post-socialist market based order.

Moreover, the collectivist system of the socialist past has its destructive legacies. Those legacies are the determinants of the considerable difficulties in the functioning of the post-socialist systems and, contrary to popular perception, the causes of slow growth and unfavourable development trends of other macroeconomic indicators are located far outside of the present institutional arrangements. However it may sound paradoxically, they act destructively as the leftovers of the old system were pushed for good out of existence. Deep roots of the past are responsible even for current economic policies as they reflect the constellations of political power created in the bygone socialist order. They are especially strong when acting in combination with living remnants of the past social psychology with so called *care for man* as one of the most pernicious: citizens and voters are, for most of the time, ready to hold government responsible and to blame it for the difficulties which they themselves should be obliged and able to resolve. Legacies of the old system produced a multitude of inhibiting influences and constraining effects quite independently of the structural traits and functional properties of the new system.

In favour of the presented argument referring to the somewhat unexpected location of the growth, constraining impulses could perhaps be adduced an *argumen-*

tum ad hominem. The twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1956) revealed atrocities and unheard of abominations of the Soviet system. *Confitens reus optimus testis.* Being a member of the same family, the Yugoslav system, with which Serbia has to come to grips today, could not have been *fundamentally* better. Taking into account huge costs, including those inestimable in terms of human lives, such systems could not have been efficient and could not have growth and even survival potential. But if they did have the potential to survive, that would have been a pity; their survival would come to the grave detriment of their respective societies. On any reasonable set of value judgments, the costs implied and generated by such systems are too big in relation to the benefits — especially have to be pointed out again in terms of human lives — for them to be judged as rational or desirable on any count. As for benefits, it looks as if the majority of the economics profession, as well as of the general public, would agree with the hypothetical judgment that Russians and other ex-Soviet peoples have a lower living standard today than they would have had had the *Great October Revolution* not happened at all. The Russian Federation is, according to some considerations, a less developed country, precariously depending on the price of the energy carrying raw materials and, in some important aspects, resembling Saudi Arabia. The lack of sufficiently vigorous technical progress appears to be the principal message of the general diagnosis of its economic position.

Conclusion

The bursting of socialist revolutions looks irresistibly as a colossal civilisational crash. It imposed devastating damages and victims upon many societies and caused costs and losses that would never be recuperated. It left behind deep scars with many horrifying implications for the economic present of the afflicted countries and certainly for an indeterminable but evidently long future. Individuals and societies will have to live long with the consequences of their damaging workings.

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MARKET TRANSFORMATION UNDER FIDESZ ENERGY AND BANKING POLICY REVIEW SINCE 2010[1]

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Abstract

The paper identifies several policies introduced under the Fidesz government in the years 2010-2019, which were supposed to advance wealth redistribution and assist the poorest strata of society. This narrative however, as the argument is put forward, has little applicability in the actual policy implementation. The paper is structured as follows; firstly it takes a close look at the political promises of the Fidesz government in their run-up to power. Secondly, it provides an analysis of the two major industries in order to illustrate how these political promises transformed into a form of soft-nationalisation. Lastly, it discusses the potential consequences of such a state of affairs. The main focus is rather on what these policies entail for the end-users' interests, which, despite the political ferocity of Fidesz, seem to be de facto undermined.

Key words: *market interventionism, Fidesz, energy and banking sector, Hungary, populism*

Campaigner's bait

Fidesz's victory back in 2010 did not come as a surprise. The previous government's mismanaged policymaking (Martin 2017) — further deteriorated by the 2008 crisis — had left a social stigma among the electorate that sought out political alternatives. Fidesz fiercely opposed the deal with the IMF, capitalising its popularity on the extremely disenchanted electorate in the midst of imposed austerity measures. Moreover, Fidesz was acutely well prepared for the electoral campaign. The message they gave was succinctly clear — a promise of better days for Hungarians by lowering taxes, renegotiating the IMF-imposed conditions and reversing many austerity measures imposed by the socialist government.

Fidesz's charismatic leader, former Hungarian Prime Minister (PM), Victor Orban, was at the centre of the party's campaign. Orban pledged for a radical change of the system, departing strongly from the Europhile socialist government. Once in power, and back in the prime minister's seat, his political narrative further radical-

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ised following the 2015 migration crisis. The PM has ostracised "Brussels bureaucrats" as having no right to undermine the Hungarian way of dealing with migration or protecting Christian family values (Hopkins and Peel 2020). Ever since, it has remained the party's frontline rhetoric. It has also been complemented by generous income-redistribution policies with a sound degree of anti-immigrant and Europhobic sentiments.

Study rationale

This paper considers two aspects of Fidesz's market interventionism — that is, its policies vis-à-vis the banking and energy sector. Naturally, the government has been active in a plethora of spheres, such as pensions, the tobacco industry, co-operatives, the judiciary, media and so forth. However, a comprehensive analysis of all those developments goes beyond the scope of this paper. That is not to say that these are of lesser importance. The selection of energy and banking as illustrative cases was guided by two main assumptions. Firstly, the vested characteristics of these two market spheres. The energy sector is paramount in the state's role as a provider of security, both in terms of a supply guarantor, as well as it's way of embodying the geopolitical position of the country. It is also often portrayed as a reflection of national sovereignty (Voszka 2018). Similarly, in banking, the power of the central bank steers the functioning of the market, something that has become particularly visible after the failures of 2008. The efficiency of corporate banking is strictly dependent on regulatory framework. The sector is founded on mutual inter-institutional, as well as customer trust. Secondly, Fidesz in their political programme has ferociously addressed the instant need for the state to address the policy failures of the previous government towards these two market segments. It has departed strongly from the immediacy of the post-crisis response evidenced in the West, rather to reformulate the pillars of the capitalist system erected during the post-communist transformation (Voszka 2018). The implemented policies seem to reflect those employed in the pre-transition period, strongly reminiscent of the paradigms of a post-war welfare state.[3] Therefore, this study takes a look at how the government has approached these two paramount sectors which gives a succinct script for Fidesz's policy objectives *sensu largo*.

Utility sector

Since Fidesz came into power, one of the major objectives of their policy has been to reduce energy prices. Over the years, the government has introduced a series of

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[3] Such comparison of the current Hungarian nationalisation with the communist welfare state nostalgia has been widely analysed by (Mihályi 2014, Voszka 2017). For other sectors, the tobacco reform in Hungary (Laki 2015).

price cuts, which effectively diminished gas and electricity bills by almost 20 per cent. The reduction was achieved by diminishing the legally-achievable profit margin for gas suppliers from 10.05 per cent to 2.28 per cent (Isaacs and Molnar 2017). As a consequence, in early 2019 Fidesz made Hungary one of the cheapest energy price markets in the whole EU (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019). This is particularly important, as Hungary's energy consumption relies 1/3 on natural gas. The country is, however, in scarce possession of that resource[4] and, with little import alternatives, it meets such a demand thanks to a gas deal with the Russian Federation — slowly seeking alternatives from the Black Sea basin. The government is attempting to diversify the supply with its Romanian counterparts, which is set to take effect in May 2020. This has not been well received by Moscow, and these tensions are yet to crystallise (Daily News 2018).

The reliance on the Russian supply naturally has geopolitical ramifications, visible especially when Orban manoeuvres on the international level. Despite that, there is not yet realistically feasible infrastructure to allow such a diversification in the foreseeable future (BBJ 2017). PM Orban tries to prove to the electorate that he has a strong hand and is not entirely reliant on the Russian supply. The tripod negotiations to diversify the gas supply prove that Orban is seeking to be a dominant actor in the new delivery channel, as judged by some experts: "Hungary is keen to become a sort of energy distribution hub when it comes to Black Sea gas. Orban hopes this will allow him to expand his regional influence even if it has nothing to do with exporting his political ideology to other countries in South-Eastern Europe" (Kretko 2018).

The country is highly resource dependent. 80 per cent of its total gas imports come from Russia — imports that satisfy 75 per cent of the total gas demand. A significant degree of this resource is consumed directly by households. This foreign energy dependence makes the government's policy, which has nurtured the public hopes for energy independence, seem surprising (Isaacs and Molnar 2017). Nonetheless, Fidesz militantly opposed the surge in energy prices which followed economic deterioration in 2009, prioritising household pricing above the economic rationale of the market. That is equally in strong contrast to the EU's pro-competition energy legislation, the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT).

Price reductions have been accompanied by another critical reform that Fidesz has introduced. That is, increasing state control over the utility sector. Suppliers unwilling to bear profit cuts, or who are in a precarious financial condition were invited by the government to sell their shares at a downgraded price (Magyar 2016).

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[4] The national natural gas production accounts merely for 15% of the total gas consumption (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019, 5).

This re-nationalisation of the gas supply follows the narrative of *taking back control* of the government in major spheres of public activity. In practice, it entailed monopolising the ownership over the energy wholesale and storage facilities. In 2013, the government purchased the Hungarian Power Holding Company (MVM) and indirectly, through the Hungarian Development Bank (MFB), the gas storage company MOL. In essence, the formerly private network for gas storage and wholesale instantly became a fully publicly owned entity.

The transfer of ownership was a necessary step for the government to be able to steer utility prices. The purchase of MOL from Russian company, Surgutneftegas, gave the government the upper hand in setting gas fees, as the company owns and manages the only transmitter of natural gas — the Natural Gas Transmission Closed Company (FGSZ Ltd.). Similarly, the government purchased gas storage units from British company E.ON, issuing privileged licensing to MVM in maintaining the HAG pipeline, and heavily subsidising the MVM's construction of the southern gas interconnector. In 2013, it acquired the FOGAZ gas supplier from German company RWE (Napi 2013). The price tag on that transaction reached 41 billion forints (~€122 million), and gave the government full control over the capital's gas network.

These changes have the following two ramifications on the end-user. Price cuts introduced by Fidesz operate in the realm of essentially public subsidies, as the deals signed with Gazprom are on a fixed-price basis binding the country at least until 2021, with the recent political promise of extension when the current deal expires (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019, 5). Moreover, after taking over the key energy distributors and storage, the management of energy supply has become a publicly-run domain. The overall expectation is that the public budget is incurring a constant net loss, paying more for the gas that it delivers than for what it buys. It has been the most recent development that Hungarians negotiated a secure re-export option of the unused fuel that may allow a partial recovery of the loss (Intelli News 2018). The following section seeks to illustrate this argument further.

Public subsidy impact: a known unknown?

Public subsidies[5] are a widely implemented policy across all countries and sectors. These policies are generally understood as "a financial contribution by a government, or agent of a government, that confers a benefit on its recipients" (Kojima and Koplow 2015). The initial concern is that they may essentially *directly or indirectly transfer liabilities, forgo government revenue, provide goods or services be-*

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[5] An excellent review of energy subsidies, their impact and proposed reform is done by (Morgan 2007)

low market value, or offer direct income or price support for a preferred technology and, or a company (Beaton, et al. 2013). In order to assess the magnitude of the introduced subsidies, typically we use the price-gap approach aiming to estimate how the domestic price of energy compares to same units abroad[6].

Equally frequent, especially in times of economic downturn, is for a government to radically change its energy legislation under the auspices of energy provision as a *public good* — that is of a service necessarily and universally accessible to the population. In particular circumstances, governments may decide to *take majority stakes in previously private companies, regulate privately owned companies (fixing service price), subsidising prices, introducing trade restrictions* (Mares 2010). That reasoning has also been used by Fidesz. Yet, given the attitude towards change in other sectors such as banking, pensions, the judiciary and media, it has been judged as a complementary piece of the government's populist policy puzzle.

To present how drastic the implemented price cuts have been, the table below gives ratios of the EU average natural gas price compared to the Hungarian price per gigajoule (GJ). In the years 2009—2010, the mark-up was essentially equal, with a 1:1 ratio, whereas towards the end of 2019 the staggering drop of the price of gas reached a price ratio of 1:2 that indicates Hungarian gas is two times cheaper than the EU average per GJ. That means, in the first half of 2014 and 2015, the Hungarian government has effectively managed to provide a 50 per cent cut for Hungarians compared to the EU average market price.

Table 1 — Per annum price gap in natural gas household prices per GJ in Hungary — calculated from (Eurostat, 2019)

$^1/_2$ Years	Ratio: EU average gas price / HU price	Hungarian price as EU percentage	Hungarian price as V4
I 2007	1.34	75%	79%
II 2007	1.32	76%	80%
I 2008	1.33	75%	82%
II 2008	1.21	83%	87%
I 2009	1.10	91%	94%
II 2009	0.98	102%	105%
I 2010	1.03	97%	101%
II 2010	1.01	99%	102%
I 2011	1.14	88%	93%
II 2011	1.29	77%	79%
I 2012	1.36	74%	76%
II 2012	1.51	66%	68%

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[6] A full recap of the four typically used ways to assess subsidies refer to (Sovacool 2017, 132)

41

I 2013	1.69	59%	63%
II 2013	1.82	55%	58%
I 2014	2.05	49%	54%
II 2014	1.88	53%	58%
I 2015	2.02	49%	56%
II 2015	1.81	55%	61%
I 2016	1.77	57%	62%
II 2016	1.66	60%	65%
I 2017	1.74	58%	63%
II 2017	1.65	61%	65%
I 2018	1.93	52%	57%
II 2018	1.83	55%	59%
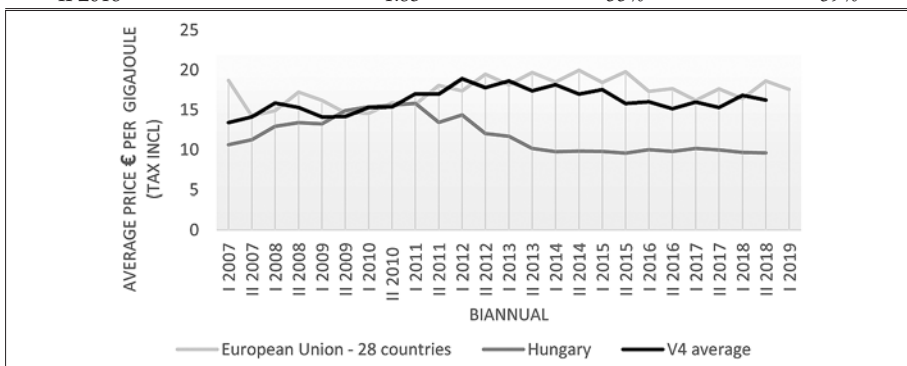
To cross-check the data, the Hungarian average price per GJ is also compared to the V4 average. Noticeably, Hungarian gas is the cheapest in the region, despite the immense dependence on imported fuel and a lack of internally produced alternatives. As previously mentioned, the major shift in prices started in the first and second halves of 2011, with a drastic 30 per cent drop from the initial 1:1 ratio in average prices compared to a year before. Therefore, to conclude, on average since Fidesz has been in power, the prices of a GJ of natural gas in Hungary has been 40 per cent lower than the EU average every consecutive year.

The first implication for such a drastic reduction in price is an increase of gas consumption. According to (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019) estimations, the total consumption of natural gas will steadily increase to 43 GWh from the current 40,000 GWh. That accounts for 45 per cent of the total generation capacity. Aside from the increase in consumption, subsidies in general erode the need for innovation, increasing efficiency or encouraging reasonable consumption (such as heating premises with windows closed).

Politically, the government has all the rationale to reinstate the feeling of social safety, particularly by reducing the 'energy poverty' of the population. There

are three long-term consequences to consider here. First, an irresponsible increase in energy consumption may lead to shortages that historically end in rationing programmes.[7] Secondly, price cuts infrequently benefit energy companies, equipment suppliers and the wealthier strata of society. The poorest, especially in rural areas, despite the price cuts, may still not be either able to afford the energy and burn whatever there is left for heating, or they'll have a relatively meagre consumption to pay for connection to the grid. The energy subsidies benefit the biggest consumers, which are usually the wealthiest individuals or corporate actors (United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology 2008). Hence, the mere justification that energy subsidies are meant to uplift the most unfortunate remains unfounded in the literature.

Thirdly, once subsidies are enacted it is tremendously difficult to phase them out. In a certain way, subsidies become a self-replicating policy, as they require immense political capital to attempt their reversal. Some would refer to this phenomenon as the subsidy trap — once subsidising starts, safeguarding these policies becomes a raison d'être of a policymaker and the support of its benefactors is conditional upon it (Koplow and Dernbach 2001). A set of other economic hurdles seams onwards from a prolonged reliance on subsidies. These may include maintaining a production that is otherwise uneconomic, deterring efforts to innovate in networks as there is little need to make it more efficient, over-reliance on the subsidiesof the energy source against other less profitable sources and, lastly, the already-mentioned overconsumption that contributes to the environmental burden.

Banking sector

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, certain general vulnerabilities in the Hungarian banking sector became apparent. Firstly, there was households' overreliance on foreign-currency loans — predominantly Swiss Francs — which back in the day seemed an affordable credit opportunity to become a homeowner. Contrary to some other cases, Hungary has not experienced a parallel real-estate bubble, rather there was a higher degree of perceived risk concerning the domestic currency that made foreign-currency loans yet more attractive[8]. By the end of 2009, 60 per cent of household loans were held in foreign currencies. That is a substantial figure, given that the total household debt accounted for 40 per cent of the country's GDP. That became a major problem when the national currency plunged, and repayment of foreign-currency loans became tragically difficult. Given that at that time

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[7] As natural gas shortages in the US (Tomain and Cudahy, 2011)

[8] For more (Barrell, et al. 2009)

2/3 of the banking sector were essentially foreign banks, the political capital for scapegoating growingly crystallised.

By the end of 2011, the government essentially banned foreign-currency mortgage lending, a move radical enough to shake investors' trust regarding foreign banks' prospects in the country. The undertaken policy vis-à-vis foreign banks has drastically reduced creditors' rights and weakened banks' solvency, however, it arguably helped borrowers, to some degree, to repay their foreign-currency loans. In parallel, the government nationalised pension funds, a move that critically reduced the potential for Hungarian financial markets to mature towards a healthier degree of competition

The condition of financial markets improved to a major degree by the end of 2016. Banks increased their capital adequacy ratio to a healthy 20 per cent, whereas the loans-to-deposit ratio reduced from above 150 per cent, back in 2009, to 100 per cent at the end of 2015. However, it still remains difficult to argue that the sector has managed to offset the drastic losses incurred between 2010—2014. Current structural vulnerabilities include a significant number of badly performing loans (NPLs), as well as the overwhelmingly public ownership of major banks that hinders competition, consequently reducing economic growth in the long term (OECD 2019).

Currently, the Hungarian banking sector is considered as relatively stable. In total it consists of 2,235 branches[9] and employs around 40,000 people — that is 0.89 per cent of the total labour force (Hungarian Banking Association 2019). There are 60 financial services providers overall, with 26 commercial banks. Among those, foreign presence has diminished overtime, especially after the imposed tax levy from 2011.[10] Nowadays, the sector has 9 foreign branches, and the total sector's asset value accounts for 93.6 per cent of the country's GDP. As for 2018, 49.9 per cent of the banking shareholdings were in domestic hands, with 2/3 of those in the public sector (around 36 per cent). The sector struggles with diminishing returns, particularly due to a slow rate of generating asset impairments.

Bank ownership: A tied network

Along with macroeconomic shifts, the government has made major stakeholder changes — that is, the nationalisation of major banks. Some of the reshuffling already happened during the first Fidesz government back in 2001. However, due to their election defeat in 2002, the hastily-attempted intervention has been disrupted.

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[9] For more information please see the appendix table 3 listing banks operating in Hungary

[10] Government introduced the highest tax levy on banks 0.6% on total assets, reduced to 0.21% in 2017 (EY 2015)

Fast forward to 2014,[11] PM Orban is back in power with a flagship promise to increase state-owned shares in the lending sector, especially by converting foreign currency credits to Hungarian forints. The government also committed to post-recession public bailouts and, later, re-privatisation or an assignment of Fidesz proxies as decisive board members. That strongly deformed the competitiveness of financial services. A list of four names quickly appears if one tries to track down these developments: Sándor Csányi, Sándor Demján Zoltán Spéder and István Töröcskei — referred to by some as *Fidesz's adopted family*.[12] These individuals have gained an incredible market position established by their banking holdings linked to Fidesz. The foreign banking groups currently present are Erste Group Bank AG, Raiffeisen Bank International AG, KBC Group NV, UniCredit SpA and Intesa Sanpaolo SpA. That is a strong change from the 2/3 majority of foreign banks back in 2010.

Table 2 — Financial services providers: Key CEOs (Várhegyi 2017)

Person	Bank	Comment
Sándor Csányi,	OTP Bank Group	Total assets 18 971 033million HUF (OTP Bank 2019)
Zoltán Spéder	FHB Bank group — (Takarek Mortgage Bank Co. Plc OTP Bank Nyrt)	Total assets 610,577 million HUF
István Töröcskei	Széchenyi Bank	Bailed out by the government in 2013, late 2014 after the fall-out between Fidesz and Töröcskei bank left without public assistance went bankrupt

The close clique of individuals in charge of major banks is just one side of the story. The second critical development is that, since 2010, these banks have effectively downgraded their total assets (Graph 1) — initially in response to the financial crisis. The particularity of Hungarian banking was how the banking sector was rapidly nationalised late after the financial crisis. The enacted tax levy and devaluation of foreign-held loans have targeted foreign banks, enough to make them consider selling off shares. The government was the primary buyer and, by early 2013, the sector's major bank became principally public[13].

The commercial MKB bank, which, back in 2009, was the second largest private bank, has been hit significantly by the 2010 special tax on foreign-currency

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[11] That is their second consecutive term. Fidesz has not lost parliamentary elections in any cycle since 2010.

[12] (Várhegyi 2017, 297)

[13] See the appendix, table on bank actors
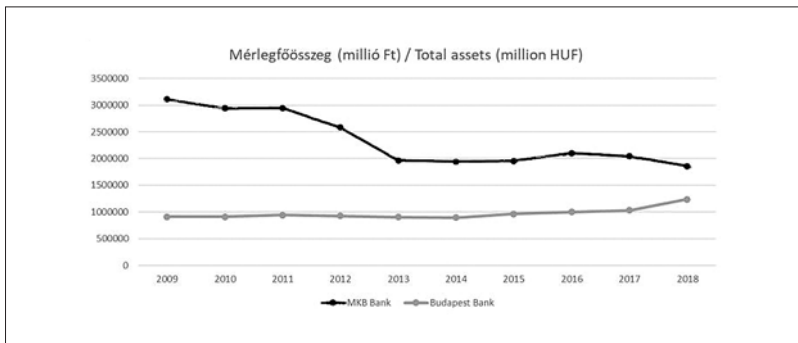
Graph 1

loan providers. The bank incurred major capital losses in the years 2010-2013. By the end of 2014, the Hungarian state nationalised MKB, buying it for € 55 million. Given that in 2010 the bank's net annual income was € 394m,[14] such a transaction seems financially symbolic. In the meantime, the Hungarian-owned banks had already increased their market share, taking advantage of the government's hostility towards foreign-owned financial providers. The overall burden of the new tax policy has been estimated to be HUF 370 billion on the entire foreign-held financial sector.

This exemplified tendency is correct for all other foreign branches. Graph 2 shows the total assets of public- against foreign-owned banks. Since 2012, publicly-owned banks have remained a principle market player with an increasing total assets trend from 2015, while the foreign branches rather guard their existing market. That is furthermore supported by other studies, which exemplify the government's policy to maintain a 50 per cent public stake in the banking sector (Djankov 2015, Válasz 2014).

In the long term, such a curb on competition in financial services has a gloomy outlook for end users. This oligopolistic nature of the sector is quite frequent around the globe. The anticipated threats that a low degree of market competition may cause, especially in retail banking, are primarily connected to the *too big to fail dilemma.* Banking, contrary to other sectors, has certain particularities whereby a lack of regulation and low degree of competition is categorically more critical than in traditional business operations. That is due to network externalities, financial intermediation (for instance, insurance banking), information asymmetry, switching banking costs — requiring a stable degree of regulation that ensures stability. Com-

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[14] Before the flat tax reform that caused major capital losses at the MKB's end, ref: https://www.mkb.hu/sw/static/file/item_3377.pdf

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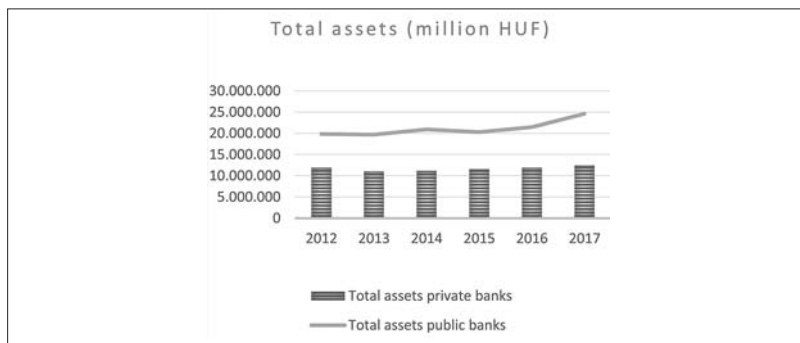
Graph 2 — Graph Hungarian private and public banks: total assets data compiled from the CITATION Hel20 \l 1045 (Helgi Library 2020)

petition helps the market to be a healthier provider of services, ensures efficient use of resources and provides a better-quality service to the final consumer. It stimulates innovation, provides customers with alternatives and, hence, ameliorates resource allocation. Banking, amid the regulatory requirements, has a similar market characteristic — oligopoly hinders the end-user.

The Hungarian specificity of banking interventionism, argued by experts in the field (Voszka, Nationalisation in Hungary in the Post-Crisis Years: A Specific Twist on a European Trend? 2018), is that nationalisation didn't come as a post-crisis bailout as evidenced in the West, nor was it not welcomed by the public. The historical role of the state — that the public associates with a strong public sector presence in the core spheres of market activity — became apparent when Fidesz reaped the fruits of its populist rhetoric. The policy towards banks, equally, had one major message — centralised decision-making within the reach of political elites has, as in the energy sector, become the desired status. This plan had staggering popularity, as it served strongly with the liberal idea of multi-national competition (Voszka, Nationalisation in Hungary in the Post-Crisis Years: A Specific Twist on a European Trend? 2018, Isaacs and Molnar 2017). The electorate welcomed the policy as a way to retain its own say against the pressures of globalisation, seen to be hedged by the state.

Conclusion

The overall promise of Fidesz was a broadly-defined vision of regaining national control of crucial market segments, such as utilities or banking. The policy has effectively nationalised these entities, yet at a trade-off of spreading cronyism by handing management positions to Fidesz sympathizers (Magyar 2016). There are visible similarities in how the government dealt with the nationalisation of the banking and energy sectors. Firstly, both these domains had struggled to gain ground

post-2008. Banks needed capital flows, while energy suppliers drastically increased end-user prices to keep their margins. The government, in both these sectors, implemented policies that significantly reduced the rentability of privately-owned businesses. Once the long-term business prospects had been infeasible, the government bought a deciding number of shares both amongst energy as well as banking actors. Secondly, it is crucial to underline that the government has sought public support for both of those policy changes (Voszka 2018). The dominant political narrative was to depart from the liberal policy-making implemented by the post-communist elites. Moreover, the Prime Minister frequently rejected the EU's pro-individualism commitment so characteristic to Western democracies, calling for an instant necessity to centralise power in hands of a *democratically elected government* (Gulyas 2012). The presence of the public sector in banking and energy then greatly increased. The government's commitment to have a final say in the provision of services is evident. The banking sector has merely 13 per cent of total bank assets in the country, with a continuous transfer of assets to the public sector (Djankov 2015), while the energy market is essentially public[15]. Therefore, it seems evident that the government's policy was to reshape the state of capitalism in the country towards state-run centralisation standing strongly against multinational entities. That is, unless these companies operate in the manufacturing sector which has been untouched by such tectonic policy shifts.

It is still too early to judge the economic consequences of such a magnitude of public interventionism in the market. For the energy and banking sectors, the policy remains vigilant to private players. The drastic drop of competition, in the long term, brings few benefits to customers. The general anticipation is that, in an oligopoly, customers will bear higher costs of service and a downgraded quality of service, as there is little alternative for them to turn to. In banking, an inability to have an affordable service additionally limits small entrepreneurial investments that typically enrich non-urban areas. For the energy sector, the price cut of gas, as this paper has highlighted, does not assist the poorest who may not be able to connect to the network and will continue to use other fossil fuels for heating (coal or wood, which prices are not considered by the government). Such market barriers essentially discourage a flow of foreign foreign investment, innovation and deepens the structural dependence of the country on the existing system that for now is tied to gas coming from Russia.

This paper has briefly reviewed Fidesz;s policies in the energy and banking sectors since 2010. It has also provided a commentary on the potential outcomes for the end user. As mentioned, the politics behind state interventionism in the

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[15] For more on how these entities had been acquired (Isaacs and Molnar 2017)

country seemingly follows the populist narrative of the governing party. However, the long-term economic rationale of such a centralisation of market power may have detrimental effects for the competitiveness of the country, essentially reducing its potential for economic growth.

A p p e n d i x

Table 3 — List of Hungarian based banks sort by number of branches[16]

No.	Bank	Founded	Headquarters	Total assets As of 2016 ($ bn)[17]	# of branches As of 2016[18]	Type	Origin
1	OTP Bank	1949	Budapest	44.66	388[19]	Public	HU
2	K&H Bank	1986	Budapest	11.31	207	Foreign	GER
3	Erste Bank	1998	Budapest	256	129[20]	Foreign	AU
4	Budapest Bank	1986	Budapest	3.95	94	Public	HU
5	CIB Bank	1979	Budapest	6.43	95	Foreign	IT
6	MKB Bank	1950	Budapest	8.30	81	Public	HU
7	Raiffeisen Bank	1986	Budapest	7.88	68	Foreign	AU
8	UniCredit Bank	1990	Budapest	10.81	55	Foreign	IT
9	FHB Bank	1997	Budapest	2.34	51	Public	HU
10	Pannon Takarék Bank	2011	Komárom	2.24	45	Public	HU
11	Sberbank	1993	Budapest	1.16	30	Foreign	RU
12	Duna Takarék	1960	Győr	2.19	27	Public	HU
13	Polgári Bank	1972	Polgár	1.21	22	Public	HU
14	Kinizsi Bank	2007 (1958)	Veszprém	1.04	16	Public	HU
15	Mohácsi Takarék Bank	1958	Mohács	1.24	15	Public	HU
16	MagNet Bank	1995	Budapest	0.08	14	Public	HU

[16] Own compilation, sources: (MKB 2020, OTP Bank 2019, K&H Bank 2019, Erste Bank 2017, Budapest Bank 2019, CIB Bank 2019, Raiffeisen Bank Zrt 2019, UniCredit 2019, FHB Mortgage Bank 2019)

[17] Some figures were estimated from HUF to dollars on an exchange rate as for 5 February, 11:07 GMT

[18] Number of branches take from: (CFI 2020)

[19] As a OTP group operating in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia and Montenegro bank has 1307 branches (Banks Daily 2017)

[20] As a Erste Bank Gorup ltd. Which operates in Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Croatia and Serbia it has 2,648 branches (CFI 2020).

17	Sopron Bank	1995	Sopron	0.209	13	Foreign	AU
18	Citibank	1985	Budapest	1.9	10	Foreign	US
19	Oberbank	2007	Budapest	0.215	8	Foreign	AU
20	AXA Bank	1998	Budapest	0.012	7	Foreign	GER
21	Banif Plus Bank	2010 (1998)	Budapest	0.036	6	Foreign	PT
22	Gránit Bank	2010 (1985)	Budapest	1.03	2	Public	HU
23	BNP Paribas	1991	Budapest	0.04	1	Foreign	FR
24	Cetelem Bank	1996	Budapest	0.35	1	Foreign	FR
25	Cofidis	2005	Budapest	0.214	1	Foreign	FR
26	Eximbank	1994	Budapest	3.07	1	Public	HU
27	ING Bank	2008 (1991)	Budapest	1.56	1	Foreign	NL
28	Merkantil Bank	1988	Budapest	1. 20	1	Public	HU
29	NHB Bank	1990	Budapest	0.193	1	Public	HU
30	Porsche Bank	1994	Budapest	0.174	1	Foreign	GER

Table 4 — List of Hungarian based energy companies sort by number of employees[21]

Sector	Company	Founded	Headquarters	CEO	Principal ownership %	Company's Size (No. Employees)
Oil And Natural Gas Retail	MOL	1957	Budapest	Zsolt Hernádi	100 Public	26000
Electricity	MVM Group	1948	Budapest	Peter Csiba	100 Public	7859
Natural Gas Distributor	Emfesz[22]	2003	Budapest	István Góczi	100 Foreign	4000
Natural Gas Distributor	Panrusgáz	1994	Budapest	Alexey Zaytsev	100 Foreign	270

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[21] Own compilation, sources: (Wagstyl 2009, MOL Group 2019, Panrusgas Gas Trading Plc 2019, MVM Group 2019)

[22] The ownership of the company is currently disputed between RosGas and Group DF (both foreign entities), more information (Bryant 2011).
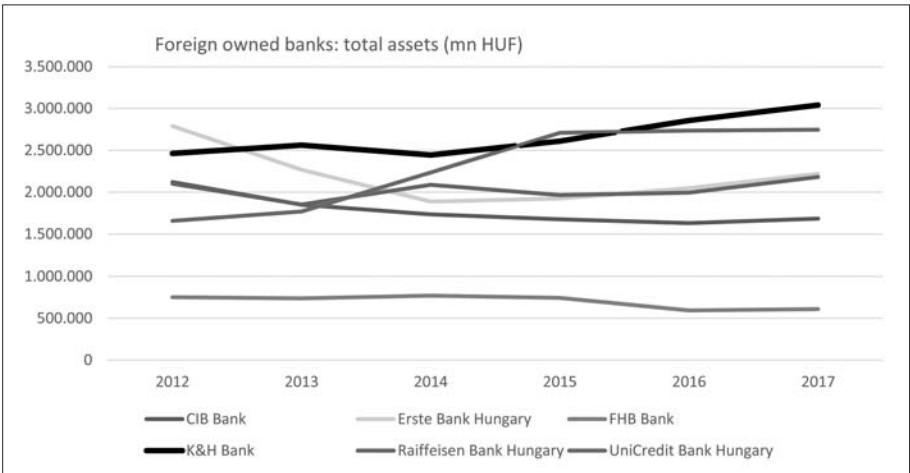
Graph 3 — Foreign owned banks: total assets 2012—2017 based on (Helgi Library 2020)
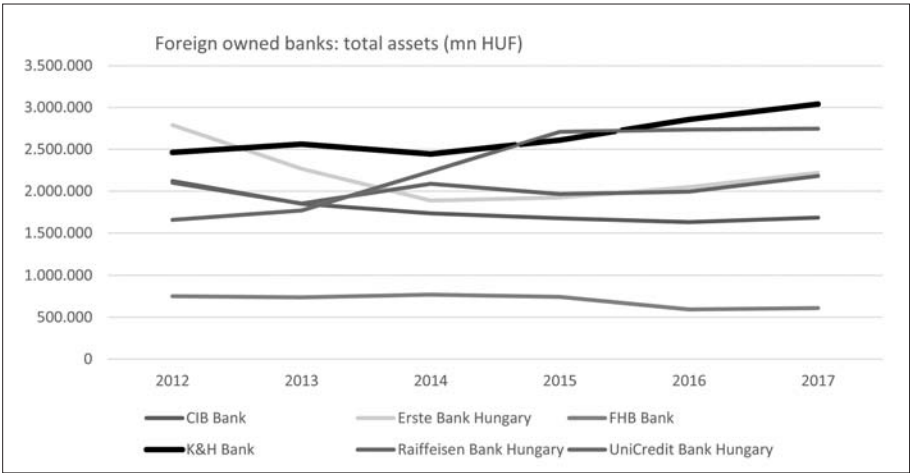
Graph 4 — National banks; total assets 2012—2017 based on (Helgi Library 2020)

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THEORIES ON THE ROOTS OF THE EU AND THE WESTERN BALKANS RISE OF POPULISM[1]

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A b s t r a c t

In this paper we focus on providing a clear definition and political classification of the term populism in a political and economic sense on a global scale. Consequently, we will explore all the popular academic theories concerning the roots of populism in crisis and discuss different mechanisms through which populism affects the electorate. We will also focus on building a comparison between the EU area and the Western Balkans populist experience followed by explaining differences and similarities in both models and make difference between supply side inward and outward populism.

Key words: *economic and political crisis, European Union, Western Balkans, inward populism, outward populism*

> *As we will show, poor countries are poor because those who have power make choices that create poverty.*
> Acemoglu and Robinson (2012)

Introduction

As some Western countries are seeing the rise of populist movements against wealth and income inequality, others like the United Kingdom have found its rhetoric moving towards inflammatory, anti-immigration speeches against "job-grabbing" foreigners who are to blame for their depressed European wages. Further south, near the Mediterranean, the debtor Eurozone member states of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece have provided sound support for populist opposition to the

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European Union's fiscal discipline policies. These periphery Euro Area countries are growing increasingly Eurosceptic in the aftermath of the European Debt Crisis (2009—2015) and showcase increasing levels of mistrust in public institutions and fury over state corruption. Their charismatic party leaders actively seek solutions through policies such as drastic corporate tax cuts, minimum wage caps, increases in public infrastructure spending and different welfare style subsidies for their citizens. In the Central and East portion of the EU, leaders like Hungarian prime minister Victor Orban are fueling nativism in response to the European migrant crisis (Hopkins and Peel, 2018) and economic self-sufficiency politics in retaliation to the core EU countries' negative sentiments towards the effects of the free movement of workers, whereas their voters show increasing dissatisfaction with the lack of the EU commitment to lowering cross-country wealth, unemployment and trade inequalities. The "Who exploited whom?" debate dominates national and European parliaments to this day. The self-proclaimed winners and losers of the European project launched the "Who is to blame?" debate between each other, just as their domestic populist parties started to fill the seats of their national parliaments.

In the South-East of Europe, the Western Balkan post-communist countries (Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) have been continuously re-electing populist politicians for the past thirty years. The trend was initiated with the very establishment of their independent statehood from Yugoslavia in the 1990s, as populist politicians such as Slobodan Milošević, Milo Đukanović, Radovan Karadžić, Franjo Tuđman and Alija Izetbegović took the centre stage in mainstream politics. The disintegration process was soon followed by severe economic crises and the rise of nationalistic discourse against ethnic minorities living on the territories of these countries. Populist politicians came into power in the midst of the crises, targeting the economic hardships of the electorate and fueling feelings of hostility and bitterness towards other ethnicities and nation states. The Yugoslav break up crisis and the current EU disintegration crisis exhibit many parallels (Becker, 2016) and most importantly share one commonality: both resulted in a surge of populism.

Although the initial conditions for populism were the same — economic and political crises, the manifestation through the supply side (parties) is divergent, setting the base for a comparative study from which a lot can be learned.

The first part of the paper is focused on providing a clear definition and political classification of the term populism in a political and economic sense on a global scale. What exactly is populism? What is the conceptual and historical background? And, finally, what are the circumstances under which this phenomenon reoccurs?

56

The second part is mainly involved with a literature review. It will explore all the popular academic theories concerning the roots of populism in crisis and discuss different mechanisms through which populism affects the electorate. Here we will showcase the three dominant theories explaining the rise of the European populism followed by a discussion of the underlying economic and cultural factors which influence its nation-wide adoption.

Next, we will focus on building a comparison between the EU and the Western Balkans' populist experience followed by explaining differences and similarities in both models. We will also investigate the similarities between EU area disintegration and the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and discuss their experience with severe economic crises which led to the rise of populist movements.

Moreover, we will offer a new binary classification mechanism for the supply side of populist party strategies — inward and outward. Such a classification draws a clear line between the roots of populism in the EU and Western Balkans. Inward populism (mainly present in EU countries) places the main focus upon inward-looking, self-sustainable economic solutions by showcasing anti-globalisation, anti-immigration, anti-European and Eurosceptical sentiments. Usually their policies target trade imbalances, economic inequality, European labour mobility, European bureaucracy and fiscal austerity. On the other side, outward populism (present in the Western Balkans plus Croatia) exhibits Erdogan-type neo-conservatism and neo-traditionalism, hand in hand with efforts for European integration and economic internationalization.[4]

Populism Deconstructed

What do we mean when we say someone is populist? Populism clearly means different things in different countries, making it a very difficult concept to define. Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Boris Johnson, Matteo Salvini, Viktor Orban, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Aleksandar Vučić, Milo Đukanović, Andrej Plenković, Milorad Dodik, Nikola Gruevski etc. are all labeled populist while having completely opposing views and opinions on everything from social issues to macroeconomics. Populists may be authoritarian technocrats, progressive leftists, climate change deniers, environmentalists, direct democracy supporters, Ayn Rand economists, Misses devotees or admirers of Marx. They can be left or right on the political spectrum, offering government-based subsidies or market-based isolationist solutions. They are elected from a state of grievances and deep divisions be-

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[4] Benczes et al. (2020a) define populist neo-traditionalist narrative as a route to escape from insecurity brought by "… dangerous new values and ways of life which come to the region from globalisation and from the EU" (Benczes et al. 2020a, p. 7).

tween two opposing poles, splitting society into winners and losers — the corrupted elite against the common people (Mudde, 2004, 2009). That is to say, common people are abused by a forceful elite minority controlling the state for its own benefits (Benczes et al. 2020b).

For many of the academic writers (Ionescu and Gellner, 1969; Canovan, 1981; Betz, 1993; Albertazzi and McDonell, 2008) and media outlets,[5] populism is simply radicalism you do not want to call radicalism (Bale et al., 2011). The terms populism and populist almost always come with a negative connotation and association with ideologies which are considered undemocratic or at least anti-liberal democratic (Mudde, 2004, 2009). In addition, the word populism is often associated with nativism, ethno-nationalism, mono-culturalism, racism, neo-conservativism, neo-traditionalism, socialism, anti-imperialism and authoritarianism.

Clearly, the words populism and populist have no one simple meaning. The terms originated in the 1880s, farmers in the south of the United States, joined by workers and miners, formed an agrarian-based political movement against the Eastern coastal establishment and banking elites in the country. These farm workers took out big loans under unfavourable terms and conditions to buy all the supplies and tools needed to grow and sell cotton. When the price of cotton collapsed due to the economic depression, they found themselves faced with unpayable loans with surging interest rate payments. After they had forcibly handed the cotton crops to the creditors, they were left impoverished and without profits. This started agrarian activism and an anti-elitist backlash which escalated with the formation of The People's Party (later known as The Populist Party) in St. Louis in 1891, which later morphed into the southern branch of the Democratic Party of America (Omaha World-Herald, 1892). The first populist movement encapsulated the same underlying principles relevant nowadays.

At its core, a populist is a politician who appeals to the common people who increasingly feel alienated from the power centres of decision making — establishment politicians. The key mobilisation mechanism is creating a state of conflict between the two sides of the equation, the losers against the winners of globalisation. As we have witnessed, such a fertile state of conflict was created by the destructive economic consequences of the Yugoslav disintegration crisis (1991—1995), the Global Financial Crisis (2008), the European Debt Crisis (2009—2015) and the European migrant crisis (2015), whereas the content that united the electorates in the aftermath of these crises differed internationally depending on the historical, social and economic factors in play.

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[5] Bale et al. (2011) study on UK populism negative media coverage lists: *The Economist*, *Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Telegraph* and others.

Different types of national conflict yield different types of reaction to the crises and different types of manifestations on the supply and demand side. Hence the term cannot be tied to one and only definition. Drake (1978) introduces three core postulates of populism: political mobilisation, recurrent rhetoric and use of symbolism designed to inspire common people aimed primarily at the working class. Dornbusch and Edwards (1989, 1991) define macroeconomic populism as efficient party targeting of the electorate facing highest economic hardship by introducing short-term policy solutions that target income distribution and growth without revealing the long-term losses for the social strata most affected in downturns. He identifies populism in Latin America with economic programmes designed to expand state activism and Conniff (1982) says that such redistributive programmes often overlap with those of socialism. Mudde (2004) labels populism as "thin ideology" using a fuzzy, anti-pluralist framework of contrasting the common people against the corrupt elite. He identifies three common features of populism; anti-establishment, authoritarianism and nativism. Muller (2016) defines populist leaders as standalone representatives of the people by delegitimising all others that fall out of the scope of the native society. This, he states, ultimately clashes with the basic values of democracies — the rights of minorities.

Nonetheless, Muller (2016) rightfully critiques identifying populism as an undemocratic leftover of the ideologies of Nazism, fascism or any right-wing radical ideology, stating that such categorisations do not help the mainstream political establishment in understanding the real problems of the common people. Hence the usual portrait of populism as right-wing fails to account for many forms of populism in Latin America and the Western Balkans where political parties favour more left-wing and welfare state economic solutions. According to him, the new wave of European populism simply radicalises the same attitudes most Europeans held in the past century by intensifying the supply side offer and overstating the dangers that immigration poses on nativism and economic prospects in the host country. This is one of the reasons populist discourse frequently escalates into purely opportunistic forms of nativism, racism and authoritarianism by creating negative but popular sentiments which can unite the most optimal group of potential voter anger against one joint enemy. It is recurrently equated to regressivism or the antithesis of progressivism because of the predominant usage of reactionary politics in opposition to liberal values.

Rationalizing the definitions above makes us ask ourselves: Is populism an ideology, form of rhetoric, communicational approach, set of economic remedies or just a media strategy for creating political discourse? Taggart (2000) rightfully concludes that such minimalistic conceptual form renders populism ideologically ubiquitous and vague. If you call someone a Marxist, you can be pretty certain what that

person thinks about economics and politics, but if you call someone a populist, the probability that their views are left or right on the political spectrum are equal. Populism is not an ideology; it is a tool for the mobilisation of the masses.

From the above interpretations, we can identify five fundamental postulates that define populism as a tool for the mobilization of the masses:

1. Two conflicting homogeneous units of analysis: The people vs. the corrupt elite.
2. Anti-pluralism and anti-heterogeneity of opinion: Those who disagree are the traitors of the nation, corrupt establishment politicians, criminals etc.
3. Short-term protection policy solutions with high long-term negative consequences.
4. Fluid underlying ideology: Left or Right on the political spectrum scale.
5. Political mobilization around antagonism, use of recurrent demagoguery and powerful symbolism.

Theories on the roots of populism

In this section we focus on both the macro and the micro side of the equation by deconstructing three popular theories on the roots of populism. First, we showcase the top-down macro approach which looks upon economic crises as the core reason behind the emergence of populism. Secondly, we dissect the bottom-up micro approach which focuses on two theories: The Economic Inequality Hypothesis and The Cultural Backlash Hypothesis. The latter helps us gain a deep understanding of the socio-economic factors that drive the demand side (the electorate) towards populist voter choice.

The top-down macro approach: The Economic Crisis Hypothesis

The traditionalist on populism in the past decade focuses on the economic crisis hypothesis as the root cause for the emergence of populism. Economic crises are frequently seen as the main postulates for extremism and radicalism in politics, giving politicians solid argumentation for anti-establishment discourse. For example, Dustman et al. (2017) proved that the negative effects of the European debt crisis (2015) and sluggish economic recovery in the aftermath converged public opinion in the debtor EU countries against centralised EU decision making, which in turn resulted in voting for populist party platforms. The study is one of many that drives conclusions upon European Social Survey individual voter data. Dippel et al. (2016) focuses on the effects in the EU creditor state of Germany and finds a correlation between casting a vote for a populist candidate and living in the dominantly export-oriented parts of the country which witnessed higher unemployment rates and lowering of wages due to trade competitiveness from cheaper Asian markets in the aft-

ermath of the Financial Crisis (2008). He concludes that populism in Germany is motivated by the older voter cohort and its anger against economic globalisation. The counterbalance to the developed EU countries' experience is to be found in the periphery countries of Europe which were faced with hard austerity programmes in the aftermath of the European Debt Crisis. However, the shocks in the Central and Eastern as well as Mediterranean peripheral EU countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus, Slovakia, Hungary etc.) also affected the most economically insecure part of the electorate — the undereducated, unskilled, older citizens dependent upon state benefits, and the youth which suffered the consequences of depleting economic activity and rising unemployment. Lechler (2017) uses the individual-level Eurobarometer data to research the influence of unemployment on the rise in Euroscepticism and confirms a strong positive impact of employment fluctuations among unskilled and unemployed older cohorts and negative EU sentiment often used as a powerful demagogue by populist candidates.

Rodrik (2017) argues globalisation as the main stimulus for the development of economic crises via its unfair mechanisms in trade redistribution, short-term capital allocations (capital flights) and financial liberalisation. A good example of such a negative outcome is the EU monetary unification in 1999 which drove the risk premia in periphery countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal, leading to rising borrowing costs between member states. This move stimulated the development of so-called "debtor economies" (also pejoratively known as PIIGS) which effectively enabled European countries to run huge current account deficits and acquire unsustainable amounts of external debt, further used unproductively by investing in the construction industry and non-tradable sectors.

Both, the EU countries and the ex-Yugoslavian countries went through severe economic crisis in which the least developed countries suffered the most as a result of the austerity programs and policy prescriptions put in place. Finally, in both cases the crises created entry space in the government for populist leaders like Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, Franjo Tuđman in Croatia, Alija Izetbegović and Radovan Karadžić in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milo Đukanović in Montenegro, Ljubčo Georgievski in Macedonia, the SYRIZA (The Coalition of Radical Left) movement in Greece, The Five Star Movement in Italy and Podemos in Spain.

During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, all former Yugoslav republics, apart from Slovenia, were faced with a similar experience of rising dissatisfaction with the split of economic benefits across the federal republics. Becker (2016) captures the similarities between Yugoslavia in the 1980s and 1990s and Europe today, explaining that in both cases there were conflicting forces at the national level in support of greater decentralisation and allocation of power to the nation-states, and the forces on a supra-national level (European Parliament and the Communist Party estab-

lishment) which were in support of keeping the system intact. The Yugoslav case resulted in the independence of the constitutive republics which were part of the federation followed by merciless wars, severe macroeconomic crisis with unseen levels of hyperinflation,[6] years of rising unemployment and economic underperformance due to the massive war destruction, fiscal irresponsibility and the corrupt privatisation process which led to deindustrialization and closing of many factories in the newly sovereign nation-states.

Following Dornbusch and Edwards' (1989, 1991) macroeconomic populism theory, such irresponsible deficit finance led the Western Balkan countries to even deeper economic and political crisis which fully eroded the trust in the political system and representative democracy.

This shifted the unitarian, authoritarian model in the late stages of Yugoslavia into a republican, authoritarian model in which the existential hardships of the war-torn society during times of severe economic crisis were transformed into resentful nationalism by usage of self-victimising and populist discourse (Popov and Gojko-vić, 2000). During this time, populist leaders emerged in former Yugoslav republics, both left and right on the political spectrum, who efficiently used the economic dissatisfaction of the voters, strategically repositioning it into an ethno-national backlash during the Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina wars (1991—1995), the Kosovo war (1998—1999) and the Macedonian war (2001). The aftermath of the wars resulted in even greater economical destruction and reinforced the creation of radical anti-nationalist and anti-religious feelings across the region.

The bottom-up micro approaches:
The Economic Inequality Hypothesis and The Cultural Backlash Hypothesis

Such a top-down theoretical premise although useful, does not help us understand which socio-economic factors drive the electorate after the initial shock hits. Neither does it give us adequate description about the supply side offerings, populist strategic games and policies for effective capture of the electorate in shock conditions. These supply and demand factors are crucial in understanding why the electorate overreacts against the liberal-democratic model when faced with political and/or economic crisis, as is the case with the Western Balkans. Many studies which are micro-oriented are focused on modeling the factors behind the voter behavior (the demand side) by using the European Social Survey or the Eurobarometer data while simultaneously classifying the supply side — the political parties — into populist and non-populist. This bottom-up approach usually looks at two core reasons

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[6] For more details on Yugoslav hyperinflation see Lyon (1996).

for such behavior on the demand side: the economic inequality and the cultural backlash.

The Economic Inequality Hypothesis

Proponents of the economic inequality hypothesis (Guiso et al., 2017), examine the behavioral impact on the electorate based on perceived levels of economic hardship and insecurity.[7] Economic inequality measures start from distribution as the same basic input (Benczes et al. 2020b). The macro level influence of this hypothesis is based on Piketty's (2014) theory of economic inequality which centres around the explanation for the uneven return of economic growth momentum in the post-crisis period which did not reflect a net positive benefit in the incomes of the majority of the population. This is due to the fact that most of the newly-created capital is disproportionately distributed to the top 1% of the population which is mainly based in the capital-rich metropolis. Such a wealth skewness creates the effect of Kahneman and Deaton's (2010) "happiness comparison bias" which is legitimised with the feeling that the "grass is greener on the other side". In this case, the other side are better-off citizens and countries which saw a positive influence of globalisation in the redistribution of global wealth.

The most economically uncertain class of voters — unskilled, older, male underemployed classes of society in West liberal democracies were failed by the welfare protection net and confronted with the feeling of comparative income stagflation in the years following the Global Financial Crisis (2008). The dominant capital allocation in the metropolis followed by the processes of automation and growth of the tech economy created populist discourse and a split in society between the less well-off and the well-off, which can be seen in the correlation between voting for populist parties and an increased feeling of short-term economic insecurity or experiencing high levels of perceived economic hardship.

In the Western world this phenomenon is reinforced through:
1. Periphery exclusion of productive workforce.
2. Wage stagflation and lack of economic opportunities.
3. De-industrialization of smaller cities and dominance of metropolis.
4. Outsourcing of low-skilled jobs in underdeveloped economies.

The effects of the macroeconomic uncertainty are usually modeled through questions about the subjective feelings of economic hardship of the average voter — i.e. feeling of anxiety triggered by the risks people see as major and inevitable downside economic risk (Benczes et al. 2020b). Therefore, the economic uncertain-

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[7] Since ineqality is "conconceptually embedded in the term of economic insecurity." (Benczes et al. 2020b, p. 6)

ty hypothesis perceives populism as a direct product of the income inequality and states that populist votes should be dominant among the economically marginalized stratas of the society (unskilled workers, unemployed, under-educated, households dependent upon state welfare and families situated in outer-city rural areas). The hypothesis states that increased feeling of economic hardship induces voters not to vote and, if they do, they diverge towards a populist voter choice. Reduced voter turnout gives competitive advantage to right-wing parties as it gives them an abstinence-based entry space in the political stage during times of political and economic crisis. Hence this theory concentrates around a two-step analysis of populism through voter-turnout and through voter choice.

B. The Cultural Backlash Hypothesis

Another perspective by Inglehart and Norris (2016) takes the cultural backlash theory viewing populism as purely socio-cultural phenomenon, which explains the rise of populist support as a direct consequence of the older birth cohort's nostalgia towards their post-war value system. Such cultural transformations are usually captured by survey-based research which takes upon education, age and gender as base predictors of voting populist parties, while adding cultural factors such as progressivism, patriotism, religiousness and traditionalism as explanatory variables.

First, age will expose the generational turnover, as the younger, educated birth cohort which grew up in affluent capitalistic welfare states replaced their parents and grandparents, who had much tougher upbringing during the inter-war decades. Second, gender roles have significantly changed as millennials entered the workforce, moving the society towards more feminist-oriented attitudes and more equal distribution of workforce amongst males and females, eroding the patriarchal role in society. Over time, naturally the traditional value system, which is held by the dominantly less educated, males in rural areas became anti-thesis of the fast-paced, contemporary, high-tech city life, generating feelings of resentment, anger and loss.

The cultural backlash theory captures the value shift generated by globalisation in the big metropolises is in direct opposition with the pre-war value system of traditionalists and baby boomers in the peripheries, who increasingly feel left out and forgotten by establishment political parties. This feeling of being "left out" dominantly makes older, white men and less-educated strata of society unresponsive to the tide of progressive values,[8] leaving them vulnerable for populist exploitation. Their hypothesis is centered around the cultural shift of the post-war generation towards multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, which they state, is not reflective of the "silent" majority of the electorate. Many establishments politicians such as Hill-

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[8] For detailed definition see Gillette (2008).

ary Clinton in the US and David Cameron in the UK have failed to account for the "silent" left-behinds — costing the former the presidential election, while the latter lost and greatly miscalculated the EU referendum. These theories are exploring the traditionalist, regressive, nationalist and authoritarian value system of the voter as possible explanatory variables for populist voting choice.

The Supply Side — The peculiar case of inward and outward populism

Taggart (2004) points out that, at the national level, representative populism is re-emerging in a post-crisis, contemporary Europe as a response to the failure of the European Union project in reducing the nation-state's power and significance, arising from the differences in economic progress (The Economic Inequality Hypothesis) and cultural values (The Cultural Backlash Hypothesis) in between and inside the nation-states on an individual voter level. After a decade of stagnant incomes and fiscal austerity, the economic and cultural shifts which took place in the aftermath of the crisis created fertile grounds for the rise of supply side populism in Europe, giving new age populist politicians centre stage for heated rhetoric. This made voters susceptible to short-term protection policies from populist politicians and parties, which, as mentioned above, manifest differently in the EU and the Western Balkans countries calling for two distinct types of supply side categorisation. Hence it is necessary to differentiate between the two paths these populist discourse styles take, as each follows its own path based on a country's historical background, political culture and economic situation. Therefore, we introduce two separate forms of supply side populism: inward and outward.

Inward Populism

The process set in motion by the Global Financial Crisis (2008) produced two losing sides — liberal democracy and economic globalisation with open mobility across borders. A distinctive hallmark of Le Pen, Wilders, Trump and the Brexit vote is the accentuation the political leaders put upon inward-looking economic solutions by blaming globalisation, the metropolis-based well-off's obliviousness and cosmopolitan values for marginalising the lower classes of society which are left behind. Usually, the core EU countries' populism is built upon the aura of a newly found-affection for self-sufficiency under the banner of anti-immigration sentiment, progressive and liberal value backlash, joined by economically isolationist policies targeting trade imbalances, economic inequality, wage stagflation, lack of labour productivity growth and high unemployment in the peripheral cities as opposed to the cosmopolitan big capitals. The rise of European, populist right-wing parties since 2000s is heavily linked to a rise in Euroscepticism (especially in countries such

as Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal) and the rise of nationalism (France, United Kingdom, Holland, Hungary and Poland) which mirrors the demise of the welfare supported market economy — the only brand of capitalism which offered trust in democracy for the ordinary voters (Figure 1). What followed can be captured by the results of the 2015 Eurobarometer survey which showed that the positive image of the EU had greatly eroded from 53% in 2007 to 37% in 2015. Distrust of the EU was highest in Greece (81%), Cyprus (72%), Austria (65%), France (65%) and Germany, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic (all 63%) (Standard Eurobarometer 84 Autumn 2015 Report, 2016). Some good examples of the successfulness of these movements include the Italian cases where The Five Star Movement won the majority support in the last 2018 parliamentary elections, along with the Scandinavian countries where the 2017 share of right-wing parties in parliament reached 20% (Tartar, 2017).

Policy characteristics of populist parties in the EU countries:

1. Economic nationalism and isolationism.
2. Trade protectionism.
3. Immigration reduction or fully anti-immigration.
4. Individual and corporate tax reforms in the top wealth tiers.
5. National self-sustainability of the labor market.
6. Against financial globalisation with accent on the negative effects of "too big to fail" banks and financial institutions.
7. Against the power of big globalised corporations, the business elites.
8. Euroscepticism, anti-EU austerity policies, pro fiscal autonomy.
9. Anti-Europeanism, focused on national sovereignty and the nation state culture and values.

Outward Populism

The case is different in Western Balkans countries such as North Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania — plus Croatia — as they exhibit Erdogan-like, neo-conservative and religious populism in support of economic integration with the EU, going hand in hand with ethno-nationalism, native mono-culturalism and leftist welfare policies for the impoverished by expanding state activism. In general, the post-communist Western Balkans countries exhibit symptoms of intermediately developed transition economies with high levels of state corruption, high youth unemployment, the lack of strong middle class, lack of media freedom, lack of rule of law and lack of efficient small business capital allocation. On a macro scale these are the typical European debtor states with persistent budget deficits, negative trade balances and fiscal irresponsibility due to unproductive public spending. There is a total disregard for freedom of expression and

Figure 1 — Inward vs. Outward Populism

the media is closely linked with the party-state apparatus via tight relations between government and media moguls. Hence party propaganda is served on a daily basis throughout most media outlets. There is a weak market economy and low protection of property rights. The private business elite is subject to pressures from the government unless they support the ruling party. There is no independence of the judiciary and there is a clear dominance of the executive branch over every public institution. In terms of economic orientation, the strategic position of both populist platforms is somewhere between the economic left and the economic right. They are leftist in supporting welfare transfers, increased deficit spending and state activism in the economy but also hold neo-conservative right stances with market liberalism, FDI orientation and economic internationalism. Because of the party-state corrupt system and decades of populist rule, there is clear scepticism and a lack of trust towards the institutions of government and a general disenchantment with representative democracy. In these countries the leaders in power follow the profile of patriarchal fathers of the nation posing as saviours of "the people" which gets them repeatedly re-elected despite the overall dissatisfaction with the state of politics and persistent lack of trust in the government (Figure 1).

Policy characteristics of populist parties in the Western Balkans:
1. Welfare policies "vote buying" via benefits, subsidies and free services.
2. Unproductive deficit spending on infrastructure (Marušić, 2015).
3. "Economic liberalization" image via ineffective FDI policies.
4. Fiscal irresponsibility and concealment of the long-term economic costs.
5. State controlled public institutions and administration.
6. Media control and lack of freedom of expression (Freedom House, 2017a, 2017b).
7. Ethno-Nationalism driven rhetoric (Balkan Insight, 2017).
8. State controlled judiciary system (N1, 2017).
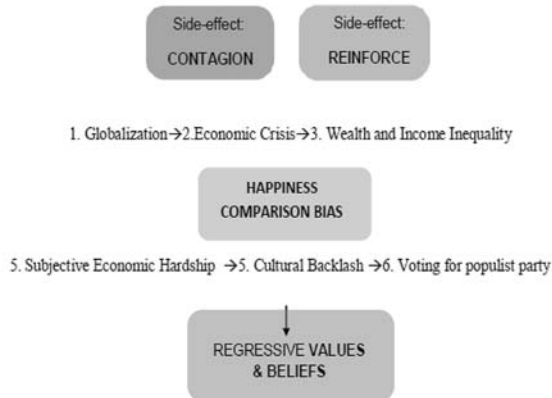
Figure 2 — Why populism is so popular all across Europe

9. Lack of rule of law and corruption.[9]
10. Party nepotism and state clientelism.
11. Abuse of state resources for electoral gains and pressure on voters.

Such supply side rhetoric's difference between the inward and outward oriented countries is a direct byproduct of the historical difference in demographic, cultural and socio-economic factors in play.

Heads or Tails? Two sides of the same Coin

The existence of multiple theories on populist voter choice and turnout made us aware of the interlaced, complex, correlated effects between the macro crisis theory and micro explanatory variables (attitudes, outlooks, perceptions). Hence, we believe the useful explanatory power of voter dissatisfaction and turn towards radical and extremist ideology choices can be achieved by a top-down dissection (Figure 2).

It is an indisputable fact that the globalisation witnessed in the last decades brought many benefits for both developing and developed countries around the world. On a positive note, we are living in times with higher life expectancy, increased life quality and a drastic reduction in world poverty. However, it has also brought extreme income and wealth inequality and gigantic environmental degradation. Also, it delivered a level of international interconnectedness which in times of economic crisis creates spillover and contagion effects influencing different economies and countries in different ways and multiple micro levels (Mendoza and Quadrini, 2009). Hence simultaneous appearance of populist discourse across dif-

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[9] See Fokus (2015) for the full wire-tapping materials revealing the corruption of the highest Macedonian government officials.
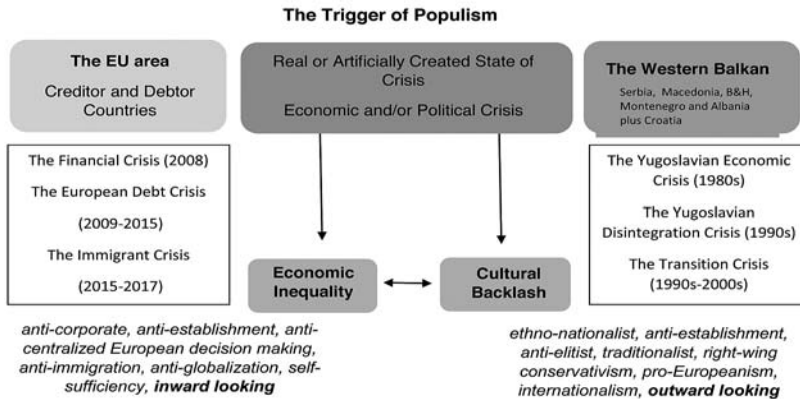
Figure 3 — The Trigger of Populism in the EU and the Western Balkans plus Croatia

ferent countries affected is to be expected. Whether the state of crisis will reflect on the voter through subjective economic hardship or will take the form of cultural backlash depends on the most effective entry place of the populist party for optimal capturing of the highest percentage of dissatisfied voters. The second option is that the cultural value scales and economic insecurity hypotheses are connected. Decline in economic security has a negative direct impact on socio-political value systems and beliefs.

How these two pressure points fill the content offered by populist parties largely depends on country-specific factors and historical background. In the EU countries economic inequality is mainly portrayed as a movement against the "corporate rich elitists", the political establishment and economic experts who are perceived as enablers and protectors of their own interests and utility functions. This creates a state of economic marginalisation of the periphery of the countries and generates income stagflation which fuels increased subjective perceptions of economic hardship.

On the other hand, the cultural backlash in the EU countries is depicted through anti-immigration rhetoric and through the traditionalist older birth cohort's disenchantment with the liberal value system in the capital rich metropolis. In non-core parts of Europe populism manifests itself through increased need for clear nativism and economic self-sufficiency due to the economic trauma which was largely felt in the most socially and financially insecure parts of the society, the youth and the pensioners. Most radical movements started as a cultural backlash against the EU budget austerity policies in the aftermath of the European Debt Crisis (Figure 3). In the Western Balkans pus Croatia, the cultural backlash is traditionally portrayed through the struggle for clear nativism in society and nationalistic discourse against ethnic minorities as leftover anger of the post-Yugoslav wars. The war and

aftermath experience created mistrust in representative democracy and politics in Western Balkans societies. We believe that such trauma of the Balkan war generation created a clear preference for nationalism, self-sufficiency, traditionalism, regressive value scales, negative sentiment towards international diplomacy, deep mistrust in liberal democracy and political actors with a clear preference for a strong nation state. Economic insecurity in the Balkans is constantly reinforced by persistent unproductive government spending, ubiquitous corruption, low standard of living and high economic inequality dating back to the disastrous privatisation processes which disabled the societies from building solid base of capital formation and efficient capital allocation, resulting in three decades of sustained unemployment rates in the double digits (Figure 3).

All this factors are rendering the part of the electorate who is predominantly composed of less-educated, older, rural habitants are a core supporters of a decades long protraction of populist leaders.

Rodrik (2017) notes that all crises have the net effect of increasing average voter disappointment and result in declining trust in the ruling establishment. On the macro scale, economic and/or political crises act as a root cause for the entrance of populist platforms onto the main stage, while both economic inequality and cultural backlash serve as the best explanatory variables for predicting populist voting choice. Hence, they are not mutually exclusive but rather interlacing pieces or two sides of the same coin. The popularity of culturally-stimulated anger against immigrants, ethnic minorities or rich educated city elites is simply an easier way for parties to capture and mobilise voters. Ethno-nationalism and mono-culturalism are superior propaganda themes in organising the collective towards homogeneous voting patterns.

Conclusion

The brave new world of mainstream support for populist parties has changed the political landscape of European societies. What's behind this phenomenon? Three theories on the demand side were introduced: The Economic Crisis Hypothesis, The Economic Inequality Hypothesis and The Cultural Backlash Hypothesis. We argue that economic and political crises provide solid grounds for development of voter backlash against the current establishment. While the backlash may have been predictable on a macro level, the specific form it can take can varies greatly in accordance with country-specific problems. However, on a micro (individual voter) level, radical political views, ethno-national discourse, strong leadership desires, and intolerant regressivist attitudes are activated as defensive mechanisms during economic and political turmoil both in the EU and in the Western Balkans. The eroded middle-class in the suburbs and the rapid workforce transformations that took place in

the new globalised economies lead to economic crises which manifested themselves through rising economic inequality everywhere.

On the supply side of party strategy, a new methodology of binary classification was presented drawing a clear comparative line between inward-looking EU populists and outward-looking Western Balkan autocrats. Kakkar and Sivanathan (2017) test the hypothesis of strong leader preference in a deteriorating socio-economic condition during crises. They prove that populist leader profiles are most likely to meet the expectations for protection that a populist voter seeks. There is a clear preference and fondness for patriarchal, powerful, dominant and decisive leaders throughout the entirety of the electorate in the Western Balkans. Furthermore, voters show rational ignorance for the moral vague compasses such a leader has. In the Western Balkans the electorate is willing to re-elect a populist leader, despite an awareness of corrupt means of ruling, suppression of basic freedom of expression and diminished plurality of opinion. Why would voters put high value on pluralism and tolerance while being faced with an existential risk on a daily basis?

We do not choose populists because we fear them, but because they are a reflection of our fears. Populist leaders are just a symptom of an overall economic hardship and systematic economic failure which voters have been experiencing for years. The rational response of the supply side is to offer the electorate the greatest utility function and satisfy its latent desires in order to stay in power.

Economic, political and violent crises created a strong foundation for populism in the Western Balkans. When the optimal combination of demographic, economic and political factors are present, the voters repeatedly vote for populist leaders in line with their learned value system. In societies in which past experiences with nationalism and authoritarianism are part of the voter value system, the growing class struggle during crises re-activates the backwardness and regressive traits. The turbulent post-communist transition created a persistent economic uncertainty which continuously replicated the same values throughout multiple generations of populist rule. When the new populists came into power, they kept the advantage of the corrupt and extractive institutions in place, further eroding economic incentives and creating a pool of citizens disenchanted with politics. This self-reinforcing cataclysmic mechanism failed to provide the necessary stimulation for people to save, invest, innovate and generate economic value.

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II
POLITICS

THE CONTINUITY OF POPULISM IN SERBIA: FROM THE 19th TO THE 21st CENTURY[1]

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A b s t r a c t

In the second half of the 19th century, Serbian populism became a focal point of the political life of the country and the dominant social model. Established by the Radical Party and relying on the ideas of Russian populism, it was manifested in two forms: as social egalitarianism and ideological nationalism. A monopolistic party, reliance on Russia, an authoritarian leader, essentialisation of the nation and a striving for the establishment of a great state were the basic forms through which it was manifested. In socialist Yugoslavia the predominant form of populism was the leftist one, emanated through resistance to market reforms and the liberalisation of society. At the time of the breakdown of European socialism, Serbia, at the time of the so-called antibureaucratic revolution, turned towards radical populism personified by Slobodan Milošević. That was a time of transformation of leftist and pro-Yugoslav populism into a predominantly right-wing Serbian populism with an ultranationalist content. The pattern established in this way has not significantly changed to the present day.

Keywords: *Serbia, populism, nationalism, socialism, antibureaucratic revolution*

Theories of populism are still at an early stage of development, for it is a phenomenon that is relatively new and controversial in the domain of politics and society in the West. It undoubtedly has to do with the political consequences of the great economic crisis dating from 2008. In the view of Jan-Werner Müller (2017, 14), "we lack coherent criteria on the basis of which we could determine when political actors become populists in a meaningful sense of the term". Accusations of populism often occur in political struggles as a sort of stigma thrown at political opponents, while there exist theorists who interpret it as "an authentic voice of democracy",

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such as Christopher Lasch. Werner Müller systematises the recognition of populism in the form of several elements. The first, but by no means only one of which, is sharp criticism levelled at the "elites" and "the establishment". Apart from anti-elitism, an important element of populism is also anti-pluralism. "The 'people' are perceived by populists as an indivisible whole that cannot be divided according to one's political preferences. Such a whole, the essentialised 'people', can only be represented by 'authentic' political representatives who are capable of understanding it because they possess a special kind of sensibility. On account of this, those who are not supporters of populists, as a rule, are branded as a corrupt elite and an ostracised establishment — those who are not truly a part of the people, which, viewed from the essentialist perspective, is always moral, in the right and uncorrupted (Mudde, Kaltwasser 2017, 11-16).

Due to its anti-pluralist and organicist character, each populism necessarily enters into a pact with authoritarianism and endangers the democratic order, which is essentially a pluralist one. According to Jan-Werner Müller (2017, 15-16), populist regimes are characterised by three central components: they strive to place the apparatus and institutions of the state under strict control, the demonstrate corruption and widespread clientelism that presupposes material benefits or political "short-cuts" to the citizens' support, and finally they aim to systematically smother the voice of any critically-inclined media and civil society. This is a generic model, within which there exist different variants, but all populists justify their conduct by claiming that it is only them who represent the people, in the name of which they are allowed to implement undemocratic and authoritarian methods in practice. Even though it denies the crucial postulates of democratic governance, populism speaks in the name of the highest democratic ideals — the model according to which "the people rules". Populists come to power in elections, using the mechanisms of liberal democracy, which they subsequently call into question or abolish altogether. Each populism is closely connected to the politics of identity — to nationalism as the key legitimising determinant of the populist policy, for the "people" is the essentialised and reified form of the identity narrative.

The foundations of populism in Serbia were laid down in the 19th century by Nikola Pašić and the People's Radical Party, headed by him. Proceeding from the egalitarian traditions of the socialist doctrine of Svetozar Marković and relying on the ideological concept of Russian populism, Pašić laid the basis of the ideology of the social, national and political unity of the Serbs, denying the need for social differentiation and political pluralisation. Towards the end of the 19th century, Russian populists, acting under the influence of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, were recognised as strong opponents of the capitalist development of Russia, arguing in favour of pre-capitalist forms of production that predominated in rural regions of Russia. Their

ideological concept was opposed to the liberal political reforms that were unfolding in Western Europe around the middle of the 19th century. They were also opposed to any change of Russian society that would not take into consideration the value-based aspirations of the Russian peasant masses (Kolakovski 1983, 377-392). Strongly influenced by Russian socialist thought, Svetozar Marković returned to Serbia after studying in St Petersburg and Zurich convinced of the resoluteness and originality of the ideas of Russian populism, which, in his view, led to the economic and social emancipation of the people. Marković's ideas about the "non-capitalist development" of Serbia and rejecting the development of bourgeois society presupposed creating an alternative, embodied in a kind of "people's self-governance", liberated from the constraints of bureaucracy and relying on the idea of "common property". As a true "phenomenon that duly appeared in Serbian society", through his theoretical work, Svetozar Marković levelled a strong criticism at liberalism and established the basic ideological foundations of the future People's Radical Party, always demanding of his political brothers-in-arms to manifest a true revolutionary dedication of authentic "representatives of the people's thought" (Perović 1985, 274-278). As the leader of the populist radicals, Nikola Pašić strove in his political work to provide continuity and institutionalisation to Marković's fundamental idea of creating an egalitarian "people's state", close to the interests of Serbia's peasant society and opposed to the much-reviled capitalist development of the Western world (Perović 2019, 350-351; Stojanović 2017, 43-66).

The basis of Serbia's 19th-century populism was resistance to the modernisation of society, striving not to follow the path taken by Western Europe, and faith in the ideological and political power of Russian autocracy and Orthodox Christianity. That is why the radical populists' slogan in the second half of the 19th century in Serbia was: God, the people, Russia. The basic means of political activity was the socially undifferentiated "people", which could be represented solely by the Radical Party and the only goals were said to be national liberation and unification. Collective freedom had to be above individual freedoms. In terms of social egalitarianism, Serbian populism was leftist but in terms of its nationalist essence, it was right-wing. This dichotomy would be retained throughout the 20th century. The central controversies of Serbian populism in the 19th century were manifold. Instead of the notions of rule of law and division of power, it promoted the principle of the people's and party state as the embodiment of "national characteristics", whereas instead of the idea of the market economy, the model that was adopted was that of a state-controlled economy for the purpose of preserving egalitarianism, distribution and implementation of the "national" aims. From the 19th century onwards, Serbian populism, both in terms of form and content, has been manifested as nationalism, and this constant has remained to the present day. Just as the basis

of the programme has not changed — the presence of an authoritarian leader, reliance on Russia, avoidance of Western models, a monopolistic party identified with "the people", a leader who is the only authentic interpreter of "the will" of the people, unity instead of division of power and the idea of creating a large and ethnically homogeneous state — as the central point of the programme (Perović 1985, 23-38; Perović 1993, 104-131; Brubejker 2017, 325-364).

The creation of the Yugoslav state changed the context in which Serbian populism developed, placing it in surroundings made up of different political traditions of Yugoslavia's constituent countries and confronting it with the very Yugoslav idea, which was linked to liberal-democratic traditions. The crisis of liberal democracy in Europe in the period between the great wars favoured a further development of the cultural and the ideological matrix of the anti-Western and the anti-liberal model in Serbia. The complex experience in the equally complex Yugoslav state contributed to the strengthening of the right-wing spectrum of Serbian politics, which could be identified with the dominant spirit of the times until the Second World War, which favoured autocratic and fascist regimes in Eastern Europe. Serbian fascism was a marginal phenomenon on the political scene, but with the increase of the anti-democratic discourse towards the end of the 1930's and the seeking an alternative, it was successful when it came to expressing the key items on its populist agenda: nationalism as the only tradition and reigning ideological paradigm; an anti-Western attitude, manifested not only through resistance to Western values but also through the striving to avoid following the Western development path; collectivism instead of individualism; collective freedom from "the other" instead of the individual freedoms of citizens; authoritarianism instead of strengthening the role of institutions; negation of the rule of law; the people's state instead of a modern state; a state-controlled not a market-oriented economy; russophilia, as opposed to adherence to Western values; striving for a national liberation and union of all Serbs instead of developing a state along realistic lines; sacrificing the freedom of the individual for the freedom of the collective; etc. (Perović 2015, 1528; Stojanović 2017, 12-17; Perović, 2019, 348-423; Hobsbaum 2002, 5-26)

Preserving the content, the populist form changed somewhat in the second half of the 20th century. In socialist Yugoslavia, populism was manifested in the policy of the ruling Communist Party. The anti-fascist winners of the war established a monopolistic and undivided rule, with an authoritarian model of a party state and reliance on Soviet Russia. From such a position of power, they dealt harshly with the perpetrators of the Quisling terror campaign, and also with their ideological opponents. The new powers-that-be referred to the people as the source of their authority, court decisions were passed "in the name of the people", and an important slogan of the new victors' populism was: "Death to fascism, freedom to the peo-

ple", while the political nomenclature often used the term "the working people" as a political-ideological and constitutional category. Another pillar of socialist populism in Yugoslavia was the demand for economic and social egalitarianism. For the sake of egalitarianism, all reforms and attempts at democratising the system were obstructed, as were all tendencies towards social differentiation (Popov 1993, 3-34; Stojanović 2010, 125-157).

When analysing the above-mentioned attitudes, it is logical to take into consideration the period from the early 1960's, when fundamental reform processes were initiated and started being resolved, to the early 1970's, when reform-oriented attempts at democratising the system in Yugoslavia were brought to a close by relieving a number of prominent figures of duty, first of all in Croatia and Serbia. During the course of that period, the authoritarian Yugoslav President Tito delivered three speeches, which, at moments of crises, expressed very similar views — this occurred in 1962, 1968 and 1972 respectively. Each of these speeches reflected the continuity of Tito's successful technique of maintaining his central authoritarian role in Yugoslav society by means of frequent appearances at mass rallies and in the media, as a direct and very effective method of populist mobilisation of the Yugoslav public (that is, "the working class", whose interests he represented though the Party) for ideological purposes. The first of the speeches referred to above was delivered by the Yugoslav President in Split on 6th May 1962, and for years afterwards it made Party hardliners feel nostalgic. In this speech, Tito invited not only the Communists but the people as a whole to struggle against getting rich and the usurpation of power, and he found the causes for the majority of the country's problems within the Party and its leadership. He urged that the influence of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia be increased, that the Communists, in the name of the people, assume responsibility for the development of socialism in Yugoslavia more directly. He demanded that those wishing to get rich be condemned and exposed to more severe measures, and that the same treatment be applied against speculators who travelled abroad and squandered foreign currency, as he put it. Tito also warned of the increase of bribery and corruption in companies, especially among managerial staff, saying that he was in favour of closing down and reducing the number of foreign trade companies. On this occasion, the Yugoslav President also condemned the "striving for making quick earnings" that had manifested itself in Yugoslav economy, and he commended the restrictive measure of banning the import of cars to Yugoslavia. He sharply criticised those managers who "only cared about profit and paid no mind to what their collective had decided", saying that the distribution of funds and determining the level of workers' income had to be equitable. After this speech, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses increased, people chanted Tito's name and swore allegiance to him throughout the

country — so much so that it was even claimed that the Yugoslav leader, bypassing the Party and the state institutions, "held a Party meeting with the entire people". During the radically leftist rebellion of 1968, Yugoslav students occasionally referred to this speech of Tito's as a positive example, compatible with their demands (Petranović, Zečević 1988, 1085-1088; Bešlin 2019, 261).

The speech that brought the students' 1968 rebellion to a close was delivered on 9th June; in it, he agreed with the students that there was a huge backlog of problems, and that the events of June that year had occurred before the Party got around to resolving those problems. He, too, was of the opinion that the major problems were "issues pertaining to self-management in work organisations and workers' collectives, which had to be urgently resolved." He said that he completely understood the students, accusing the Party that "its hearing had not been acute enough" when the students previously warned the powers-that-be that the amassed problems should be resolved more quickly. It was, he thought, high time that slowness and inefficiency were eliminated when it came to resolving the problems. The Party was unified only when problems were observed and conclusions drawn but not when it came to their implementation, for there were always problems and "separate views", Tito said. Economic and social reform required a much speedier and more efficient resolution of the problems, "so that the people might be given a sense of being able to improve their lives in the future". Each kind of populism always refers to "efficiency", in the name of which it is allowed to derogate the role of institutions. Tito urged that measures be taken "in order to improve the living and working conditions of the working class". It was necessary, Tito reiterated, to improve the position of the producers, who should not be made to carry the burden of the reform, to deal with the issue of employment and, in particular, to eliminate "major anti-socialist phenomena", which were becoming increasingly manifest and violated the egalitarian character of society and the system. In his egalitarian enthusiasm, he very energetically condemned "unwarranted riches" and "various anti-socialist phenomena", first of all the opening of privately owned factories, stressing that such things would not be allowed. He singled out the following issues as being key and most urgent to resolve — "the issue of the working class, that is, making the situation easier for producers in their companies, the problem of the distribution of funds, eliminating the huge discrepancy between people's salaries which were glaringly obvious, which is something I do not at all approve of". He also criticised the Party for allowing itself to be overly impressed by "various investments" and for forgetting to care about the working man, as he put it. Tito urged the students to monitor the realisation of the goals, and "whenever they are not clear about something, whenever something needs to be explained, let them come to me, let them send a delegation" (Đukić, 1989).

Tito's third turning-point-type speech, derived from the same ideological arsenal was an interview given to the daily *Vjesnik* and the well-known "Pismo [Letter]", within which he initiated the campaign for ousting the liberal Party leadership in Serbia in 1972. He reiterated the same arguments used before, thus nipping reform-oriented tendencies in society in the bud. By addressing the students in 1968, Tito basically called into question and disciplined the Party, turning the students' demands against it. This process strengthened the patrimonial and populist characteristics of society, as well as the autocratic contours of the political system. Still, the Yugoslav President did not address the students as his brothers-in-arms — he addressed them from the position of the leader of the "revolution", promising them that their egalitarian and anti-capitalist ideals would be fulfilled. Tito's personal authority was very much increased, "overshadowing all the state and Party institutions, Tito directly communicated with the students... A new revolution with the old leader", Latinka Perović wrote (1991, 57). Detecting unwanted changes that were changing the Bolshevik character of the Communist Party and its leading role based on firm unity, Tito resorted to more frequent direct contact with the masses, following his idea that the role of a leader becomes important only if "he represents the will of the people" as the decisive moving spirit, which he uses to organise and "formulate the thoughts of the people" (Dedijer 1986, 656). The idea of a charismatic Balkan leader who acts over and above institutions fit in with the Serbian political tradition of the 19th century and the basic contours of the political culture and populist policy in the 20th century (Kuljić 2005, 49; Urbinati 2019, 131-132).

The termination of the reform-oriented ideas of the Party liberals in the early 1970's in Yugoslavia strengthened the position of the neoconservative Party ideological matrix, which, by resorting to repressive methods, prevented the legalisation of pluralist phenomena and the democratic forms of Yugoslav socialism. One of the ousted liberal protagonists of the Serbian Party leadership, Marko Nikezić (2003, 126-131), warned of the dangers that threatened Serbian society through the ideological combination of "state socialism" and nationalism. As a reaction to the accelerated process of the transformation of Yugoslavia towards the end of the 1960s — specifically in Serbia, which was a part of the Yugoslav federation — nationalism and populism prevailed and became dominant among the intellectual elite and also among a number of politicians. Reacting to the decentralisation of the state and the democratisation of society that presupposed reforms leading to political liberalisation, they vehemently condemned the ongoing processes and voiced the dilemma: either Yugoslavia was to conform to the Serbs and Serbia, or there was to be a homogeneous Serbian state in the entire ethnic space populated by Serbs. The populist wave formed on these foundations in Serbian society exploded in the second half of the 1980s. As the new leader of Serbia with an almost consensual sup-

port in 1987, Slobodan Milošević, a populist, appeared on the scene. Riding on the wave of populism in the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution, criticising the "alienated" and "bureaucratised" elites, he won the broadest possible support in Serbia, which he used to initiate the creation of a great state in keeping with the plans of nationalist-populist ideologues. Populism was stoked by means of street rallies entitled "the happening of the people" and "truth rallies", which were shifted from Serbia to Montenegro in January 1989, when the legally-elected Montenegrin leadership was brought down in the streets. That particular concept had gained consensual support in Serbia. Its ideological foundation was rising nationalism, manifested as political populism. The true character of the movement that elevated Slobodan Milošević to the position of a leader is testified to by the designation of the political structure that became the new dominant force — "the happening of the people", otherwise known as "the anti-bureaucratic revolution". The attempt to export the populist course of action to other parts of Yugoslavia by means of "truth rallies" and "happenings of the people" proved to be a failure (Bešlin 2019, 650-765; Dragović Soso 2004, 76-128; Marković 2009, 35; Milosavljević 1995, 1-30; Trkulja 1998, 14-97).

During the course of organising the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution (1987—1989) and the coming to power of Slobodan Milošević, populism was transformed from a predominantly Yugoslav and egalitarian movement with a leftist and socialist content into a nationalist one with a right-wing agenda. Following the victory of the conservative trend among the Serbian Communists in the course of a Party plenum held in September 1987, the new leader Slobodan Milošević, as early as spring 1988, initiated his nationalist campaign striving to topple the leaderships of the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo in order to establish unity across the entire territory of Serbia. In order to achieve this, he resorted to the mass mobilisation of people in Serbia, who he won over by using nationalist-populist slogans that had been out of use in multinational Yugoslavia during its entire existence (Grdešić 2019, 35-38). Abolishing all attempts at pluralism and stigmatising them as a betrayal of the nation, the new populist regime, relying on a nationalist platform, accused the provincial leaderships of Serbia and Kosovo of "dismembering Serbia, betraying the nation and separatism". Even though the rhetoric of the new Serbian populism did not yet reject the Yugoslav framework and had a nominally socialist content, these themes were being pushed into the background in favour of the idea of Serbian unity strengthening the Serbian people at the expense of other peoples in multinational Yugoslavia. The mobilisation of the masses on the basis of a right-wing, nationalist populism was carried out fast — mass rallies became increasingly numerous and the Belgrade media, controlled by the regime, stoked up national sentiments, so that, under the pressure of the public opinion and street gatherings

in the course of 1988 and 1989, the provincial leaderships of Vojvodina and Kosovo were deposed as was the republican leadership of Montenegro. Milošević's loyalists took over the key positions in these units of Yugoslavia, whereby the new regime took over half the posts in the federal, parity-based institutions of Yugoslavia. The peak of the transformation of the new leader Slobodan Milošević from a Party apparatchik into a national leader occurred after Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro were placed under control. In June 1989, a hitherto unprecedented public event was held — a commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the mythical Battle of Kosovo, wherein the army of mediaeval Serbia was defeated by the Ottoman army. Deftly manipulating the people's emotions, national sentiments and resorting to a nationalist rhetoric, the regime of Slobodan Milošević gathered over one million people in Kosovo polje in the autonomous province of Kosovo, reportedly the location of the legendary battle fought in 1389 between the Christian and the Ottoman armies. In the historic speech that Milošević delivered there, he established the point of final discontinuity with socialist Yugoslavism and promoted the rhetorical and practical agenda of Serbian national-populism as the new ruling ideological paradigm (Đukić 1992, passim; Đukić 1994, passim; Čalić 2013, 339). During the course of this turning-point gathering, Milošević was finally promoted from a Party official using a moderately leftist brand of populism to an unassailable, authoritarian national-populist leader whose position was based on right-wing, nationalist populism. Starting from the sentence that he uttered before Kosovo Serbs living in the predominantly Albanian province of Kosovo: "No one can dare to beat you" in 1987 to the greatest mass gathering in modern Serbian history on the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo (St Vitus' Day — 28th June 1989), and during the course of the two years when hundreds of these so-called truth rallies were organised and the disloyal provincial and republican leaderships were deposed, the process of the transformation of Serbian populism from leftist-socialist to right-wing-nationalist was completed. From the latter platform, Slobodan Milošević would go off to wars fought for the sake of realising the national-populist idea of Greater Serbia. The central preoccupation of the new course of action, through the use of violence and due to the impossibility of taking over institutions of the federal state completely, was the creation of an ethnically homogeneous Serbian state on the territory of the greater part of Yugoslavia. If, in terms of form, the rule of Slobodan Milošević and his party (the Socialist Party of Serbia — SPS) was populist in character, in ideological terms, it was a case of syncretism of conservative and dogmatic segments of the League of Communists of Serbia (renamed SPS in 1990) and the conservative and nationalist intellectual alternative gathered around the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) (Popov 1993, 11-34; Milosavljević 2002, 340-374).

The wars fought during the break-up of Yugoslavia and the erasure of the borderlines between the republics, then, were the collective endeavour of a dominant part of the Serbian intellectual elite — as well as the highest point of its influence on state policy and the broader public in the past two centuries. The national-populist project, the crimes planned and systematically carried out — first of all in Bosnia and Herzegovina — were the result of a well thought-out plan of the dominant part of the Serbian intellectual elite, converging with the newly established populist and authoritarian establishment. The intellectual populism of social scientists — first of all historians and writers — served to "prove" the moral purity and righteousness of their own people and the "malignant nature" or the "criminal character" of all the others, convincing their followers of their role as eternal victims of their "ungrateful" neighbours, and doing so to such an extent that each act of theirs would become easily acceptable and morally justified in advance, as Dubravka Stojanović writes. Thus, at the outset of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and before and during the armed conflicts, a major part of the political, intellectual and media elite of Serbia, using populist rhetoric for the purpose of spreading nationalism, carried out the necessary ideological and mental preparation of society for war, presenting it as "inevitable", "just" and "liberating" (Stojanović 2010, 126-128).

The intellectual platform for internal Yugoslav antagonism and the dissemination of nationalist narratives in the second half of the 1980s, was identified by researchers within the framework of: SANU, the Writers' Association of Serbia and other cultural-ideological institutions. SANU first came out with a Memorandum (in 1986) — a *sui generis* Serbian national programme — which carried out the structural ideological and intellectual preparations for war. The influence of the central scientific and cultural institution on the formation of public opinion, on "the widespread belief that the crisis of Yugoslav society could only be resolved by resorting to radical measures — by causing a political crisis, defining the Serbian national programme, and *if need be*, alternatives to the Yugoslav state — can be considered to have been immeasurable". Similarly, even more radical views could lso be heard in the public discourse from other parts of society or from individuals but "none of them had the authority of the institution whose members, during the course of its history of one hundred years, had included the greatest names of Serbian science and culture" (Milosavljević 1995, 52). Researchers have quite rightly observed that the period between 1986 and 1999 can be defined as one of an intense ideological preparation and homogenisation of the national-populist matrix. One of the most influential disseminators of the new ideological paradigm, with which the wars for the Yugoslav heritage and territorial expansion towards the end of the 20th century were initiated, Mihailo Marković, wrote *post factum*: "The spirit of Serbia was magnificent. The reputation of SANU was at its highest point in history." (*Memoran-*

dum SANU 1989, 128-136; Đurić Bosnić 2016, 111-120; Milosavljević 1995, 52; Marković 2009, 209)

Following the breakdown of populist authoritarianism in Serbia, the wars and crimes, international isolation, defeats and economic ruin, Serbia deposed the personal bearers of power, but the ideological matrix and the national-populist platform survived. The idea of Greater Serbia was reshaped, having acquired new protagonists within the framework of the intellectual and political hotbed formed around Vojislav Koštunica. After the change of power in Serbia in October 2000 and the extradition of Slobodan Milošević to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, the essential characteristics of the ideology of his rule and the dominant value orientation of society were not changed. On the contrary, through the erroneous interpretation of the political changes as a turning point in the dismantling of "socialism", preconditions were created for the condensation and reaffirmation of the defeated Serbian national-populism. Through the ousting of Milošević — who, through violence and crimes, compromised the dominant ideological and practical matrices in society —, within the nationalist political and intellectual circles that formed around the new President Vojislav Koštunica, a consensus was established to the effect that the time had come for a rehabilitation and a reaffirmation of Serbian national-populism and for preserving it by building it into the very foundations of the identity of society. For that purpose, relevant intellectual forces were engaged, so that nationalism should be redefined and given a positive content. "It was perceived that the easiest way to achieve the set goal was to permute causes and effects, that is, to deny that nationalism was the ideology of the politics of power in the name of the nation, but that, on the contrary, it represented its very identity", as Olivera Milosavljević wrote (2007). Thus Koštunica's intellectual and political nationalist-populist movement, especially after the assassination of the liberal Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić (2003), not only reaffirmed the values of Milošević's epoch, but also prevented the liberalisation of Serbia, which was initiated in the year 2000. At the time, the aim was to disseminate theses about "good" and "democratic" nationalism, which led to intensive attempts at the reaffirmation and homogenisation of the compromised ideological concept that provided the platform on which the war conflicts in the post-Yugoslav area unfolded. A successor of Slobodan Milošević, Koštunica took the statement "the people knows" as his central slogan. This created the preconditions for a new Serbian populism,which, following the breakdown of a liberal orientation, would be established by the ultra-right-wing Radicals (Milosavljević 2007; Nikolić, Popović 2006, 104 et passim).

The re-establishment of the *ancien régime* and politics dating from the 1990s was particularly contributed to through the coalition of the pro-Western Democratic Party (which was the key agent of the democratic changes after 2000) and Mi-

87

loševic's national-populist and authoritarian Socialist Party. Their "reconciliation" (2008) and, in effect, the exculpation of the main protagonists of nationalist and war-mongering politics, as well as the perpetrators of corruption from the Milošević era, intensified the political breakdown of "the Republic of October 5th" and brought to power radical populists and ultra-nationalists in Serbia (Bieber 2019, 43). The process of solidifying the new, extreme nationalist and more emphatically anti-Western Serbian populism, personified by Aleksandar Vučić and his Serbian Progressive Party, has been ongoing since 2012.

The establishment of the new radical populist course of action began immediately after the change of power in 2012. The aim of the dominant populism, soon enough, became the excessive popularisation and aggressive media promotion, to begin with, of the First Deputy Prime Minister — soon to become Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić. The media, institutions, the judiciary, security services… all were harnessed to contribute to the glorification of Vučić's personal rule and accelerated the development of his political authority. The most conspicuous examples of this were the suspicious arrests carried out in the course of the populist anti-corruption campaign, the abuse of the media and the increase of the social and redistributive component of the budget. The methods referred to above were combined with anti-Constitutional extraordinary elections and a never-ending pre-election campaign. Over time, Aleksandar Vučić showed an increasing ambition to concentrate all power in his hands. Security structures were soon placed under his control, which contributed to an impression among the public that he is the most powerful political subject in the state — and this was also contributed to by the forcible breakdown of all opposition parties and suppression of an alternative.

On the domestic front, Vučić's populist politics is characterised, apart from the element of populism, by a pronounced resistance to the Europeanisation and modernisation of Serbia, regardless of its occasional pro-European rhetoric. Populism is but one of the manifestations of Serbian nationalism — which survives as the only ideology — and Aleksandar Vučić is the bearer of that policy (*Populizam: urušavanje demokratskih vrednosti* [Populism: The Breakdown of Democratic Values] 2013, passim.). Although Vučić continues the deep and solid vertical of Serbian populism — reaching as far back as the 19th century —, the foundations of his authoritarian power, consisting of: nationalist homogenisation, xenophobia, authoritarianism, control of the media, destruction of institutions, clientelism, corruption, destruction of the opposition, etc. are not particularly original compared to other populist movements and regimes in Russia, Turkey, Hungary, Venezuela, etc. Vučić's rule, despite its historical roots, is primarily an eclectic combination of *déjà vu* elements of the classical populist system, as opposed to previous Serbian populist movements, which had a considerably higher degree of originality and authenticity (Var-

ga 2018, 89-123; Subotić 2007, 45-72; Stojanović 2010, 125-157). In that respect, the historical constants of Serbian populism have remained essentially unchanged over two centuries of modern history — nationalism and striving to form a great, ethnically homogeneous state; an anti-Western attitude and anti-liberalism; dependence on Russia; a monopolistic party representing a unified "people"; and an authoritarian leader — remain well into the 21st century, the models of social constitution and the dominant state ideological matrix. The ruling value paradigm, whose foundations contain two central pillars of Serbian populism — nationalism and anti-pluralism — have remained unshaken to the present day.

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RUSSIA AND WESTERN BALKANS 1999—2019. THE RISE OF POPULISM AND HYBRID WARFARE[1]

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A b s t r a c t

Russia's relations with the EU and NATO, and the candidate states, were based on the idea of undermining liberal democracy by supporting populist leaders and movements, in order to and renew Russia's political and strategic influence in Eastern and Central Europe. The Second Cold War between Russia and the West was announced already during the 1999 NATO intervention in Serbia and Montenegro. Russia has failed to stop NATO and EU enlargement, and decided to carry out hybrid actions using corruption of the Western political and business establishment, and campaigns of deception and lies in the media and social networks. The weaknesses in EU foreign and security policy, after 2008, and obviously since 2012, enabled Russia to establish three points of strategic pressure in response to EU and NATO enlargement in Eastern and South-eastern Europe: Baltic, Ukraine and Western Balkans. Simultaneously, Russia affected gradual rejection of the EU values and standards within the Visegrád Group states. Every major populist leader and movement in EU member states enjoyed official Russia's support. Successful EU integration of Eastern European states 2004—2007 was followed by political, financial and strategic crises (2008 finansial crisis, 2014 Ukraine, 2015 migrant crisis, 2016 Brexit). While EU was giving weak and hesitant answers, WB states were becoming objects of malign influences of Russia, China and Turkey. In general perspective, none of the EU strategic objectives have been achieved: Russia has not become a democratic state, WB were not fully integrated in the EU. Russia has also managed to secure secure economic and political strongholds in Hungary and Croatia, and produce political confusion in Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania, especially manipulating the Kosovo crisis. Kosovo was another EU failure of a poor leadership and weak political authority. Here are particularly underlined patterns of disinformation campaigns ran by Russian state agency Sputnik.

Key words: *Russia, hybrid war, populism, Western Balkans, EU Foreign and Security Policy*

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Emergence of Putin and New Perspectives
for the Western Balkans

After the first wave of EU integration, in the late 1990s, Russia became increasingly dissatisfied with the US-dominated position in international relations, seeking to restore its superpower status lost during the Soviet disintegration and the first transition period that followed. Russia also faced frustrations as the society sharply split into extreme winners and extreme losers, while the state apparatus of ideological guidance and political coercion, now in coalition with the Russian Orthodox Church and transitional oligarchs, started planning a revenge on a global scale. At the end of the twentieth century, Russia had two levers of power and global influence for the twenty-first century: strategic weapons and the export of cheap energy to the European market.

Vladimir Putin came to power thanks to resentments following the collapse of the USSR and the growing disorder in Russian Federation 1991—1999. Conservative circles in Russia, army, secret services and the church were trying to rebuild the imperial power, while it was becoming apparent, facing the new realities in world politics and economy. The rise of Vladimir Putin was accompanied by the political support from a society fed by generated feelings of anxiety, powerlessness and the conspiracy theories. From 1991, the deep state was feeling uneasy within the strategic interlude created by the US unilateral power. Putin provided a national consensus by including the tsarist tradition to Soviet heritage and relying on personally loyal transitional winners. Putin's model was based on criticism of the failed state, although appointed by Boris Yeltsin to serve as his successor. Official propaganda identified disorder with the Westernization. Instead of joining the West, the doctrine of liberation from the West was built around the core idea of a "sovereign democracy", a political order allegedly adapted to Russian interests and habits (Krastev 2006, 113-117).

Putin's propaganda used fears and was fed by fears. The fear of the EU was based on rejection of the liberal values. The fear of NATO was based on the impulse to restore Soviet strategic power. For Russia, the unipolar world of the nineties was unacceptable. Official propaganda was reconsidering European postmodernism as dangerous pathology, freedom and individualism as destructive forces with regards to the traditional values of "Russian man" and Russian society, using historic fears of European invaders (Shevtsova 2008, 34-40). "Information warfare, according to the original Russian government document *Conceptual Views Regarding the Activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in the Information Space*, is defined as confronting a state in the information space by damaging information systems, processes, and resources" (Ajir & Vailliant 2018, 72-79).

92

The Soviet empire was built with strategic reliance on buffer states as a defensive belt from prospective European conquerors. The fall of communism and European integration deprived Russia of continental strategic security. In opposition to European liberal-democratic order, and wishing to restore the status of a planetary superpower, Russia retained the territorial logic again subordinating the system to the logic and needs of authoritarian order. Over time, Russia was including internal propaganda in relations with the outside world, recommending a return to the concept of national sovereignty and traditional values as the concept of a general European stability (Glazychev 2009, 9-14).

During 1991—1999 Yugoslav wars South-eastern Europe was emerging as a latter platform for Russia's relations with the EU and NATO. Yugoslav conflict was the last major war in Europe in the twentieth century. War crimes and genocide provoked the first and last NATO military interventions ever, 1995 and 1999. EU and NATO integration of post-Yugoslav republics was delayed, if compared to the integrative, developmental and reformist potentials of pre-war Yugoslavia. Yugoslav disintegration was also becoming a paradigm, a scale model of the collapse of the Soviet Union, as Serbia mimicked Russia's role in trying to maintain control over the largest possible segment of former Yugoslav territory, and prevent political changes that followed the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. The former Yugoslav "core state", Serbia played an imaginary but employable role of Yugoslav Russia, the former Soviet core state (Samardžić 2005, 117-120).

In the following years after 1995 NATO intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia was showing increasing dissatisfaction with the US-dominated international relations and indicated intention to restore its former status of the superpower. A turning point for the new Russia's strategic policy, or the reason for the shift, was the 1999 NATO intervention in Serbia and Montenegro. Furthermore, in April 1999, NATO introduced a new strategic policy. Official Russia began to reconsider the West as a strategic threat. Russia's security concept of 1999 was based on restored anti-Western political views. Putin centralized the political power and imposed his personal role in the chain of command. On 12 March 1999 Czech Republic and Hungary joined the NATO, and on 24 March NATO campaign was launched in Serbia and Montenegro, to last until 10 June 1999. On April 13 the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) unilaterally joined the alliance with Russia and Belarus, apparently in an attempt to involve Russia into conflict. The creation of a Union State of Russia and Belarus, signed later, on December 8, 1999, was envisaged with a particular strategic importance. Putin also tightened the position of the national Security Council taking over part of the authorities of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff. Events were accelerating (Haas 2010, 16-18).

The new Foreign Policy Concept of 2000 emphasized that Russia is a great power, and must strengthen its influence on international politics. Cooperation and integration of the Russian Commonwealth of Independent States were priorities. Russia was concerned about NATO's intention to expand beyond its European borders, and with the economic and strategic domination of the US and the EU enlargement. Russia was warning, that the UN Security Council is the central institution of international relations. The NATO enlargement was interpreted as an obvious threat. Even a more complex challenge was the forthcoming EU integration of the former Soviet satellite states in Eastern, Central and South-eastern Europe. EU integration has opened and democratized societies, emancipated institutions from the executive power, freed the individuals. NATO and EU expansion also cast a shadow on the UN. The 1999 intervention in Serbia and Montenegro had not received Security Council approval and a few NATO members fenced off. EU threatened with substantial changes as the new Russian concept preferred a closed, controlled society, subject to manipulation by the authorities and the church. Russia was also dissatisfied with the election of pro-Western governments in Georgia and Ukraine (Haas 2010, 34-35).

Since 2001, Russia could draw the benefits from favourable global changes as the US unilateralism was overthrown almost at once. The 9/11 terrorist attacks revealed the vulnerability of the US as the greatest single global military force and the guarantor of Euro-Atlantic security. A new global reality emerged also thanks to the integration of PC China in World Trade Organization on 11 December 2001. Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill coined the BRIC acronym and predicted that four emerging powers, Brazil, Russia, India and China, were on their way to reshape the world economy. In a long-term Sino-Russian axis was formed in terms of an authoritarian alternative to the dominant Western liberal order (Öniş 2017, 1-16). Occasionally, it was wrongly assumed that the economic opening would contribute to a new wave of democratization (Rose & Chull Shin 2001; Wright 2009; Gilley 2009; Miller 2012). And that never happened. Of contrary, followed a global deterioration of democracies, marked, among other things, by the emergence of populism, a new essentially totalitarian form of "immediate democracy". Subsequently, the US intervention in Iraq in 2003 could not acquire a full consent of European partners.

Between 2000 and 2005, on the other side, Russian authorities and state services were building a populist cult of Vladimir Putin, emphasizing his merits in rebuilding the economy, intrusion of a supposed order into social relations, dealing with financial moguls (YUKOS affair 2003—2006[3]). New Russian populism has be-

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[3] "The Yukos case revealed the dangers of the commercialization of the political sphere, but the outcome was the further politicization of the economic sphere. We thus have a tri-

come a model for any European populist movement that relied on Putin's Russia (Sakwa 2009, 94-107).

Ten years after the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union the final boundaries of the European project's geographical spread were becoming clearer. The Russia-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement from 1994, enforced on 1 December 1997 to last 10 years, established the basic common goals, and recognized a shared responsibility for the international order based on multilateralism. The European Security Strategy has highlighted that the EU and Russia, with the US and NATO, and other international partners, have made the Balkans no longer at risk of major conflict. However, between 1998 and 2008, EU and Russia were mutually distancing. Europe was imposing its values of freedoms and democracy, science, knowledge, technologies and open market economy as an instrument of power. Russia imposed a concept of personal rule and energy as an instrument of power (Tichý 2019, 23-28). Energy resource has become a key political instrument of Russia especially after 2004 due to rising global oil and gas prices and increasing demand, and thanks to the global economic growth (China and India) (Haas 2010, 45--46). In 2003, Putin indicated the Russian gas company Gazprom as a near future powerful lever of influence over the rest of the world (Sakwa 2009, 94-107).

Optimism of EU and NATO enlargement to Southeast Europe was short-lived, culminating in Thessaloniki EU-Western Balkans Summit on 21 June, 2003: "The EU reiterates its unequivocal support to the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries. The future of the Balkans is within the European Union. The ongoing enlargement and the signing of the Treaty of Athens in April 2003 inspire and encourage the countries of the Western Balkans to follow the same successful path. Preparation for integration into European structures and ultimate membership into

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angle of power, freedom, and property accompanied by political as well as economic contradictions. The Yukos affair inhibited the move away from neo-patrimonial approaches to economic life, but it did not resolve the fundamental constitutional question about the proper scope for autonomous economic activity. The Yukos affair came to symbolize both the achievement and failings of Russia's headlong rush to the market. The freedom of the 1990s came at a high price, but the attempt in the 2000s to modify the earlier settlement came with penalties of its own. Sections of the elite used the attack on Khodorkovsky to achieve certain goals of the regime and to enhance the perceived interests of the state. Whether these goals are desirable, laudable, or achievable remain contested. The Yukos affair was not a Tiananmen Square massacre, when in June 1989 the Chinese authorities asserted their power over mass popular demonstrations calling for greater popular inclusion in the political process, but it did mark the moment when the political state in Russia reasserted its predominance over the nascent business class to determine the main contours of domestic and foreign policy. The power of the oligarchs had originally derived from authority delegated from government, and this practical dependency was now turned into political reality" (Sakwa 2009, 380).

the European Union, through adoption of European standards, is now the big challenge ahead. The Croatian application for EU membership is currently under examination by the Commission. The speed of movement ahead lies in the hands of the countries of the region" (EU-Western Balkans Summit Thessaloniki 2003).

In the meanwhile, assassination of the Serbian prime minister Zoran Đinđić, supported with a discreet approval of official Moscow, in the long run turned out to become successful as Serbia's gradual dissociation from the EU and NATO caused restlessness and instability in the former Yugoslav neighbourhood. Slovenia became a full EU member on 29 March 2004. At that point, obstruction of further EU integration and NATO enlargement in South-eastern Europe has become one of Russia's priorities in strategic pressure and corruptive influence.

Russia considered the 2004 EU and NATO enlargement a new strategic challenge in Eastern Europe and Mediterranean. The integration of several states of Eastern Europe into the EU in 2004 and 2007, followed by NATO, brought the West to Russian borders. Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004—2005 frustrated the Russian elite, challenging the essence of the Soviet power restoration project. Facing its strategic retreat, Russia started to search for weak within the increasingly complex EU structure. On the other hand, the EU was beginning to reveal the lack of unity in interests and attitudes. Its growing weakness was reflected in indecisive and unfocused foreign and security policy, energy dependency, corruption of officials and other members of political, cultural, and scientific establishment, and internal dissatisfactions caused by social shifts and inequalities. While preparing for a great Eastern Europe in 2004, the EU did not really have enough capacity to commit its foreign and security policy to Ukraine (Conradi 2017, 273-326).

As Romania and Bulgaria also joined the EU in 2007, and upon their accession to NATO, a buffer zone was established between Russia and the Western Balkans (Haas 2010, 52-55). Montenegro declared independence in 2006 with the intention to join the NATO and the EU. Points of strategic pressure after 2007 were Russian communities in the Baltic Republics and Ukraine, and former Yugoslav republics in South-eastern Europe. At these points, Russia sought to lay the strategic foundations of its renewed imperial power.[4]

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[4] "As a researcher at the Levada Analytical Center, Russia's leading institute for the study of public opinion, writes: 'Today, all categories of the population care about Russia recovering its power. As soon as a young man becomes conscious of his citizenship, the following idea emerges: The country is in bad shape, its authority in the world needs to be enhanced.' 12 Indeed, in 200, among those who regret the collapse of the USSR, 55 percent (as opposed to only 29 percent in 1990) cite as their main reason: 'People no longer feel they belong to a great power.' And those who regret the passing of the Soviet Union are not a small minority. In answer to the question, 'Would you like the Soviet Union and the socialist system to be reestablished,' 12 percent answer, 'Yes, and I think it quite realistic';

In South-eastern Europe Russia continued to rely mainly on frozen Kosovo conflict. The logic of proxy wars could also be felt in other rather unfinished post-Yugoslav states, still burdened by ethnic and religious differences, or border and cross border disputes. Russia explicitly opposed recognition of Kosovo independence without the consent of Serbia, and possibly even with the consent of Serbia. Serbia and Russia were using the frozen conflict as a stronghold of domestic and exported populism, a concept of an opposition to the Western values and integrations, based on the notion of a conservative nation founded on and traditional institutions of the state, church and authoritarian culture. Otherwise, the Kosovo crisis was the starting point for the Yugoslav crisis. The Kosovo "precedent" has been used already during the secret negotiations between the Serbian and Croat leadership on the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 1992.

Russia established strategic influence in Serbia and the Western Balkans since the fall of the Milošević's regime in 2000. Russia has already taken a sharper course during 1999 NATO intervention, and found a new political perspective in new conservative forces determined to reject Western influences, with increasing support from security circles and the church. Three important issues have been raised, relations with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), relations in the state union of Serbia-Montenegro, and future status of Kosovo. Obstruction of relations with ICTY was supposed to stop the process of understanding and confronting the politics and consequences of war aggression, crimes and genocide in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. It was necessary to tie Montenegro to the pro-Putin, anti-Western course, and prevent Montenegro to join the EU and NATO. Preserving the frozen conflict in Kosovo was following the Russia's model of manipulating ethnic conflicts in the post-Soviet neighbourhood. Serbian conservative forces assassinated the first democratic, pro-European prime minister, Zoran Đinđić. The promise at the Thessaloniki summit in 2003 that the Western Balkans had a European future turned to be insufficient and ineffective consolation. Serbia's EU prospects with negotiations frozen outright in May of 2006 as part of the EU's response to Serbia's perceived non-cooperation with the ICTY. In 2006. Montenegro declared independence. Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari proposed an ultimate settlement for Serbia and Kosovo in February 2007, after a period of consultations with both parties, to be proposed to the UN Security Council. However, political leaders from both sides signalled a total unwillingness to compromise on their central demands, so the EU finally acknowledged the complete failure of the negotiations. In the meanwhile, Russia repeatedly affirmed the intention to veto any

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48 percent say, 'Yes, but I think now it is unrealistic; and only 31 percent say, 'No, I would not'" (Hassner 2008, 11).

proposal not acceptable to both sides of the negotiations. Kosovo unilaterally declared independence on February 17, 2008. The United States and a majority of EU member states quickly recognized the Kosovo independence (Weller 2008, 47-55).

As the 2007 EU integration of Romania and Bulgaria built an additional barrier between Russia and the Western Balkans, the remaining channels of Russia's influence remained the power of the energy sector, corruption of South-eastern European officials and propaganda. However, Russia has also strengthened its reliance on classic strategic resources. Considering that the international environment had changed significantly, in March 2008, Russia announced a new foreign policy strategy. Russia also considered a threat of NATO expansion to Ukraine and Georgia, and a planned US missile shield, and the intent to deploy US troops in Eastern Europe. In order to restore the status of a great power, Russia further encouraged the energy policy and diplomacy based on the energy sector. The defence budget was increased from 2.5 to 3.5% of GNP, and the function of Minister of Defence extended to the function of Deputy Commander-in-Chief. The Minister was thus effectively provided with the position of Vice-President and supervision of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Ministry of the Interior affairs (Haas 2010, 33).

The First Milestone, the 2008 Crisis

EU and NATO 2004—2013 enlargement took place in states that proved to be able to apply EU institutional standards and democratic procedures, and ensure the effectuation of European freedoms. However, a series of crises that have erupted since 2008 have provoked populist responses in the EU and its neighbourhood. The rise of populism was especially successful where the influence of Russia and conservative forces prevailed over independent institutions and democratic procedures. In Baltic states and Ukraine, Russia counted on Russian ethnic minorities and urged for respect of their collective rights. In South-eastern Europe, Russia found its sphere of influence in unresolved ethnic, religious and border conflicts. The domino effect of collapse of fragile democracies in South-eastern Europe was caused by the 2008 elections in Serbia. The alleged victory of the European forces was illusive, as the true outcome revealed the long term return of the communist nationalist regime in its full capacity. The day after definite election victory, the new president of Serbia-Montenegro, Vojislav Koštunica, received explicit support from Russian diplomacy on October 6, 2000, who was primarily interested in his predecessor not answering to the ICTY.[5]

Previously, president Boris Tadić visited Russia during his presidential campaign. The Socialist Party of Serbia, the most responsible for war aggression, war

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[5] Retrieved from http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/39421.

crimes, genocide, international sanctions, self-isolation and the destruction of institutions and society possessed the key coalition capacity to influence strategic decisions of all governments since. The Socialist Party of Serbia became the most important intermediate of the Russian state influence. Immediately after the elections, Serbia sold to the Russia's state owned Gazprom the 51% based control over the state-owned oil company "Naftna Industrija Srbije" (NIS) and an exclusive right to exploit natural resources. The agreement, otherwise approved both by a convincing pro-government and opposition majority in parliament, was disputed as underpriced, in Russian benefit. Serbia justified the deal as a necessity to secure energy stability in the region, announcing its benefits in the South Stream project, and Russia's involvement in defending Serbia's territorial rights over Kosovo (Vlček 2019, 163-176).[6]

By taking over the energy sector Russia has also provided means of financial penetration and corruption. Russian Sberbank appeared both in Serbia and in the neighbourhood, also in Croatia, as an extended arm of the Russian state. Serbia's foreign policy was established on "four pillars", the EU, the US, Russia, and China (Serbia's cooperation with China, the European Union, Russia and the United States of America 2017, 11).

The events that followed, in a long run, confirmed that Serbia had given up EU integration, and only simulated agreements and cooperative efforts in order to maintain EU financial assistance and political support.

Dimitri Medvedev's presidency 2008—2011 was only a following interlude in Russia-EU relations. Medvedev enjoyed an otherwise unfounded liberal reputation in the EU (Donath 2007; Aslund 2012).

Croatia and Albania joined NATO on 1 April 2009.

The EU-Russia summit in 2010 led to a series of bilateral modernization partnerships between Russia and EU member states. At that point, Russia had already exploited the weaknesses of the EU's foreign and security policy to consolidate its foothold in the Caucasus region, and prepare aggression against Ukraine. Russia needed a stronger foothold with Western Balkan states in order to undermine EU enlargement objectives. The 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections in Serbia

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[6] "Gazprom has taken advantage of the disarray inside the European Union by forging ahead with its own contracts with Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary and now Serbia, as it consolidates its presence in southeastern Europe. Under terms of the provisional agreement, approved Tuesday by Serbia's cabinet, Gazprom has offered to pay $600 million for a 51 percent stake in NIS, with pledges to turn Serbia into a hub for Russian energy. The contract is to be signed Friday in Moscow" — Dempsey, J. "Russia's Gazprom Takes Control of Serbian Oil Monopoly". *The New York Times* (Jan. 23, 2008) https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/23/world/europe/23serbia.html.

facilitated the return of the war coalition of the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Serbian Progressive Party (which emerged from the Serbian Radical Party). Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt stated that, with the new president, "Serbia under Nikolić must create confidence in its will to move towards Europe and partnership in the region" (Ristic, Andric & Barlovac 2012). For a while, Serbia did indeed hold a pro EU course. Under strong EU pressure, and under the tide of Euro-enthusiasm in Serbian society, on 19 April 2013 was concluded the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations between the governments of Serbia and Kosovo, on the normalization of their relations, mediated by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton.[7]

The next and last major EU success in the Western Balkans took place as Croatia became the 28th member state on 1 July 2013. Following the EU integration of Croatia in 2013, and the signing of the Brussels Agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, aimed at ensuring a peaceful solution and mutual recognition, the obstruction of the EU and NATO integration of the rest of the Western Balkans became Russia's priority. "Russia has successfully hindered almost every step the Western Balkan states have taken to move closer to NATO or the EU. This helped President Putin to consolidate his popularity and strongman image in Serbia (with a 57% approval rating there, he is the most trusted foreign leader), while sustaining sympathy in Republic Srpska, the northern municipalities in Kosovo, a pro-Russian base in Montenegro and the nationalist political party VMRO-DPMNE in North Macedonia" (Secrieru 2019). Along with its aggression on Ukraine, Russia definitely launched, a hybrid war against the EU using propaganda, campaigns of lies and deception, corruption of officials, and support for populists both in ruling parties and in the opposition. In order to achieve its strategic goals, Russia had to ensure subordinate clientele bound to obstruct the reforms and promote anti-EU alternatives (Galeotti 2016; Chivvis 2017).

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[7] "In fact, the lack of transparency was a deliberate and strategic choice on the part of the EU to allow both parties to interpret the agreements in a way that would be beneficial for their respective positions. The talks involved only high-level government representatives from the beginning. Both parliaments, as noted above, were informed and provided their support for the agreements. However, this was a consequence of governments seeking to secure legitimacy for any agreements rather than EU policy, and parliaments received only minimal information. Considering the vagueness of the agreements, it is in fact odd that parliament would ratify such an agreement in which all key aspects remain unelaborated. In keeping with the absence of a comprehensive agreement, the idea of any public vote also never featured on the agenda. Without a clear end point, there was little to ratify in a referendum, and the risk would have been considerable that any agreement might be rejected in Kosovo or Serbia. However, the absence of a public vote on the agreement makes it argu-ably more easily reversible." (Bieber 2015, 316).

Along with aggression on Ukraine, Russia has launched a hybrid war within the EU using propaganda, campaigns of lies and deception, corruption of officials and support for populists in government or the opposition. In order to achieve its strategic goals, Russia had to ensure subordinate clientele bound to obstruct the reforms and promote anti-EU alternatives (Rácz; Galeotti 2016; Chivvis 2017). "In Russia, soft power is the exclusive tool of state sponsored agencies supported by state-controlled media. The underlying message is promotion of a common faith in the superiority of approved behavioural standards and supremacy of conservative, orthodox cultural norms. Under Putin, the nascent civil society that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Union was eliminated or severely curtailed under the resurgent strong-state government model. Internal critics, nearly all of whom have been silenced in one way or another, are forced to accept the present model as a carbon copy of the old Soviet system." (McNabb 2016, 65-66).

Favourable circumstances have occurred in a series of successive crises that turned the EU leadership and institutions becoming ineffective and unconvincing: the 2008 financial crisis, Ukraine crisis 2013—2014, migrant crisis from 2015, and 2016 Brexit. EU foreign and security policy failures further aggravated all serious internal issues in the Western Balkans. The Russian authorities have launched disinformation campaigns using both traditional and online media, including social networks.[8]

The Western Balkans were further weakened by the long duration of Yugoslav disintegration, while the challenges of Serbia's recognition of Kosovo and Greece's

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[8] "Russian pro-government traditional media have a large reach and budget. Two of those outlets, RT and Sputnik, operate in 100 countries and broadcast programs in thirty languages. RT's annual budget of around € 270 million allows it to compete on the global news scene with BBC World and France 24, which have similar budgets. Then there is the Internet Research Agency, which was revealed to be a so-called troll factory owned by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close associate of Putin. The agency conducts online information operations and is an important part of Russian disinformation activities. Operating since 2013, it has a monthly budget of around € 1 million and employs about eighty people divided across foreign sections. The task of the employees — the "trolls" — is to set up fake social media accounts and conduct discussions online with people from all over the world with the goal of inducing extreme emotions and riling up people. Since the beginning of 2020, they have also been spreading disinformation about the coronavirus with the aim of inducing distrust in public institutions and aggravating the public health crisis in the EU. Most often, their posts on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Telegram) and other online platforms (YouTube, Google) question the EU's democratic legitimacy and play up sensitive topics in public debate such as migration, national sovereignty, and values. The channels and disinformation strategies they use depend on the target country and target group of their message, and the effectiveness of it depends on the resilience of societies to counter information, manipulation, and provocation": Legucka, A., "Russia's Long-Term Campaign of Disinformation in Europe" In https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/81322

recognition of Northern Macedonia were postponed, and cross-border disputes also unresolved, even between Slovenia and Croatia, already integrated in EU. The most important pillar of that clientele was the transition boot concentrated in circles related to the security services. Utilizing a clientele in the ruling parties and administration, Russia soon submerged the influence of the EU on key political decisions, and has primarily achieved success in public information and propaganda, in sectors where editorial influence has been established by the linkages of the executive power, secret services, transition moguls and the Orthodox church. Russia was imposing a concept of personal rule and energy as instruments of power and influence. Energy resource became Russia's key political instrument, especially after 2004 due to rising global oil and gas prices that responded to the increasing demand to a large degree caused by global economic growth (China and India), so that Russia could blackmail the European market by pointing the demands from Asian markets. In 2003, Putin defined Russian gas company Gazprom as a future powerful lever of influence over the rest of the world (Tichý 2019, 22). The definite decision was the sale of Serbian Oil and Gas Industry (NIS) to Russia's Gazprom monopoly in 2008 at a controversial price while Russian and Serbian officials spoke in unison about Serbia and Russia's historical friendship (Socor 2009).

Why the EU enlargement policy became a special challenge for Putin's Russia? The EU enlargement was a foreign policy tool to promote values, institutions and democracy. Enlargement implies the adoption and application of laws, norms and values, and profoundly changes institutions and social relations, economy, rule of law, good and efficient administration, ecology, security, some decisions are transferred to supranational institutions, European ideas spread further in a neighbourhood. The enlargement of the EU took place almost in parallel with the expansion of NATO. While NATO enlargement was an immediate challenge, EU integration was bringing substantially more dangerous undermining features for the Putin regime.

For Russia, the EU is also an identity problem. The expansion of the EU to the east also aroused economic interests. The EU "threatened to limit Russian commercial leverage" with Ukraine. One of the interests was the transit route for Russian gas. Russia's Gazprom often enjoys exclusive rights with respect to access to infrastructure and other non-competitive privileges, such as a prohibition of re-sale or re-export (Zorić 2017, 15).

The EU enlargement delay after 2007, or after 2013, belongs to the series of events that followed, exposing internal weaknesses of the candidate states, malign alien influences, and subsequent EU crises. The most contentious internal aspects were corruption, organized crime, weaknesses of the judiciary, poor economic performance, loath protection of minorities, state mismanagement. Propaganda raised

scepticism towards reforms, the EU value system and the concept of supranational unity, to a distrust of representative institutions. One of the propaganda platforms was the alleged Slovene closeness. Russia's official pressures ran from the UN Security Council, by disposing the right to veto every decision aimed at WB states that did not match Russian interests. Putin's regime was also using corruption as a tool of political influence (Harding 2005; Koval 2017; Benner 2017).

Following the EU and NATO enlargement in Eastern and South-eastern Europe, Russia laid strategic foundations on three important points: the Baltic, Ukraine and the Western Balkans. In South-eastern Europe Serbia became an ultimate stronghold of Russia's influence and destabilization of the neighbourhood. From 2008 to 2015, two Russian presidents, the Prime minister and Minister of foreign affairs visited Belgrade eight times. Serbian officials were hosted in Moscow nine times in total. In 2014 both Medvedev and Putin visited Belgrade, and imposed an agreement on South Stream gas pipeline, giving an "unconditional support" for the Kosovo turnover as Serbian officials rejected the application of the previously signed 2013 Brussels Agreement. Russia and Serbia also reached agreements on trade liberalization in 2009 and 2011, giving Serbia exclusive rights as the only state apart from Commonwealth of Independent States. Serbian used EU sanctions so exports to Russia rose up to 68% in comparison with the year 2013 (Zorić 2017, 39). Serbia even joined the military manoeuvres Slavic Brotherhood 2017.[9]

Ukraine War and Hybrid Warfare

Putin was re-elected again as a President in 2012, when a breakdown in relations with the EU was already being felt. But he did not immediately cause the crisis. Deterioration started from events at strategic points, in the Caucasus and the Black Sea. First Armenia suspended the negotiations with the EU and joined Eurasian Economic Union instead. The pressures on Moldova introduced pressures on Ukraine.

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine started in February 2014 in the Crimean peninsula and the Donbas region. On request of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin Federation Council of the Russian Federation decided to use military force on territory of Ukraine, on 1 March. Russia annexed Crimea after a referendum organized by Russian authorities on 16 March 2014. On 11 May, Donetsk Republic declared independence. On July 17, pro-Russian separatist forces shot down the Ma-

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[9] "Belarus, Russia and Serbia are holding joint military exercises of landing troops close to the Polish border. The choice of time, place and participants is not accidental. This is a response to Montenegro's accession to NATO and a further confirmation that Serbia and Russia closely cooperate in the field of security." In "Slavic Brotherhood against NATO". Russia Monitor (Warsaw Institute, 9 June 2017) https://warsawinstitute.org/slavic-brotherhood--against-nato/

laysian Airlines Boeing 777, believing that it was a Ukrainian air-force jet, and killed all 298 passengers, the majority of them Dutch, and 15 crew-members. In August, Russian military launched a land invasion on Donetsk Oblast and defeated Ukrainian forces in early September. Since March 2014, the EU has progressively imposed sanctions against Russia, as diplomatic measures, individual asset freeze and travel restrictions, restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, restrictions on economic cooperation. Ukraine remained a divided state.

The Ukraine crisis coincided with the appointment of Federica Mogherini to the position of High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in Jean-Claude Juncker's new Commission, following the 2014 European election. Her nomination proposal had been opposed by Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, and Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands and the United Kingdom also raised concerns, since her stance towards Russia concerning the Ukrainian crisis was considered to be "too soft" (Wright 2014). On 2 August 2014, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi formally nominated Mogherini to EC President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker, as Italy's official candidate for EU Commissioner. The decision was effective from 1 November 2014 (Juncker 2014).

The annexation of Crimea and the Russian occupation of the eastern Ukraine (similar to the partition of Poland in 1939), became a new basis of Russia-EU relations. "Following the annexation of Crimea and the ensuing worsening of EU—Russia relations, Moscow's strategy in cyberspace has been increasingly hostile and assertive. While Europe's multiple crises have been impacting on citizens' everyday lives, Russia has been making full use of its influence on traditional and social media to inject confusion and ignite fears in EU politics" (Viceré, 2). The Ukrainian crisis has spilled over into South-eastern Europe and Syria. The collapse of the EU's foreign and security policy encouraged populists both in the EU and in the immediate periphery of the EU. Visegrád Group, an intergovernmental cooperation between Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, mainly opposed the EU sanctions against Kremlin. Only Poland clearly condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Since coming to power in 2010, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has been conducting a strongly pro-Russian foreign policy, officially called the "Eastern opening", and becoming strongly supportive in his relations with Balkan populists.[10]

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[10] Between 2007 and 2013 Serbia ignored or refused a several hundreds of EU declarations (Serbia 2013 Progress Report https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/serbia_2013.pdf). In 2014 crisis Serbia supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, however refused to vote of UN General Assembly Resolution in favor of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Serbia repelled the European Commission decision on restrictive measures in response to the illegal

EU, however, recognized the reality of divided, partly occupied Ukraine. Already in January 2015, Mogherini launched an initiative among EU foreign ministers exploring a potential rapprochement with Russia, including a pathway to ease economic and open discussion on topics as travelling, visas and energy policy. The proposal sharply refused United Kingdom and Poland. During following years, Mogherini continued to avoid naming Russia as the main creator of hybrid war against the EU, especially the hostile disinformation campaigns and officials' corruption. On 27 April 2017, on her first official visit to Russia, Mogherini met with minister of foreign affairs Sergei Lavrov. Their discussion covered the implementation of the Minsk Agreement, the Annexation of Crimea, homophobic discrimination in Chechnya, and other topics. Mogherini stated that she supported policies in the spirit of "cooperation rather than confrontation."[11]

Russia's Pressures and Failures in Western Balkans

In 2015 and 2016, Russia took the chance of the Mogherini's goodwill and weaknesses of EU foreign and security policy. Russia was using state agencies, the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) to gather information and target public opinion and leadership in order to promote its foreign policy and political values (Haas 2010, 45). Populist leaders and organizations have become a key political tool. Populists have allowed Russia's official policy to penetrate the institutions of EU member states and candidate states. In the Western Balkans, the main vehicle for misinformation and public pressure campaigns has become agency Sputnik, related to the Russian government. While promoting official policies and values, Sputnik was disseminating lies and defamation to discourage public opinion in support of EU integration with NATO, and to direct the EU and NATO candidate countries' public policies towards self-isolationism in relation to the European neighbourhood. The campaigns also discredited democratic institutions, and included raising ethnic tensions and religious intolerance. The main goals were: to provide stable support in Serbia, to keep Kosovo in a state of so-called frozen conflict, to provoke new ethnic divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to stop Montenegro and Macedonia in their intentions to join NATO and the EU. The actions included support for populist leaders, organizations and governments in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary.

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annexation of Crimea (Serbia 2014 Progress Report https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-
-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/brochures/serbia_2013.pdf).

[11] "EU an 'indispensable' UN partner, working for rules-based international order, Security Council told". 2017. UN News 9 May. Retrieved from https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/05/556932-eu-indispensable-un-partner-working-rules-based-international-order-security

The central territory of Russian strategic influence became Republika Srpska, as Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to become an effective, functional state, with a minimum of common institutional interest. The other part of the State, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was also split as the key influence was established by Turkey over the Bosnian people, and both Croatia and Russia over the Croatian people. Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, the conservative Croat party, while declaratively pro-NATO and pro-EU, was blocking the state's NATO accession, as the party leader Dragan Čović became the immediate executor of Russian interests. "There are several levels where this influence is shown. Formal level of Russian influence is through the direct decision making powers in the functioning of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the international representative in BiH whose primary mandate is to monitor the implementation of the peace settlement through being a part of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. Peace Implementation Council also includes seven other countries, the EU and the Organization of the Islamic Conference represented by Turkey. The OHR is, together with the EU delegation, the most powerful international institution in the country, and this gives Russia a voice in every political dynamic in the country, as well as a direct influence on all work of the whole international community inside Republika Srpska". Russia's economic influence in Republika Srpska was established, similarly as in Serbia, with the purchase of the oil refinery in Brod, refinery in Modriča and distributer Petrol (for only 120 million euro), and the deal was confirmed by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska (the first session was declared secret). "The South Stream" narrative was mostly used by Serbian politicians in promotion of a Russian interest. The Russian state-owned „Sberbank" established a wide regional presence (Kremlin Watch Program 2020, 8-16).

Russia has profited profoundly from the weaknesses of the EU during the long period of political and crisis that probably also provoked crisis in EU leadership. Populist leaders, movements and parliamentary political parties were fed by the absence of clear views and visions of the future of EU leadership. Russian propaganda has wiped out deception campaigns on alleged dangers from the flows of migrants, fostered anti-vaccine campaigns that have cast doubts on scientific knowledge, especially scientific medicine, and interpreted the Brexit from a perspective of the futility of the entire EU project. The Visegrád Group states began to progressively violate democratic norms and procedures. In relation to Ukraine crisis, Poland supported personal and economic sanctions against the Russian Federation. The Czech Republic also criticized Russian activities, the social democrat Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomír Zaorálek even compared aggression against Ukraine with German annexation of the Sudetenland and occupation of Czechoslovakia (1938-1939), however, Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka disputed the effectiveness

of the economic sanctions against the Russian Federation, and the government refused to supply Ukraine with weapons. "Former Czech president Václav Klaus and former conservative prime minister Petr Nečas also expressed explicitly pro-Russian stances". The Slovak Prime Minister disagreed with official EU policy towards the Russian Federation, even stressing "the pointlessness of sanctions against Russia". In September 2014, Fico described the conflict in Ukraine as a "geopolitical struggle between Russia and the USA". "Despite these critical remarks Slovakia did not block the sanctions. Both Fico and M. Zeman participated in the 70th anniversary celebrations marking the end of the Second World Warin Moscow in May 2015; however, Fico did not take part in the military parade. Their actions contradicted decisions made by Polish and Hungarian representatives not to attend the Victory Day celebrations. One month later, on a working visit to Moscow, Fico stressed that there were no controversial issues between Slovakia and the Russian Federation." Hungary officially condemned the annexation of Crimea, however the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared that "Hungary is not a part of the Russian—Ukrainian conflict. Orbán was disapproving economic sanctions against Russia, and stated that EU had "shot itself in the foot." "In June 2015 Hungary was also one of the very few EU countries, besides Finland, Austria and Slovakia to hold bilateral talks with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. Putin visited Budapest in February 2015" (Marusiak 2015, 38-44).

In another fragile state, in North Macedonia, Russia was using the Macedonian name dispute with Greece, internal tensions in relations between Macedonians and Albanians, and malign influences from Bulgaria and Serbia and their populist leaders. Increase in Russian intelligence activity was noticed already after the Greek veto for North Macedonia at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest. While confronting relatively little support in Macedonia for its strategic goals,[12] Russia was counting on the nationalistic VMRO-DPMNE (The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization — Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) and the support of the leader and prime minister Nikola Gruevski in Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary, and their populist leaders. Another tool of destabilization become the Democratic Party of the Serbs, included in ruling coalition with the VMRO-DPMNE.[13] Russia was describing the ethnic relations in Macedonia as the result of foreign interference de-

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[12] In 2017, 14% thought that Russia would be the best ally, comparing with the 42% for the EU and 17% for the US, and the opinion on who had the most significant influence, 41% thought that it was the US, 38% for the EU, and only 4% for Russia.

[13] In June 2016, together with party representatives from Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia, and Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina), DPS signed a pact with the ruling United Russia Party, and called for neutrality for the Western Balkans and membership of North Macedonia in the Eurasian Economic Union.

signed to create the so-called Greater Albania. Disinformation campaigns outlined the Macedonian political elites as servile to the Albanian political elites.[14]

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[14] In Macedonia, a propaganda campaign by the Russian Sputnik agency was based on spreading the belief that "the Macedonian population does not want NATO membership" but that the government "will not ask it for an opinion". An important pillar of the campaign was the anti-NATO policy of official Serbia. A dissemination of hostility in regard to ethnic Albanians was related to their alleged plans to make Macedonia part of Greater Albania: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201707181111960664-MAKEDONIJA/
Sputnik also pointed the EU and NATO hostility in relation to Russia, but also to China and its "Belt and Road initiative
https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/ 201705191111236983-nato-vardar-rusija-kina-/
Greece paved the way for Northern Macedonia in the EU, but France and the Netherlands "lowered the ramp": https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201910171121030965-koju--lekciju-srbija-moze-da-nauci-iz-samara-makedoniji-video-/
The "agents of chaos" in Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are supported by the US. Apartheid and Nazism are based on "exceptionalism": https://rs.sputniknews.com/intervju/201506282875922/
Washington is "really afraid" of the Russian expansion to the Balkans:
https://rs.sputnik news.com/komentari/201711061113344416-nato-trik/
The decision of EU ministers not to give a date for the start of negotiations undermines the credibility of the First Minister Zoran Zaev https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201910161121024185-evropska-unija-saopstava-zemljama-balkana-ne-racunajte-na-nas/
Bulgaria restrained, believes that Northern Macedonia does not qualify for EU accession talks, also Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/regioni/201910181121036029-bugarska-o-pocetku-pregovora--o-pristupanju-makedonije-eu-mogli-bi-da-ostanu-u-cekaonici/
https://rs.sputniknews.com/vesti/201906211120148578-nisu-jos-sazreli-premijer-bugarske--saopstio-makedoncima-pravi-uslov-za-pocetak-pregovora-sa-eu/
https://rs.sputniknews.com/regioni/201706121111534633-makedonija/
Pro-Bulgarian nationalists against joining NATO: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201906241120173585-dzaba-su-se-odrekli-imena-makedonci-imaju-jos-jednu-krupnu--prepreku-do-eu-i-nato-a-/
NATO will "ravage" Macedonia and Montenegro: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201708241112403640-Makedonija-NATO-cena/
NATO no longer has a purpose: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201912021121269197-severna-makedonija-clanstvo-u-nato-u-placa-najskupljom-cenom-/
Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić sending hate messages to Macedonian Albanians: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201705171111213713-makedonija-vlada-mandat-1/
North Macedonia will not join NATO any soon:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/regioni/201909031120745255-severna-makedonija-nece-skoro-u-nato/
Macedonia rejects both EU and NATO in referendum: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201810011117362210-makedonija-referendum-/
The new Macedonian government will increasingly resemble Ustasha's Croatian government, threatening peace and stability in the region: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201702271110192586-makedonija-vlada-nato-1/
Efforts to create "Greater Albania" have gained momentum:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/regioni/201809011117042744-Makedonija-NATO-rat/

Corruption and abuse of institutions were the triggers for the 2015 and 2016 civil protests in Macedonia, against the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, President Gjorgje Ivanov and Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. The political change took place after the early parliamentary elections held on 11 December 2016, as the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia succeeded to form a coalition government. on late February 2017. Russian threats took place in critical moments during the change of government and the announcements of improving relations with neighbouring Greece. Russian actions in Macedonia turned out as more clumsy than the Sputnik-directed propaganda. The culmination of Russian interference took place on 27 April 2017, when the Serbian intelligence officer Goran Živaljević was exposed as a link in the chain of malignant influences of Serbian journalists, MPs, and intelligence officers.[15] Around 200 demonstrators, many wearing masks, broke into parliament, attacking MPs in protest against the opposition Social Democrat party and others representing Albanian ethnic minority, and even wounded the opposition leader, Zoran Zaev.[16]

On May 31, 2017 the Macedonian parliament confirmed Zaev as the new Prime Minister. The Prespa Agreement was reached on 12 June 2018 between Greece and North Macedonia, concluding the 27-year name dispute. The Prespa agreement was ratified by the Macedonia's Parliament on 20 June. Opposition party VMRO-DPMNE boycotted the session and declared the Treaty as a "genocide of the legal state" and a "genocide of the entire nation". Political bots, organized trolling, disinformation, and hate speech on the referendum boycott campaign suggested an organized structure behind. Campaign was even related to the ruling party in Serbia, Serbian Progressive Party. The non-mandatory referendum was held on 30 September 2018, with voters asked whether they supported EU and NATO membership by accepting the Prespa agreement Despite 94% of voters voting in favour, voter turnout was

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The EU is readily considering a US plan for the admission of a "united" Balkans under an accelerated procedure to the second EU echelon: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201608141107758848-eu-clanstvo-balkan-zajednica-amerika-srbija/

[15] Goran Živaljević had close contacts with the MP Ivan Stoiljkovic, and Miroslav Lazanski, a Serbian journalist, political analyst, and current appointed Ambassador of Serbia to the Russian Federation well known for his pro-Russian and anti-NATO attitudes. Lazanski frequently commened North Macedonia should not change its name to join NATO etc.

[16] "Macedonia: protesters storm parliament and attack MPs." *The Guardian* (27. Apr. 2017) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/27/macedonia-protesters-storm-parliament-and-attack-mps; "Earlier this year five more people were added to the list of suspected organisers including former VMRO DPMNE Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, who fled to Hungary in November 2018 to escape a two-year prison sentence for corruption" In "Heavy sentences handed down to North Macedonia parliament attackers." *EU-OSC* (March 19, 2019) https://eu-ocs.com/heavy-sentences-handed-down-to-north-macedonia-parliament-attackers/

around 37%, less than the 50% threshold required to validate the results (Kremlin Watch Program 2020, 17-27).

Pressures on Montenegro were deeply rooted in the starting points of the anti-western course adopted by Russia back in 1999.[17] The final breakup of a state union with Serbia in 2006 it weakened Russia's strategic interests and discredited Serbia's rapprochement with Russia. Russia's presence in Montenegro was also based on historical closeness and the projections of Montenegro as an anchorage of Russian influence in South-eastern Europe, including access to the Mediterranean. An-

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[17] Russian state agency Sputnik took the most important role in the dissemination of fake news and diffamation campagns. Sputnik (formerly The Voice of Russia and RIA Novosti) is a news agency, news website platform and radio broadcast service established by the Russian government-owned news agency Rossiya Segodnya. In Serbia and Republika Srpska Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sputnik is the central news agency backed by both governments, and a basic stronghold for pro-government media. From 2015, Sputnik campaigned vigorously against Montenegro's entry into EU and NATO and used mostly the statements of propagandists from Serbia. Professor at the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade, Miloš Bešić claimed that NATO integration of Montenegro is affecting deep divisions and that an unstable political solution is at stake: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201704281110970722-duboke-podele-crne-gore-i-makedonije-1/ A massive political resistance was announced, and the possibility that the next, or a future Parliament assemby would withdraw the decision to join NATO: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201704251110927133-sta-posle-ulaska-crne-gore-u-nato-/
https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201703291110561075-kako-ce-reagovati-opozicija--na-prijem-crne-gore-u-nato-/
Montenegro's entry into NATO is an act of hostility towards Russia:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201703281110549823-hoce-li-americka-vojska-uvuci--mila-u-nato-/
Maybe Trump will distance Montenegro from joining NATO: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201703171110421915-hoce-li-crna-gora-docekati-prijem-u-nato1/
Milo Đukanović introduces chaos into Montenegro:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201704121110739351-crna-gora-nato-clanstvo--medojevic/
It is possible that Montenegro will become the province of Greater Albania:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201805221115686742-crna-gora-lazanski/
The situation in Montenegro from the standpoint of EU standards from the chapters on Judiciary and Security, 23 and 24, is catastrophic: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201906041120010271-ek-crna-gora-napredak-/
The EU has imposed entry into NATO. EU and NATO entry will trigger accelerated emmigration of the working population: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201812181118197402-eu-nato-pristupanje-brzina-/
USA will put Western Balkans under full control:
https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201510251100556343-Crna-Gora-NATO-protest-policija--brutalnost/
Support for the EU project is also falling in the Member States: https://rs.sputniknews.com/analize/201802131114536455-crna-gora-eu-clanstvo/
Đukanović cannot be a part of a "final deal" with the EU: https://rs.sputniknews.com/komentari/201809201117241931-milo-djukanovic-/

other interesting moment became the fact that President of Montenegro Milo Đukanović remained is a single populist pro-EU and pro-NATO orientated. The levers of influence were also based on a vivid memory of the persecution of Montenegrin Stalinists in communist Yugoslavia since 1948. Subsequent pro-Stalinist generations remained close to the Kremlin and Belgrade, but also to the Serbian Orthodox Church as an exponent of conservative and belligerent politics.[18]

Russian pressures have grown right after declaration of Montenegro independence in 2006, as Serbia also became more and more pro-Russian, and the first outgrowths of European populism were emerging. Campaign of pressures, defamation and disqualification were also possible due to the growing weaknesses of EU diplomatic missions in the region. Montenegro is the only example that maintaining the commitment to the EU, and the success of NATO accession, were the results of populism. Montenegro has succeeded precisely thanks to the populist leadership that was not willing to retreated while facing the Russia's pressure and public opinion (Kremlin Watch Program 2020, 29-39).[19] Moreover, the events have not been short of a serious drama. Large anti-government protests began in mid-October 2015, organized by opposition coalition Democratic Front, and escalated with large riots in Podgorica on October 24, 2015. Russian TV channels covering the protests were adding the anti-NATO comments. By then it was already uncovered that the Democratic Front leaders have taken trips to Russia and been supported by Russia to varying degrees. Montenegro has accused the Russian Federation of meddling in the 2016 parliamentary elections by attempting to violently overthrow the Government through the Democratic Front. "On the Election Day, on October 16, the Montenegrin security services arrested 20 Serbian nationals who were suspected of organizing a plot to prevent the election of a pro-NATO government, and possibly assassinate the-then Prime Minister, Milo Đukanović. The former Serbian Prime Minister and now-President Aleksandar Vučić himself later acknowledged the plot, even presented further evidence, and offered his cooperation to the Montenegrin Special Prosecution. The indictment for this case charged 14 people, including Andrija Man-

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[18] The ties of Serbian and Montenegrin nationalists with the Serbian Orthodox Church and circles in Russia that sought to stem the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism, were established immediately after the outbreak of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. The last Minister of Defence in the Yugoslav government, from 1988, general Veljko Kadijević, and his aide general Vuk Obradović, visited Moscow in March of 1991, and it was assumed that the purpose was to request help from the USSR for a planned JNA coup. The defeat of the Soviet hardliners and Russia's subsequent independence opened a period of weak Russian influence in the region.

[19] Public opinion polls have showed that Russia is more popular than the US or EU (47 % of Montenegrin citizens thought that the Russian military is a superior force to NATO, and only 37 % that NATO has the advantage) (Kremlin Watch Program 2020, 29-39).

dić and Milan Knežević. The trial for coup attempt was live broadcasted and attracted enormous media attention. After 19 months of trial all accused were found guilty at the first instance court in May 2019. Andrija Mandić and Milan Knežević were each sentenced to five years in prison". Russia was even accused of organising plot to assassinate the Prime Minister (Zorić 2017, 11; Kremlin Watch Program 2019, 7).

Montenegro joined the NATO on 5 June 2017, and remained the most successful state in the negotiation process with the EU. North Macedonia joined the NATO on 27 March 2020.

Summary and Epilogue

The weaknesses in EU foreign and security policy, after 2008, and obviously since 2012, enabled Russia to establish three points of strategic pressure in response to EU and NATO enlargement in Eastern and South-eastern Europe: Baltic, Ukraine and Western Balkans. Simultaneously, Russia affected gradual rejection of the EU values and standards in the Visegrád Group states. Every major populist movement in EU member states enjoys the official Russian support and assistance. Russia failed only in the Baltic states. Russia annexed Crimea, divided Ukraine and partially plunged Turkey into its sphere of interest in the Middle East (Balta 2019, 69-86). Using an increasingly obvious affection of Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission from November 2014 to November 2019, Russia successfully affected the "freezing" of the Kosovo conflict, obstructing the process of consolidation of the former Yugoslav federal units at a point that promised the continued duration of unfinished states (Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Aleksandar Vučić's populist regime in Serbia has become the stronghold of Russia and China in South-eastern Europe. In Western Balkans, as in Ukraine, and previously in the Caucasus region, unfinished conflict and unfinished state building is eventually promising new ethnic and religious conflicts, similar to those that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Russia's hybrid war against the EU in South-eastern Europe has paved the road to the growing influences of China and Turkey. The character of these influences was in accordance with the character of their regimes, as in the case of Russia. The EU has not been able to sanction destructive political influences brought about by new economic relations. The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative started right from South-eastern Europe, and the project counted on the support of regional populists, followed by the Visegrád Group states. The Belt and Road Initiative became another Trojan horse within the EU, bringing corruptive arrangements in relation with infrastructure investments, and also exports of dirty technologies, and exports of surveillance and monitoring and eavesdropping technologies. Turkey focused its influ-

ence primarily on Balkan Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo, but also concluded non-transparent, corrupt agreements with other Western Balkans states. Exports of political influence to the South-eastern Europe have especially acquired malignant elements following the failed coup attempt in Turkey in 2016.

Russia's relations with the EU and the EU candidate states were focused on by supporting populist leaders and movements. After the 2016 US presidential elections, Donald Trump's anti-EU rhetoric has become additional support for Russian influence. The rapprochement between Trump and Putin has already been hinted as revealed in Cambridge Analytics affair.[20] Since the beginnings of EU the US policy has not been so antagonistic. The EU was left alone, and deprived of its own reliable leadership.

Populists have been the dominant force of political influence and government decisions in Southeast Europe since 2016. The power of populism grew as the legacy of communism, as the societies were facing the challenges of transition and European integration, transforming into nationalism, supported by clerical forces. Russia was using the disappointments of the post-communist transition, the religious influence of the Orthodox Church, and the crisis in the EU. The disintegration of Yugoslavia is still ongoing, based on a general denial of the idea of possible coexistence in cultural differences. From a populist perspective, tolerance, the communities of cultures, nationali-ties and races, are perceived as a cultural disorder of a united Europe. Populists began to condemn the right to cultural pluralism, and the separation of the public sphere from the private, as a rejection of tradition and collective identity. Populism has also imposed itself as a seductive alternative to any individual political or economic respon-sibility. In the postmodern reality, the need for protection, belonging, recognition, respect, becomes increasingly clear in the depths of society. Originating in relativisation syndrome of postmodern philosophy, post-truth is a sys-tem of illusions that release the individual from individual responsibilities. Such means were used by national populists and the Russian propaganda. Populists and Kremlin also counted on a new middle class dissatisfied with the pace of economic growth and social emancipation.

Expertise or scientific debates on populism as a symptom, and executive form of democratic regression and, in particular, an applied shape of Russia's influence, may credible views on European unity, its moral and identity grounds. European

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[20] "In December of 2016, President Obama announced that he had signed Executive orders targeting Russian intelligence services in retaliation for harassment of American diplomats in Russia and, specifically, the meddling of the 2016 US Presidential election.9 The FBI and DHS released a joint statement that said that they were confident that the Russian government used cyber means to meddle in the US Presidential election" (Shuya 2018, 3).

values, based on cosmopolitanism, openness, diversity, with a strong focus on individualism, are becoming too complex to understand and apply, in comparison to simple solutions offered by populists. Populists also offer seductive alternatives to any individual political or economic responsibility. In postmodern reality, the need for collectivity, for singular and authoritarian leadership has fully arisen, for protection, belonging, recognition, appreciation. In their clash with liberalism populists play on feelings of hurt and insecurity. Extreme right-wing or left-wing voters are not always poorer than average, but the new middle classes are also dissatisfied with the pace of economic growth, with relative inequality and social emancipation. Putin has thus enforced new class conflicts, within the same social layers as economic differences no longer significantly affect the quality of life. It can be assumed that populism, new totalitarian tendency of the twenty-first century, becomes successful precisely in the absence of historical precedents, with the exception of remembrances of twentieth-century totalitarianisms, and those memories fade as they vanish in time.

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THE POPULIST LEFT AND THE POPULIST RIGHT IN THE CONTEMPORARY POST-YUGOSLAV SPACE: SOCIO--ECONOMIC PROGRAMMES OF MAINSTREAM PARTIES IN SERBIA AND CROATIA[1]

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A b s t r a c t

The lack of a clear economic policy and profiling is the common denominator of many populist options in Europe. Populists use economic deliberations in their "combat" against the "corrupt elite" and therefore little room is left for a deeper and wider analysis of socio-economic measures and the policies for which they stand. This aspect of populism is an interesting meeting point of right- and left-wing populists who are becoming ever more alike. The authors have examined this hypothesis about the homogenising potential of populism by analysing the main legal documents of four parties in Serbia and Croatia. The authors' aim is to examine whether the hypotheses constructed for Western European countries can be heuristically applied to former socialist countries.

Keywords: *Yugoslavia, the Balkans, Serbia, Croatia, populism, socio-economic programmes, left wing, right wing, populist left, populist right*

Introduction

One of the main theoretical assumptions regarding the definition of populism is that the majority of parties, either left-wing or right-wing, have relatively similar economic programmes, which have been developed so as to be attractive to the entire population of voters — to "balance" between the indisputability of free-mar-

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ket principles and social rights protection and to advocate that all population categories and all economic sectors are equally developed. Unlike populism in other parts of the world (e.g. Latin America), the European experience has shown that the differences between right-wing and left-wing populism are evident in some dimensions but not in the economic one. In this paper, we have constructed a hypothesis that we have decided to test through the example of four parties in Croatia and Serbia — two parties from the left and two parties from the right of the ideological spectrum.

In accordance with a specific historical context and a relatively recent transition to a market economy and party pluralism in the two ex-Yugoslav countries, we will also examine whether some other populist approaches and narrative strategies are used in the economic programmes of the said parties. We primarily refer to the discourse tactic of "blaming" political opponents for oversights, instead of providing realistic and sustainable solutions. We expect this to be one of the findings of this research and, at the same time, hope to contribute to the theories of populism.

The aim of this research is to compare the economic programmes of right- and left-wing parties in Serbia and Croatia to see whether and to which extent their economic visions and messages fit into the definition of catch-all populist parties in Europe. Therefore, the main question this paper poses is whether the economic programmes of the said parties in Serbia and Croatia correspond to the definition of populist parties that aim at "covering" the broadest possible scope of the needs of a wider social strata and economic branches, based on allegedly being the representatives of the "common people". The method we will use is an analysis of the parties' programmes, however this is the initial, basic level of analysis and other methods need to be included to reach more comprehensive conclusions. Certainly, we should immediately emphasise that this paper analyses only four parties (the Serbian Radical Party, the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Croatian Democratic Union, and the Social Democratic Party of Croatia), which is insufficient to draw general conclusions on the entire political scene in Croatia and (particularly) Serbia. Nevertheless, these parties nominally declare as ideologically left-wing and ideologically right-wing and, as such, they have served to test the aforementioned theoretical hypotheses. In addition, it should be noted that we decided to analyse parliamentary political parties and that our analysis would be significantly different if we had also included non-parliamentary parties and especially social movements that have right-wing or left-wing agendas. In other words, this research is explorative and represents an initial step for further (and broader) research concerning this topic.

Theoretical and methodological framework: Analysis of socio-economic political party programmes as indicators of populism

The statement that there is no consensus on a unique definition of populism has become almost a commonplace that no longer requires particular emphasis in contemporary social science. Some authors regard populism as a discursive strategy, while others define it as a "thin ideology". On the other hand, some believe that populism is an indicator of deeper social conjunctions and that it is not imposed exclusively "from above". The authors' views differ according to whether they believe that populism is related only to the right or they consider populism to be a strategy of left-wing political actors as well. In addition, there is no consensus on whether populism is bad for democratic institutions or whether it acts as their corrective, and there is no unique view on whether it is a new phenomenon or whether it has existed before. In this paper, we will not delve into further discussion about the theoretical definition of populism. Instead, we will focus on an aspect that will serve as a starting point for our further empirical examination within the context of the contemporary political scene in Croatia and Serbia.

In this paper, we will follow the thread of J. W. Müller's and Cas Mudde's argumentations, which highlight several significant aspects of the definition of populism. Müller believes that populists take a criticising approach towards the elite, that they have a negative attitude towards party pluralism and that they represent the idea that they are the sole, authentic voice of the people (Müller 2016, 20-22). Mudde extends this definition and highlights the Manichean worldview characteristic of populists, which enables the entire political and social fields to be viewed as a struggle between the "corrupt elite" and the "common people", where populists are representatives of the latter social group (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2010, 8). In their constant struggle with "enemies", as populists most commonly present and name their political rivals and opponents, not much room is left for a detailed and precise elaboration of different policies and, therefore, attention is focused on the perpetual "defence" from the said "enemies". The policies that do not leave much room for elaboration are socio-economic plans and measures. Socio-economic programmes mostly remain rudimentary and are filled with attractive empty phrases, while the economies of individual countries flow in accordance with the requirements of the global market. This fact, pointed out by Wolfgang Merkel (2014), among other authors, draws significant implications, which we will further discuss below.

Populists also reduce economic policy to a struggle between the "corrupt economic elites" and "honest working people". Their most common promise to all so-

cial groups is prosperity, while, on the other hand, the rich should supposedly be penalised in various ways for the accumulation of capital — which is typically presented as dishonourable and dishonest. According to the authors, populism is most often not conditioned by class and the audience that populist leaders and parties aim towards is not distinguished by class. Populists aim at quite heterogeneous social groups, while the potential for a so-called class struggle is drawn only from their call to fight against the ruling elites, which undoubtedly encompasses economic elites too (Müller 2016, 40).

This class unfoundedness of populism is not that surprising if we take into consideration that the phenomenon or concept of class voting, widespread up until the 1960s, has lost its explanatory and analytical power in contemporary societies. In other words, it is becoming more difficult, or almost impossible, to establish a rule regarding which class votes for which political option (this primarily relates to the European context and multi-party, not two-party, systems) compared to the first half of the 20th century, when a correlation between lower classes and left wing, and upper classes and right wing parties could be identified. As Wolfgang Merkel claims, with the growth of economic inequalities (Piketty 2014) grows a disinterest for political activism, leading to a decline in general election participation. At the same time, trust in various institutions also declines, especially liberal democratic institutions. Voters believe that a change of political actors does not necessarily imply a change in their socio-economic positions and, therefore, other topics take over the spotlight in election campaigns and political addresses outside election cycles, such as topics related to preserving national borders, security, migration, the environment, etc. (Merkel 2014). Considering that class voting practically does not exist, it is logical that the inherently universalising populist rhetoric focuses on different classes. A *vice-versa* process is also taking place — class stratification and alienation from liberal democracy institutions certainly constitutes fertile ground for the development of populism.

The fact that populism is heterogeneous class-wise stems from the fact that, almost as a rule, populists do not have a clear economic programme. Therefore, there is no clear and precisely defined economic platform which could be linked to populism (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2010, 2). On the contrary, populists mostly do not attach much significance to economic programmes and they are predominantly based on a set of arbitrary, volatile measures, mostly constituting a mix of liberal (market) principles and attractive messages about social protection and social rights. This is, among others, one of the main meeting points of left- and right-wing parties, which, due to their populist patterns, are becoming ever more similar to each other and ever more resembling the so-called *catch-all* (Kirchheimer 1966) parties. Even though left-wing and right-wing populism have different characteristics — especial-

ly if we consider Latin America — it is interesting to note that economic programmes are in fact the meeting point of left- and right-wing parties — especially in Europe (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2010, 2) — and not their main differentiator, as was the case with the traditional interpretation of the left and right.

At this point, we will not delve into the development history of the left and the right from the French Revolution until today, nor will we elaborate on their shift from political to economic (from the 1960s) and cultural distinction axes. Instead, we will only explore some of the segments relevant to our research subject. As a rule, the right has a negative stance on liberalism, as they do not accept the idea of liberty unless it is realised in a homogeneous social group. Nevertheless, it can coexist with a parliamentary system and be entirely based on economic liberalism (Bakić 2017, 36). The left, on the other hand, is based on anti-capitalist ideas and an inherent criticism of the free market (Bakić 2017, 38). Of course, this list of contemporary aspects of the right and the left is certainly not exhaustive, but it is essential for this paper to underline these elements.

To sum up, the part of the populist narrative directed at socio-economic matters mostly serves as a means for "combating" the "corrupt elites", while, on the other hand, the measures and social policies they suggest are not thoroughly thought out, strategically oriented nor sustainable — instead, they are usually *ad hoc* solutions produced in accordance with current needs, both economic and political. Even though there are differences between left- and right-wing populism, it is interesting that one of the major differences between the opposite ends of the ideological spectrum is that their view on the economy has lost significance.

Bearing in mind the above assumptions, we have decided to examine whether the said hypotheses also apply to parliamentary left- and right-wing political parties in Croatia and Serbia. The theoretical model of populism is based on the development of populist tendencies in Western Europe. This model has later on been applied in its redefined form to the countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. It is usually said that there are specificities related to the socialist heritage that still define populism in these countries in an entirely different manner (Shafir 2008, 425), but we will not analyse these specificities this time. We will instead focus on examining the theoretical hypothesis claiming that the lack of clear economic programmes is one of the more important aspects of both left- and right-wing populism. In other words, it is our aim to show that, despite the fact that the parties self-proclaim as left-wing or right-wing, they are in fact catch-all parties incorporating various similar ideological messages and positions, and covering a wide range of ideas regarding socio-economic programmes that are attractive to contemporary voters in Serbia and Croatia, and that stem from the left- and right-wing corpora of ideas. Taking into account the specific context of democracy development

in the former Yugoslav space and the frailty of the young democratic institutions in Serbia and Croatia, our starting hypothesis is that the similarity between the left and the right in their economic programmes will be high and that we will be able to characterise both left- and right-wing party programmes as populist.

To re-emphasise, this paper will analyse only one piece of the populist mosaic, and those are the socio-economic party programmes in Croatia and Serbia. In order to come to more comprehensive and precise conclusions regarding the development of populism in these countries, a more extensive analysis of all differing aspects of the definition of populism would be required, which certainly exceeds the scope of this paper. Therefore, we will focus on one aspect of the definition of populism, and on several parties in these two countries. The conclusions reached in this paper cannot be generalised and applied to the entire political arena of Croatia and Serbia, but the findings of this research can serve as an explorative introduction for future, more extensive studies. It should be noted that we have decided to analyse parliamentary parties which self-proclaim as left- or right-wing, while, for a deeper and broader analysis, social movements sharing these ideological positions should also be taken into consideration. The authors of this paper believe that different results would have been gained from this, however, the research in this paper does not focus on the left and the right in the former Yugoslav space, but rather on the development of populist ideas and narratives among political parties self-declaring as ideologically profiled.

In this paper, we have decided to apply a method that analyses programme documents of four different political parties in Serbia and Croatia: a left- and a right-wing party from each country. We will analyse the latest programmes of these parties and we will compare them in accordance with the theoretical hypotheses we have introduced. This analysis method has already been applied by the authors of this paper in the form of an analysis of legal documents of political parties from various aspects (Jovanović Ajzenhamer & Dajč 2020). This research method has been extended in this paper to include a comparison of various documents. We regard this methodology as an introduction to a more detailed study which would require an analysis of practices — specific economic measures taken while a party was in power — and discourses in election campaigns, public addresses, and media appearances. In addition, a more holistic analysis could include interviews with the leaders of these parties. Nevertheless, despite all their limitations, the programmes constitute a solid starting point for analysis as they represent the principles to which each party is nominally committed. Therefore, we believe that this research is useful primarily as a basic insight into the researched topic.

Serbian and Croatian historical context: 1980s—2010s

Populist parties in the former Yugoslav space share a similar concept: the idea of a people's party and a leader representing the voice of the "common people". It is important to understand the historical context in Serbia and Croatia that has made it possible for mainstream political parties to retain their populist characteristics. The territories of Serbia and Croatia, within the states they were part of since the second half of 19th century, proved to be a very fertile soil for populism. Both territories/countries were also predominantly rural until the mid-20th century. This factor is significant as it caused populism to develop in a specific way and made it possible for populism to survive the entire period from the multi-party system in the Kingdom of Serbia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, through the kingdoms of Serbs Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia and the single-party system within socialist Yugoslavia until the end of 20st century. The foundations for populism in Serbia were laid in the 19th century by one of the most prominent Serbian political leaders, Nikola Pašić, and the party he founded — *Narodna radikalna stranka* (National Radical Party). This party developed under the very strong influence of the Russian Narodniks and the egalitarian traditions of Svetozar Marković's socialist doctrine (Perović 2019).[4] The party could be considered a catch-all party, which combined both left-wing and right-wing populist ideas: a model of state economy that would provide egalitarianism, crucial for its rural supporters, was combined with nationalism and the need for a strong leader — the only interpreter of the "will" of the people. The monopoly of the single-party system in post-1945 Yugoslavia did not find much challenge as the Communist Party had found a fertile ground for its economic and social egalitarianism (Samardžić 2011, 62-71).

In the case of Croatia, populist ideas became much stronger during the interwar period as a result of the popularity of *Hrvatska pučka seljačka stranka* (the Croatian Peasant Party), led by Antun and Stjepan Radić. It also combined left- and right-wing populist ideas, insisting on a special cultural and historical context in which the Croatian nation developed through social and economic egalitarianism (Petrić 2015, 540-544). The high popularity of this party also contributed to the acceptance of the new post-1945 ideology.

The end and breakup of Yugoslavia started as a result of the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution led by Slobodan Milošević, a new hope of the Serbian communists. His position in Belgrade helped the ascent of Franjo Tuđman, a former

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[4] Perović L. Srpski socijalisti 19. veka ['Serbian socialists of the 19th century'], (Beograd: Nolit, 1985), 1-2; Bešlin M. Ideja moderne Srbije u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji [Ideas of Modern Serbia in the Socialist Yugoslavia], (Beograd — Novi Sad: IFDT i Akademska knjiga, 2019), 7-15.

communist and unsuccessful historian, who became the most influential politician in Croatia. The two of them became key protagonists in the further development of populist parties.

The post-Yugoslav space of the 1990s was marked by a transition to a market economy and multi-party system, overshadowed by a state of war that lasted for several years. In Croatia, this transformation went more smoothly and had a more linear path compared to Serbia, where the governing structure (headed by the SPS) used its position for economic manipulations. After democratic changes in autumn 2000, Serbia began with the process of democratic consolidation and an accelerated adjustment of the economic system to free-market principles. Today, in both countries, all large (parliamentary) parties generally advocate a capitalist economy and democracy; nonetheless, the dominant global trend of populism has not bypassed Serbia and Croatia. In the following paragraphs, we will explain why we have chosen these four parties to analyse (even though they are not young parties), but it was necessary to make this brief historical overview in order to clarify their current position (Jovanović Ajzenhamer & Dajč 2020).

Slobodan Milošević, the elected party president, renamed the League of Communists of Serbia to *Socijalistička partija Srbije* (Socialist Party of Serbia — SPS) in July 1990. In December 1990 he won 65.34% of voters' support for the position of the President of Republic of Serbia (Jovanović Ajzenhamer & Dajč 2020). This party continuously led Serbia through four lost wars, one of the largest hyperinflations in the world, a refugee crisis and economic decline. It is interesting that, after just several years in opposition between 2000—2008, the SPS made a comeback and has remained a part of all governing coalitions until today (excluding a short period when it supported the minority government in 2004—2007). Such success requires exceptional political skills, and the populist character of the party contributed to the success. The SPS underwent a major leadership and programmatic transformation after regime change at the beginning of the 21st century in Serbia. The SPS is today a mainstream party that has maintained its nominally left ideological orientation.

Another party from Serbia that will be analysed in this paper is *Srpska radikalna stranka* (Serbian Radical Party — SRS). This party was founded in early 1991 and its choice of name reflects its desire to continue the tradition of the most significant Serbian political party before WWII. The party is a far right-wing party and, besides its nationalist rhetoric, it declaratively advocates social and economic justice typical of left-wing parties. The founder and sole president of the SRS is Vojislav Šešelj, the perfect example of a populist politician who has marked his party with his role of a dominant leader (Dajč & Pantelić 2019, 79-81). The SRS supported the wars that Milošević waged in the 1990s and was included in the government towards the end of the last decade of the 20th century. After the democratic chan-

ges in late 2000, it became the most prominent opposition party until 2008, when its division resulted in the forming of *Srpska napredna stranka* (Serbian Progressive Party — SNS). The SRS has remained on the political scene and, as of 2016, is among the strongest parliamentary opposition parties.

In Croatia, political parties are more ideologically profiled and thus we can easily identify the right-wing populist party *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (Croatian Democratic Union — HDZ) and the left-wing *Socijaldemokratska partija* (Social Democratic Party — SDP), which have been the two most prominent political parties since Croatia gained independence. The Croatian political system has been dominated by these two parties, and all the ruling coalitions in Croatia have been formed around one of them.

The SDP was created in a similar way to the SPS in Serbia in late 1990 — out of the League of Communists of Croatia. The first president and founder was Ivica Račan, who was also the leader of the Croatian communists until the founding of the SDP. This party has had quite a different path from its fellow socialist party in Serbia, the SPS — it was part of the opposition for over 10 years and its founder Ivica Račan became the first left-wing prime minister of Croatia in 2000, which also helped the democratisation of Croatia. The SDP also marked the beginning of its second decade as the ruling party between 2011—2015, the period when the country joined the EU in 2013.

The HDZ, founded by former communist general and historian, Franjo Tuđman, led Croatia through the first 10 years of independence. It was among the first non-socialist parties within the Eastern Bloc that won the first elections in a still socialist country. Its founder and first president, Franjo Tuđman, had a similar career to his Serbian colleague Slobodan Milošević. He died early and therefore did not face the consequences for some of his policies during the 1990s wars in former Yugoslavia. He established a right-wing party that, in the early stages of its history, was a far right-wing party that later on shifted to the centre-right. Unlike the parties in Serbia, the HDZ in Croatia has a somewhat more consistent, nationalist-oriented ideological agenda. The HDZ also defines itself as a "state-building" party, appealing to emotions of the Croatian War for Independence. The party is the dominant centre-right party in Croatian political life, haunted by its nationalist stances and ambivalent positions towards the revisionism of history (Wróblewska-Trochimiuk 2017, 62-67).

Empirical level of analysis

The part of the Socialist Party of Serbia's (SPS) programme referring to economic development and economic policy includes many socialist ideas. Nonetheless, there are certain diversions from traditional socialist principles. In their programme, the

SPS states that they advocate "democratic socialism" that implies "greater social welfare, better and fairer working conditions, and higher employment rate and salaries" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 26). The programme explicitly states that the SPS is a party committed to preventing the unscrupulous race for profit that enables individuals to lead luxurious lives, and is against the exploitation of disenfranchised workers. Furthermore, the first paragraph of the part referring to economic policy incorporates references to the legislation of most developed European countries, and this reference to positive examples of EU countries "runs through" this entire part of the programme (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 26). What is particularly important for this paper is that nowhere in the programme do we see alternatives to capitalism, or the promotion of social and economic systems that do not include the free market.

The SPS calls itself the "authentic party of the left" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 26) that insists on representing the interests of those who live from their work, thus advocating the democratisation of education, security of full employment, and the development of trade unions, which certainly corresponds to a leftist ideological repertoire. On the other hand, the SPS does not bring into question either the market or capitalism as a system. The role of the state is strong, but it is clear that, according to them, it should not intervene in all spheres. It must ensure an initial meritocracy, but nowhere in the SPS programme do we find explicit criticism of capitalism or the liberal market. The criticism is in fact directed at abuse, manipulations, monopolies and exploitation of workers, not at market principles as such. The programme states, "To put it simply, the state must create equal conditions for education and training for entering the labour market to all citizens. Knowledge as a private good should be efficiently protected as intellectual property, so as to be a comparative market advantage and to enable those who possess it to make profit" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 26). Another quotation confirms the aforementioned, "All participants who enter the market competition with a concrete product or service, who have clearly defined prices, who bring profit and pay taxes, must not have limitations regarding their activity and development" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 29).

The SPS also supports the concept of private property — "Private property has historically and civilisationally demonstrated its economic and social sustainability and efficiency. Therefore, socialists support the privatisation process as one of the preconditions for the existence of a market economy" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 29). Although the SPS believes that privatisation is a favourable process for Serbian society and economy, and that private property is preferable, they oppose abuse in the privatisation process: "However, we are aware that neither private nor public property in the economy guarantee neither economic efficiency nor

social justice. That is why the socialists will decisively fight against all forms of privatisation abuse. We will demand the annulment of privatisations that were carried out in an unlawful way, through capital acquired through criminal activities, and in cases where not all the conditions from the contract were met with regard to workers and the state" (Socialist Party of Serbia Programme 2010, 29).

A similar discourse is found in another crucial (programme) document called the "Vision of Serbia 2020 — Programme Declaration Proposal". This document offers the same views regarding economic policy as in the programme: The SPS advocates labour protection, the development of trade unions, full employment, to fight against labour discrimination, a reduction of the unemployment rate, investment in domestic production, the development of environmental policies, the prevention of market manipulation and creation of monopolies, stable and high pensions, democratisation of education, investment in modern technologies, investment in youth, etc. In other words, all business activities and all generations will be protected and invested into. The SPS supports cooperation with all countries, while the economic segment of the programme emphasises cooperation with the EU. On the other hand, this programme document also does not bring into question capitalism, moreover, it is presented as an economic and social system that has no alternative (Vision of Serbia 2020 — Programme Declaration Proposal 2010). Given that we are analysing and comparing the programmes of four political parties, we will not get into a further analysis of the document "Vision of Serbia 2020 — Programme Declaration Proposal". In any case, the principles defined in the SPS programme are reiterated (and elaborated on in some segments) in the said programme document.

The economic part of the Serbian Radical Party's (SRS) programme covers almost the same topics discussed in the SPS programme and, if we compare these two documents, we will notice similarities as well as some differences. In general, the SRS also advocates labour protection, pension security, reduction of unemployment, visibility and presence of trade unions, regional development, etc. However, a great difference compared to the SPS programme lies in its insisting on preventing the inflow of foreign capital and focus on the development of the domestic economy. The SRS advocates the introduction of customs duties on goods from the EU and promotes a permanent campaign titled "Let's Buy Domestic" (*Kupujmo domaće*) (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 45). According to the SRS, foreign economic cooperation should be exclusively directed towards the East: "We believe that the future of Serbian trade lies in tighter connections with the East, the accession to the Eurasian Economic Union — the customs union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and in forming a single market, where Serbian products will be placed without any limitations. The government of Serbian radicals will reintroduce customs duties to goods from the European Union, given that our country pays export

127

duties that bring domestic producers into an unequal position" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 43).

For the SRS, liberal market and private property are indisputable principles on which the Serbian economy should function: "There must be no imposition of limitations to free trade and verification of the monopoly position carried out as a pretext to introduce temporary measures due to disturbances on the market, because a serious state, almost as a rule, has economic policy mechanisms through which it must and should resolve those disturbances. Such limitations always deny the chance for work and create the conditions for monopoly and corruption" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 45). The following quotation confirms the aforementioned, "The Serbian Radical Party believes that the right to property, which, according to classical individualistic and liberalistic concepts of natural position, is considered as one of the most fundamental autonomous rights, as well as a necessary precondition for exercising all other rights and freedoms, must be guaranteed by the highest legal acts of our country. Property rights and the priority of private property rights must not be limited by any legal act" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 26).

Given that it advocates free market and private property, the SRS also advocates the privatisation process, but its focus is on manipulations that, according to them, took place during the privatisation process in Serbia: "We advocate privatisation, believing that an efficient economic system must be based on the principles of efficiency, competition and private property. According to the Serbian radicals, the main goal of privatisation is to define ownership rights and introduce a market system based on competition that promotes general economic efficiency and a faster resolution of the crisis. Unfortunately, following the 5th of October uprising, the government was formed by dishonest and unprofessional politicians, who carried out the privatisation process solely led by their intention to gain as many material benefits as possible. The failure of the process of privatisation is measured not only in billions of dollars hidden abroad and in luxurious properties owned by DOS-affiliated politicians and tycoons close to them, but also in hundreds of destroyed companies and hundreds of thousands of workers who were left unemployed" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 32).

Therefore, the authors of the programme claim that the SRS's economic policy completely corresponds to the concept of market policy: "Free agreement on the conditions of exchange enables a maximum market position to all actors in a given exchange, while the prices of goods and services are formed based on unhindered forces of the economic laws of supply and demand. In that case, any intervention by the government regarding price formation is forced and irregular. The state's interventionism and influence come down to defining price levels through

the mechanism of taxation, the customs protection system, and the creating of conditions for investment into areas the policy defines as a priority" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 31).

In addition to explicit calls for freedom and self-regulation of the market, the SRS notes that the poor, pensioners, the unemployed and other vulnerable persons will be protected, and that state intervention, besides in the said protective activity, will also be necessary to shift the course of foreign trade completely to the East: "When the Serbian radicals come into power, they will improve the economic and social situation in the country, and reduce the grey economy and undeclared employment. We will establish a system where employers will be obliged to pay all taxes and contributions. We will secure funds for a significant increase in salaries and pensions by destroying the import lobby, which is the richest in Serbia, and which contributed to the crisis the most. We will reintroduce customs duties to goods from the European Union, and thus protect domestic production, primarily agriculture and food production" (Serbian Radical Party Programme 2019, 33). In other words, the economic part of the SRS's programme is based on the model of the free market and marginalisation of the state from the free market but it also incorporates ideas concerning the protection of labour rights, socio-economic benefits for the vulnerable, care for pensioners, etc., and on state intervention regarding foreign trade relations.

The Croatian *Socijaldemokratska partija* (SDP) declares itself to be a part of the European social democrats, a party that is "optimistic, positive and oriented towards strengthening all, but especially marginalised and discriminated social groups" (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 3). The economic part of its programme is divided into several segments, with the central part devoted to increasing salaries, reducing social inequality and solving the problems of youth, or more specifically, their emigration. However, the economic part of the programme does not offer any alternatives to the capitalist system, and neither does it advocate a socio-economic system that would not imply a free market. The SDP's explanation of the problems the Croatian economy is facing is very simplified, and it focuses on the two previous governments formed by the HDZ, their largest political opponent. In its programme, the SDP states that EU membership contributed to economic development but not nearly to the extent it could have were it not for the incompetent HDZ's policy: "retrograde processes, the weakening of democracy and the rule of law, the flourishing of corruption and political and economic scandals under the direction of the current government" (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 4).

The SDP considers the loss of the middle class to be one of the most dangerous aspects of the transition of the Croatian society and economy under the direction of the HDZ (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 6). Despite the fact that

in most of the programme's chapters, economic measures and policies, the SDP mentions EU legislation, policies and standards, it shows that it is a left-wing party fearing globalisation with statements like, "Workers and middle-class people are paying the price of globalisation, both in Croatia and the entire European Union" or, "Croatia and the European Union must change and start acting in such a manner that workers and members of the middle class can finally feel the benefits of globalisation" (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 6). Within its plan to increase competitiveness and the strength of the Croatian economy, the main position of the SDP is its criticism towards the HDZ, which proved incompetent and which endangered the economy with its party/client behaviour (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 10). The programme claims that one of the reasons for the problems in the economy is the impossibility to reform public administration, which is used for party employment of HDZ members and sympathisers (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 11). The SDP proposes an increase in minimal guaranteed wages, while, in order to have a fairer distribution of funding public services, "those who have more must pay more" (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 11). Not once does the SDP challenge the capitalist system as an economic and social system. However, to ideologically justify its affiliation to the left wing, the part of the programme referring to economic development concludes with a populist manifesto, "The social democratic success of many European countries in shifting the neoliberal paradigm from punishing and abolishing towards encouraging and strengthening, justifies our claim that social democracy will achieve its goal in Croatia as well" (Social democratic Party Programme 2019, 11).

A common statement of the neighbouring SPS and SDP are the accusations directed towards political opponents regarding failure in the privatisation of public enterprises — the SDP even calls it criminal (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 10). The SDP has expressed its concern that the state might not manage to keep strategic companies (INA Refinery, 3. Maj, Uljanik), and that the state will give them over to the market, possibly even bring them to bankruptcy (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 10). Despite warning of the dangers of the neoliberal economic model, the SDP does not offer any alternative. Rather, it offers a visionary conclusion stating what is necessary, "Instead of temporary and subordinate employment relations between employers and employees, it is necessary to develop cooperative and partner relations" (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 13). How to develop them and through which incentives, remains a mystery. The SDP has devoted a significant share of its programme to agriculture, the majority of which analyses the catastrophic measures and incompetence of its political opponents (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019. 15-16). The programme observes that the HDZ enabled foreigners to buy the most fertile soil and that they gave one

of the largest agricultural companies to Russian banks (Social Democratic Party Programme 2019, 16). In this part, the SDP reminds us of the SRS with its fear of foreigners and capital not related to EU incentives entering the country.

The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) ruled for the first decade of Croatian independence from 1991 to 2000, while, since the beginning of the 21st century, it has alternated with the SDP as the ruling party. The HDZ's economic programme corresponds to its declaration as a centre-right party. However, in order to compete with the SDP and other political opponents, the HDZ does not abandon the idea of a social state. It does not express this attitude directly but through its activities, proposals, solutions and plans, the HDZ covers all citizens of Croatia, including those who live abroad. Although we are deep in the 21st century, the HDZ has not managed to move away from 19th-century nationalism, which can be seen already at the beginning of its programme, which states that "the HDZ has spearheaded the achievement of the most important strategic national goals at crucial historical moments since 1989 — the creation of the multi-party democratic system, the gaining of independence and international recognition, victory in the defensive War of Independence, with countless victims and an immeasurable contribution of Croatian defenders, institutional building and Croatia's accession to NATO and the European Union" (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 3) Despite the fact that these claims are true, although not entirely measurable, it remains unknown why they are relevant for the programme that refers to economic growth, the creation of new jobs and social justice. In the same spirit, in 2016, the HDZ recognised that there were areas still affected by the war (more than 20 years after the war finished), which would receive particular financial benefits and be revitalised through financial instruments that would increase economic growth (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 14).

The HDZ intends to affirm the private sector as the key sector of the state's economic development, while the largest part of its moves is aimed at relieving the economy from various levies and facilitating business activities through the reform of public administration and the tax system. However, the HDZ does not really state how it will reform the public administration, except that it will establish new bodies and that it expects that e-government and digitisation will solve all challenges micro, small, and medium entrepreneurs face (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 11-13). Still, the HDZ has kept some elements from older economic systems, where it believes that populist measures relating to the police — in a certain sense, Orwellian in nature, such as the establishment of a unique inspection body/a state inspectorate that would prevent the spread of the grey economy and undeclared employment, protect consumers, protect all forms of ownership, enable food quality control, protect the environment, regulate the appropriate implemen-

tation of public procurement contracts — would become the main tasks of state control (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 12).

What is characteristic of the HDZ's plan is that it very precisely envisages the number of new jobs they will create once they form a government, which is contrary to their declaratively liberal economic approach (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 51). In the part of the programme related to agriculture and reindustrialisation, the proposed economic measures are typical of left-wing parties. In this way, the programme demonstrates its catch-all populist nature. The plan for agriculture is to create better living conditions in rural areas and increase agricultural production through the joint work of farmers, scientists, and experts, with state and local incentives. However, the programme does not elaborate on the kind of alchemy that would enable all that. The conclusion is quite populist: "The results of our activities will be measurable and visible, while Croatian villages and agriculture will finally have their place at the top of Croatian society and economy, which they deserve" (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 31). The programme also includes some aspects of the populists' favourite mercantilist policy: "We will protect domestic production by introducing stricter controls of low-quality imported products and by actively applying the anti-dumping policy. Adhering to the European regulatory framework, our government will fully promote Croatian producers" (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 46). By the end of its term, the HDZ intends to open 180,000 new jobs (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 51), while they guarantee permanent employment to everyone younger than 35, regardless of their professional qualifications (The Croatian Democratic Union Programme 2016, 54).

Conclusion

The economic part of the SPS's programme was developed in accordance with principles adhering to social justice, the protection of labour rights and the right to form trade unions, the prevention of labour abuse, commitment to meritocracy and other principles that certainly belong to the corpus of left-wing ideas. However, the SPS programme presents capitalism as a system that has no alternative and, accordingly, a position that Serbia should cooperate with other (capitalist) European countries. Just like the SPS, the SRS's programme covers a wide variety of economic policies. Therefore, this right-oriented party also advocates the prevention of labour abuse, development of trade unions, reduction of unemployment, etc. According to the scopes of their economic programmes, both parties can be identified as catchall parties because they are not clearly profiled when it comes to their priorities — all areas of social and economic life, all generations and all branches of economy are their priority. Certainly, this comprehensiveness goes to the expense of preci-

sion, while such a wide scope of protection refers to everyone who is a potential voter. In fact, in both programmes, there is nobody who will not be taken care of, even though one programme is left-oriented and the other is right-oriented, and despite the fact that the SRS believes that the market should be unhindered — without significant state interventions. Such economic programmes, which are structured in a way that every age, class and professional group can count on their help, protection and welfare, represent a good populist mechanism that lacks criticism, focus and objectivity.

Another interesting contribution to the development of populist rhetoric in the economic programmes of the SRS and the SPS is their virtually identical view on privatisation in Serbia. Privatisation is one of the most common topics in Serbia's public discourse and, as a rule, it is regarded as a process that instigated the widening of the class gap, making one part of the population poor and accumulating wealth in the hands of the economic elite. Those that gained wealth in the privatisation process are accused of manipulation and theft, while on the other side there are workers who are dubbed "transition losers" as they belong to the group of people in Serbia who can barely make ends meet. This context is important to understand why so much room in both the SPS and SRS programmes was dedicated to privatisation through the prism of binary populist divisions between the "corrupt elite" and the "common people". Those who carried out the privatisation process (primarily the governments that came to power after the 5th of October 2000 when neither the SPS nor the SRS were in power) can be defined as the "corrupt elite", while on the opposite side there are honest options that represent the entire "common people". Given that we have previously observed that all social subgroups are represented in the economic programmes of both the SPS and SRS, we may conclude that they aspire to be representatives of the entire "common people". Both parties, regardless of their ideological differences, promise to tackle the consequences of irregular privatisation, to punish those who caused it and prevent further similar abuses of political monopoly in the economy.

An important difference between the SPS and the SRS programmes regarding the economy is the SRS's advocacy for cooperation solely with countries of the East, while the SPS remains open to cooperation worldwide, focusing particularly on the EU. In that sense, the SRS programme is more ideologically consistent — they promote a market economy, focus on domestic production and cooperation with countries from the East (having an extremely negative attitude towards the democratic and liberal or, as they would call it, "imperialistic" West). On the other hand, the SPS's programme covers a wide variety of topics and incorporates various ideological messages (from private property protection and the free market to the fight for labour rights). It is important to emphasise that, to understand the social context in

Serbia, it should be taken into account that anti-European sentiment is a crucial segment of the amalgam of the right-wing ideological repertoire (Bakić 2007, 36), which is why the economic attitudes of the SRS are not surprising.

Differences between the two programmes certainly exist. The SRS's programme is clearly right-oriented, while the SPS programme has some "leftist" colours in it. However there are numerous overlaps and common denominators, therefore, it is safe to say that, with regard to Serbia, our hypothesis that right-wing and left-wing populist parties have similar and/or identical economic programmes that are not extensively ideologically conditioned has been confirmed, even though it cannot be entirely confirmed because these are not identical programmes and certain ideological differences are evident. The SRS's programme deviates from our hypothesis to a greater extent because, although it fosters populist rhetoric, it also incorporates explicitly right-wing narratives, while the SPS programme confirms our hypothesis and supports the claim that the economic programme also contains populist messages with certain deviations from the nominal ideological profile.

We see similar findings in analysing the Croatian parties. The economic programmes of both parties analysed (HDZ and SDP) belong to the scope of catch-all parties. The economic programmes of both parties will allegedly "take care" of a wide spectre of the population, primarily focusing on youth and the issue of emigration (which is a huge problem that Croatia has been facing since joining the EU), but also including other age and professional categories. Therefore, these are populist programmes that are defined in such a way to attract all groups of voters, regardless of their nominally left- or right-wing ideological position. In other words, in the Croatian parties we have analysed, economic programs are designed to lead readers to think that these parties are the representatives of the "common people".

As in the case of the Serbian parties (SPS and SRS), we can identify some elements of a clear ideological profile. In accordance with a nominally left-wing position, the SDP criticises the process of globalisation and a bad (precarious) position of the labour force in Croatia. Unlike the SPS, the SDP's (leftist) criticism targets the unequal global distribution of resources. Nevertheless, the SDP also does not bring into question either capitalism or the free market or private property. It is interesting to note that the SDP insists on protecting the middle class far more than the working class, which represents a deviation from the traditional left-wing repertoire. However, given that they place emphasis on global mobility and (in)equality, it is logical that their focus is the middle class. On the other hand, just as the SRS, the HDZ has a more (right-wing) profiled economic programme, because they focus on the historical dimension — the Croatian War of Independence and the protection of war veterans. Nationalism also permeates the economic part of the programme, just as in the case of the SRS. However, unlike the SRS, the HDZ advocates open-

ness to the world (EU, NATO, etc.) despite focusing on the development of domestic production. Nonetheless, this is also an expected finding since Croatia is an EU member state and that is a dominant course of their parties. Furthermore, the HDZ's programme promises social protection to almost all social strata in Croatia, although they too do not criticise capitalism but only its negative effects, such as the grey and black economy, class inequality, monopolies, etc.

Another similarity between the Serbian and Croatian parties is evident in their criticising of political opponents. This is particularly the case with the SDP that permanently "blames" the HDZ for its poor economic policy and oversights, for politically-driven employment and for its inability to carry out appropriate public sector reform. Such discourse corresponds to the populist matrix of permanently "blaming" political opponents for oversights, instead of actually advocating concrete, realisable and sustainable measures. In Serbia's case, the main motive for criticism is privatisation, while in Croatia the scope of criticism is wider and includes various measures and dimensions. Nevertheless, a significant part of the SDP's economic programme is dedicated to criticising the HDZ. Unlike the SDP, the SPS and the SRS, HDZ's economic programme does not level considerable criticism at other options, except sometimes at the SDP, because they were in power for a long time (unlike the other three parties); therefore, this finding is quite expected.

To summarise: we started with the hypothesis that there should be no major discrepancies between the economic programmes of left-wing and the right-wing parliamentary parties in Serbia and Croatia and that the results of our analysis will show that these are in fact catch-all parties covering a wide range of topics, measures and the population, without clearly ideologically-profiled socio-economic strategies. Our hypothesis has largely been confirmed: All four parties can be defined as catch-all parties with an expressed populist approach to their voters, as well as to their political opponents, which they present as the "corrupt elite". However, despite major similarities, there are certain differences, particularly with regard to the HDZ and SRS that have stronger ideological profiles compared to the left-wing parties. As we have noted, differences do exist, and the nominally left-wing or right-wing affiliation is not completely "invisible" in their economic programmes but these are predominantly catch-all parties. However, we would like to reiterate that these claims only refer to the socio-economic elements of the programmes, given that other dimensions have not been analysed in this paper.

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BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: STRATEGIES OF POLITICAL COOPERATION IN A POPULIST WORLD

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A b s t r a c t

A rising tide of populist anger lifts all boats, but it pushes some more than others. For representatives from smaller parties representing national minorities the question of how to exercise power at the national level without becoming the target of populists becomes increasingly pertinent. To investigate this this paper uses Social Network Analysis (SNA) to analyse the coping strategies of national minority political parties within Croatia and Serbia, attempting to understand how these parties view their political space and under what conditions they cooperate with populists and under what conditions they oppose populist politicians. More specifically, this paper analyses the evolution in strategies of political cooperation in the parliaments of Croatia and Serbia, the Sabor and Skupština respectively, to identify changes in response to rising populism. This analysis reveals that despite the virulent rhetoric and the politicization of ethnic issues during elections minority parties continue to be able to operate and accumulate influence at the elite level depending on their party size. Taken together this raises questions about the impact of populism on the political space and how politics functions in an era of polarization and conflict.

Keywords: *national minorities, elite networks, social network analysis, populism, europeanisation*

Introduction

From the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom, to the election of the Five Star Movement and Northern League in Italy, populist parties, politicians, and movements have begun to reshape the political landscape and affect politics in countries large and small. What has been the impact of this rising tide on the former Yugoslav region? This paper utilises a mixed methods approach involving Social Network Analysis (SNA) complemented by interviews to attempt to understand how the rising tide of populism has affected the political cooperation strategies of ethnic minority parties in Croatia and Serbia. In particular, the focus is on what if any changes in the political cooperation strategies of these parties has been in the parliaments of the two cases, the Sabor and Skupština respectively.

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Why this question, and why now? While there has been a blossoming of studies regarding the nature of populism, including Mudde's seminal work, studies helping to identify populist, or potentially populist, actors within the political space, identifying the underlying causes behind the populist surge, and examining populist parties impact on liberal democracy more widely, there has been a relative dearth of studies into how *non* populist parties react to the phenomenon. This relative lack of attention matters to understanding populism as a fact of modern political life as, while identifying and understanding any new force or movement in the first instance is crucial, failing to understand how other forces surrounding it are shaped by its existence leaves conceptual gaps.

In the region in question this is particularly pertinent given the recent violent impact of populism during the breakdown of Yugoslavia in the 1980's and 1990's helping to produce and reproduce narratives of historical repression of the nation and "people" by an "other", either pan-Yugoslav elites or foreigners. Despite the cataclysm of the wars in the 1990's each of the post-Yugoslav countries contains minority groups which are represented in parliament by various ethnically based parties. In line with bargaining theory and other rational choice approaches to political party competition, this paper investigates how these parties attempts to represent their interests have been affected by the rising tide of populism. Have minority Members of Parliament (MPs) been forced to change their patterns of political cooperation within the parliaments?

Case Selection

In line with the principles of comparative analysis, in particular the idea of a theory infirming/confirming case study, Croatia and Serbia were chosen because of their wealth of similarities and key differences. Both states emerged from the same socio-political unit, that of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As part of said unified system their legal, economic, and political frameworks were, largely, analogous as they were governed by the same federal structure and shared in the same economic system: that of market socialism. While this system only lasted until the beginning of the Yugoslav wars both states have continued to share similar trajectories, despite the violent nature of their separation.

Throughout the 1990s, and under the leadership of President Franjo Tuđman, Croatia remained a presidential republic with a highly centralized power structure at its apex. The Tuđman era Croatian Democratic Party (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*, HDZ) won elections and maintained power through the promotion of a Croatian national identity to the exclusion of others. However, with the passing of Franjo Tuđman in 1999 and the election of Ivica Račan the government passed a new constitution which created a parliamentary republic. As part of these reforms

the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities was passed, guaranteeing representation for recognized national minorities within the Sabor. With the beginning of the return of refugees to the country, this created a situation where continued minority representation within the parliament was guaranteed.

On the other side of the war, Serbia also experienced a torturous route through the 1990s. While the toppling of war time president Slobodan Milošević in 2000, and the ejection from power of his Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*, SPS), brought a brief lull in populist rhetoric and a brief moment of optimism the assassination in 2003 of Serbian Prime Minister Zora Đinđić by criminal elements within the state quickly brought the period of optimism to a close. The final dissolution of the rump State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006 coincided with the drafting of the post-Milošević constitution, and marked Serbia as on the path towards European integration along with the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union in 2007.

Both states also continue to be populated by minority communities which were the targets of inter-ethnic, sometimes military scale, violence in the 1990s and who now have representatives in the legislatures. In Croatia ethnic Croats make up 90.42% of the population with ethnic Serbs making up 4.36% of the population and the remaining 5.22% of the population made up of a patchwork of other regional and ethnic affiliations. Collectively these parties have eight seats reserved for them within the 150 seat Sabor, with three seats reserved for the Serbian minority parties as it passes the 1.5% population threshold, and a further five seats reserved collectively for the remaining minority groups. In Serbia, ethnic Serbs also constitute 83.32% of the total population with the next largest group consisting of ethnic Hungarians (3.53%), Roma (2.05%), and Bosniaks (2.02%). Unlike in Croatia these groups do not have any reserved seats but, instead, parties representing them are not subject to Serbia's 5% electoral threshold during elections for the Skupština. This has guaranteed minorities variable representation in the Skupština, with a variance between 8 and 12 members of parliament per electoral cycle out of a total of 250.

Theory

For the purposes of this paper MPs are assumed to be rational actors who are seeking political power to achieve certain aims/goals for their members. In line with this, when faced with a dominant party in the system the parties must choose some response that will either augment their power or, at the very least, maintain their current power within the parliament to enable them to continue to best implement their party positions. Smaller parties then must choose among several options in order to implement this, attempting to leverage their potential power as kingmakers or key vote holders to complement or constrain the power of the dominant group.

The strategies available to the small parties in relation to the larger group can be divided as follows:

— opposition: a rejection of the demands and advances of the populist ruling party;

— co-existence: a moderate position vis a vis the populist party;

— co-option: joining with the populist party in government.

These options are in line with theory regarding coalition formation, with sufficient rewards (payoff) being required to bring possible coalition partners onside.

The game theoretical calculations involved in the choice of these strategies is also modified by the rhetoric and actions of the dominant, populist, party. Unlike other dominant parties, populist parties are marked by their emphasis on the "pure and good" people versus a corrupt elite, usually domestic but often as well including other forms of international organizations. Populist movements and groups within the region are operating also along an ethnic fault line due to the history of mixed ethnic communities in Central and Eastern Europe. This, then, adds in another factor to the populist "good" v. "evil" dichotomy: that of the "pure" nation and the "impure" outsiders, appending an "ethno-" to the "populist" label for regional parties.

Methodology

To address these questions this study uses Social Network Analysis (SNA) as the primary investigative tool. SNA as a method was developed in sociology to highlight the influence of connections between individuals in a network on selected outcomes, as opposed to more traditional hierarchical methods of organisation. As such SNA focuses the research on the types and quantities of ties which exist between various actors, or "nodes", within a network. Measuring these ties, their strength and frequency, allows for the computation of various standardized characteristics of networks which can be compared across cases and time. In addition, each node is ascribed values depending on their position within the network allowing for cross comparison of the relative network importance of the nodes. The comparison of the values of these nodes and network values allows for the identification of key actors during periods of change.

In this particular study the program GEPHI was used to generate the network maps and to compute the network values. While there are a large number of possible values only the following nodal values were chosen for analysis in this study:

— closeness centrality: length of the path between a node and every other node;

— betweenness centrality: number of shortest paths in the network that pass through a node;

— eigenvector centrality: measures not just the connections of the node in question but also incorporates how many connections the adjacent nodes possess.

Collectively these values can be used to measure the relative importance of a node to the network and, in turn, the relative power of the node. This is due to an understanding of power as an inter-relational trait: actors accumulate power through connections, through the ability to monitor the transfer of resources, and their ability to control or influence this transfer process. While, of course, this is dependent on the amount of resources the network has access to, with resourceless networks thus facing little to no competition for central positions, in organisations and institutions such as parliaments, which are the focus of study here, the ability to situate oneself centrally within the network thus enables actors to monitor or influence the distribution of resources on a national scale.

Data

Data was collected from the publicly available websites of the Croatian Sabor and Serbian Skupština for each electoral cycle from 2008. This provides a timeline of 2008-2016 for each of the countries, beginning with their 2008 elections and continuing through to the current parliamentary sessions. The 2015—2016 parliament in Croatia, however, was excluded from study due to its brief tenure. In addition to the names of MPs information was also collected on their party affiliation and membership of various committees and working groups. This information was then plugged into GEPHI and connections were drawn between the nodes depending on their shared membership in political parties, working groups, or committees. These ties were then weighted depending on their type, with the weighting determined by interviews conducted with current and former politicians. Tie weighting was determined based on results drawn from a frequency analysis of the various committees, with the committees meeting more frequently being weighted more highly than others, and due to the results of interviews conducted in the Serbia in two phases in 2019. The weighting of the ties is given in table 1 and the computed values, per cycle, is given in table 2.

Table 1 — Tie Weighting

Type	Croatia	Serbia
party membership/party group	1	1
club/party group	0.5	0.5
boards	0.25	0.25
election list	-	0.25
working group/delegation	-	0.15

Table 2 — Network Values

CROATIA			
Values	2008—2011	2011—2015	2016—Present
Av. Weighted Degree:	82.328	58.947	49.49
Diameter:	4	3	4
Graph Density:	0.964	0.683	0.613
Modularity:	0.42	0.434	0.357
Connected Components:	3	5	2
Av. Clustering Coefficient:	0.741	0.666	0.642
Av. Path Length:	1.485	1.618	1.672

SERBIA				
Values	2008—2012	2012—2014	2014—2016	2016—Present
Av. Weighted Degree:	85.526	57.843	120.995	78.612
Diameter:	2	3	3	3
Graph Density:	0.695	0.531	0.901	0.806
Modularity:	0.476	0.46	0.164	0.234
Connected Components:	1	1	4	2
Av. Clustering Coefficient:	0.607	0.609	0.74	0.743
Av. Path Length:	1.589	1.657	1.473	1.498

Analysis

Collectively this information illustrates trends in the structure and organisation of the two parliaments in question. The first measure of interest is the diameter of the networks, which fluctuate between two and three and three and four for the Skupština and Sabor respectively. Diameter for networks, as with the diameter for any geometric object, captures the maximum distance between the most distant connected nodes. The variation, while not particularly dramatic, is the first evidence of fluctuations in the unity within the parliaments with higher diameter scores representing increasing fragmentation within the parliaments.

In addition to the fluctuation in diameter the density of the graphs also changes with the fluctuation in party dominance reaching a peak of 0.901 in Serbia from 2014—2016, as the *Srpska Napredna Stranka* achieved almost total electoral dominance in the period, and the 2008—2011 period in Croatia, where the system solidified into two strong electoral lists with very few parliamentarians existing outside the two main masses resulting in a score of 0.964. The discrepancy between these two political systems, despite their similar density scores, is reflected in the modularity values which capture the existence of smaller in groups within the broader groups. The low score of 0.164 for Serbia 2014—2016 thus represents significantly lower amounts of sub-groups within that overall network, as compared with the 0.42 score in Croatia during the 2008—2011 period. However, while these overall network values are useful for providing broad insights the true answers lie with the individual values.

Table 3 — Croatian Minority MPs

Key: Cluster = Clustering Coefficient, BC = Betweenness Centrality, CC = Closeness Centrality, EC = Eigenvector Centrality, WD = Weighted Degree, ▢ = Government Support, ▢ = Government

Member	2008–2011	Member	2011–2015	Member	2016–2018
Ratko Galjica (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.576 BC: 0.00199 CC: 0.6016 EC: 0.2149 WD: 17.25	Dragan Crnogorac (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.7 BC: 0.00064 CC: 0.5345 EC: 0.0609 WD: 11.5	Dragana Jeckov (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.485 BC: 0.00405 CC: 0.5709 EC: 0.1153 WD: 15.75
Mile Horvat (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.739 BC: 0.00015 CC: 0.5355 EC: 0.0969 WD: 9.0	Mile Horvat (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.584 BC: 0.00045 CC: 0.5269 EC: 0.0563 WD: 9.5	Boris Milošević (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.668 BC: 0.00078 CC: 0.5359 EC: 0.0878 WD: 12.75
Milorad Pupovac (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.738 BC: 0.00253 CC: 0.6741 EC: 0.4087 WD: 27.25	Milorad Pupovac (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.562 BC: 0.00284 CC: 0.5654 EC: 0.1898 WD: 16.25	Milorad Pupovac (SDSS)	Cluster: 0.529 BC: 0.00314 CC: 0.5820 EC: 0.1740 WD: 18.25
Zdenka Čuhnil	Cluster: 0.620 BC: 0.00086 CC: 0.5571 EC: 0.1382 WD: 11.0	Nedžad Hodžić (BDSH)	Cluster: 0.522 BC: 0.00221 CC: 0.5719 EC: 0.1255 WD: 12.75	Robert Janovics	Cluster: 0.549 BC: 0.00203 CC: 0.5687 EC: 0.1317 WD: 13.25
Nazif Memedi	Cluster: 0.643 BC: 0.00085 CC: 0.5634 EC: 0.1308 WD: 10.75	Šandor Juhas	Cluster: 0.547 BC: 0.00143 CC: 0.5547 EC: 0.1001 WD: 11.25	Ermina Lekaj Prljaskaj	Cluster: 0.468 BC: 0.00408 CC: 0.5820 EC: 0.1400 WD: 18.0
Furio Radin	Cluster: 0.829 BC: 0.00125 CC: 0.6453 EC: 0.3042 WD: 19.75	Furio Radin	Cluster: 0.646 BC: 0.00276 CC: 0.5951 EC: 0.1998 WD: 16.0	Furio Radin	Cluster: 0.673 BC: 0.01133 CC: 0.6008 EC: 0.2323 WD: 18.0
Deneš Šoja	Cluster: 0.610 BC: 0.00135 CC: 0.5634 EC: 0.0997 WD: 12.5	Vladimir Bilek (HNS-LD)	Cluster: 0.460 BC: 0.00636 CC: 0.5951 EC: 0.1837 WD: 30.25	Vladimir Bilek	Cluster: 0.524 BC: 0.00207 CC: 0.5539 EC: 0.0813 WD: 15
		Veljko Kajtazi	Cluster: 0.434 BC: 0.00445 CC: 0.5927 EC: 0.14722 WD: 18.25	Veljko Kajtazi	Cluster: 0.468 BC: 0.00408 CC: 0.5820 EC: 0.1171 WD: 18.0

Croatia

As shown in table 3, the individual values for Croatian MPs represents the evolution of the positionings of minority MPs throughout the period in question. As Croatia completed the process of EU accession party politics in the country moved from focusing on the ability of politicians to complete the "national mission" of EU accession, thus confirming the "Europeanness" of the Croatian national identity and on towards addressing domestic political problems. This created space for a reformation of the national political space, an opening into which populist parties moved particularly in the febrile atmosphere of the Eurozone crisis. In response to these movements the members of minority parties had to adapt their strategies of political representation and contestation. Throughout the period the relative positioning of members of the *Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka* (SDSS) decreased as the party moved out of coalition in the 2011—2015 period represented by a decrease in their weighted degree and centrality values. This is from a rather high peak, as the SDSS was in coalition with the ruling HDZ throughout the tenure of Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, where two members of the SDSS (Mile Horvat and Milorad Pupovac) had clustering coefficients close to the parliamentary average and high centrality scores. These scores decreased when the SDSS left the coalition and took their place on the opposition benches.

However, all scores of all members of the SDSS did not collapse throughout the period in question. Mile Horvat and Milorad Pupovac raised their betweenness centrality scores, representing increased participation in parliamentary activity and the relative increase in their central positioning within the parliaments. This trend continued again into the 2016 parliament when the betweenness centrality score of Milorad Pupovac increased again along with his closeness centrality score, representing a further increase towards the centre of parliamentary politics.

This pales in comparison to values of Furio Radin, the representative for the Italian minority in the Sabor. As one of the longest standing members of the Sabor, representing the Italian minority community since 1992, Radin has also served on many of the key committees in the Sabor. His chairmanship of the Human Rights Committee since 2000 guarantees him a central position within the working of the Sabor. This is reflected in his high centrality scores, in particular eigenvector centrality, when compared with the relative scores of other minority MPs.

What can be learned from all of this in relation to the question at hand? It points to a relative resilience of minority parties in the face of rising populism. Despite the rise in incidents in the country targeting representatives of minority communities and a rising tide of nationalism in recent years, and a rising tide of populism at both the national and European level, MPs in Croatia appear to have adopt-

Table 4 — Serbian Minority MPs

Key: Cluster = Clustering Coefficient, BC = Betweenness Centrality, CC = Closeness Centrality,
EC = Eigenvector Centrality, WD = Weighted Degree,
■ = Oposition, ▭ = Government Support, ▨ = Government

Member	2008–2012	Member	2012–2014	Member	2014–2016	Member	2016–Present
Fremond Árpád (SVM)	Cluster: 0.525 BC: 0.00215 CC: 0.6201 EC: 0.2711 WD: 31.5	Fremond Árpád (SVM)	Cluster: 0.685 BC: 0.00050 CC: 0.5583 EC: 0.2466 WD: 22.0	Fremond Árpád (SVM)	Cluster: 0.653 BC: 0.00185 CC: 0.6125 EC: 0.1649 WD: 31.25	Fremond Árpád (SVM)	Cluster: 0.660 BC: 0.00141 CC: 0.6509 EC: 0.2653 WD: 37.75
Elvira Kovács (SVM)	Cluster: 0.534 BC: 0.00201 CC: 0.6254 EC: 0.2887 WD: 32.25	Elvira Kovács (SVM)	Cluster: 0.522 BC: 0.00298 CC: 0.6368 EC: 0.4637 WD: 38.7	Elvira Kovács (SVM)	Cluster: 0.621 BC: 0.00425 CC: 0.6749 EC: 0.3008 WD: 49.2	Elvira Kovács (SVM)	Cluster: 0.678 BC: 0.00092 CC: 0.6359 EC: 0.2807 WD: 37.25
Dr Balint Pásztor (SVM)	Cluster: 0.619 BC: 0.00093 CC: 0.5952 EC: 0.2588 WD: 28.5	Dr Balint Pásztor (SVM)	Cluster: 0.590 BC: 0.00143 CC: 0.5971 EC: 0.3398 WD: 30.0	Dr Balint Pásztor (SVM)	Cluster: 0.729 BC: 0.00140 CC: 0.5889 EC: 0.1855 WD: 32.0	Dr Balint Pásztor (SVM)	Cluster: 0.767 BC: 0.00029 CC: 0.5863 EC: 0.2163 WD: 28.0
Lászlo Várga (SVM)	Cluster: 0.619 BC: 0.00093 CC: 0.5952 EC: 0.2588 WD: 28.5	Lászlo Várga (SVM)	Cluster: 0.720 BC: 0.00045 CC: 0.5596 EC: 0.2294 WD: 27.75	Lászlo Várga (SVM)	Cluster: 1.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.4554 EC: 0.00823 WD: 7.5		
		Zoltán Pék (SVM)	Cluster: 0.614 BC: 0.00077 CC: 0.5633 EC: 0.2399 WD: 22.5	Zoltán Pék (SVM)	Cluster: 0.630 BC: 0.00305 CC: 0.6586 EC: 0.2372 WD: 40.5	Zoltán Pék (SVM)	Cluster: 0.722 BC: 0.00043 CC: 0.6049 EC: 0.2116 WD: 28.5
				Anamarija Viček (SVM)	Cluster: 0.622 BC: 0.00341 CC: 0.6621 EC: 0.2717 WD: 47.25		

Petar Kuntić (DSHV)	Cluster: 0.666 BC: 0.001579 CC: 0.6687 EC: 0.4530 WD: 55.5	Petar Kuntić (DSHV)	Cluster: 0.572 BC: 0.00171 CC: 0.6241 EC: 0.5102 WD: 45.25			Tomislav Žigmanov (DSHV)	Cluster: 0.669 BC: 0.00078 CC: 0.5849 EC: 0.1493 WD: 20.25
Riza Halimi (PZDD)	Cluster: 0.542 BC: 0.00241 CC: 0.6416 EC: 0.3029 WD: 31.5	Riza Halimi (-)	Cluster: 1.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.45772 EC: 0.0104 WD: 5.5	Riza Halimi (PDD)	Cluster: 0.654 BC: 0.00077 CC: 0.6079 EC: 0.1623 WD: 27.0	Fatmir Hasani (PDD)	Cluster: 0.782 BC: 0.00019 CC: 0.5701 EC: 0.1245 WD: 16.5
Barjam Omeragić (SLPS)	Cluster: 0.548 BC: 0.00217 CC: 0.6453 EC: 0.3311 WD: 33.0			Šaip Kamberi (PDD)	Cluster: 0.701 BC: 0.00056 CC: 0.60643 EC: 0.1783 WD: 27.5	Prof. Dr Jahja Fehratović (SPP)	Cluster: 0.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.3498 EC: 0.0005 WD: 1.25
		Emir Elfić (BDZ)	Cluster: 1.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.4577 EC: 0.0104 WD: 5.5	Dr Sulejman Ugljanin (SDA)	Cluster: 0.916 BC: 0.00004 CC: 0.5385 EC: 0.0612 WD: 12.25	Dr Muamer Zukorlić (SPP)	Cluster: 0.911 BC: 0.008 CC: 0.5368 EC: 0.0571 WD: 9.5
		Bajro Gegić (SDA)	Cluster: 1.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.4577 EC: 0.0106 WD: 6.5	Sabina Dazdarević (SDA)	Cluster: 0.605 BC: 0.00149 CC: 0.6499 EC: 0.1996 WD: 35.2	Bajro Gegić (SDA)	Cluster: 0.688 BC: 0.00062 CC: 0.6093 EC: 0.1985 WD: 25.75
Esad Džudćević (BDSS)	Cluster: 0.531 BC: 0.00235 CC: 0.6423 EC: 0.3064 WD: 32.0	Enis Imamović (SDA)	Cluster: 1.0 BC: 0.0 CC: 0.4577 EC: 0.106 WD: 6.5	Enis Imamović (SDA)	Cluster: 0.713 BC: 0.00042 CC: 0.5833 EC: 0.1430 WD:21.85	Enis Imamović (SDA)	Cluster: 0.688 BC: 0.00084 CC: 0.6294 EC: 0.2704 WD: 32.25

ed a "wait and see" approach, attempting to maintain their positions close to the centres of power within the parliaments without engaging with populist parties or attempting to build wider coalitions against them. This strategy of co-existence without co-option by the majority appears to have worked in the case of Croatia in terms of preserving pure network and parliamentary influence.

Serbia

Table 4 shows the individual values of Serbian minority MPs during the period in question. Initially, under the premiership of Mirko Cvetković, all minority parties were supportive of the government if not actively taking part in the governing coalition. This is represented by the relatively high WD measures of the minority representatives across the board. While none come close to the network wide average of 85.526, their scores are generally higher during this point than in subsequent sessions. Collectively, the minority MPs in Serbia appear to have adopted all possible strategies in relation to the changes taking place within the Serbian political space: confrontation, co-existence, and co-option.

From the first to the second sessions in question two parties move from support into opposition: SVM and DSHV. While this shift led to a decrease in the centrality of some actors in the network it did not signify a decrease for all members of the parties: Petar Kuntić, of the DSHV, increased both his EC and BC by moving to the opposition benches as did Elvira Kovacs and Dr Balint Pasztor, of the SVM. Thus, for these individuals, moving to oppositional positions allowed them to move into more central positions in the new parliament rather than being subsumed by the rise of the SNS. This was confirmed in interviews where the oppositional stance was, at least initially, confirmed as valuable for minority MPs as it allowed them to leverage their opposition to gain power in committees before returning to cooperation later. The opposite was true in the cases of the minority MPs who opted for co-option by joining the SNS led ruling coalition as Rezi Halimi, running as an independent in 2012, saw a dramatic decline in all of his measures as did the new Bosniak MPs, Barjo Gegić and Enis Imamović, who took over for the now defunct BDSS and SLPS in the parliament.

Conclusions and Further Research

What can be learned from the comparison of both cases? First and foremost, is that despite the targeting of minorities by individuals on the ground and in populist rhetoric, seeking to exclude the minorities from the collective "people", there has not been a systematic exclusion of the minority representatives from collective decision-making networks. This is surprising given the nature and structure of populist discourse, and the specific history of the countries in question with a very recent his-

tory of active military conflict against the very ethnic groups represented by these MPs. That such a discourse still offers space for cooperation, and not just cooperation but even for the accumulation of power while in opposition, does challenge, to an extent, the idea that the populists represent a threat to the *de facto* liberal democracy within a state. While clearly the populist movements and parties represent threats to the *de jure* apparatus of the liberal state, through state capture of institutions or assaults on the freedom of the press, there appears to still be opportunities for these minority MPs to preserve and increase their power within the parliaments. A surprising result, given the relatively recent ethnic violence and the generally "exclusive" nature of populist parties in Europe.

Party size also appears to be a factor in determining the rate of co-option of minority MPs. The SVM in Serbia has managed to accumulate power in the parliament despite not joining explicitly with the SNS in coalition, instead using its heft to preserve influence within the parliament. Smaller minority parties have instead opted for co-option, joining in with the populist majority. Unfortunately for them, this does not seem to have preserved their power in parliament as they have simply been subsumed into the wider mass without preserving their influence. This then raises questions of why they were subsumed? One answer which was raised during field work was that the populists were a more effective ruling block than other previous governing coalitions, something that came up in the interviews. Seeing the penalties imposed via exclusion could also have been a motivating factor, or that the smaller groups were offered something within the parliament, or that they simply agree with the overall political program of the majority party. Given the small sample size of this study it is not possible to say at this point but, even with the limited data gathered here, it appears there is still much to understand about how populism affects the political landscape of countries as complex as those in the region.

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SOME SOCIOLOGICAL ELEMENTS OF NEOCONSERVATIVE POLITICS IN POPULIST MOVEMENTS OF CROATIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

The increse influence of a new conservative, populistic initiatives and movements in Croatia had affect the denial or abolition of human rights. A vast number of civic and religious organizations connected with Catholic Church and its interest had strong influence on the curricula change in Croatia. These changes have had long-term affect the denial or abolition of human rights, have impose a certain system of traditional and non scientific values, and occasionally show very dangerous and worrying elements of cleric-fascist retorics. The introduction of religious education in schools is one of such a changes. The religious education introduce the discourese of refusing women's, LGBT and minority rights into education system. The malignant interest of these conservative and populistic movemens to influence the content of education became pretty obvious in the situation of non-transparent attempt to integrate the Catholic Faculty of Theology and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences as well. The consequences of these changes are not yet clear, but it is already clear the failure to develop political culture and democracy as well as serious risk of collapsing human rights in the perspective of Croatian society.

Key words: *clericalism, Croatia, Catholic Church, education, human rights, LGBT, neoconservative politics, populist movements, sociology*

Introduction

The term populism is generally used in pejorative terms in contemporary politics and social sciences to discredit political actors whose views and proposals are not agreed by those who assert them, because populists often make false and unrealistic promises and cheap demagoguery that helps people stir up feelings and passions and thus win their support (Šalaj 2012, 23). Populism often carries the danger of the collapse of democracy and regression into some non-democratic form of government, emphasise many political analysts. Paul Taggart (2002) and Margaret Canovan (1981; 2002) say that populism is a reaction to a feeling of extreme social deprivation, most often economic crisis. Francisco Panizza (2005) also highlights that

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151

populism most often appears in crisis situations, when citizens lose confidence in the existing social order and in the ability of the political system to offer a solution to overcome the crisis (Šalaj 2012, 35).

At the same time, most contemporary political actors do not want their policies and programs to be qualified as „populist", looking for other terms to indicate their positions. British political theorist Margaret Canovan four decades ago in her study *Populism* (1981) began a systematic study of the phenomenon of populism, where she classified different typologies of populist movements in two main types: agrarian and political. Agrarian populism she divides in three sub-types: farmer populism (in the US), agricultural populism in some Western European countries, and intellectual populism, in the late 19th-century Russian populist movement. Political populism she further divides in few sub-types: populist democracy, based on advocating for citizens political participation through instruments of direct democracy, reactionary populism, which gathers on the basis of intolerance towards certain minority groups and a subspecies of the populist dictatorship (Canovan 1981). Šalaj points that she calls political populism „the attempt of individual politicians to call people without broad ideology to the broadest possible political support and conquest of power" (Šalaj 2012, 24). He emphasise, and I agree, that from today's perspective is evident in the last decades, this subspecies of reactionary populism that has become very prominent in political life in Europe, especially reactionary populism.

In populist movements Canovan emphasize specific social and economic problems at the bottom, but their common feature is a political appeal to the people, and a claim to legitimacy that rests on the democratic ideology of popular sovereignty and majority rule (Canovan 2002, 25). She also points the tension within western democracy between the populist tradition and liberal constitutionalism, as well as awareness of a complex and elusive paradox that lies at the heart of modern democracy. „Precisely because it is the most inclusive form of politics, democracy needs the transparency that ideology can supply, and yet the ideology that should communicate politics to the people cannot avoid being systematically misleading" (Canovan 2002, 25). But, because democracy is about widening the political arena to include the entire population, „the more successful the project of inclusion, the more crowded and dynamic the political arena, and the more interests and opinions exert some small influence on policies, the harder it is for any particular voter to form a picture of the location of power or to trace a clear path through the maze" (Canovan 2002, 26).

Ideology is indispensable in mass politics, but the ideology of democracy, continually reaffirmed by politicians and the mass media, is full of populist themes, emphasise Canovan, stressing sovereignty and the exercise of the general will against

152

compromise and accommodation, popular unity against pluralism, majority against minorities etc. (Canovan 2002, 26). The paradox, she says, is that while democracy, with its claims of inclusiveness, needs to be comprehensible to the masses, but the ideology that seeks to bridge the gap between people and politics misrepresents (and cannot avoid misrepresenting) the way on which that democratic politics necessarily works (Canovan 2002, 26).

Populism in postsocialism

The post-socialist experience of the former Eastern socialist countries became a panic movement towards the West as a goal to be seen and to which all attention, hopes and expectations were directed. This goal involved crossing a path that is not at all easy — from totalitarianism to democracy and a market economy (Galić 2000). Although it was often thought that this was something that every state, wishing to see itself as modern, could easily cross, the reality that the new states faced often denied the original euphoria and imposed more cautious attitudes. Namely, post-socialist countries, especially some, including Croatia, were not equipped with the experience of civil democracy, the institutions that make it possible, nor the democratic civic political culture. Most notably, the following problems have arisen: new populism, disrespect and violation of human rights, state paternalism, corruption and crime, while health and environmental problems have been suppressed to the margins of society or completely ignored. Instead of aligning with civic political culture and democratic values, the transition has contributed to an even more intense "development of traditional forms of ethnic consciousness and a whole host of traditional attitudes, and especially authoritarian relations in family, school, politics and the workplace, have greatly contributed to deterrence in developing a civil, democratic political culture and restoring 'parochial' and 'submissive' forms of political culture with a traditionalist and neo-traditionalist structure in 'new democracies', including Croatia" (Galić 2000).

Perhaps the most important drawback of the countries of Eastern Europe in relation to Western Europe and the Western civilization cultural circle in general is the underdevelopment of key elements of the civil and political culture of "civil society" as a basic precondition for the development of modern democracy. "Civil society" implies the usual standards of civility, pluralism, tolerance and human capacity for democratic rule. Namely, without establishing rules of civil society behavior, only authoritarianism is likely. The political cultures of Eastern European countries also contain strong elements of paternalism and religious orthodoxy, which is geared toward conservative political roles and empowering autocratic tendencies. For the mobilization and unification of the newly created mass public in Eastern European countries, including Croatia, there were most often used as key ideological

forces ‡ nationalism and religiosity (attachment to the Catholic Church) ‡ which often degenerated into political intolerance, targeting all minority categories, from ethnic minorities that exist in almost all Eastern European countries to religious, gender and LGBT communities etc.

According to analyst Janos, the most significant patterns and strategies of political adjustment sought to create new political elites in Eastern Europe immediately after the takeover of power, besides adjusting to the liberalist tradition and technocratic strategies, soon was established "neopopulism" (Janos 1994, 14-17). Such political cultures renew, in Almond's and Verba's vocabulary, the "parochial" and "submissive" forms of expression of political culture with a traditionalist and neotraditionalist structure (Almond, Verba 1965). Regardless of the fact that the former socialist countries agreed concerning market mechanisms, the majority of the population of these countries remained nostalgic for the welfare of the former states, because the populist regimes and chaotic characteristics of the markets in these countries allowed various abuses, thus turning free enterprise into a "free hijacking", together with some unlegal business calculations, and turning democracy into intolerance and nationalism (Galić 2000, 205). Because the standard of living of today's average population is lower than it was under the rule of the former socialist system, people feel deceived, and cynicism towards politicians who have made empty promises prevails. Therefore, in an economic downturn, democracy can hardly have better development strategies, so it is no wonder that the final product of today's trend has become a semi-authoritarian pattern combined with nationalist and populist policies (Galić 2000, 205). O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) find it equally certain that the transition of authoritarian regimes will lead to democracy as well as to undemocracy and the renewal of a new or even stricter form of authoritarian rule. The transition, according to the same authors, is already leading to confusing rotations of governments that are unable to provide a long-term solution to the institutionalization of political power, and, according to them, the development of violent conflicts that could also be directed towards "rotational regimes" if "the rules of political games are not defined" (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 6).

Populist movements in Croatia

A new impetus for the scientific pursuit of populism emerged in the 1990s, when political movements, which analysts refer to as "right-wing populism", intensified in a number of European countries. Among them was Croatia too. In the case of Croatia the decisive importance of national identity was most emphasized by the conservative HDZ political party, a new populist party that presented itself as the strongest national party, after the fall of socialism, which "flew in" at the right moment of political headlessness and with good background preparation and managed

to win publicity with the help of new political promises and thanks to a new election law that it immediately passed, that party also got an absolute majority in parliament.[2] The HDZ also managed to advance its leader, former communist and former JNA general, Ph.D. historian — Franjo Tuđman — then a leading Croatian nationalist, to became president, while political parties who were in opposition for a long time found themselves in an almost insignificant position in Parliament under such conditions (Galić 2000, 205-206). The most important change that this party immediately made was the revolution of symbols, "along the national lines", while the skill of economic policy was not demonstrated by the new government (Pusić 1992). A rigid authoritarian regime was established and institutionalized, with the obligation to adopt national collectivity as supreme good, and by such an introduction of a hierarchical identity structure all other identities and important topics were suppressed or marginalized, for example — regional, sexual, intellectual, professional, ethnic conflicts, etc. The hegemony of the ruling HDZ party has adversely affected the democratization processes in the country, directly hampering the creation and development of a democratic, civic political culture, enabling the creation of populism, the spread of nationalism, the glorification of fascism, and the founding of new neoconservative groups, with the involvement of religious groups upbringing in all educational levels of society, thanks to the signing of the Vatican Treaty with the Catholic Church, from 1996 and 1997, too.[3]

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[2] In the political orientations of Croatia, as shown by the results of the research since 1991, two fundamental opposing types of political culture — traditionalist and modernist — dominated, which largely coincided with the ideological-political opposition of "right" and "left". The former is committed to traditional values, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, and clericalism, and is largely nurtured by "right-wing" political parties, while the latter is committed to modern values, cosmopolitanism, democracy, and secularism; it is most nurtured by the "left"political parties. Researchers Bulat and Štrelov (1995a, 297-315) have come to similar results when exploring the dimensions of the electoral effects of the Croatian political space. When looking at the social demographic characteristics of individual party voters, it can be seen that the HDZ and the "right" have generally been significantly voted on by less educated, rural and older populations, and more often by men than women, while for "left"parties and parties civic-liberal orientations were more voted on by urban populations, of middle and higher status, who were more oriented towards modern values ??(Bulat and Strelov 1995a)

[3] The abundant financial support that Croatian citizens pay to the Catholic Church stems from four Vatican agreements signed on behalf of Croatia during the government of Zlatko Mateša, (now deceased) Jure Radić, then the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the State Commission on Religious Communities. Three treaties were ratified in 1997 and the fourth in 1998 with the Vatican (The Holy See) and the Republic of Croatia. It is estimated that Croatia allocates approximately 600 million kunas to the Church annually. The first was the signed Agreement on cooperation in the field of education; then the Treaty on the Counseling of Catholic Believers, Members of the Armed Forces and the Croatian Guard; the third was Legal Matters Treaty and the fourth Economic Matters Treaty. (Hrvatska biskupska konferencija: http://hbk.hr/ugovori-izmedu-svete-stolice-i-republike-hrvatske/)

155

Clericalism in Croatian educational system

The nationalist euphoria of the transition period in Croatia played its part in the initial phase of reintegration of Croatian society, but by long acting solely on the "ethnic line" it became dysfunctional for democracy. The authoritarian and paternalistic state successfully suppressed diversity, individuality, exercised the tyranny of the majority, and displayed intolerance of every kind towards opponents. What particularly hindered the democratization of all former post-socialist societies and was specially evident in Croatia in the last decade of the twentieth century was the restoration of a whole range of pre-modern and old-fashioned values. This retraditionalisation included a return to: historical mythology, religious and rural values, social strata of pre-capitalist stratification, traditional values and traditional lifestyles, disparaging women's work, discrimination against diversity and individual lifestyle preferences, and glorifying national identity as the basis of individual identity, etc. (Pusić 1993, 9). But special retraditionalization on longterm perspective was happened in education, under the patronisation of inevitable Catholic Church.

The old dreams and political and economic demands of the Catholic Church towards the Croatian state were suddenly awakened. Catholic Church in Croatia, apart from being known for its great demands for the return of property confiscated during the socialism, is well known for already mentioned "Vatican contracts", which enabled it to supply large material resources and longterm policies to influence educational institutions at all levels, as well as on the media (Galić 2018). Catholic Church became very active in Croatian social and political life, so from 1991 until now the Church has implemented a number of conservative "spiritual" actions in order to promote its values such as: non-working Sunday, punishment of the crimes of the socialist era, introducing religious education from preschool institutions to schools and higher education institutions, protection of marriage as the union of a "man and a woman" (2013 referendum), opposition to abortion liberal law (campaign: "Protecting human life from conception to natural death"), opposition to euthanasia, opposition to natural methods of family planning and the treatment of infertility, and opposition to artificial birth control methods (Galic 2018, 214).

New "clericalization" of Croatian society began in 1991 with the introduction of religious education in primary schools as the only one "elective" course, which has a privileged status among compulsory subjects without an alternative, and continued with the obstruction of introducing health education, from the early 1990s. In the case that pupil do not select the only elective course, he or she will be in the situation of "time lost" during that class in the middle of the class-schedule, 2 times a week for the whole school year and for every year in primary schools, from 1990s

156

until now.[4] In secondary schools, an alternative is an "ethics". Their influence especially expanded after the conclusion of the "Vatican Treaties" in 1996 and 1997 and is very alive untill now, according to international Contracts that the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the mid-1990s concluded with the state Vatican in the areas of "education and culture", in "legal issues" etc. Catholic religious education in public schools was introduced at all levels in public state educational institutions (from preschools to universities), and all was performed by persons whom the bishop gave a confirmation of the canonic mandate (*missio canonica*). According to the Vatican's Contract in the field of education, publis school/state schools do not have right to choose the teachers to perform religious education in schools by themselves and public competition, as they choose for other subjects-matters in schools, but "the bishop determines a suitable person for performing religious education", according to Vatican's Contract about Catholic Religion in Public Schools and Religious Education in Public Preschool Institutions (*Ugovor između Svete Stolice i Republike Hrvatske o suradnji na području odgoja i kulture*, HBK, 1996) (Galić 2018, 216). Schools cannot do much if teacher is inappropriately behaving towards children, if someone discriminates or sends a message of harassing, racist or even fascist content, too.[5] Croatia still don't have any kind of school-subject concerned with the curricula about sexual or human rights education at primary or secundary schools.

One of the most important attempts to impose clerical influence on the educational system and secular society in Croatia was 5 years ago when the Catholic Church tried to impose the integration of the Catholic Faculty of Theology (CFT) with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS, University of Zagreb) to establish dominance in the educational system in schools, as the FHSS educates professors for schools, but the Church needs dominance in the educational system. In 2014 the ex-Dean (now Rector of the University of Zagreb from 2014) signed secretly, without legal aprovement of the FHSS Council, the Contract with CFT, despite that the realisation of that Contract should have been provided at the expense of FHSS and its students, because its students would be discriminated in applying for their study, during studies and in getting employment. After signing the Contract, ex-Dean received very soon the votes for the Rectorate, and became the Rec-

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[4] The stigmatization of those who did not choose religious education is a particular topic, for which neither the Church nor the state in Croatia show any interest.

[5] Accordingly, religious instruction largely depends on the choices of teachers, whereby the bishop has the right, by his decree, to revoke the canonic mandate (*missio canonica*) for teaching Catholic doctrine or religious education due to "the correctness of the teaching and the personal timidity", what is stated in the Vatican's contract on performing religious education in public schools and religious education. So, it is not suprising that sometimes teachers of Catholic religion in schools show their intolerance and hatred towards other ethnic groups, minority religions, minority sexual and LGBT populations, but also sexist attitudes towards women and other different opinions (Galić 2018, 210-225).

tor because it was a good „deal" with the Catholic Church. The Church expected from him to "return" the service by signing a wishful Contract on joint double major studies with an important faculty (FHSS) in Croatia which educates half of the required teaching staff for many public-school subjects. But, conditions, legal approach and reciprocity of study programs of two faculties were not equal, neither were the possibilities for getting jobs in public schools for graduated students and neither the responsibilities of faculty authorities, since FHSS is in the ownership of the Republic of Croatia and works under "civil law" and CFT is in the ownership of the Holy See and works under "canon law" (where women are not equal with men). At the same time, international Contracts of State of the Vatican City were presented and officially accepted in Croatia as the law even "above" Croatian Constitution, but question about it goes beyond this paper.[6]

However, the Church didn't succeed with that Contract finally because one of the faculty members at the time — the Vice-Dean[7] — opposed it publicly and with the help of some colleagues and the majority of students managed to stop this attempt at the Faculty Council, which finally rejected it. However, the fight has been going on for months and years, and to this day the author of this text still have the consequences from that activities that she must endure in rigged trials of a corrupt Croatian juridical system. But people in Croatia on average are not at all informed about that kind of actions and processes that are going on very far from public eyes, because interests of Catholic Church in Croatia are fighting very far from public eyes.

New conservative populist organizations in Croatia

In the last 2,5 decades, Republic of Croatia became full of religious associations and organizations, Internet portals, TV stations, neo-conservative and radically right in-

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[6] For attendance, CFT asked additional condition — the parish's confirmation, what was not possible to fulfill for some students of FHSS in the first place. Also, CFT wanted for their students to get more than twenty different studies on different Departments on FHSS, as the second major study, but at the same time CFT offered for students of FHSS only one study as the second major — "religion pedagogy and Catechesis", i.e. "confessional religion" for teaching in public schools. It was meaning that their students can easily enter and get plenty of possibilities for study at FHSS, but students of FHSS can get only one study of confessional religion on CFT. Additional problem for students of FHSS was in getting jobs because they were in unequal position without "canonic mandate" if they are not religious or are members of other religious community. From religious teachers is expected to have a virtuous life in accordance with the Catholic doctrine (Galic 2018, 216-217).

[7] At the time, the author of this paper was working for the FHSS as the ViceDean for Science and International Cooperation, but because of her open opposition to concluding a harmful contract for the FHSS, she was illegally dismissed by the Rector and the Senate of the University of Zagreb, and defamed by the deans in the media. Today, there are 2 court proceedings, which are being conducted incorrectly and unfavorably for her, although she has the Ombudsman's legal opinion that this is discrimination based on conviction.

itiatives and movements that have emerged in Croatia at the end of transition period from 1990s until now, and as a response to the secularization process in Western European and East European countries. The Croatian new conservative and populist political movement is comprised of a dozen of conservative civil society organizations of the last decade, connected openly or hidden with Catholic Church with demanding of "safeguarding Christian values". They promote Catholic values, advocate for active citizen participation in the society and in politics, pursue pro-life activism and oppose abortion, oppose to rights for marriage and for adopting children in the case of homosexual persons; they oppose to the autonomy of the state in educational curricula, oppose to reproductive rights,[8] oppose to education on gender roles etc. The nexus between neo-conservative groups in Croatia and their like-minded people in the United States is evident in their common political agenda, with the "mentoring" position of US actors in the transfer of experience and action strategies, while their financial links are often hidden.[9] Revival of forces that were defeated in World War II can be only added to it.

The first manifestation of conservative mobilization was in 2006 with the association Voice of Parents for Children (Glas roditelja za djecu — GROZD). They objected to the introduction of curriculum for sexual education program in schools (Bijelić, 2008). The other associations — Association for a Comprihensive Sex Education "Teen- star and the Reform — Association for the Promotion of Ethics, Morality, Family Values, and Human Rights — both were connected with the same persons. *Teen-Star* was offered to schools and teenagers on responsive sexual behaviour aiming at the maintenance of the virginity of its participants or the discontinuation of sexual activity. The Reform opposed the introduction of sex education in school curricula. Association "Teen-Star" is a member of an international association

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[8] Concerning the history of reproductive rights legislation in Croatia, in the former Yugoslavia — abortion first was legalized in 1952. Further liberalization of the conditions and procedure for termination of pregnancy were in 1960 and 1969 and the last free-reproduction Law-act in ex Yugoslavia was accepted in 1978. Republic of Croatia also accepted the same Law from ex state in 1991 and until now didn't change the text of the law which allow the termination of pregnancy on demand until the 10th week of pregnancy, but changed the practice in hospitals. In majority of hospitals (about 80-90%) medical staff is calling on "the call to conscience", and this impedes or hinders access to abortion for many women, specially poor. In last few years populist and conservative demands for more restrictive regulation or ban on the application of the Abortion Act was growing, with particular reference to national interests and religious postulates.

[9] For example, the visit of controversial pseudoscientist Judith Reisman in Croatia in 2013 and 2014. Reisman holds a PhD in communication, founded the Abstinence Clearinghouse, which promotes abstinence before marriage. It is neither the historical, nor the sexological, the biological, nor the psychological or psychiatric profession; she is traveling the world with her campaign against the sexual revolution (Hodžić, Bijelić 2014).

Teen-StarR International, connected with the Natural Family Planning Center in Washington, D. C. (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 67)

The third important association — Vigilare (meaning "watchful") — promotes preservation of "dignity of rights of the individual, family and values of life" (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 67). They organize international activism, call supporters and send emails to politicians and to the heads of institutions who belive in traditional values. They called, for example, controversal communicologist Judith Reisman as the strong person fihghter against sexual education in schools, against human rigghts for homosexuals and against women's reproductive rights. Although Reisman came twice, in 2013 and 2014 and had many lectures on different faculties in different towns in Croatia, she wasn't accepted everywhere very vell, except theological faculties as well as Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb, where was very conservative dean (Petričušić, Čehulić and Čepo 2017). Fourth established association was theCenter for the Renewal of Culture with the goal of educating and training future conservative leaders, as the part of a pan-European conservative association with its leader in Croatia Stjepo Bartulica,[10] PhD, an American returnee from Croatian diaspora.[11]

One of the most influential new conservative organizations in Croatia is In the Name of the Family that is part of the broader religious-political movement. They advocate for exclusively religious influence on the family institution in Croatian society, oppose sexual and reproductive rights and insist on the primacy of religious education. This new conservative association was particularly active on the issue of denying rights to LGBT persons, in promoting the right of exclusively heterosexual marriages and families with children. It was active and still is against national minorities, against women's reproductive rights with the help of the increasing "the call of conscience" of gynecologists at abortion clinics, organizing a "40 Days for Life" initiatives to intimidate women seeking abortions at clinical centers, and obstructions against signing the Istanbul Convention in Croatia (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017). In the Name of the Family organized on the 1st December 2013 the

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[10] Professor of political philosophy at Catholic University in Zagreb, advisor to Croatian ex Prime Minister Tihomir Orešković in 2016, and member of the Opus Dei Catholic Association. Bartulica, along with Vice Batarelo, head of the populist-conservative association *Vigilare*, is one of the most prominent conservatives in Croatia. One of the main tenets of this movement is social engagement, which is why Bartulica is known for engaging in similar actions before. He was one of the initiators of the "I was an embryo too" initiative as well, when signatures were collected against the Act on Medically Assisted Fertilization.

[11] Apart from these groups and associations, there are some other associations for promoting family values Assoiation for Promoting Family Values "Blessed Alojzije Stepinac" (Udruga za promicanje obiteljskih vrijednosti 'Blaženi Alojzije Stepinac'), Center for Natural Family Planning (Centar za prirodno planiranje obitelji) itd. (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 68).

referendum on the constitutional definition of marriage as a "union between man and woman", why Croatia had to change the constitutional text in heteronormative way. Although the same definition already exists in the Family Law, the referendum claimed that was necessary to constitutionalize the definition. That initiative significantly increased the level of intolerance and homophobia. Although only 38% of eligible voters voted, The State Election Commission pronounced the official acceptance of the referendum, and announced that "66% voted 'Yes', 34% voted 'No' and 0.57% of ballots were invalid" (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 74).

Croatian religious political movement registered their political party Croatian Growth "HRAST" in 2010 that was politically active and aligned with the European Christian Political Movement, and concerned with three main goals: the protection of the traditional family, the resistance to the introduction of sex education in schools and the prohibition of abortion — connected with a wider European neoconservative agenda (Petričušić, Čehulić and Čepo 2017, 69). In February 2012 it formed the civic initiative "I was an Embryo Too" and presented a legislative proposal to Croatian Parliament for infertility problems by advocating natural conception and opposing the freezing of embryos for the purpose of artificial insemination, emphasise the same authors, so the conservative movement in Croatia is trying to restrict the potential for liberalization of reproductive rights.

Croatian clerical etc. Fashism

Catholic Church in Croatia didn't officialy criticised some convicted war criminals, nor what they did, but on the contrary, some of their clerics openly celebrate and glorify that convicted war-criminals.[12] Graffiti with hatred speeches against Serbs, LGBT people and women's rights again were re-painted in last years and last days over many buildings and facades in many towns of Croatia.[13] Over than 2000 antifascist monuments have been destroyed throughout the Croatian country, from 1990s, while no investigations by state authorities have been taken. However, when one student drew a sickle and hammer last year at the memorial-statute of the first Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, the State Attorney's Office initiated criminal proceedings and threatened him with imprisonment, immediately.The Catholic Church in Croatia also regularly holds every year masses for Ustashe's leader from World War II. Ante Pavelićat at one church in the centre of Zagreb, without any reaction

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[12] Some of Croatian bishops openly defend the Ustashe's salute *Za dom spremni* (Ready for home) who were Hitler's associates and who were executing people (Serbs, Jews, and comunist Croats) in concentration-camps in Croatia during World War II., the largest and most terrifying being Jasenovac.

[13] During maskerade in Croatia, one pair of homosexual kissing dolls with adopted child was burned in one square of little town in Dalmatian back, as the "folk custom".

from the Croatian government, and this year it has been moved to the main church of Saint Marko near by The State Parliament of the Republic of Croatia

"Gender Ideology" against Christianity

The Catholic Church proclaimed the document of Istanbul Convention as a "gender ideology" and carried out a major campaign in the media and Internet portals against the ratification of the Convention in Croatia, but finaly didn't succeed in it, because Croatian Parliament finaly ratificated that convention. But regularly representatives of Catholic Church in Croatia oppose to any kind of gender education in Croatia, and openly advocate against women's organizations as well as against any woman intelectuals who are fighting for human and women's rights. They support strengthening the influence of new male groups of registered associations and portal sites or forums on Internet to strengthen male dominance in society and fight for "male rights". At the same time, some bishops state for women they are beings of the 2nd class in public (*drugotne*), without any reaction of the state institutions.

Instead of a conclusion

In a situation where there is no movement to defend the material interests of the poorer and workers, and the state and political parties see only their preferential interests, while completely marginalizing the influence of trade-unions, it is not difficult to gain marginalized, impoverished and dupeable sections of the people through a sense of belonging to a particular populist identity group — Catholics, veterans, men, heterosexuals, patriots, as well as radical right-wingers, etc., to ensure long-term survival. In that circumstances specially Catholic Church has own interest and continues with her consequence of the revival of the "1000-year dream" as the most patriarchal, but also the most powerful church institution in this region, which refuses to accept the equal emancipation of women and men, the development of democracy, human rights and new knowledge, but returns all deeper into the abyss of the Middle Ages using for that goal all possible old and new organizations, that emerge from undeveloped political culture of postsocialist democracy in Croatia.

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163

MILITARIZATION, STATE CAPTURE AND CONTAMINATED SOCIETY — CASE STUDY SERBIA (2010—2020)

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A b s t r a c t

The key-idea of the paper is that the contemporary social science needs a new and original terminological determination to describe the actual dynamics and character of social changes which are happening during the last decade (2010—2020) in the Western Balkans (especially in the case of Serbia), and that the term state capture has become dysfunctional in describing contemporary social phenomena and relations. This paper proposes a new theoretical perspective and argues that the state capture should be replaced in modern theory by a new term which better explains the real political, socio-economic situation — contaminated society. The term contaminated society is thus introduced into the field of theory as a new and innovative, or original contribution to the analysis and understanding of certain social phenomena and relations present in current Serbia. As a case-study, the examples testifying on growing the specific form of populism — militarization of a public space — as a socio-political context of the contemporary Serbian society are presented.

Keywords: *populism, militarism, captured state, contaminated society*

There is still not a sufficient degree of agreement in the modern social theory on the meanings of terms *populism and militarization,* while the term *state capture* is still more present in public policy papers and strategic documents and reports than in scientific papers. Almost all the concepts or meanings have been constantly re-examined and reinterpreted by scholars in recent decades. The need for such re-thinking is contributed by the development of social science, but also by very dynamic social, political and economic changes going throughout the world.

Populist's precipitating breakdown of democracy

The term populism is used as one of the most appropriate description of the contemporary political practice and, as such, the term is present in media, as well in scientific researches, as one of the most frequent terms last decade. Even, in the last two decades there has been a kind of reanimation of this term which follows the modern course of work in the political space of Europe and it is recognized by

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many scholars as the "rise of populism". This trend, in the current social-political circumstances across the globe, has imposed the need for additional interpretations and redefining the notion of populism.

Contemporary political practice makes populism a diffused concept, as Ilze Balcere has stated and explained that in the professional literature the term populism is usually described as three main conceptual approaches — a specific style of doing politics, an internal organizational form of party and thin ideology (Balcere 2017). Balcere also described populism as a phenomenon that could potentially be found among right-wing, left-wing and centrist parties, citing Tjitska Ackermann's interpretation that it quickly became evident that the populist phenomenon was not limited to the radical right only.

The attitude that populism is a discursive strategy employed by political outsiders on both, the left and right extremes of the political spectrum, is also represented by Bart Bonikowski (Bonikowski 2016). As an example, he offers empirical analyses that he made with Noam Gidron on U.S. presidential discourse when they have conclude that the variation of campaigns and language used by the same politician suggests that populism is not a deeply held ideology, but rather a rhetorical strategy, or what political sociologists call a "frame."

According to Patrick Liddiard, populists in government can also erode the institutional checks on executive power necessary for durable democracy, even in previously resilient advanced democracies, and populist mobilization has precipitated democratic breakdown in the wealthiest democracies to ever revert to autocracy: Turkey, Venezuela, and Thailand (Liddiard 2019). Liddiard predicts that populists are more likely to have future electoral success in the subregions that have weaker connections between voters and parties (Central and Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, the Andes, Central America, and Southern Africa) than other subregions. By describing the examples of three countries with different political systems and ideologies of rulers and ruling political parties, also provides an argument to those who argue that populism is an instrument of governance represented on all sides of the political spectrum (usually seen in a very narrow and one-dimensional pattern — as *left* and *right*).

It is necessary to mention that the still widely applicable analysis of the political model that operates with left and right benchmarks needs to be replaced by a new one in which benchmarks are the degree of militarization, totalitarianism, authoritarianism, i.e. civility of society, pluralism and tolerance. Such an approach offers a wealth of material for understanding populism not as isolated or predominantly present on the political right (comparing to the left), but as a term referring to the level of centralization, unification, uniformity, totalitarianism, dogmatism, loyalty, hegemony and mobilization within a particular political discourse, in relation

166

to a particular topic (most often it is a determinant of identity) and within any society or community, regardless of the political system, social order or historical period. Populism is seduction to obedience. Understood in this way, populism applied in political practice remains without potential for emancipatory action.

It doesn't matter if we deal with populism as skills or attitudes, as a medium through which the message is conveyed or as the essence of what is said, as hardware or software, or populism we understand as both — a form and a content (Pabriks 2017), or in populism we see the same as Balcere — one of the most widely used concepts in today's politics, media and public discourse, actually, with numerous possible derivatives of the same, populism always occurs from political power and on the political scene — in an interaction with the audience. Populism strives for performativity. That is why the audience is so important for the success of populism. Populism is like a magician's trick that aims to seduce, enchant, and overshadow the audience so that people do not see and understand certain things, but so that they believe and think exactly what the magician wants them to think and believe. Like an allegory about the eve of Nazism by Thomas Mann in "Mario and the Magician". Populism becomes impotent when it is unmasked and demystified, when the magic trick is illuminated and presented from different perspectives. Pluralism and constructive criticism deconstruct and demystify populism. Populism only ostensibly advocates and agitates for something that could be described as "the general will of the people," as Rousseau would call it. In fact, populism formulating, labelling and imposing a certain option as something that must be accepted by everyone as common — the need, interest and desire of the masses. That is why any populism leads to totalitarianism, and any totalitarianism is populists.

In this article populism is interpreted as a certain political management and marketing model. Populism is understood as a political strategy or method, which makes populism part of the style of communication (in a broader sense), or public relations (in a narrower sense) of some political leader.

Inhalation of toxic militant-populism

Populism and militarism are strongly interdependent social phenomena that have numerous pervasive elements; even symbiosis is almost organic and inevitable in order for such a political system to survive at all.

Michael Klare describes militarism as the "tendency of a nation's military apparatus (which includes the armed forces and associated paramilitary, intelligence and bureaucratic agencies) to assume ever-increasing control over the lives and behaviour of its citizens; and for military goals (preparation for war, acquisition of weaponry, development of military industries) and military values (centralization of authority, hierarchization, discipline and conformity, combativeness and xenophobia)

increasingly to dominate national culture, education, the media, religion, politics and the economy, at the expense of civilian institutions." (Klare 1978, 121).

Or, as Hugh Gusterson and Catherine Besteman pictorially describeds, militarism "is capillary, shape-shifting, always in motion as it constructs threats, enrolls constituencies, colonizes cultural life, and generates new loci of resistance" (Gusterson & Besteman 2019, 4).

Evans, G. and Jeffrey, N. defined militarism as the "subordination of civil society to military values" (Graham & *Newnham* 1998, 325). A "militant" type of society becomes possible only after a certain period of continuous inhalation of toxic militant-populism. Militarization is not only about producing weapons and war materials, but also about producing citizens, gender identities, family forms, language, ethics, morals, ways of being and ways of seeing the world is already general and common wisdom, as many scholars agreed about (Frühstuck 2007; Bickford 2011; Gonzalez 2010).

Obviously, the process is very complex and implies that militarization is always fighting and striving to dominate the public sphere and, also, non-military social activity, essentials and existential. To militarized society means to impose understanding of the security as the most important public interest and priority as a common believes of all the citizens; to be obsessed of constant creation of feeling such as "being safe and secure", "being jeopardize" or "being victim". That is why producing of different types of crisis it is just a manipulative tactic, a task for political marketing and public policy stakeholders where fear is constant target. To create a specific atmosphere of being dedicated to the issue of common defense — that should be the focus and occupation of people on a daily level. To glorify and celebrate the *military* as an approach to the final solution, as the most efficient method and the best instrument, the ideal vision. In such a society, the government is devoted to military-oriented, not civilian-oriented strategic goals, and society is nurturing military-centralized, opposite civilian-centralized, political culture and collective memory.

Based on the views of Klare, Evans, Jeffrey and other mentioned scholars, it can be concluded that when a government for a long time applies militarism to increase control over the lives and behavior of its citizens and use militarism as the dominant discourse of national culture, education, media, politics and economy, that has also a toxic effect on gender identities, family forms, language, ethics... actually a total of social substance.

Toxicated society — case study Serbia

In searching to assess up to which level the assumption about toxicated/militarized society is applicable in the case of Serbia today and how this certain term is related to the actual and unique characteristic of the contemporary Serbian society

(2010—2020), and can we argue that the process of militarization is part of the strategic change (means planed), several criteria were applied:

a   All the cases are unique in the history of Serbia,

b   All the cases are related to a certain period of time (2010—2020),

c   All the cases are organized or facilitated by the state executive government,

d   In all the cases are clear transfer and overflow from the military sector into the civilian sector,

e   All the cases are multidimensional and multisectoral interconnected,

f   None of the cases is just an ad-hoc event; they are repeating in the same or similar shape, becoming a part of the systemic events and behavior.

Many examples have been found that meet the criteria. The list of the examples below could be much longer. For this article, just few are presented:

1. In spite that Minister of Defense is not military officer, but civilian servant, and has no military rank, he very often wears paramilitary clothes. These clothes are not an official uniform and the symbols on that imitation of the uniform are not official symbols, but some improvisation which should give the visual impression that they are official army symbols.

2. A great spectacular (as media describe it) Military-Police Parade "Defense of freedom", was held in 2019 in Niš, a town in southern Serbia. That was the first and the biggest of this kind of parade organized out of Belgrade. Initially, the parade was planned for March 24, the 20th anniversary of NATO launching airstrikes against Serbia and Montenegro.

3. The International Armament and Military Equipment Fairs have been held permanently each two years at the Belgrade Fair since 2010. Every new event is exceeding the results of the previous one.

4. The largest public television station in Serbia, Radio Television of Serbia, used 70 cameras to TV broadcast an in-live of 9-hours military maneuver at 2018. It was the largest and longest TV broadcast of a military exercise in the history of Serbia.

5. From 2019, as part of the regular school curriculum, high school students attend military education classes on the role and tasks of the Serbian Army and how to become a professional soldier. This is a completely new program and nothing similar has existed in Serbia since 1991, the time of the break-up of Yugoslavia (ruled by the Communist Party in a one-party system).

6. Football players and fans of the "Red Star" club installed a tank, a military vehicle, in front of their football stadium. They drove another military vehi-

cle through the centre of Belgrade. Police did not react. Even the football fans got support from The Minister of Internal Affairs.

7. The ruling political party, Serbian Progressive Party (SPP)[2], very hierarchically organized, with strong party discipline and managed by absolutely authoritarian role of the president of the party (and president of the Republic of Serbia), is the biggest party in Europe and the number of members was continually growing during the last ten years (about 10% of the total population). In the parliamentary elections in 2020, after 8 years of ruling the state, the SPP won the most convincing victory since its founding and won the largest number of seats in the republican parliament. Most of the democratic opposition political parties and citizens boycotted these elections, and political analysts assess the work of this parliament as one-party.

8. The constant increase in the number of extreme political organizations and their actions, the increase in the number of magazines on weapons, a huge number of murals and graffiti on the streets glorifying people convicted of war crimes, organizing camps where children carry wooden rifles and learn to throw bombs, foundation of nongovernmental organisations offering to citizens trainings in handling weapons, building huge monuments to warriors from the far past, selling replicas of weapons in shopping-malls... are just some of the examples that can supplement this list.

Militaristic populist goals

The relationship between militarism and populism can be easily recognized in the comment by military analysts and journalist from Serbia, Aleksandar Radić: "We have a government that is obsessed with media presentation. And really, it would be best for them to make a military brigade for parades and ceremonies. And that these people train all year round and whenever they need it, they appear on television. And to show how nice they are marching."[3]

Two[4] years later, commenting on military exercise on Pešter 2021, A. Radić explained that "Pešter has primarily the function of being the reason for a live television broadcast. Watch carefully how many TV shots you will see with politicians and how many with the army. The army is just a decoration to create an image of

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[2] The SPP is the largest party in the national parliament (42% of the MP), runs the government on the national level and all of local municipalities, and the party president is also the president of the state.

[3] http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a555253/Strategija-odbrane-i-Zakon-o-vojsci-ministru-veca--ovlascenja-i-cuvanje-RS.html, N1, Petar Gajić, 24. dec. 2019.

[4] The next two paragraphs were added during the preparation of the publication and were not part of the conference presentation.

politicians for public opinion. [...] In practice, in Europe, no one makes live television broadcasts of military exercises. There is no need to put so much pressure on the public and to create an atmosphere that we are a garrison-state that someone will attack any moment. [...] If we continue like this, in 5 years we will have more military parades than Yugoslavia from 1945 until the breakup."[5]

The same military exercise was the motive for the former head of the Military Security Agency, General Momir Stojanovic, to explain that "Other armies have practice to organize such military exercises also, but they are organized without fanfare and without so much presentation in public. [...] Never before has been so much media pomp about what the army is supposed to do according to the constitution. [...] What has been happening in recent years is that everything in this country is happening exclusively by the orders, approval and ideas of one person, I think that does not send a message to some potential centers that could endanger the security of our country or territorial integrity. What has been happening in recent years is in the function of an internal market-war. We don't need to parade; we don't need so many parades and so many public military exercises. Public exposure of the army in any form, even in the form of a parade, is unnecessary."[6]

What can be the function of this kind of militaristic populism, the propaganda and popularization of the army, uniforms, weapons…? Some of conclusions can be:
a) To raise the political rating and political authority of the government.
b) To create new national myths.
c) To flirt with traditionalism.
d) To mobilize nationalists and militarists as political activists.
e) To create collective paranoia as a psychological mechanism for manipulating public opinion.
f) To impose militarization as a collectively wanted and expected response to national vulnerability and threat to national security.
g) To create legitimacy and justification for the investment in the military industry and the purchase of weapons.
h) To cover up or justify privatization of the military industry.
i) To animate public attention, make a social life more dynamic and impose militant topics (and language) as permanently present in every-day life.
j) To make uniforms popular and to involve citizens into sharing government's enthusiasm for (para)militarism.

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[5] N1 Beograd, Novi dan, broadcasted 27. jun. 2021.

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVCBHj9J7-U&t=1408s, July 6, 2021. "Radić: Vežba na Pešteru pokazno gađanje iza kojeg stoje trgovci oružjem" (Radić: An exercise on Pešter is a demonstration shooting behind which are arms dealers).

Truth mutated into lies and deceptions

The *state capture* has become an almost unavoidable determinant used to describe the executive government methods of managing and the standard of the human rights and freedom of all of the Western Balkan countries. The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, in their "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament" (2019) comment that today, the countries (Western Balkans) show clear elements of state capture, including links with organized crime and corruption at all levels of government and administration and, also, organized crime's foothold on the Western Balkans remains strong, whether in terms of trafficking in human beings, drugs and weapons or risk of criminal infiltration of the political and economic systems. Another explanation coming from the EU Institute for Security Studies, also dated in 2019, saying that captured political systems, the suppression of independent institutions and weak law enforcement are all features that accompany corruption, as is standing in the publication "Balkan Futures — Three Scenarios for 2025" (Čeperković & Gaub 2018).

Nives Miošić-Lisjak from Croatia, in her political analyses published in the "Captured state in the Balkans" (HBS 2017) explained that capture produces numerous negative effects — from creating new or widening existing inequalities, through generating a sense of inability and pointlessness of public action, to political apathy and disinterest in politics on the part of citizens. Even, she points out that the citizens are aware of the mechanisms leading to capture, but they consider them to be part of the "normal" and sometimes "expected" behaviour of politicians. In the same publication, diplomat and journalist from Sarajevo, Zlatko Dizdarević, brings more critical observations and questions when he is saying that an old truth mutate into lies and deceptions, while the new criteria for good and evil, smart and stupid, wise and snobbish, have already become established. He is asking how we came to the situation that successful maintenance of people in this state of slavery and obstruction — is a planned and carefully sustained business.

The term *state capture* is much more related to the economy-relations and operating with economic categories, which is logically, since that the author of the term state capture is the World Bank. Also published in the "Captured state in the Balkans" Đorđe Pavićević, professor from the Faculty of Political Science from Belgrade (Serbia), explained that the usual conceptions of *state capture* are not comprehensive enough to capture all important elements of the new style since that leaves many important features out of sight. According to Pavićević, a more precise qualification of the Serbian state could be given in terms of a hijacked and appropriated state. Still, since the term *hijacked* or *appropriated* state, which also can be

easily associated with an economic issue, can mean that this term(s) is also not comprehensive enough. So, why do we need some new term? The answer is to make the understanding and illumination of a disquieting trend in contemporary politics in the Western Balkans — the militaristic populism — more theoretically precise.

In the case of *state capture*, citizens still think that corruption is not normal and welcome, citizens are able to distinguish what is true and what is a lie, what are the criteria for good, what for evil, and what is legal — what is a crime. In the case of *state capture* citizens still have critical attitudes and can define common collective interests in a constructive way and to express expectation from the government to lead the nation in a responsible way by respecting law. In a *contaminated society* they do not. In the case of *state capture*, human rights and freedoms are suppressed; the space for public and political action is very limited and directly controlled by the rulers, while most citizens recognize such a situation as repression and the government as illegitimate. In the case of *state capture*, the popularity of rulers is declining, while in a *contaminated society*, despite large social differences, increasing enrichment of the political elite, *juridical insecurity*, strengthening corruption and diminishing all kinds of human rights and freedoms, the popularity of the ruler grows and the number of members of the ruling party grows.

What else can be recognized as some characteristics of a *contaminated society?* That can be collective disorientation and confusion about the real political situation at the national and international level; blurred & unclear expectations from the future, ideas and vision of development; Anxiety, even Paranoia; socio-economic dysfunction and unproductively; self-isolation from international cooperation, exchange and mobility; Amnesia about the national past; irrational management and misuse of public resources and wrongfully defined public interests; irrational behaviour of the citizens; collective hallucinations and hysteria; lack of critical public opinions and constructive behaviour; diminishing or derogation of capacity of institutions; raised degree of authoritarianism and totalitarianism; creation of social cohesion predominantly around national defence issues and patriotism; created national scientific technological and economic development dependent on and blackmailed by owners of the military industrial complex[7].

Conclusion

The analysis is the beginning of a social change. Any strategy plan, problem-solving strategy or decision-making process directly depends on how some problem

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[7] The term "military-industrial complex" was created in 1961 by Dwight Eisenhower, former U.S. President.

have been analyzed and understood. The way how we do understand the world we are surrounded with we are expressing by using a certain terminology and it is directly related to the process of constructing some political alternative and social change strategies.

Many recent social-political changes in Serbia, among militarization is the dominant one, caused such broad consequences that makes the term *state capture* (as predominant economic term) not comprehensive enough to capture and explain all of the important new social-political characteristics. Cumulative effects of the militaristic populism led to the contamination of public space, public opinions, social relations, political scene and culture, and leave enormous consequences on all kinds of human activity. This type of populism — militaristic populism leads society into military culture. Society contaminated with the military culture is not an inclusive and tolerant society, shows clear symptoms of collective disorder and hardly can interact with other societies and neighboring states in a manner of trust, cooperation and peace, nor can find inner potential to contribute to history with managing global developing goals. More likely, in the best case, that society will be a source only of instability and tensions. In the case of Serbia, the *state capture*, as a process of the economic transformation, followed by militarization, was a pre-stage and it created the foundation of the *contaminated society*.

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174

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POPULISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE ECONOMIC GROWTH MODEL IN SERBIA: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

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A b s t r a c t

The main purpose of this paper is to show how the pursuit of political identity in Serbia, especially after the beginning of the transition process, influenced the inability to create its long-term sustainable growth model. After a brief theoretical overview of the basic tenets of political and economic populism, this paper will try to show using certain processes of transition (deregulation, privatization, state relation to the real sector, etc.) as an example, that still there is no clear idea which, indeed, are the economic potentials of the long-term sustainable growth of the Serbian economy. Instead, the practice has shown so far that reform processes have taken place spontaneously, without a clear vision and conception of economic development, and are often influenced by Western European experience and recommendations. The lack of a clear vision of economic growth and development, on the one hand, and as it seems, a dogmatic and ideological approach to economic reforms and economic policy, appear to be a suitable economic ground for the awakening of political and, consequently, economic populism in Serbia.

Keywords: *political and economic populism, transition, economic growth, economic development, Serbia*

The 1888 Constitution adopted at the Great National Assembly of Serbia, held on December 22, meant the beginning of parliamentarism in Serbia. That Constitution was one of the most modern at that time, representing the peak of Serbian parliamentarism, whose adoption formally placed the Kingdom of Serbia in the ranks of European parliamentary states. Despite these characteristics, the Constitution did not suppress certain restrictions on politics and political life in Serbia, which were still strongly influenced by authoritarian and populist tendencies of representatives and holders of political power.

Numerous political reforms and changes in the political system of Serbia from that period until today have failed to suppress the authoritarian and populist dimen-

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sions of politics, political parties, and politicians. Moreover, it can be said that this is their dominant characteristic, which results in the suppression of critical consciousness and individualism, which should be respected as a legacy of establishing democracy and its basic values everywhere in the world, even in Serbia. However, going through all the reforms and metamorphoses of the political system of Serbia, the individual is in the same way transformed from a citizen, aware of his political and civil rights, then to a member of the people (mass) in which all this is lost, disappears, have drowned in the concept of "Brotherhood and Unity" — the community of nations and unity of the working class, and finally, to a turn towards ethnic self-identification. As a result, all his political potential disappears.

As one of the most important social spheres, and under the great influence of politics, the economy could not be immune to the influence of populism and its numerous limitations. This is especially visible after the Second World War, when authoritarianism and political one-dimensionality spilled over into economic life, mostly in the form of mass industrialization, numerous youth actions of workers, nationalization, and collectivization (social ownership) of property, etc. The one-party system in Yugoslavia found its economic foundation in skillfully creating economic populism. It seems, however, that the real challenge is to analyze the political foundations of economic populism in Serbia after the break-up of Yugoslavia, the introduction of a multi-party system, and the beginning of the transition process. We are talking about a period of 30 years, considering that the transition process in Serbia is still ongoing. In this paper, special attention will be paid to the analysis of certain economic segments of transition, especially privatization, to show that this process has been skillfully used (and still used) by political authorities and other political representatives to strengthen and expand their political (and economic) populism and, accordingly, their power.

In this paper, we will try to answer two dilemmas. The first refers to the effects of the discontinuity of the political order and the political system on the building of political institutions, which resulted in the impossibility of developing a clear political identity, both of the individual and the state as a whole. The second refers to the lack of economic preconditions, more precisely quality economic institutions, as a basis for creating a long-term sustainable model of economic growth. Using the theory of path dependence, as one of the concepts of institutionalism (North 1990), which analyzes the change capacity of institutions by taking into account their historic structures, on the one hand, and macroeconomic populism (Dornbusch, Edvards 1990), on the other, we will try to show the lack of a clear vision and strategy regarding Serbia's economic growth model. By analyzing the results of the privatization process and the attitude of the political elite towards the deregulation process, as one of the foundations of the overall transition (political and econom-

ic), we will show that the attitude of political authorities and economic reformers towards these processes was extremely voluntary, with a clear absence of a political will, and in some periods the ability, to implement transitional reforms efficiently and consistently to the end. This approach and attitude towards economic reforms develop opportunities for the emergence and then expansion of the mechanisms of economic, and thus, political populism in Serbia.

Briefly about populism

We will start with the definition of populism. The scientific literature (Matić 1998, 270) that deals with this phenomenon define populism as a certain social tendency, process, or movement. Populism, on the one hand, represents a certain political style, i.e. the method used by political elites, while, on the other hand, populism, which is the dominant feature of political life in certain countries, is spoken of as a regime. If, on the other hand, it has become established as a model of political life, populism can even be seen as a system.

Thus, as can be seen from the above definition, a really wide range of political and even social phenomena and processes can be subsumed under populism. To make a certain systematization of this phenomenon, Matić (1996, 271-273) distinguishes between two main groups of populism: agrarian and political populism. Within the agrarian one, he distinguishes peasant populism (promoted at the end of the 19th century by the American People's Party), then the populism of peasant movements in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, with pronounced national and ethnic-populist admixtures, and revolutionary romantic populism, combined with the messianism of "great leaders", PRC, Cuba, African countries). Within political populism, Matić distinguishes between various established populist forms, such as populist dictatorships (Peronism, etc.), populist democracies (characterized by radical theories of people's sovereignty, in which various forms of direct participation and declaration of the people are practiced), and, finally, reactionary populism (which shows marked intolerance towards other social strata, races, elites, etc.).

Populism, according to other authors (Hopkin and Blyth 2018), can also be viewed and defined as an anti-elite discourse that pretends to represent a morally charged idea of "nation" as a whole, at the same time denouncing the existing institutions for treason or failure to properly represent the people. In this context, one can find reasons why populism also relies on authoritarianism, with a strong tendency towards charismatic leadership and personalism. Criticisms of the populists are most often directed at the establishment, with a tendency to replace it with a form of government that is largely based on the people's will.

In addition to the above explanations of populism, we must not omit another very useful interpretation (Guiso, Herrera, Morelli, and Sonno 2017, 3), which, in

addition to the anti-elitist dimension, emphasizes that populists share the fear of people's enthusiasm and promote policies regardless of long-term consequences for the country. The three important components of populism, according to this interpretation, are: 1. the populists' claim to be on the side of the people against the elite (so-called supply rhetoric), 2. the fears of people's enthusiasm (so-called demand conditions that populists give in) and, 3. neglecting of future consequence (short-term oriented policy).

This attempt to decompose populism, in economic terms, to the side of supply and demand, is important for understanding the short-term nature of populist politics. The demand side, which refers to the so-called fears of people's enthusiasm meets with the side of the offer, that is, the populists' claim that they are against the elite and, as such, on the side of the people. In this context, short-term protection represents the moment in which supply and demand meet. This is especially pronounced in situations of economic insecurity when people try to overcome new problems as soon as possible. More precisely, they require short-term protection. On the other hand, short-term supply-side politics, i.e. populist politics, is based on the dichotomy of people against the elite, because the long-term is considered the interest of the elite (Guiso, Herrera, Morelli and Sonno 2017, 8-9).

Thus, based on the above analysis, there are clear differences between left and right-oriented populists. The entry of left-wing populists into politics is mainly motivated by their commitment, and then by the fight to reduce inequality, while their policy would be focused mainly on those groups of people who depend on the way the state implements the policy of distribution. On the other hand, right-wing populists will focus on issues of national identity (Guiso, Herrera, Morelli and Sonno 2017, 11-12).

We see, therefore, that populism gains importance only when it is politically institutionalized. Until then, its range is very limited. To politically institutionalize themselves populists and populist parties must win political power. More precisely, they must participate in political elections. The question now is, what is kind of authoritarian dimension of populism we are talking about if populist parties participate in democratically organized political elections. This implies that by participating in elections, populist parties respect the democratic order as such, so their authoritarian dimension cannot be explicitly discussed. However, the moment they get elected, the populists turn to their policies and the way they are implemented, which is, without a doubt, very close to authoritarian political systems.

Other authors (Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin 2011, 2-31) offered a view of populism that explains the participation of populist parties in elections, and especially their behavior after winning them. Namely, they believe that the policy of populism is characterized by the support of a significant part of the population, but after win-

ning the elections populist parties often endanger the economic interests of this majority. Namely, populism is most pronounced in those countries characterized by a high level of economic inequality, followed by weak political institutions (and often as a consequence of the same), which allows rich elites to significantly influence political decisions — the way they are made and their content. They prove that it is in these societies that there is pronounced political corruption and the so-called "political betrayals" by populists, who make a drastic turn from the policy of redistribution and accompanying rhetoric, toward policies in line with the interests of the rich elite.

Of particular importance are their conclusions regarding the participation of populist parties in elections (Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin 2011, 31):

1. policies are more likely to be populist when the value of re-election for politicians is higher;
2. if a politician is right-wing, his policy is more likely to be populist;
3. the more likely it is that a politician may be corrupt, the more likely it is that his policy will be populist;
4. populist policies are more likely in highly polarized societies, starting from the assumption that with greater polarization of society, the benefits of re-election are greater for both left- and right-wing politicians;
5. insufficient voter information about policies increases their populist bias;
6. as the uncertainty of the election of current politicians increases, so does populist bias;
7. finally, politicians who are more future-oriented are more likely to be populists because they are more willing to adopt those policies that are not so much focused on their personal well-being, but solely on gaining an electoral advantage.

These characteristics indicate that there is mutual mistrust between populist politicians and their voters. Namely, despite the populist rhetoric of politicians, their voters believe that after gaining political power in the elections, politicians could have a certain "hidden" program in favor of realizing the goals of the rich elite, on the one hand, which opens the possibility that they could be corrupt, on the other. This indicates that the basic driving force of populism is the weakness of democratic institutions.

Dealing with the analysis of the mentioned forms of populism, we will single out several of their common characteristics, which also represent some of their main features (Matić 1998, 274-275):

1. glorification of the people (Populus, ethnos, but not demos), and "small, average man", as bearers of political wisdom, truth, and social justice;

181

2. resistance and distrust towards political elites, intellectuals, as well as liberal values of an open political match;
3. striving to mobilize the broadest social strata, to provide political support to the leadership and order;
4. the tendency of leaders to directly address the people (mass) and political communication leadership — mass, personalization instead of institutionalization of politics;
5. the use of public manifestations and propaganda (e.g. opening of highways, factories, etc.) as a form of expression of "people's will" that should provide support to populist leaders;
6. the use of traditional symbols as well as collective frustrations, irrational fears, and emotions of the masses (nationalism, xenophobia, fear of conspiracies, etc.) to transform them into means of manipulating the people and strengthening the position of popular leaders;
7. resistance to political pluralism and the pursuit of concentration of power in the hands of the leader or oligarchy while preserving pseudo-democratic rhetoric;
8. hostility towards the large property, market economy, and competition and favoring small business, cooperatives, and traditional forms of business and living, with resistance to modernization;
9. a tendency to political, non-economic use of national income, various political redistributions, as well as tactical satisfaction of social demands of the masses and lower strata to the detriment of long-term development and prosperity.

Populism and its economic effects — economic populism

In the previous part of the paper, we offered several definitions of populism, to better understand this phenomenon. The existing literature on political economy in the analysis of this phenomenon and its economic effects focused on explaining the demand for populist policies and through such an approach offered some of its views on populism (Guiso, Herrera, Morelli and Sonno 2017, 7). One such interesting position is the development of the paradigm of populist macroeconomics (Dornbusch and Edwards 1990), as a policy perspective that emphasizes economic growth and redistribution of income without emphasizing the risk of inflation and deficit financing, various external constraints, etc. However, it is external influences (debt crisis), together with domestic structural policies (nationalization of banks), and inconsistent fiscal and foreign exchange policies that result in an unsustainable situation, in which inflation spirals out of control and foreign exchange restrictions force policymakers to be realistic. On the other hand, it is of great importance to explore

populism, from the economic aspect, on the supply side. Guiso et al. (2011, 7) point out that Dani Rodrik is an exception in that sense, focusing on the shocks of globalization, claiming that the waves of globalization can predictably lead to a populist reaction at a certain moment (at the time of shock) followed by a certain geographical pattern (usually refers to countries most affected by globalization). Hence, it is important to analyze populism on the supply side as well, to understand the chosen orientation of populist parties.

Populism is most often associated with left-wing parties, which criticize the current economic situation — dissatisfaction with the country's growth performance, initial conditions, etc. (Dornbusch and Edwards 1990) Increasing economic inequality provides a fertile ground and political attraction for a radical turn in economic policy, which usually begins or ends with economic populism.

On the other hand, we can also talk about the populism of the leading political structures, which we are witnessing today in Serbia. The political background and political ambitions of placing populism on the part of both the opposition and the government can be understood as striving for the same goal but in a different way — to change one political structure for another to come. Unfortunately, that is the main feature of political life in Serbia — the non-existence of political and ideological identity. From the aspect of populism, one gets the impression that it is taking on unprecedented proportions in Serbia. Despite attempts to find understanding for this kind of political life in Serbia, where the same political parties and, even more problematically, the same political representatives and individuals have existed for more than three decades, the bad impact of such a policy on the economy cannot be ignored.

The lack of ideas in politics and the pursuit of narrow personal and party interests results in the lack of ideas in economic policy, with one difference — the worst that can happen to a political party is to lose elections in the political arena and step down. However, the economic effects are long-term, and even incomparably more harmful to society as a whole.

This can best be illustrated by a change of government, or frequent political changes within the government, the so-called political cycles (political macroeconomics). Frequent changes in political course or frequent changes within political power result in high economic costs. This can best be explained by the concept of "path dependence". According to this concept, from the economic point of view, long-term good economic results can be expected only if it "does not turn off the road". Pierson (2017, 74) also talks about that, referring to the excellent analogy of Margaret Levy, who uses a tree, composed of many different branches and twigs, instead of a road to explain this concept. Although it is possible to turn or move from one branch to another — primarily due to the rot of the first — the branch

you started with is still the same one you are moving on. In the institutional context, established, stable and quality institutions strengthen further development. Many economic institutionalists (North, Acemoglu) point out that once established, institutions are difficult to change, and that each change causes great costs. Without quality institutions, there is no significant economic growth. In this context, Pierson (2017, 89) rightly observes that policies are generally easier to change than the constitutive rules of formal institutions, but despite this fact, they represent very importantly limiting features of the political environment.

So, before we move on to a concrete analysis of economic populism, we must distinguish that despite having a bad impact on the economy and living standards of citizens, populist policies remain very attractive to a good part of the public, but we see that political parties resort to them, especially during election campaigns. Given the short-term nature, which is one of the features of the populist policy, and which occurs on both the demand side and the supply side, the damage that such a policy causes prevail in the long run.

To better understand this relationship, we will use the analysis of Hopkin and Blyth (2018), who have explored the significance of different "growth models" and "macroeconomic regimes". It is important, as they point out, to distinguish these concepts because they point to a corpus of institutions and ideas whose analysis can establish a connection between the rise and fall of specific macroeconomic regimes and models of growth and accompanying forms of policy, especially the rise of populism around the world in recent years. They claim that the populism of "great people", which is very pronounced today, is just one of the symptoms of the collapse of traditional political parties and party systems, especially focusing on the growth regime in Europe in the period from 1977 to 2007, which resulted in the so-called catch-all political parties, with a vague ideological orientation, but with a clear goal to include as many people as possible in their activities. Namely, after the post-war period, the model of economic growth was based on full employment, investment in the real sector was encouraged, while the financial policy was strictly kept under control. The whole system relied on high levels of demand-boosting consumption. Thus, states were primarily responsible for providing jobs and wages. There was no talk of any market interventions. With the transition to a new growth model from the 1970s to 2008, with an emphasis on curbing inflation, reducing the role of the state in the economy, and opening the space for the market to function freely, a new economic environment is created to which parties must adapt. It began with a decrease in voter expectations, to reduce the political obligations of the parties, which had previously been excessively expanded. Left parties have declared their commitment to the free market and the global economy, while right-wing parties have turned to criticism of the "neoliberal" concept. Creating so-called

184

catch-all parties, adjusted to the growth regime in the observed period, had, as the above authors point out, three critical weaknesses:

1. Governing nothing is fine so long as nothing is wrong because voters notice when the parties do not have the ability or tools to respond effectively to emerging problems;

2. Catch-all parties have also led to the cartelization of parties, which, whether they wanted to transform the system or simply profit, created new challenges in the long run;

3. Finally, if the post-war growth model failed due to the cost of inflation, the other failed due to the cost of inequality in various forms (housing, income, mobility, assets, etc.), and catch-all parties were less and less able to solve new problems, which created fertile ground for the development of political and economic populism.

We will now turn briefly to economic populism. It is characteristic of economic populism that it occurs in the conditions of economic crises and is directed towards that part of the population that is most affected by the effects of those crises, e.g. if we observe the process of transition, the so-called "transition losers" are the target group towards which economic populism is directed. So, from the economic point, populism always has a negative connotation, that is, it means a short-term irresponsible policy. In the previous part of the paper, we briefly referred to one of the features of populism towards which it is anti-elitist, i.e. on the side of the "people" against the "elite". In this context, Rodrik (2018, 196-199) argues that populists despise the limitations of executive policy because they fight for a certain "common" interest and that restrictions on the exercise of executive power undermine the will of the people. It is easy to see the many dangers that can result from this attitude towards the constraints of the executive, where basic democratic institutions in society are finally undermined.

Despite the generally accepted fact of the connection between politics and economics, as the two most important social spheres, Rodrik, for the aforementioned reason, believes that when it comes to populism, a clear distinction should be made and that political and economic populism does not always go hand in hand. Economists believe that in the situation of short-term economic interests of politicians, there should be certain rules and procedures, and mechanisms of certain autonomous technocratic agencies to which decision-making will be delegated. The reason is simple — the policy is often inconsistent in time, which is in contrast to economic policies that are desirable in the long run. He cites the example of the state's treatment of foreign investors, who, after the investment, as he points out, can become trapped due to the whims of the state. State promises made to at-

tract foreign investors can be easily forgotten and replaced by policies to fill the state budget. In that case, foreign investors decide to invest in another country.

Rodrik (2018, 196-199) warns that the commitment to the rules and the delegation of decision-making has another side and can also serve to advance the interests of certain narrow groups to strengthen their temporary advantage in the long run. Thus, the result is the creation of extractive political and economic institutions, created by politically powerful elites to extract resources from the rest of society. However, he concludes that the populism that undermines liberal, pluralistic, democratic norms is always dangerous. In contrast, economic populism is different, especially in cases where it is perhaps the only way to prevent its much more dangerous cousin, political populism.

It has already been said that economic populism is characterized by the possibility of achieving good results at the moment. If so, then what are the problems with this kind of economic policy? Searching for the answer to this question, Popović (2017, 24-27) states several phases of the application of economic populist measures. For the first phase, she points out, there are no harmful consequences: inflation is stagnant, incomes are rising, the exchange rate remains unchanged, and in cases when domestic debt is growing, this situation reaches the optimum in terms of Pareto: improving some does not worsen the position of other participants in countries economic life. However, these results are short-termed, and when they dry up, the situation becomes even worse than it was before the initial application of populist measures. Then the second phase is coming, followed by numerous problems — when excessive costs come to charge. On the whole, the economy ends so that at the end of the second phase, it is no better than it was before the introduction of populist measures. If economic populism continues, in the third phase there will be a drop in production, tax revenues, necessarily subsidies, as well as other benefits, and wages. Increased instability also results in the withdrawal of foreign capital, the domestic currency depreciates, and often inflation rises at the same (or higher) percentage. The economic downturn is becoming apparent. In the fourth phase, a strict stabilization policy is introduced, and when this work is done successfully, it is necessarily accompanied by statements that real wages have fallen to a lower level than they were before the introduction of measures of economic populism. So, Popović concludes — the measures of economic populism are effective, but they are short-termed, and they also have excessive costs.

The analysis of economic populism could be summarized as follows: despite possible short-term effective measures of economic populism, and based on the above four phases, it is evident that in the long run there are major disturbances in the economy that can only be suppressed by stabilization policy measures. On the other hand, economic instability also leads to political instability, which means in-

stitutional instability. The biggest problem of economic populism is precisely the excessive reliance on the state in terms of overcoming its negative effects, in which subsidies play a major role.

The political dimension of economic populism in Serbia

The introduction of a multiparty system in the early 1990s did not lead to political stabilization. On the contrary, things have become more complicated. The ideology we knew before becomes history, and various "national" goals come to the fore, often as a cover for certain structures to gain political power and take over and control public or state resources. This was (and is) an excellent basis for the spread of corruption at all levels of government. At that point, political and economic populism has been skillfully used (and is being used).

However, the transition process that began in Serbia in the late 1980s, due to the turbulent 1990s (war, sanctions, NATO bombing, etc.) was completely stopped, which is why many agree that the period of political transition began with changes after October 5th, 2000. It was considered a turning point in the political and even economic life of Serbia. Unfortunately, expectations were not met, as a period of weak coalition governments ensued, with numerous political cycles[2], resulting in an unstable political and institutional environment. Political instability and weak coalition governments whose members, representatives of political parties, were only interested in retaining political power, or participating in the decision-making process, provided a suitable environment for maintaining and later developing authoritarian elements of the political system, with pronounced characteristics of personal authority (especially in the last ten years). In short, the political system of Serbia, as we have seen throughout history, and especially today, can be defined as a system of authoritarian populism.

We must admit that no post-socialist country during the process of political and economic transition has encountered all the problems that accompanied the political and economic transition of Serbia. Precisely those circumstances in which Serbia found itself at the end of the 20th century, represented a suitable ground for the development and flourishing of ideological political and economic populism. The

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[2] Political cycles are specific to countries in transition, more precisely to those countries that have opted for building a market economy (economic transition) and building political democracy (political transition). They arise as a consequence of the lack of established institutions (both economic and political), i.e. their dysfunctionality. (More: Tmušić 2014, 141--163).

political changes that took place after 2000 in Serbia, as it turned out, only made the path to final democratic consolidation even more difficult.

However, what is most worrying, and what was mentioned at the end of the part of the paper on economic populism, is the fact that there is still a very pronounced awareness among people of the political dominance over the economy. Of course, it is known that political decisions have economic outcomes and that without a successful economic policy there is no successful political policy, but it is very problematic to remain aware that politics is the most important social sphere, to prevail over the economy and other social spheres. The social consequences of such a way of thinking are far-reaching and very harmful — we have already mentioned the suppression of political potential (lack of individual consciousness and critical thinking, etc.), but also the economic consequences (suppression of individual initiative, competition, and entrepreneurial spirit at the expense of the belief that without connections with the political elite one cannot prosper economically). This ultimately results in an excessive (and seemingly unnecessary) reliance on the state and its assistance (e.g. subsidies), which is contrary to the proclaimed political and economic goals of the transition, which could be summed up by reducing the state's role and its initiatives in economic as well as political life.

This attitude towards political and economic reforms has two sides, which Matić (1998, 56-57) also points out[3]. On the one hand, we have individuals who, on the margins of society and as such, often become victims of indoctrination and numerous external and internal influences, doubt their attitudes and, consequently, become increasingly dependent on the political will of government officials. On the other hand, political actors who base their political action on populism are in a state of constant uncertainty in which they constantly impose themselves as the only ones capable of pulling society out of the crisis, reformers on whom the future of the whole society depends. In such circumstances, populism takes on unprecedented proportions, reaching its peak, because on the one hand we have individuals who have abandoned their original beliefs and, as such, become objects of political manipulation, while on the other hand, we have politicians who make political decisions and manage economic state resources.

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[3] This situation of socio-political apathy and social stratification on those who do not want to participate in political life and those for whom politics is the only occupation (for some even the first employment) in life, is best explained by the following observation: "Indeed, because of the 'ugly face' of our political passions and schisms, much better people and shuns politics, giving way to the worse, so that on the surface of public life, with the support of egomaniac leaders, emerges the lowest social element, poltrons and characteristic, often selfish social scum, which, except in fickle politics , cannot be confirmed in any other area of human creation and action." (Matić 1998, 56-57).

Economic effects of political populism in Serbia — economic populism in practice

In this last part, we will look back at the economic effects of populism, which we will analyze in particular through the process of privatization and privatization of the industrial sector, to point out the lack of a clear reform strategy to complete the overall economic transition process. This resulted in slowing down and stopping the entire economy, further deterioration of the economic situation in the country, which on the one hand opened space for economic populism to flourish, and on the other hand, contributed to the growth of corruption and the creation of a new class in society, so-called tycoons. Frequent political cycles, followed by the economic crisis, together contributed to the rise of political and economic instability and the slowdown of political and economic reforms. This created an unpredictable business environment, and it is known that the business environment is a reflection of the quality of institutions in each country.

The first step in reforming the political and economic system of Serbia was the creation of an institutional base, more precisely formal institutions (an appropriate set of reform laws). In this context, deregulation was a key process, followed by economic liberalization and privatization.

As a process aimed at reducing and eliminating numerous internal and external obstacles to the free functioning of the market, deregulation had to "deal" primarily with several political influences that controlled economic flows and, as we pointed out in the previous part of the paper, incited corruption. On the other hand, deregulation meant reducing the state apparatus — numerous state agencies and organizations, among which there were some whose competencies coincided with certain line ministries. In short, deregulation meant the consistent application of appropriate legal solutions, without exception.

In transition countries, including Serbia, the comprehensive social transformation has opened several important issues: first, harmonization of legislation with the principles of the market economy, and second, harmonization of legislation with European Union standards. The adoption of new legal solutions in Serbia would often turn into mere copying of EU legal solutions, which resulted in the imposition of solutions that did not always correspond to the reality of the economic environment of Serbia.

Therefore, the success of legal reforms is reflected in the number of adopted legal solutions, and their harmonization with European standards. Such an approach proved to be insufficiently effective because the inherited conditions and economic structure of the Serbian economy were not sufficiently respected. Such a

reformed legal framework would sometimes open up new possibilities for non-compliance and non-application of the essence of legal norms.

The creation of an appropriate normative environment was aimed at paving the way for the liberalization of the economy and the privatization process. In the following, we will look back at the privatization process, and also analyze its impact on the real sector, with an emphasis on some key elements in the analysis that clearly show how much the influence of economic populism in these processes has contributed to reducing their economic effects. These processes clearly show the combination of political power and its economic effects, which is also reflected in the functioning of economic institutions. Thus, those who have political power can regulate the actions of economic institutions in the direction that corresponds to the realization of their interests.

The process of privatization, i.e. ownership transformation, is only acceptable if it leads to increasing the efficiency of the economy, as an economic goal. Of course, in addition to the pronounced economic dimension, privatization has a political, social, but also moral dimension. In that sense, the choice for an appropriate model of privatization could not be a matter of a simple choice between the offered alternatives, but it was necessary to take into account primarily certain economic requirements, i.e. economic incentives, contained to different degrees in different forms of ownership. Hence, any attempt to politicize and dogmatize this process posed a danger not only of reducing the economic effects of this process on the Serbian economy but also of creating a realistic politic-economic basis for the establishment of a dictatorship. Given that from the very beginning of economic reforms, privatization was said to be the main lever of transition, it is clear that from the very beginning the political authorities saw opportunities for political manipulation of this process, with pronounced elements of economic populism, which at some points outgrew a complete dogmatic approach. Consequently, the politicization of privatization, in line with the political potential it brought with it, was accompanied by an evident conflict between politics and the economy. This means that completing this process within the legal deadlines would reduce the space for political manipulation and economic populism, which the ruling parties skillfully used. Therefore, it can be said that there was no political will to start reforms seriously.

At the heart of the reforms were failed state-owned enterprises, which revival was the most important state project, accompanied by numerous dilemmas. The dilemmas were related to the concept of reforms — whether to implement all measures (stabilization, liberalization, and privatization) at once or to go gradually, to delay their social consequences. The situation in society at that time would be best described by the term "socialist controversy" (Stojanović 1995, 35-36) — long and

complex theoretical discussions within economics on whether it is possible to organize a society with socialist principles (absence of private property and market) so that it is economically efficient, but also democratic. So, even though some issues should not be more controversial or open, because they are theoretically proven and empirically verified, they come to the fore again. The best example that can illustrate this situation is the legal measures that practically stop the process of property transformation and the creation of institutions necessary for the overall reform of the system.

The absence of appropriate and lasting political and economic institutions has negatively affected the success of overall transitional reforms. The discontinuity of legal solutions, as a consequence of political instability, made it impossible to establish a stable institutional framework for privatization, the results of which only partially coincided with expectations.

The lack of a clear privatization strategy in Serbia, and the lack of political will to carry out the process to the end can best be seen in the example of legal solutions, which in the first decade (until 2000) was six[4], and since 2000 there were four.[5]

In the initial stages of privatization in our country, it was believed that rapid privatization was necessary because the slow process of changing the ownership transformation "... will melt the substance of social (state) property so much that we will soon have nothing to privatize." (Economic Policy 1998, 16-17) As a consequence of such beliefs, there are companies in social and mixed ownership, which have recorded losses from year to year. Losses were not covered, as the companies were continuously in losses, and did not have a profit from which to cover losses, which constantly increased the value adjustment of capital (losses as value adjustment) so that their own capital "melted".

After the political changes in early 2000, much was expected from privatization. Or so it is presented. By switching to the model of privatization based on sales

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[4] Law on Enterprises (Official Gazette of the SFRY, No. 77, Year XLIV, December 31, 1988); Law on Trade and Management of Social Capital (Official Gazette of the SFRY No. 84, Year XLV, December 22, 1989); Law on Amendments to the Law on Trade and Magagement of Social Capital — Law on Social Capital (Official Gazette of the SFRY, No. 46, Year XLVI, August 10, 1990); Law on Conditions and Procedure for Converting Social Property into Other Forms of Property (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year XLVII, No. 48, August 5, 1991); Law on the Basis of Change of Ownership of Social Capital (Official Gazette of the FRY, No. 29, June 26, 1996); Law on Property Transformation (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year LIII, No. 32, July 22, 1997).

[5] Law on Privatization (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year LVII, No. 38, June 29, 2001); Law on the Privatization Agency (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year LVII, No. 38, June 29, 2001); Law on the Share Fund (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year LVII, No. 38, June 29, 2001); Law on Privatization (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, Year LXX, No. 83, August 5, 2014).

(tenders and auctions), a larger inflow of foreign direct investments was expected, as well as an increase in budget revenues. There was a sharp increase in budget revenues from privatization in 2002 and 2003, before starting to decline in 2004. The fiscal effects of privatization in Serbia should have had a threefold effect (Privatization Agency 2005, 155-156): (a) an increase in budget revenue either directly from the transfer of privatization proceeds to the budget, or indirectly through increased profitability/liquidity of privatized companies to increase tax revenues, (b) financial injection from privatization proceeds aimed at the recovery of the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund, (c) reduction of subsidies and other forms of financial support to socially owned enterprises. However, as the biggest fiscal burden on the Serbian economy, subsidies remain, which are generous and largely indiscriminate, and thus economically unjustified, behind which, according to the Fiscal Council (2012), stands an insurmountable obstacle to restructuring and/or privatization of state-owned companies.

In Serbia, 671 privatization contracts were terminated in the period from 2002 to 2012, which is 41.5% of the total number of privatized companies through tenders and auctions (due to non-fulfillment of contractual obligations in the group of tender companies, the termination is 55%). These companies employed 45% of all employees. Part of the assumed obligations was never paid, which is why the contract was terminated. Out of a total of 671 terminated contracts, 251 contracts were terminated due to non-payment of due installments of the purchase price, 250 contracts were terminated due to non-maintenance of business continuity and non-compliance with the social program, 89 contracts were terminated due to non-fulfillment of investment obligations, 20 contracts were terminated due to disposition of property contrary to the provisions, while in only 5 contracts the buyers unilaterally requested termination (Nikolić 2013, 44).

Companies that are the subject of terminated privatizations are once again becoming a problem that the state needs to solve, which reopens the space for economic populism. Companies that are, or are again under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia, receive significant support through "indirect" subsidies, primarily tolerating non-payment of obligations to the state and public companies. According to Arsić (2012, 78), these companies were making losses that in the period from 2008 to 2010 amounted to around 350 to 400 million EUR a year. To keep them alive and prepare for a new round of privatization, the state tolerates non-payment of tax and other contribution obligations, as well as obligations to public companies. During 2011 alone, debts for unpaid taxes and contributions increased in the gross amount by about 15 billion RSD, i.e. 150 million EUR. The largest part (more than 80%) of accumulated debts to the state refers to companies in the status of restructuring. Also, these companies receive other significant "indirect" subsidies of

about 95 million EUR per year, which include the so-called "soft" loans that are generally not repaid, which is why they are treated as a subsidy. These funds are mainly placed through the Development Fund. They include subsidies from the budget of the Republic (about 35 million EUR per year), which are "special purpose loans" that are generally non-repayable and represent an expenditure for the national budget. The World Bank findings show that during 2013, these companies made a total of 690 million EUR in losses, which is over 2% of GDP, which creates a significant negative spillover effect on large public utility companies, while in the period from 2010 to 2015, about 140 companies that were restructuring cost the Republic of Serbia one billion EUR, in direct and indirect subsidies[6]. Part of that (what goes to companies from failed privatizations) is the unnecessary transaction cost of privatization.

Based on the terminated privatization contracts in Serbia (which are not noticeably larger than in other transition economies), we can conclude that the institutions at the beginning of the transition (when most of the privatization took place) were too weak to guarantee its success in terms of transaction costs to privatization revenues. Based on that, we can conclude that those economists who advocated the gradual reform in transition had the right views.

To other republics of the former SFRY, privatization in Serbia was the fastest, on the one hand, while it recorded the most modest results, on the other hand. The outcome of privatization has, to a large extent, determined the course and development of the entire economy. Although this is certainly a necessary process, we must emphasize that privatization is only a way to establish ownership preconditions for more efficient use of available resources, and by no means an end in itself. Cerović (2012, 161) connects this with the market structure, claiming that change in the ownership form is not enough, in itself, to achieve an efficiency increase. Privatization must be done in a competitive environment. Otherwise, the efficiency effects of this process will be suboptimal.

Here we want to emphasize the danger of ideologizing privatization because this kind of conclusion inevitably carries with it a dose of subjectivism and dogmatism. With this statement, we only follow the position of Cerović (1996, 171) who says that the project of transition and privatization as its integral part should not be

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[6] Until the abolition of the Privatization Agency, these companies were under its jurisdiction. After its termination, 29. 1. 2016., all competencies and obligations, as well as companies, which the Privatization Agency had, were taken over by the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Serbia. Within this ministry, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has established the Privatization Dispute Management Agency, which deals with representation in court proceedings, arbitrations, administrative bodies and other competent bodies, in which the Privatization Agency participated, and which were initiated before 1. 2. 2016.

connected with the political positions of the left or right simply because it is done about the universal social goal — to achieve the maximum result with the available resources.

Privatization has been highlighted as a conditio sine qua non of transition in Serbia. One gets the impression that this process was approached dogmatically, without considering the experiences of other socialist countries. On the one hand, privatization was expected, as it seems, too much, while, on the other hand, the institutional environment within which the privatization process took place was neglected. The creators and bearers of economic reforms in the country at the time neglected the importance of norms and rules that would regulate this process, and on the other hand, they expected that the results and effects of this process would occur "by themselves", although it was impossible.

Based on the insight into the effects of the legal regulations that have been regulating the privatization process in Serbia for almost a quarter of a century, several common characteristics can be singled out that connect the periods of each of the listed legal solutions (NALED 2014, 9):

— *surplus of employees:* most of the companies that were privatized had a significant surplus of employees. The 2001 Privatization Law shifted this problem to the buyer. Given that there were fewer and fewer customers involved in the social programs for laid-off workers, the state took over solving the problem of redundancies, with two problems that arose in the meantime — first, the reduction in the number of employees took a very long time, because it was based on the principle of voluntariness, and another problem is insufficient funds to finance severance pay from the so-called. "Transition fund";

— *(over)indebtedness:* expressed "opportune behavior of certain state creditors, who blocked the sale of privatization entities, making it more favorable settlement". The problem was overcome by the concept of mandatory debt forgiveness for state creditors. In the meantime, after 2005, debts accumulated again, as debt relief related only to the period up to the end of 2004;

— *unresolved property issues:* there was no appropriate legal framework to regulate construction land issues; the restitution issue was also not regulated;

— *soft budget constraint:* in addition to obstructing the privatization of companies by a lack of willingness to write off old claims, state creditors have, very often, at the same time allowing those same companies to borrow more.

These characteristics: excess labor, indebtedness, unresolved property issues, and the soft budget constraint, have represented just the basis for a new series of negative tendencies in the privatization process in Serbia. Compared

to other countries in the region, as well as others, Serbia has lagged far behind in reforms, which is why it was not so attractive for the inflow of foreign capital (Ibid.).

After this brief analysis of privatization in Serbia based on the laws on privatization, we can single out several of their general characteristics:
— there is a noticeable discrepancy between the promises inaugurated in the mentioned legal solutions and the results and effects of privatization after their implementation,
— legal solutions often reflected current political ambitions and interests, and less objective economic opportunities and needs,
— over-emphasized dogmatization and ideologization of privatization have opened the way for strengthening and expanding the functions and scope of the state in or on the occasion of this process, which is contrary to the reform goal of reducing the role of the state in the economy, giving priority to markets and market institutions,
— the discrepancy between legal solutions regarding the privatization model due to the lack of a clear vision and strategy of privatization and its role in stimulating economic growth and development,
— discontinuity of legal solutions as a consequence of pronounced political instability, due to which it is not possible to speak of the existence of an adequate institutional framework for privatization in Serbia.

This legally regulated attitude towards privatization leads to a large number of problems, such as terminated contracts, robbed companies, a large number of unemployed, and the growth of companies in restructuring, which further burdens the already stagnant Serbian economy. The most important thing is that the implementation of privatization, in an environment that can in no way be called well-institutionalized, can, in the long run, jeopardize the construction of a functioning market economy in Serbia.

Privatization, as we can conclude, was managed in the previous period without a clear vision of how to implement it efficiently. The laws were a reflection of political impossibility and unpreparedness as well as partial interests in the previous period of mature "tycoons" with great influence on the new political elite and indecision to implement privatization decisively and to the end. Not only did privatization in Serbia not take place in an adequate institutional environment, but it also significantly contributed to the growth of corruption[7] and the gray economy, which has already jeopardized the integrity of already existing institutions.

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[7] On the relationship between privatization and corruption, from the aspect of the country's economic development (see Boubakri et al., 2009).

The commitment to an adequate model of privatization in the industrial sector was also very important. Certain analyzes[8] have shown that large companies privatized through tenders have shown almost twice the productivity of other companies privatized through auctions. It is characteristic of large companies that they showed the best performance in the first two to three years after privatization. In contrast, the dynamics of privatization of small and medium enterprises did not play a crucial role in their productivity. It remained less — more at the same level, regardless of the time of the beginning of privatization.

Industry growth rates in the period from 2001 to 2009 were accompanied by marked instability and high oscillations. The average growth rate of industry was about 0.5% and was well below the growth rate of the economy, which grew by 4.5% on average. The largest growth of the industry in the mentioned period was recorded in 2004 at 7.1%, and the largest decline in 2009 of as much as 12.1%. This average growth rate of the economy and industry has led to the level of GDP in 2009 reaching 79% of that of 1990, and the level of industrial production at 44.6% (Mićić and Zeremski 2011, 52-53).

The share of industry in GDP in 2009 was 15.9%, which compared to 1990 when it was 44.4%, represents a significant decline and indicates the severity of the problems in which the industry finds itself (Mićić and Zeremski 2011, 54). The reduced share of industry in GDP was characteristic in the first years of transition. This development was a consequence of the transitional concept of reforms, which predominantly relied on liberalization and privatization, while the industrial policy was not seen as a significant component of economic policies in transition countries. This concept of reform was dominant until the latest world economic crisis when it became increasingly necessary to establish a new growth model for these economies, in which industrial policy will play a significant role (Cerovic and Nojkovic 2014).

Since 2000, Serbia's industrial policy has focused on the process of privatization and restructuring of the economy, then strengthening the entrepreneurial sector and creating a competitive business environment. On the example of privatization in the processing industry, we will show how this process took place and with what results. In the period from 2002 to 2010, 878 companies were privatized in the manufacturing industry, and the realized sales revenue was 1.5 billion EUR (55% of total privatization revenues) and realized investments in the value of 953 mils. EUR (73% of total investments). However, due to non-compliance with contractual obligations (non-payment of installments, non-maintenance of production continuity,

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[8] For an empirical analysis of privatization and its effects on industry in Serbia (see Nikolić, Kovačević M., 2014.).

non-compliance with investment and social program, disposal of property contrary to the provisions of the purchase agreement), 258 purchase agreements between the Privatization Agency and buyers were annulled (44% of total contract terminations). (Strategy and policy of industrial development of the Republic of Serbia from 2011 to 2020 2011, 18)

Privatization in the industrial sector of the Serbian economy was supposed to contribute to increasing its effectiveness and productivity, its restructuring, and increasing production, employment, and exports. Most of the indicators do not confirm the achievement of the mentioned goals. Such developments in the industry were also contributed by the fact that despite certain positive results and success in privatization, this process put a good part of industrial companies in a difficult position. It has been easily overcome through the privatization of companies of national importance or those that have development effects on the entire industry. In addition to those companies that were successful before privatization, and after which they continue with good results, there are also those that the new owners led to liquidation, as evidenced by the percentage of terminated privatizations conducted from 2007 to 2010, where the total was annulled. 30.7% of contracts on the privatization of companies sold at auctions, 23% by tenders, and 28.7% on the capital market (Mićić and Zeremski 2011, 56-57).

The analysis so far in this part of the paper indicates the fact that the privatization process takes too long, and that its results only partially match expectations. In addition to political and economic instability, it is important to emphasize that the privatization process took place in an unregulated, unstable, and risky institutional environment. It is to be expected that in the first phase — during the 90s it was not possible to talk about the good results of privatization, but in the early 2000s, in the second phase, political preconditions were created for the efficient and successful completion of this process. However, even though some of the expected results have been partially achieved, it is still insufficient, viewed from the aspect of economic efficiency and in comparison with other countries in transition. The concept of privatization was clear, but the reasons for its only partial success can be found in its institutional instability. The poorly institutionalized privatization process has also slowed the transition process.

Populism in its various forms shared the government's ambition to respond to the many challenges of privatization through economic and social policies aimed at protecting the population or some part of it from the negative economic effects of the privatization process. The share of populists in the government largely determined the success of privatization and even overall transitional reforms. The higher their share of government, the more pronounced the negative economic effects of privatization — growing inequality and falling living standards. On the other

hand, declining living standards and growing inequality, as effects of the crisis generated by privatization, represented, as explained in the introductory chapters of the paper, a suitable economic ground for the flourishing of political and economic populism and the arrival or survival of populist political structures in power. In terms of the model of economic growth, growing economic inequality and dissatisfaction led to an increase in the electorate that was against the neoliberal model of economic growth and development, and encouraged those political and economic mechanisms that led to strengthening the state and its bodies in implementing economic policy on the one hand, and market suppression, on the other.

Concluding remarks

The transformations of the political and economic system of Serbia from the period of the introduction of parliamentarism at the end of the 19th century until today, on the one hand, really represent the specificity of one system that can hardly be compared to another that shared similar or the same experiences. On the other hand, we cannot escape the impression that this paper has presented only one part of a truly turbulent history of political, and especially economic populism in Serbia, which makes it clear that authoritarian populism has been a constant in many metamorphoses of this system. The authoritarian dimension of politics, and consequently of the economy, has withstood numerous changes that have accompanied the historical development of the political and economic system of Serbia. As such, it provided fertile ground for the flourishing of political and economic populism. The only thing we can do is ask ourselves, following Dornbusch and Edwards (1990, 275), do economic systems have a "memory" and are the mistakes of past populist regimes learned? Analyzing some basic features of political and economic populism, and their elements in the privatization process in Serbia, we believe that the lack of political will and certain ideological disorientation is still fertile ground for the development of political and economic, or perhaps better — demagogic populism in Serbia.

Political changes at the end of 2000, only in a short initial period, brought much-needed stabilization, carried in part by the wings of euphoria that shook the whole society in that period. Initial political stability also conditioned short-term economic stability. After the decline of euphoria and the beginning of institution building, the first weaknesses of the then political structure appeared — weak coalition government — with still visible and pronounced elements of personality cult, certain authoritarian tendencies within the political parties, as well as certain elements and even personal solutions from the previous political regime. Political activity was reduced to the institutional positioning of political parties in the leading structures of government, for which economic populism was very skillfully used.

We remind here that in the short term, economic populism can achieve good results, but in the long run, its economic effects are devastating.

This attitude towards politics and the economy by the holders of political power pushes society into a state of constant imbalance and insecurity, which ultimately prevents its true institutional transformation on the path to full democratic consolidation. Of course, this type of action is not a consequence of unpredictable historical circumstances, or the consequence of certain political and economic coincidences, which as such found the unprepared holders of political power, but an environment designed by political representatives to create political and economic preconditions to ensure their longest reign. Such a situation implies moving away from basic democratic values, from building stable, high-quality, and long-lasting political and economic institutions. Until a level of political culture is reached in which political participation is understood as a certain democratic obligation of a politically aware individual, and not as proof that you have fulfilled the task of the party you belong to and thus secure your job, and until political power is a service in the service of citizens paid by these same citizens, to realize their public, socially recognized needs, political and economic life in Serbia will continue to have a crisis of political and economic identity, accompanied by numerous social and political divisions, moving away from the democratic political system and, even more problematically, with devastating economic consequences.

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III
DISCOURSIVE PRACTICES

(MIS)USE OF UNNAMED SOURCES IN MEDIA REPORTING ON POLITICAL ACTORS: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE POPULIST CONSTRUCTION OF THE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE[1]

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A b s t r a c t

The paper examines populist content in media in a relation to challenges that journalism faces today — decreasing level of professionalism which, among the other issues, led to the absence of a journalistic gatekeeping role. Therefore, the research was focused on common journalistic practice, the treatment of specific type of journalistic sources — unnamed sources, which were established as a journalistic norm that indicates protection of sources in the media freedom context. According to the standards of journalistic practice, unnamed sources are supposed to reveal abuses of power and bad governance. The research shows that journalists from pro-government tabloid media use unnamed sources to promote mainstream populist political discourse and discredit opposition leaders by repeating key points promulgated by the ruling party in its defamation narratives. Instead of being used for revealing corruption or misuse of power, unnamed sources become a tool for labelling and defamation of political opponents and promoting populist governance.

Key words: *populism, journalism, unnamed sources, media, political communication, Serbia*

Political context in Serbia was significantly changed in 2012, after more than a decade. Serbian Progressive Party (Serbian: SNS) as a relatively new political actor burst onto the scene. Although SNS was established in 2008, their leadership and most of the members have been present in Serbian political life since the 1990s as members of far-right ultra nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS). Led by Vojislav Seselj, SRS played an important role in war conflicts in former Yugoslavia. Seselj's closest associate in 1990s was young Aleksandar Vucic, now omnipresent leader of SNS and Serbian President. In 2008, SNS political actors formally changed their political views, but this change was not substantial. It could be described as pragmatic, in order to conquer the political scene, which happened in 2012.

Since then, SNS became the most dominant political force in Serbia, but this process was gradual — from 20.04% of voter's support in 2012 to 60.65% in 2020. When the last Parliamentary elections in 2020, SNS and their political allies became the only people's representatives in the Serbian Parliament.

Successful political communication that SNS conducted from 2012 to 2020, resulted in more than 40% increase in voter's support. It was based populism, "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde, 2004: 543). The populist political communication depends on the specific characteristics of and relations between the three main groups of social actors that are involved in the communication process: political actors, media, and citizens (Aalberg and de Vreese, 2017). In this case populist politics and media mutually harmonized their logics and pushed SNS populist agenda. As a result, "an integrated process of content production involving both political and media actors" (Manucci, 2017: 557) transformed public opinion and voters' choices.

Media as key social institutions, shape public opinion and control the distribution of information and symbolic resources in society (Zelizer, 2004: 36). Therefore, the domination of populist content in media could be a consequence of a challenge that journalism is facing today — decreasing level of professionalism which, among the other issues, led to the absence of a journalistic gatekeeping role[5]. Consequently, this research was focused on a common journalistic practice, the treatment of specific type of journalistic sources — unnamed sources, which were established as

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[5] "Journalists are bombarded with information from the Internet, newspapers, television and radio news, news magazines, and their sources. Their job of selecting and shaping the small amount of information that becomes news would be impossible without gatekeeping. It is the process of selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news" (Shoemaker, Vos, Reese, 2009:73).
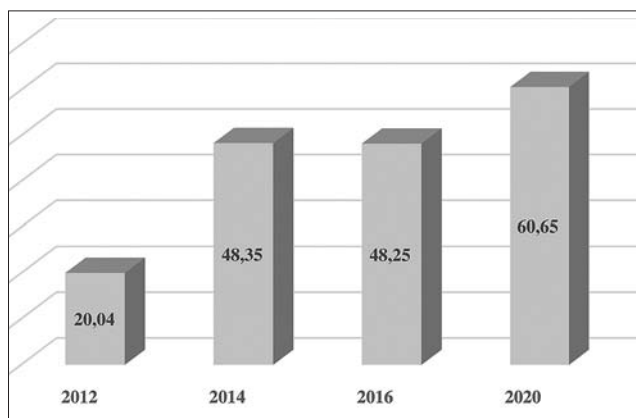
Graph 1 — Serbian Progressive Party results in the Parliamentary elections from 2012 to 2020 in %. Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction of the Enemies of the People".

a journalistic norm that indicates protection of sources in the media freedom context.

Obtaining information from an unnamed source is a common practice in journalism, which presumes use of "sources which are known to the reporter, but confidentially kept from readers" (Carlson, 2011:1). In investigative journalism the use of unnamed sources is allowed, but only in exceptional cases — in situations when it is necessary to obtain information in the public interest which is hard to gain through regular journalistic work. This practice requires trust among three parties — journalists, the source and the audience (see Graph 3). According to Carlson, introducing an unnamed source into a news story implies that the "value gained in making hidden information public outweighs the lack of transparency in withholding the source's identity" (Carlson, 2011:7). The opacity of unnamed sources, as he emphasises, prevents audiences from gaining additional information from which to make judgments about unattributed information".

As our analysis shows, most media, especially tabloids, used unnamed sources in order to provide a cover for populists' delegitimating of the opposition, to stoke "conflict and encourage polarization" as "they also treat their political opponents as 'enemies of the people' and seek to exclude them altogether" (Müller 2016:4). From the public point of view, media did not question the politics of executive power and populist governance, thus did not perform their supposed critical role. Also, they did not control the distribution of information, letting populist communication being distributed without any journalistic intervention, through sources that cannot be verified. By refraining from rational critique, the media discouraged public debate and provided the public communication infrastructure for populists to delegit-
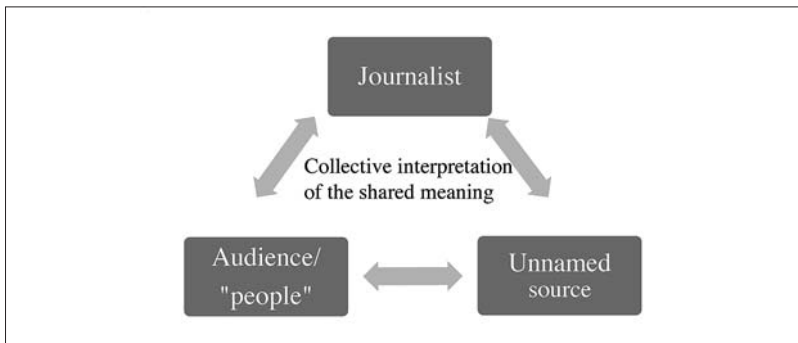
Graph 2 — Triangle of trust. Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction of the Enemies of the People".

imize the opposition. Thus, this analysis of media content aims to examine if political competitors of the populist leader(s) in Serbia were represented as "part of the immoral, corrupt elite (Muller 2016:20), and discredited as a "legitimate opposition" (Muller 2016:20) within narratives that could not be verified.

In the focus of this analysis were texts from online news portals, which were previously published on the front pages of the most relevant[6] daily newspapers with national distribution in Serbia.[7] The research sample was selected from the news portals of the following newspapers: Blic, Kurir, Vecernje novosti, Alo!, Politika, Informer and Danas and covers the period from January 1st, 2019 to June 30th, 2019[8]. The additional criteria for texts selection were: (a) the obligatory presence of at least one of the key political actors at that moment: Dragan Đilas, Vuk Jeremic, Bosko Obradovic, Boris Tadic and Vojislav Seselj, as representatives of the opposition[9], Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic[10] and Prime Minister Ana Brnabic[11], as leading representatives of executive authority; and (b) *the presence of unnamed*

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[6] In terms of circulation and reputation.

[7] Daily issues provide overview in narrower editorial selection related to the relevant content and dailies are key actors in setting public agenda in Serbia.

[8] The misuse of the unnamed sources was considered as indicator of the level of professionalism-commercialization of media. Selected media represent range of dailies from most prominent to most tabloid in Serbia. The focus of the research was on media mechanism and its implications in a relation to populism (communication dimension of populism),

[9] Those actors were selected according to the frequency of their appearance on the front pages of the observed newspapers from 1. 1. 2019 — 30. 6. 2019: Dragan Đilas mentioned in 475 texts, Bosko Obradovic — 331, Vuk Jeremic — 310, Vojislav Seselj 115 and Boris Tadic was noticed in 107 texts — source: *Quarterly Mediameter*, vol. 5, issue 1-2.

[10] Mentioned in 1399 texts.

[11] Mentioned in 330 texts.

sources as one of the sources of information[12] The selected sample was subjected to content analysis in order to enable us "to illuminate patterns in communication content reliably and validly" because "only through the reliable and valid illumination of such patterns" it is possible "to illuminate content causes or predict content effects" (Riffe, Lacy, Ficco, 2005: xiii).

In that sense, the aim of the research was to "illuminate" the journalistic practice of using unnamed sources in cases of reporting on the most prominent political actors. Through this analysis we try to examine whether journalistic work which significantly relies on unnamed sources contributes or prevents the circulation populist narratives on Serbian news platforms.

Research results

The presence of unnamed sources relating to opposition leaders varied in accordance with the level of interest that executive power displays towards each of them and the type of analysed media (tabloid or media with a similar orientation as broadsheets). Information that had been communicated through unnamed sources was concentrated in texts that were constructed around Djilas, Obradovic and Jeremic. The other two opposition leaders, Seselj and Tadic, were significantly less involved in the main narratives, especially those based on unnamed sources. The media used anonymous sources when reporting on Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, but obtained information in that manner significantly less often when texts were related to Prime Minister Ana Brnabic. Graphs 4 and 5 show the distribution of texts in the sample, by political actor and media outlet.

When analysing the structure of the selected texts, it could be observed that there was a significantly different approach towards the treatment of the actors. Negative value context[13] was directed towards Djilas, Obradovic and Jeremic, while the media presented the other two leaders predominantly in a neutral manner. This practice is mostly present in pro-government tabloids, led by news portals Alo.rs, Informer.rs and Kurir.rs, where information which damages the reputation of opposition leaders come from unnamed sources and could not be verified. As could be seen in Graph 5, more than 91% of all texts on Alo.rs news portal containing references to Dragan Djilas were damaging for him. 80% and 75% texts related to Obradovic and Jeremic, respectively, were also negative. The journalistic practice of all three tabloids is very similar (Graph 6 and Graph 7): the leaders that the politicians

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[12] The sample was finally consisted of 252 texts where opposition leaders were detected, and 245 texts where the President and Prime Minister were detected.

[13] Which considers journalistic value judgment towards certain actor —— attribution, negative attitude (*ad hominem* or on political activity) or any kind of criticism.
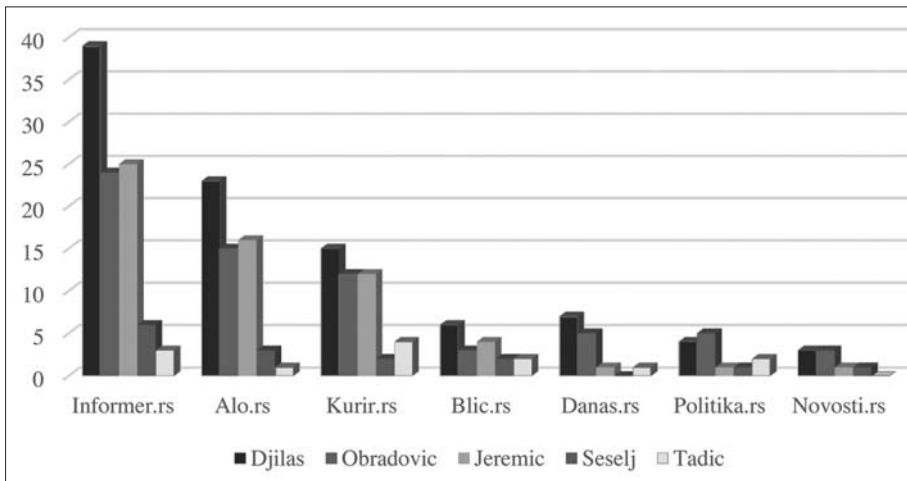
Graph 3 — Distribution of selected texts (relying on at least one unknown source) by the representatives of the opposition and media. Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction of the Enemies of the People".
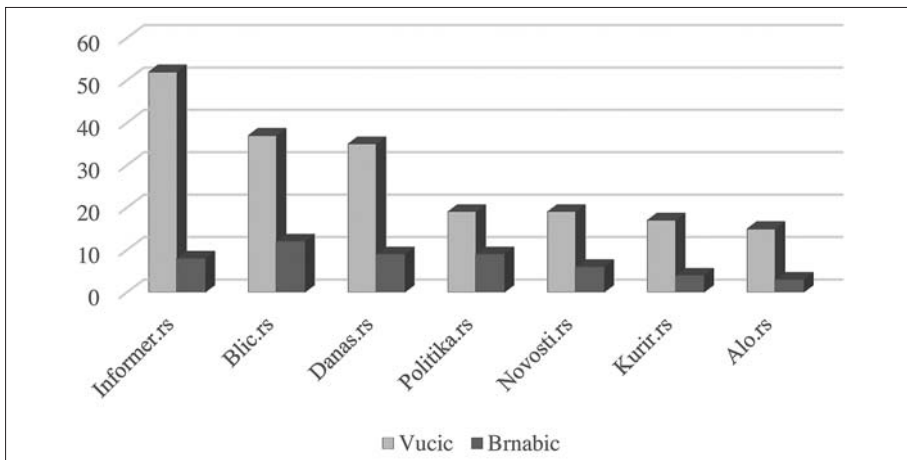
Graph 4 — Distribution of selected texts (relying on at least one unknown source) by the representatives of the executive power and media. Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction of the Enemies of the People".

who control executive power consider to be political competitors are presented in a negative manner, while other opposition politicians are left out the limelight - underrepresented or portrayed neutrally.

The rest of analysed media took a different approach. Blic.rs wrote about all five opposition leaders in 17 texts where unnamed sources were present, but all
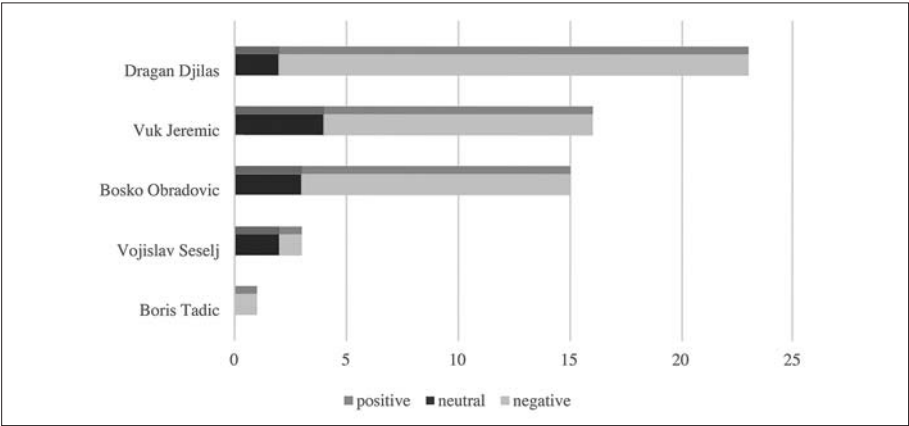
Graph 5 — Value context by the representatives of the opposition on Alo.rs.
Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting
on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction
of the Enemies of the People".
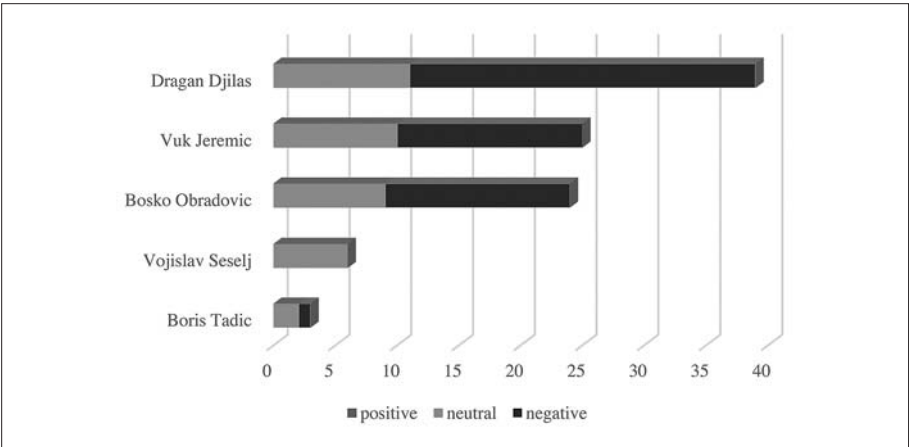
Graph 6 — Value context by the representatives of the opposition and media on Informer.rs.
Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting
on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction
of the Enemies of the People".

texts but three were neutral.[14] Danas also used information given by unnamed sources in 17 texts, but all texts were neutral towards the opposition leaders, as well as all 13 texts in Politika and 8 in Vecernje Novosti.

Evaluations of representatives of executive power were predominantly neutral. Aleksandar Vucic was presented in a neutral manner in 97.94% texts from the sam-

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[14] Three units, where Jeremic, Obradovic and Seselj each are mentioned, carried negative value.

Graph 7 — Value context by the representatives of the opposition on Kurir.rs.
Source: Jarić, Balaban, Bajčeta: "(Mis)Use of Unnamed Sources in Media Reporting on Political Actors: The Role of the Media in the Populist Construction of the Enemies of the People".
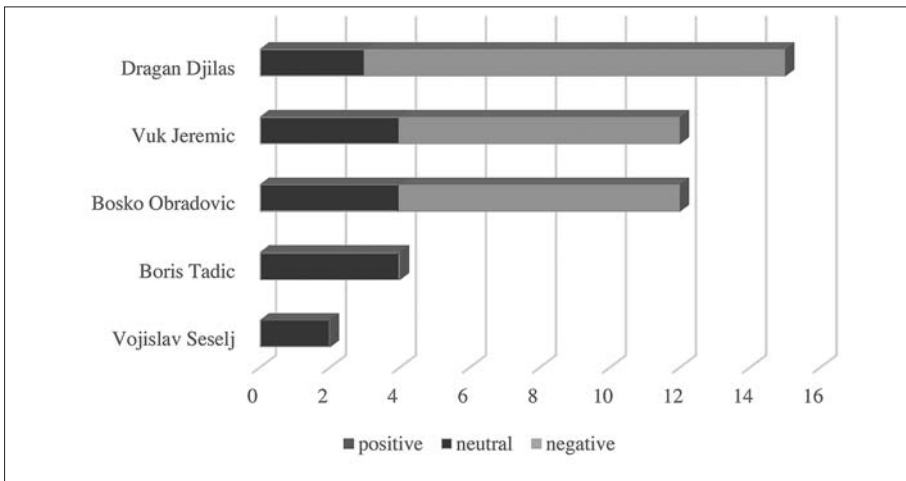
ple (190 of 194), and 3 or 1.55% units were positive (two texts in Alo.rs and one in Kurir.rs). The only negative text that contained information from an unnamed source was published in Danas daily and its news portal. This media outlet is critical towards the Government, the Serbian president and the ruling Serbian Progressive Party.

All analysed texts contained neutral evaluations of Prime Minister Ana Brnabic.

In order to discredit Djilas and Obradovic the tabloids publish stories based upon information that could not be verified.[15] Also, negative features that populist everywhere attribute to their political opponents were used in reference to each opposition leader. For example, in Informer.rs, Dragan Djilas was depicted as a corrupt former "tycoon" in 23 of the 28 texts based on unnamed sources that were classified as negative towards him, while Vuk Jeremic was labelled as a "thief" in 3 texts in all three tabloids (Informer, Kurir, Alo). Bosko Obradovic was presented as a

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[15] Examples: 1. https://informer.rs/vesti/politika/429148/mora-padne-krv-vuk-bosko-djilas--guraju-srbiju-rat-hoce-svaku-cenu-otmu-vlast suggest that three opposition leaders plan civil war; 2. https://informer.rs/vesti/politika/423247/ekskluzivno-otkrivamo-svi-detalji--tajnog-sastanka-skoplju-kod-zaeva-dogovoren-plan-vucicev-pad "exclusively reveals" that "tycoon Djilas" has agreed with Macedonian president Zoran Zaev to "remove" President Vucic from office and "create chaos" in Serbia; 3. https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/draganova-namera-da-posvada-crkvu-i-drzavnih-vrh-osujecena-ono-sto-je-imao-u-planu-je--krajnje-podlo/228627/vest discovers that "tycoon Djilas" tried to organize "coup" and take control of Serbian Orthodox Church, to prevent Vucic to perform speech on the Church's Assembly.

"fascist" in 7 of 14, the attribute which denotes the most despised collective enemy of "the people". The selection of those negative characteristics is in line with the President's narrative, who repeats them when publicly talking about those three opposition leaders.[16]

According to the standards of journalistic practice, unnamed sources are supposed to reveal abuses of power and bad governance, our research shows that journalists from pro-government tabloid media use them to promote mainstream political discourse and discredit opposition leaders by repeating key points promulgated by the ruling party in its defamation narratives. Information obtained from unknown sources is thus used to protect particular interests of the executive authority, which collides with the public interest. "The danger comes, in other words, from within the democratic world — the political actors posing the danger speak the language of democratic values. That the end result is a form of politics that is blatantly antidemocratic should trouble us all — and demonstrate the need for nuanced political judgment to help us determine precisely where democracy ends and populist peril begins" (Mueller, 2016:6).

Those demonizing narratives on corruption, immorality, and elitism — that the opposition leaders are allegedly prone to — delegitimize the political opponents of the ruling elites because "whoever does not support populist parties might not be a proper part of the people—always defined as righteous and morally pure" (Müller 2016:4).

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[16] For example: https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/predsednistvo-sns-jednoglasno-za-izbore--vucic-izbori-ili-u-junu-ili-na-prolece/yeth4kd;

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"GAY PROPAGANDA" AND MORALITY POLICY: ORTHODOX FRAMING IN LGBT RIGHTS DEBATES IN RUSSIA

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A b s t r a c t

The adoption of laws in the Russian Federation prohibiting propaganda of homosexuality and "non-traditional sexual relationships" to minors at the regional and federal levels, respectively, has raised questions regarding the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in public life. This article shall evaluate statements via online media sources by clerics and other figures serving in the Orthodox Church in order to analyze framing strategies employed. Drawing upon the typologies set forth in morality policy research, the author will examine specific arguments regarding child protection, demographics, national identity, Russia's external relations — and protection of LGBT activists from a conservative backlash.

Key words: *Russian Orthodox Church, Russia, framing, morality policy, LGBT, human rights, media*

Introduction

In the years following the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter also referred to as the "ROC" and "Church") has enjoyed a rebirth in terms of adherent numbers, reclaimed property, and an increased public profile as an institution promoting moral conservatism, including participation in political debates. In the case of adoption of laws banning propaganda of "homosexualism," "*muzhelozhstvo*" (literally, "man lying with mankind"), and "non-traditional sexual relationships" at the regional and federal levels from 2006 through 2013, Church clerics played a prominent role in discussions of the legislation in public hearings and mass media sources.

This article seeks to shed light on the ROC's place in the Russian political and social landscape by examining arguments that prominent figures in the Church make regarding issues they deem important. Theories of framing and morality policy will be used as a lens through which to analyze public statements by clerics and others serving in the Russian Orthodox Church in an attempt to pinpoint the Church's communication strategies.

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"Gay Propaganda"

As the Soviet Union fell, the opening of Russia's borders and new freedoms led to an influx of ideas and goods from abroad — including "pornography, erotica, and talk of sex and sexuality (and homosexuality) [that] flooded the media" (Baer 2002, 502). One phenomenon that arrived alongside *Cosmopolitan* and McDonalds was

> ... *global activism, including a gay international activism that was in fact always a Western one... Even in the 1990s, the homosexual as a species, as a gay or lesbian identity, was already being constructed by state officials and regular folks alike as a foreign import and one that was completely at odds with indigenous Russian values.* (Essig 2014, 53)

The mid-2000s marked the beginning of a series of showdowns between a small contingent of openly gay activists and their foreign supporters on one hand, and the conservative views of the Russian majority on the other. In May 2006, LGBT activist Nikolay Alekseyev called for the country's first gay Pride parade in Moscow (Kon 2009, 55). Although the Moscow City authorities placed a ban on the proposed march and approximately 1,000 riot police were deployed to prevent violence, 50 gay rights protestors and 20 counter-demonstrators were arrested following brawls in close proximity to the Kremlin (BBC News 2006).

Three days before the first attempt at a Moscow Pride parade, the first regional-level law prohibiting "public activities directed at propaganda of homosexualism (*muzhelozhstvo* and lesbianism) among minors" was adopted by the Ryazan Oblast Duma (legislative assembly) (*Law of Ryazan Oblast* 2006). It would be five years before the next law, under which an article stating that "Public activities directed at propaganda of homosexualism among minors will not be allowed" was added to existing legislation on "protection of child morality and health" in Arkhangelsk Oblast (*Law of Arkhangelsk Oblast* 2011). The Arkhangelsk Oblast law kicked off the adoption of similar legislation in a total of 10 regions of Russia, including the city of St. Petersburg, from 2011 through 2013 (Human Rights Watch 2014).

The law "On Amendments to the Law of St. Petersburg 'On Administrative Violations in St. Petersburg'" was unusual in that its author, Legislative Assembly Deputy Vitaliy Milonov, was a Russian Orthodox *ponomar* (altar server) at the time[2]. Under the law, bans on both propaganda of homosexuality and propaganda of pedophilia were added to an existing law on administrative offenses:

> *Article 7.1. ... Public actions directed at propaganda of* muzhelozhstvo, *lesbianism, bisexuality, transgenderism among minors will be subject to application*

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[2] By the time that my research was conducted, Milonov had been promoted to *ipodiakon* (subdeacon).

of an administrative fine... Note: This article considers public actions directed at propaganda of muzhelozhstvo, lesbianism, bisexuality, [and] transgenderism among minors to be understood as follows: activities for deliberate and uncontrolled distribution of information through public means that is capable of causing harm to the health, moral, and spiritual development of minors, including the formation thereby of a distorted view of the social equality of traditional and non-traditional marital relations...

Article 7.2. ... Public actions directed at propaganda of pedophilia will be subject to application of an administrative fine... Note: This article considers public actions directed at propaganda of pedophilia to be understood as follows: activities for deliberate and uncontrolled distribution of information through public means that is committed with the goal of creating distorted views of the conformity of intimate relationships between adults and minors with social norms. (Law of St. Petersburg 2012, my emphasis)

The process of adopting the St. Petersburg law was also notable in terms of the presence of ROC clerics at hearings. Participants in the public hearing on 24 February 2012 prior to the adoption of the St. Petersburg law included Hieromonk Dimitriy Pershin of Moscow; Archpriest and psychologist Aleksiy Moroz, head of an alcohol and drug treatment program in St. Petersburg; and Archpriest Igor Aksyonov, Superior of the Church of the Prophet Elijah in the Leningrad Oblast town of Vyborg (YouTube.Com 2012b). Moroz and Archpriest Nikolay Golovkin of St. Petersburg testified at an additional hearing on 22 June of the same year regarding practical applications of the law (YouTube.Com 2012f).

The final step was adoption in 2013 of an amendment to a federal law "with the goal of protection of children from information propagandizing rejection of traditional family values" that added an article in which

Propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors, in the form of distribution of information directed at creation of non-traditional sexual arrangements, attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relationships, a perverted image of the social equality of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships, or the imposition of information about non-traditional sexual relationships and creation of interest in such relationships among minors

would be added to a list of administrative offenses and made punishable by fines for Russian citizens, fines and forced temporary shutdowns of activities for organizations, and fines or up to 15 days in jail followed by "removal" from the country for foreigners and stateless persons (*Federal Law of the Russian Federation from 29 June 2013 No. 135-FZ*). Framing strategies of Russian Orthodox clerics and others serving in the Church before, during, and following the passage of the Arkhan-

gelsk Oblast, St. Petersburg City, and federal laws will be the primary focus of this article.

The Politics of Morality

The concept of "morality policy" has evolved over the past two decades from a substantive category of policy to a type of framing used by actors. Mooney and Lee (1999a) defined morality policy as separate from other "classes" of policy in that it "regulates social norms or evokes strong moral responses for other reasons" (81, 82). Depending on the country or region being studied, morality policy may include policies governing abortion rights, alcohol and drugs, pornography, homosexuality, prostitution, gambling, school prayer, euthanasia, gun control, and the death penalty. However, it is not so much the policy outcome as the subject of conflict that typifies morality policy. Morality policy debates have been characterized as centering around so-called "first principles," or the basic values surrounding life, death, sex, and other topics that are put forth (Mooney and Lee 1999a; Mooney and Lee 1999b; Mooney and Schuldt 2008; Mucciaroni 2009; Knill 2013).

Morality Policy as Framing

As attention has focused on the types of arguments made in morality policy debates, questions have been raised as to how "moral" these discussions truly are. Studlar (2008) floated the concept of "blended issues" that "take on different dimensions" depending on how they are framed, concluding that "morality policy appears to be more of a continuum" than a static policy category (393, 406-7). When examining gay rights debates, Mucciaroni (2009) took exception to the fact that "the morality politics perspective assumes that moral arguments are of paramount importance... without undertaking a systematic examination of the arguments that advocates actually put forward" (13). In response, he divided morality politics issues into those defined by "deontological principles," "social consequences," and "procedures," depending on whether they involved "intrinsically wrong" behaviors, a positive or negative impact on society, or calls for state authorities to intervene, respectively (Mucciaroni 2009, 13-14).

Mucciaroni (2011) is considered seminal in the field of morality policy framing due to his expansion upon his previous concepts of deontological, consequence-based, and procedural frames. In doing so, he declared that "morality policy is not so much a policy as a strategic approach to framing public policy issues" in which "different types of morality policy frames exist, depending on what kind of behavior — private, social, or governmental — is the target of moral judgement" (2011, 211). While LGBT rights are often seen as an ideal type of morality policy issue, "gay rights opponents typically do not frame the issues in terms of the immorality
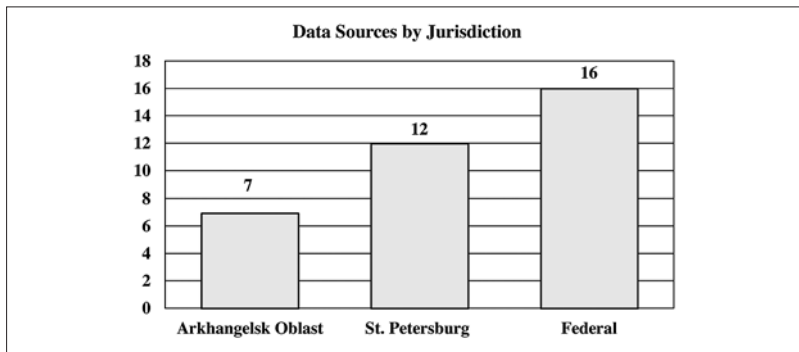
Figure 1 — Online Data Sources by Jurisdiction.

of homosexuality or religious proscriptions against it at the federal and state levels of government" (Mucciaroni 2011, 211). Instead, Mucciaroni's findings indicated that gay rights opponents employed so-called "rational-instrumental" frames "calling attention to the negative consequences for society, or some important part of it" (such as children and families), or "procedural terms" regarding "how policy makers should make decisions" (2011, 211).

Mucciaroni was quick to state that "when we say that opponents are 'strategic' in how they frame issues, we do not mean that they are being disingenuous about the arguments that they give for opposing gay rights" (2011, 211-212). While rational-instrumental or procedural frames "have the best chance of persuading a crucial mass of audience members," there should be no conflict of interest between frames used strategically and a group's "deep-seated beliefs" (Mucciaroni 2011, 212, 209). In the case of arguments by Russian Orthodox Church actors against propaganda of LGBT identity to minors, the contention that homosexuality is a gateway to dire consequences for Russian society may not employ explicitly religious framing, but is not inconsistent with their personal convictions.

Methodology

In order to determine which frames figured prominently in ROC communicators' morality policy strategies, this article consists of a pilot study of framing utilized in reference to the anti-propaganda laws passed in Arkhangelsk Oblast, the city of St. Petersburg, and at the federal level in the Russian Federation (see Figure 1). The study utilized both qualitative content analysis and quantitative calculation of framing strategies employed by ROC clerics and others serving in the Church in the following materials: articles and public statements in religious and secular online media sources; television broadcasts; and legislative hearings.
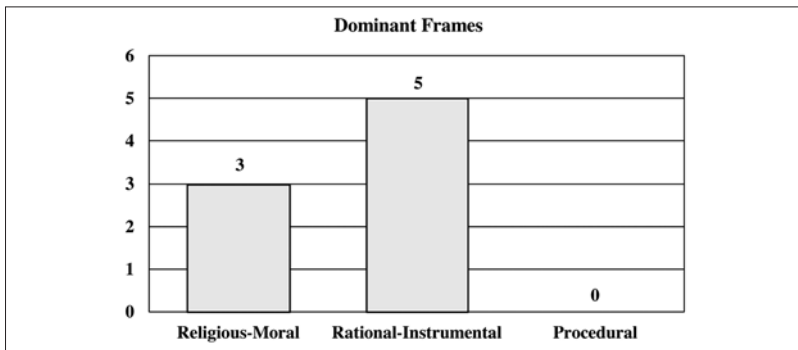
217

Figure 2 — Arkhangelsk Oblast, Media Sources, Dominant Frames Employed (Number of Times)

Findings

Arkhangelsk Oblast

For Arkhangelsk Oblast, a sample of 7 online articles was examined (5 from Russian Orthodox sites, and 2 from secular Web pages). Within the sample, the majority of overall frames used were rational-instrumental, followed by religious-moral frames (see Figure 2). None of the articles sampled had a dominant procedural frame. Three of the 5 articles from the Orthodox Internet had an overall rational-instrumental frame (Arkhangelsk Eparchia Press Service 2011; Chaplin 2011a; Chaplin 2011c) one had a tie between religious-moral and rational-instrumental frames (Chaplin 2011b), and one had a religious-moral dominant frame (Russkaya Liniya 2011). The secular publications were as follows: one with a religious-moral dominant frame (Remizov 2011), the other with a rational-instrumental frame (Interfax-Religiya 2011).

Prior to the passage of the Arkhangelsk Oblast anti-propaganda law, rational-instrumental framing by Church figures focused primarily on a sub-frame of child protection in the face of interest in underage citizens by LGBT activist groups. Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin (at the time, chairman of the Synodal Department for the Cooperation of Church and Society of the Moscow Patriarchate) stated that "Propaganda of homosexualism presents a particular danger for children and youth, who are... particularly susceptible to influence. It is known that this propaganda is directed first and foremost at youth and teenagers" (Chaplin 2011b). Debates over the draft law against propaganda of homosexuality coincided with controversy over texts authored by a professor in the city of Arkhangelsk, Gennadiy Deryagin, who was quoted as writing that pedophiles' efforts to acquire legal rights mirrored those of the early LGBT rights movement, and that "teenage boys often engage in voluntary sexual activity with adults" (Chaplin 2011c). The ROC balked at reports that the texts were
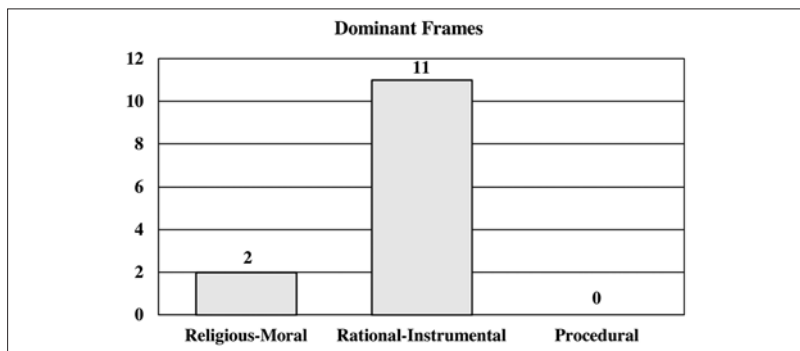
Figure 3 — St. Petersburg, Media Sources, Dominant Frames Employed (Number of Times)

used within the Ministry of Internal Affairs' higher education institutions, with Chaplin declaring that "this upsetting material contains demands for the legalization of homosexual relationships with children, [and] propagandizes pedophilia, considered around the world to be one of the worst crimes" (Interfax-Religiya 2011).

While there were appeals to universal revulsion at pedophilia on one hand, another prominent rational-instrumental sub-frame indicated that LGBT activism was an aggressive product of foreign influence: Bishop Daniil (Dorovskykh) of Arkhangelsk and Kholmogorsk was quoted as stating that "financing of propagandistic events is carried out with means from foreign funds, the goal of which is the spiritual and moral decay of Russian society" (Arkhangelsk Eparchia Press Service 2011). In contrast, the Russian public was portrayed as home to a moral majority; Chaplin stated that "the majority of Russian citizens do not accept in any way the propaganda of sexual perversion that certain external forces and certain very small — but aggressive — groups within our society are trying to force upon us" (Chaplin 2011a).

St. Petersburg

For the city of St. Petersburg, a combination of online articles, televised debate programs, and videos of hearings (the public hearing on 24 February 2012 prior to the adoption of the law, and the 22 June 2012 hearing regarding practical applications of the law) were analyzed. Of the 7 online articles, 3 were from the Orthodox Internet, while 4 were from secular Web pages. Both of the two televised debates that were transliterated and analyzed took place in secular programs. As with the media sample prior to the passage of the Arkhangelsk Oblast law, none of the articles or broadcasts in the St. Petersburg media sample had a dominant procedural frame, and rational-instrumental frames were in first place (albeit by a greater margin than in the Arkhangelsk Oblast sample; see Figure 3).

Of the 3 articles from the Orthodox Internet, only one had a purely religious-moral dominant frame (Romanov 2011), another had a rational-instrumental dominant frame (Zaytseva 2012), and the third had a tie between religious-moral and rational-instrumental framing (Borisova 2012). The 4 articles from secular Web pages all had dominant rational-instrumental frames (Dobrokhotov 2011; Sopova 2012; Rosbalt.Ru 2012a; Rosbalt.Ru 2012b). Of the 2 debates on secular television broadcasts, both had dominant rational-instrumental frames (NTV.Ru 2011; YouTube.Com 2012a).

As with the arguments made before the adoption of the Arkhangelsk Oblast anti-propaganda law, a rational-instrumental child protection sub-frame was prominent: in one of the televised debates, Deputy Milonov asked the audience, "Do you want your children to be attacked by all manner of LGBT movements, who use the fact that [children] are not yet sufficiently psychologically independent?" (NTV.Ru 2011). Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin), who participated in the first round of St. Petersburg hearings, was quoted by the Pravoslavie i Mir Orthodox Internet portal as contending that "In childhood and adolescence, impressions of norms for family relationships are not yet clearly formed, a child's psyche is unstable, and it is possible to cause serious trauma with consequences for the rest of their life" (Borisova 2012).

Another rational-instrumental argument that carried over from the debates concerning Arkhangelsk Oblast was that of a Russian majority versus ideological interlopers funded from abroad. While Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin) supported the idea that "the rights of children and teenagers must prevail over the rights of any minorities" (Zaytseva 2012), Deputy Vitaliy Milonov stated that "the first thing that the opponents of the law did was not to approach us, the deputies, but to skulk around [foreign] consulates and file complaints about us" (Rosbalt.Ru 2012b).

Russia was both compared to other countries that defended children's rights, or posed as an opponent to an aggressive West. Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin) noted that "in a number of American states, the rights of the child in terms of propaganda of any sort of sexual practices and perversions are under far stricter protection than that which the deputies of the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly are proposing" (Sopova 2012). He went on to blend rational-instrumental and religious-moral framing, declaring that

> *Since [US Secretary of State] Hillary Clinton has announced that gay rights are human rights... and all the Sodomites of the planet are under the protection of the USA, there is one thing left for us to do: take all the children on Earth under our protection, and stand up for their right to grow up and be raised in normal families... the Church, until the end of its days, will defend the rights of every little one to not be dragged into sin.* (Borisova 2012)

220

A rational-instrumental connection was also made between defense of children, the country's demographics, and a unifying "national idea" for Russia: Hieromonk Dimitriy told the Blagovest-Info Orthodox portal that "the job of all people of good will is to say that our national idea is our children," while "homosexualism, unfortunately, is a place of death — children are not born there" (Zaytseva 2012).

One rational-instrumental frame that was not cited in the Arkhangelsk Oblast case but rose to prominence in the run-up to the St. Petersburg law's adoption was that of protection of LGBT activists. Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin) exercised rational-instrumental and religious-moral framing when maintaining that the St. Petersburg law would protect LGBT activists who chose to target schools and other children's facilities from vigilantism by enraged parents, stating that it would

> ... specifically protect individuals, who have defiled themselves with Sodom's vice, from the risk that they bring upon themselves by encroaching upon underage Russians' ways of thinking and acting, [minors] whose parents may resort to mob rule. (Sopova 2012)

In the sample of videotapes of the St. Petersburg hearings (one of the 24 February hearing, and three of the 22 June hearing), three had dominant rational-instrumental frames (YouTube.Com 2012b; YouTube.Com 2012d; YouTube.Com 2012e), and one had a dominant religious-moral frame (YouTube.Com 2012f); no dominant procedural frames were found. Rational-instrumental sub-frames of prioritizing the needs of a moral majority and child protection persisted; Deputy Milonov stated that Russia was "a sovereign country that must act on the interests of citizens, the people, living within the Russian Federation" (YouTube.Com 2012b), while Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin) asked those assembled (a group that included LGBT activists) "Can you really not cope without accosting minors with propaganda of homosexualism and other perversions?" (YouTube.Com 2012b). A rational-instrumental sub-frame of a link between homosexuality, demographics, and Russia's future as a nation was a continuation of previous references to Russia's "national idea." Archpriest Aleksiy Moroz spoke of a "reproductive instinct" among human beings at the hearings, stating that "contradiction thereof is perversion, pathology" and that "the problem of homosexuality in the population, homosexuality of youth, is a problem of national security" due to a demographic crisis among Russia's Slavic population (YouTube.Com 2012b).

Federal Level

For the federal law, a sample of 16 online articles, blog posts, secular televised debates, and religious broadcasts were analyzed. Of the articles selected, 4 were from the Orthodox Internet, and 7 were from secular news pages. Of the 5 video materials transcribed and analyzed, 3 were secular television broadcasts, one was a
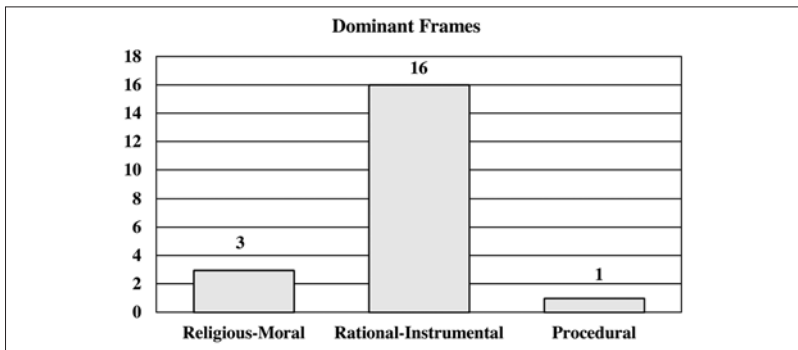
Figure 4 — Federal Level, Media Sources, Total Dominant Frames Employed (Number of Times)

broadcast by the Orthodox Christian television channel Soyuz, and one was a video post from an Orthodox multimedia blog run by Archpriest Dimitriy Smirnov of Moscow (see Figure 4).

As in the cases of the Arkhangelsk Oblast and St. Petersburg anti-propaganda laws, the overall frames employed in the sample were mostly rational-instrumental, with religious-moral framing taking a distant second. Unlike the previous two samples, however, the federal sample included one dominant procedural frame.

Of the 4 articles from the Orthodox Internet, half had combined religious-moral and rational-instrumental dominant frames (PravMir News Service 2012a; Zaytseva 2013), while half had purely rational-instrumental overall frames (PravMir News Service 2012b; Milonov and Interfax-Severo-Zapad 2012). Of the 7 articles from secular pages, 5 had purely rational-instrumental dominant frames (NewsRu.com 2012; Gazeta.Ru 2012; Regions.Ru 2012; Chyornikh and Tumanov 2012; Fetisov 2013), one had a combined religious-moral, rational-instrumental frame (Runkevich 2012), and one had a combined religious-moral, procedural frame (Tutina 2013), respectively. In the case of the article by Fetisov (2013), the fact that the dominant frame is rational-instrumental is particularly interesting due to the fact that it was featured in a secular business news site, but penned by an Orthodox priest. Of the secular television broadcasts analyzed, all three had purely rational-instrumental dominant frames (YouTube.Com 2012c; YouTube.Com 2015; YouTube.Com 2013). Both the Orthodox television broadcast video (YouTube.Com 2012d) and video blog post (Multimedia Blog of Archpriest Dimitriy Smirnov 2013) had a dominant rational-instrumental frame.

In addition to rational-instrumental warnings about potential threats to children (Priest Dimitriy Fetisov of Ryazan warned of a slippery slope by which "the simple and convincing thesis that 'if you really want something, it's permitted' can continue in any direction — for example, into pedophilia"), the argument that the law

represented the views of a moral majority of Russian citizens became especially prominent (Fetisov 2013). Protodeacon and missionary Andrey Kurayev of Moscow viewed anti-propaganda legislation as a step away from a democratic deficit that favored the LGBT community, declaring that "all expansions of the rights of these homosexual minorities in Western countries were carried out in a non-democratic way... this was a certain consensus of liberal elites who imposed their will," and indicated that the American Psychological Association's declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder was the result of "terror" and "intense pressure" against academia (PravMir News Service 2012b). Kurayev's democracy sub-frame was backed by St. Petersburg Deputy Vitaliy Milonov, who stated that "no country has ever said in a referendum 'we want to destroy our values and make a norm out of that which was once a sin'" (Milonov and Interfax-Severo-Zapad 2012).

Foreign and domestic criticism of the St. Petersburg anti-propaganda law became a driving force behind rational-instrumental framing in support of federal legislation, as the specter of aggressive Western states and LGBT activists supported by American and European funding was cited as proof that such laws were necessary. In a question-and-answer session broadcast by the Orthodox Soyuz television channel, Mitropolit Pavel (Ponomaryov) of Ryazan (the city where the country's first anti-propaganda law was adopted) called US Government criticism of the existing laws "shameless intervention in a sovereign state," and asked the audience to

> Look at the democracy that the USA is trying to impose upon us. Where does their democracy lead... look at Yugoslavia, look at Libya, look at Iraq... Do you want this to happen in Russia? It didn't work out for [the US] there, now they're trying to impose their ideas on another front. (Soyuz 2012)

On a similar note, St. Petersburg Deputy Milonov called foreign protests against the anti-propaganda laws "A violent, literally forcible intervention in our internal sovereignty" and stated that for activists, protesting against the laws was "a serious source of income. We know about the [monetary] figures that are sent here every year for support of these foundations" (YouTube.Com 2013; YouTube.Com 2015).

The protests that erupted in response to regional laws banning propaganda to children were framed in rational-instrumental terms as evidence of an unhealthy connection between homosexuality and pedophilic tendencies, and a need for further restrictions. Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin remarked that

> I'm very surprised [that] homosexual organizations, which are composed primarily of people who negate the connection between homosexualism and pedophilia, are also the ones who are so up in arms against these laws, protesting their adoption in all sorts of ways. (NewsRu.Com 2012)

The protests were also seen as a sign of the need for legislation that would shut them down: Hieromonk Dimitriy (Pershin) used a combined rational-instrumental and procedural frame when declaring that

> The determination that representatives of sexual minorities have displayed, and their intention to protest yet again outside of facilities for children show how timely the adoption of the regional [St. Petersburg] law was, which, without delay, should be given federal status — but this is already a job for [parliamentary] deputies. (PravMir News Service 2012a)

As in the case of the St. Petersburg law, the idea of LGBT activists at risk of physical retaliation from irate parents was used in rational-instrumental framing of anti-propaganda laws as a means of protecting such protestors from vigilante violence. When informed that LGBT activist Nikolay Alekseyev planned to picket schools in response to the St. Petersburg law, St. Petersburg Deputy Milonov warned that

> Of course we can't recommend that anyone physically resist them — that's illegal. But... how can a person stand back, if a pervert approaches his children and starts holding these types of protests... it's the very same as coming to a gunpowder storage facility with lit matches. (Milonov and Interfax-Severo-Zapad 2012)

Priest Dimitriy Fetisov posed LGBT individuals as worthy of sympathy, but issued a warning for those who participated in public protests:

> I feel immensely sorry for those few people who suffer from such deviations. But my pity and desire to help won't contradict righteous fury paired with legal charges or other, ruder means if such a sufferer can't limit their promiscuity and starts to ecstatically tell my children about same-sex love. (Fetisov 2013)

One rational-instrumental frame that first appeared during debates over the St. Petersburg law but bloomed in the run-up to adoption of the federal anti-propaganda legislation was that of a connection between homosexuality, the country's demographic situation, and a unifying "national idea." Archpriest Dimitriy Smirnov of Moscow opined that

> There are often discussions about our country not having a national idea. It's completely clear that this is stupidity. Our national idea is giving birth to and raising children. (Tutina 2013)

Smirnov cautioned that

> Soon young people will have nobody left to marry. There will only be same-sex families, in which (by the way, according to American data) children grow up to be more unhappy, cruel, and prone to violence and suicide. (Tutina 2013)
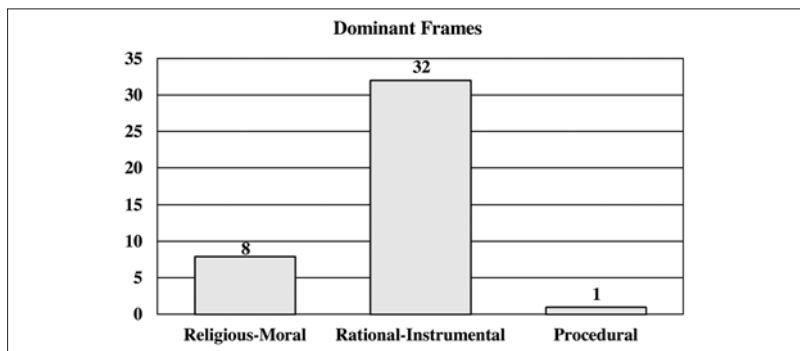
Figure 5 — Total Dominant Frames Employed (Number of Times)

St. Petersburg Deputy Milonov applied a combined procedural, religious-moral, and rational-instrumental frame to his own work and the future of Russia, stating that

As a People's Deputy, I don't have the right to allow lust and sin to be legalized and made a norm, because that will be the final year of our country's existence. (YouTube.Com 2013)

Discussions of a federal anti-propaganda law were particularly notable in that they were the first to include a dominant procedural frame. In addition to Milonov's references to his responsibilities as a deputy, Mitropolit Pavel of Ryazan praised the work of those deputies who "in the name of the people, try to do everything possible to turn off this spigot of filth [and] nastiness, so that [it] won't enter our Russian land" (Soyuz 2012). However, there also were protests against those politicians who objected to the idea of adopting federal-level anti-propaganda legislation. Archpriest Dimitriy Smirnov remarked that

It would seem that [the law] is an obvious and most necessary document. So? A huge number of civil servants, deputies, even those who are obligated to protect human rights as part of their jobs are speaking against it for some reason!...Why is the fate of such a serious law being decided by a cluster of those in power?...In Switzerland, for example, referendums are held for the most trivial matters, but here, even serious problems are not subject to public debate. (Tutina 2013)

In conclusion, when the dominant frames from each stage of the analysis (Arkhangelsk Oblast, St. Petersburg, and the federal level) were totaled, rational-instrumental dominant frames held a clear lead, with religious-moral and procedural frames a distant second and third (see Figure 5).

Conclusion

This article intended to pinpoint the framing strategies employed by clerics and others serving in the Russian Orthodox Church. By doing so, the author hoped to apply framing theory to the ROC, and expand morality policy research beyond its traditional home in the West.

The results of content analysis of media sources and recordings of public hearings on the law were as follows: while rational-instrumental framing was dominant, procedural framing lagged far behind the results of previous research. The results form a strong argument for inductive research of the ROC and other religious and social institutions and groups that have long puzzled researchers in the West, in order to create a robust research design before launching larger-scale analyses. This article is intended as a pilot for future studies of morality policy disputes involving the Moscow Patriarchate, ROC clerics, and Orthodox activist groups within the Russian Federation and other countries within the former Soviet Union.

While the nature of governance in Russia means that gleaning the exact nature of Church-state relations may be next to impossible for researchers who have not been embedded in ROC affairs for decades, longitudinal studies of fluctuations in morality frames used over time regarding different issues and a comparison of outcomes may yield clues as to which argumentation strategies have worked in the Church's favor. Morality policy and content analysis may also assist with other areas of inquiry related to religion and politics in Russia, such as examinations of tolerance levels for individual behavior (for example, comparing morality policy frames used when discussing homosexuality with respondents' attitudes toward reinstatement of Soviet-era criminal penalties).

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226

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228

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NEGOTIATING FAMILY: FAMILY POLITICS AND LGBTIQ ORGANISATIONS IN SERBIA[1]

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Abstract

The paper presents advocacy efforts and attitudes of local LGBT activists in Serbia on legalization of same-sex partnerships. Key questions that I explore in the analysis are related to how local activists perceive this issue and how same-sex partnerships advocacy is related to the wider context of family policies and family reality in modern, neoliberal Serbian society and conservative, "anti-gender" narratives on family.

Key words: *LGBT rights, same-sex partnerships, LGBT activism, anti-gender, family*

Introduction

Same sex partnerships are still not recognised in the legislation of the Republic of Serbia, while the Constitution defines "marriage" as a union between a man and a woman (Act 62).[3] The existing draft of the Civil Code (*Građanski zakonik*) indicates that legalisation of same-sex partnerships is possible in the future, but through a separate legal document — not through changes to the existing Marriage Law.[4] According to the state's *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination 2014—2018*, Serbia was obliged to adopt this law until 2019.[5] Also, there are two drafts of the legislation. One was proposed by Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) in 2019,[6] without any consultations with local

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[1] The text was developed during January and February of 2020, as part of the research that the author conducted as Early Stage Researcher on Horizon 2020-project FATIGUE. The author is also PhD Candidate at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, University in Belgrade.

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[3] Available at: http://www.ustavni.sud.rs/page/view/sr-Latn-CS/70-100028/ustav-republike-srbije

[4] Article 2214, page 558, Draft of the Civil Code, available at: https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/files/NACRT.pdf

[5] Available at: https://ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sites/default/files/dokument_file/ad_action_plan_eng_pdf.pdf

[6] "Predlog zakona o registrovanim istospolnim zajednicama". Available at: https://otvoreni-parlament.rs/akt/3932

LGBT organisations, while the other draft was created by local lesbian organisation, Labris, in 2010 (Gajin 2012). Both of the proposed drafts define same-sex partnerships only through the set of social and economic rights that are available to heterosexual married couples related to mutual social and economic support, joint property rights, inheritance, protection from domestic violence, etc. (see Gajin, 2012). Both of these drafts do not consider the issue of children — except in cases when one of the partners is a biological parent, which leads to rights and obligations for the child's and parent's support.

The draft law proposed by the LDP also explains why is it important for Serbia to legalise same-sex partnerships — to reduce the high level of discrimination and homophobia against LGBT persons, improve their quality of life without "damaging the others" and provide access to those rights that are already available to heterosexual married couples.[7] The overall silence about the topic in public was shortly interrupted in 2019 when publicly "out" lesbian Prime Minister, Ana Brnabić, became a parent, with her partner giving a birth to their baby. While her colleagues congratulated, the LGBT community and organisations posed a simple question: how is it that she can do it and the rest of us cannot? Is she a legal parent to her child? According to Serbian law, she is not. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister herself still did not take any significant and decisive steps toward the final legalisation of same-sex partnerships.[8]

Surely, this legislation has to be observed in the wider context of family politics in Serbia, which have been extremely pro-natalist ever since the 1990s (see Drezgić 2010). Family is discussed predominantly concerning increasing the birth rate and the threat of the "white plague", framed in extremely nationalistic and misogynist discourses (Drezgić 2010). The current government in Serbia does not deviate much from this pattern, proclaiming an increase in the birth rate as one of its top priorities. This decision is not at all supported by the development of sustainable social welfare mechanisms and economic measures that would indeed assist women and their partners in raising children. Actual population policies are focused on providing short-term financial assistance to pregnant women and mothers, but do not tackle the problem of the position of pregnant women and mothers on the labor market and their working rights (see Reljanović 2018; Krek and Veljić 2019).[9]

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[7] Ibid., page 16.

[8] See Ilić Dejan: "Kratki osvrt na Igora". Published at: pescanik.net, 22. 2. 2019. Available at: https://pescanik.net/kratki-osvrt-na-igora/. Radoman Marija: "Istospolne porodice — društvena realnost i izazovi". Published at: masina.rs, 21. 2. 2019. Available at: https://www.masina.rs/?p=8691. See also: "Pismo premijerki- otvoreno pismo Ani Brnabić, premijerki Srbije", Labris. Published at: labris.org.rs, 10. 12. 2019. Available at: http://www.labris.org.rs/sr/pismo-premijerki

At the same time, abortion remains legal in Serbia — legalized at the beginning of 1950s during communist Yugoslavia; the new Civil Code has announced the decriminalization of surrogate motherhood;[10] and biomedical assisted fertilization is also possible for single women.[11]

It is also important to perceive Serbian family policies in a wider context of actual "anti-gender" movements and their insistence on protecting traditional families from the dangers of "gender ideology", same-sex marriages and an "unnatural" understanding of sex and gender (see Kuhar and Patternote, 2017; Kováts and Põim, 2015; Corrêa, Paternotte and Kuhar 2018; Lazaridis, Campani and Benveniste, 2016; Kuhar and Zobec 2017). Although crusading against "gender ideology" still isn't present so much in Serbia compared to in other countries in the CEE region,[12] one cannot overlook the tendency of the current Serbian government to develop family policies emulating those governments (such as FIDESZ in Hungary) that adopted an "anti-gender" narrative in creating strategies for strengthening the middle-class, Christian, white, heterosexual *ideal* family.

Having all these aspects of family in Serbia, the aim of this paper is to analyze the initiative of LGBT organizations for the legalization of same-sex partnerships, the politics behind this initiative and how their vision of same-sex partnerships (and families) correlates with the dominant, pro-natalist policies and ideal of the traditional family model. In that regard, it is important to bear in mind that Serbia today cannot be described as a mere traditional, backward society in the notorious Balkans. Just like other CEE and Balkan countries, it has transformed into a neoliberal

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[9] See also: "Od populacione politike do podrške porodicama". Faculty of Philosophy, video debate. Published at: pescanik.net, 4. 6. 2019. Available at: https://pescanik.net/od-populacione-politike-do-podrske-porodicama/

[10] Zakon o rađanju za drugog, Article 2272, page 568, Draft of the Civil Code, available at: https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/files/NACRT.pdf

[11] Zakon o biomedicinskoj potpomognutoj oplodnji, Article 25, Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_biomedicinski_potpomognutoj_oplodnji.html

[12] The term was used in disputing the draft of the Law on Gender Equality in Serbia. See in: Ignjatović Tanja: "Gde su tu muškarci?". Published at: pescanik.net, 24. 8. 2018. Available at: https://pescanik.net/gde-su-tu-muskarci/ Also, in 2017 several prominent public figures from the academic scene actively opposed introduction of educational packages on prevention of sexual violence in the curricula, articulating it as attack on the traditional family values, parenthood rights and introduction of gender ideology in Serbian educational system. See: Antonić Slobodan: "Na mala vrata uvode seksualno obrazovanje u vrtice i škole". Published at: Srbin.info, 11. 4. 2017. Available at: https://srbin.info/pocetna/aktuelno/antonic-na-mala-vrata-uvode-seksualno-obrazovanje-u-vrtice-i-skole/. Đurković Miša: "Školski priručnik za promociju homoseksualizma". Published at: Sabornik Srbsko-Ruski, 9. 12. 2017. Available at: http://sabornik.rs/index.php/autorski-pogledi/943-djurkovic-promocija-homoseksualizma

periphery, with diminished economic and social welfare inherited from the social-ist period; a privatized economy and sharp class division (see Lazić 2011; Horvat and Štiks ed. 2015; Deacon and Stubbs ed. 2007). This is the context in which we should observe not only *family policies*, i.e. states' actions towards and for families, but also *family politics*, *"which implies a wider consideration of the place of fami-lies in the social and political life of a nation-state."* (Ginsborg 2014: xiv). Thus, when thinking about the politics behind the idea of legalizing same-sex partner-ships, we have to think not only about the *openness* of the state to respect the hu-man rights of LGBT persons but also whether LGBT persons and their representa-tives — i.e. LGBT organizations — are aware of what family means in the modern Serbian society? Moreover, are they ready to challenge the idea of the traditional family with more than just a partners' sex, but by challenging the key presumption of the family in neoliberalism — as a middle class entrepreneurship comprised from two persons with children, economically stable and a substitute for reduced public social welfare (Duggan 2003; Cooper 2017)?

This question is already analyzed in the context of same-sex partnerships' le-galization campaigns in the United States and Western Europe. Many authors, such as Judith Butler (2002), Lisa Duggan (2003), Jasbir Puar (2017), Melinda Cooper (2017), and Michael Warner (2000), emphasize that the legalization of same-sex marriages was a final drowning of LGBT activism into the neoliberal and neocon-servative "politics of equality" (see Duggan 2003). By framing the idea of same-sex partnerships solely through social and economic rights that should belong to every-body, LGBT organizations failed to challenge the idea that the family should be the primary care-giver and basis for economic and social stability of the individual — not the state. What happens with single persons? Moreover, they failed to advocate for change in the paradigm about what *is* family in the first place — for the inclu-sion of various family models that do not necessarily include two persons and a child (Butler 2002; Warner 2000). The campaigns for the legalization of same-sex partnerships indicated the rise of *homonormativity,* politics that *"does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a priv-atized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."* (Dug-gan 2003: 50). Having in mind the overall influence of western LGBT activism on the local, post-Yugoslav scene (Lončarević 2014; Maljković 2014) but also the over-all influence of neoconservative concepts of "civil society" in post-Yugoslav coun-tries,[13] these criticisms have to be taken into account. Nevertheless, I will try to

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[13] According to Darko Suvin (2014), the term "civil society" was taken over at the end of 1980s as part of bourgeois democracy propaganda, *in order to emphasize lack of freedom*

avoid a simple reduction of the initiative on the legalization of same-sex partnerships in Serbia on its Western counterparts, primarily due to the specific context in which LGBT organizations emerged, developed and function now in Serbia and the wider post-Yugoslav space. The issue of whether we can talk about politics of normativity — the Serbian way — will be touched upon briefly, and, hopefully, by focusing on the legalization of same-sex partnerships, I will contribute more to its understanding.

Methodology and Structure of the Paper

In trying to depict an LGBT perspective on the legalization of same-sex partnerships in Serbia and the politics behind it, I will rely on data gained from interviews done with seven lesbian, gay and transgender activists from leading Serbian LGBT organizations. The sample reflects a variety in LGBT identities, as well as age differences — the youngest interviewee is 24 years old, while the oldest is 46. The difference in age also reflects a difference in professional experience — some of my interviewees were part of the LGBT movement in the early 2000s, with a strong influence inherited from the 1990s; some were born long after this period, or were uninterested in the LGBT cause at that time. Also, diversity in age reflects different emotional/relationship statuses and experiences, which have been important for their perception of the initiative for the legalization of same-sex partnerships. All of the interviewees have completed higher education (a faculty diploma or equivalent), live either alone or with partners (not with parents) and some of them have children in their same-sex partnerships. All of them live in Belgrade, although the majority (five) were born outside the Serbian capital.

The structure of the interviews was semi-open, meaning that interviewees were given the space to take an active part in the conversation, discussing not only their personal and activist perception of same-sex partnership legalization in Serbia but

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in officially communist countries (...) with the aim to extort return of opposition parties and private ownership over the public means of production (2014, 151). Also, I would like to add Mulholland's remark (2012) on neoconservative influence on the shaping of civil society in the United States and post-communist countries. For Western neoliberals, the fight against communism was one of the top priorities (Mulholland 2012, 279) and, in the post-1989 era, the US administration provided significant funds for support of free elections, independent media, the rule of law and civil society NGOs, seen as priority issues that would secure a blooming of the neoliberal vision of society, as stated in the US government's 1996 statement of foreign policy: Democracies create free markets that offer economic opportunity, make for more reliable trading partners and are far less likely to wage war on each other... The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world, particularly in countries of strategic importance to us, the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper. (Ibid, 280).

also other topics that are relevant for modern LGBT organizations in Serbia: the importance of the 1990s' legacy for LGBT activism in Serbia today; the perception of professionalization of LGBT organizations and the civil society sector in general; the LGBT community and its relation with LGBT organizations. Data gained from the interviews were used both as primary source information (especially in relation to the activities that take place in advocacy and lobbying for the legalization of same-sex partnerships) and for interpretation in line with the discourse analysis method, allowing deeper insight into the formation of various perceptions and discourses on same-sex partnerships, family in general and LGBT politics in that regard, from the standpoint of LGBT activists themselves. Secondary sources included the following documents: drafts of legislation documents; legislative documents; policy analyses; strategies relevant for family, marriage, reproductive rights in Serbia and other relevant countries produced by LGBT organizations and relevant organizations/institutions. It also included official statements and media appearances of the above-mentioned entities, related to the topic.

The following chapter will present in more detail the initiative on the legalization of same-sex partnerships in Serbia and perspectives of the interviewed representatives of LGBT organizations, also in the context of pro-natalist policies of the current Serbian government. It will also give insight into the development of LGBT organizations in Serbia from the early 1990s until today, presenting key issues and challenges, relying on the conducted interviews but also existing literature on the topic (Bilić ed. 2016; Bilić and Kajinić eds. 2017; Bilić and Radoman eds. 2019; Blagojević and Dimitrijević, eds. 2014). The third chapter will present the relationship between current pro-natalist politics and wider "anti-gender" strategies in CEE, focusing more on the context of Serbia and the relationship of LGBT organizations with governments' pro-natalist measures. The conclusion in the fourth chapter summarizes and discusses the key aspects of the initiative for the legalization of same-sex partnerships, its politics (or policies) and the potential of LGBT organizations to offer a radically alternative vision of family politics in modern Serbian society.

From the Decriminalization of Homosexuality to the Legalization of Same-sex Partnerships: LGBT Organizations in Serbia and Same-sex Partnerships

One of the common misconceptions regarding civil society in post-Yugoslav region and CEE is that it emerged with the downfall of socialism. This "methodological nationalism" (Gordy 2015, 12) ignores the fact that many civic initiatives existed during socialist Yugoslavia, even ones promoting gay and lesbian rights.[14]

The first lesbian and gay organizations appeared in Slovenia and Croatia, and the first gay and lesbian film festival in Yugoslavia and Europe was organized in 1984 in Ljubljana (see Kajinić 2016; Kuhar 2012; Jurčić 2012). In Serbia, the first organization — Arkadia — was founded much later, in 1991, emerging at the beginning of a series of bloody conflicts in Yugoslavia and during the long era of Serbia's "blocked transformation" (Lazić 2011) marked with economic downfall, social deprivation and poverty, a rise in class differences and an overall dominance of nationalism and traditional values (Lazić 2011 and 2005; Dinkić 1995). On the top of all that, homosexuality was still treated in Serbia as a criminal offence up until 1994 (Vasić 2012, 103).[15] Generations of these early lesbian and gay activists emphasized the importance of informal networking that was established between these early initiatives in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia, and was continued in spite of the devastating social and political contexts in which they acted (Savić 2011; Živković ed. 2015). Based on the idea of solidarity and Yugoslav heritage, but also the personal involvement of some of these early activists in anti-war and feminist initiatives, even today we see an argument that early lesbian and gay initiatives in Serbia (and in other post-Yugoslav countries) grew from this "leftist" legacy, presenting unequivocal opposition to the dominant nationalism in these countries.[16]

This perception of the leftist, anti-nationalistic and solidarity roots of LGBT movement[17] in post-Yugoslav countries has to be taken with caution (see Bilić 2015

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[14] What is important is that these issues were not interpreted by activists in an "anti-socialist" manner, in terms that none of them actually advocated a change from the socialist system — more its improvement. In that way, the majority of these issues were treated more on a theoretical, not practical, level (Lazić 2005 ,69, also Bilić 2015).

[15] Male homosexuality was punishable in Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia by the Criminal Code (Article 186) with the prison of one year (Jurčić 2012, 89). But, after the constitutional change in 1974, Socialist Republic of Slovenia decriminalised homosexuality, followed by Socialist Republic of Croatia (1977), Montenegro and Vojvodina Province (Ibid, 90). For more information on life o gay men under this prohibition during socialism, see Franko Dota 2012 and 2008.

[16] The example of this is documentary "Crveni vez / Red Embroidery" which presents history of LGBT movement in the post-Yugoslav countries, on the basis of "personal testimonials and political accounts of 12 feminist, anti-war and LGBTI*QA pioneer activists, who have shared their stories on solidarity and their contribution to feminist, anti-war and LGBT*IQA movement in these countries." The documentary is opened with scenes of war in Bosnia and scenes of violence at Parades in Belgrade and Split, as well as during QSF in 2008, indicating connection between war violence and post-war violence that occurred against LGBT victims of the post conflict society. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EatvM0UIQs

[17] At that point, most of these initiatives did not exist as organized non-governmental organizations with strong financial support or structure. Also, they dealt primary with gay and lesbian issues, while bisexual or transgender persons remained out of scope, until the 2000s.

and Miškovska- Kajevska 2017), especially having in mind that there was an intense split between anti-war and anti-nationalistic personal engagements and values and what was perceived as important among the rest of the lesbian and gay community in that period. Not all members of Arkadia were supportive of the anti-nationalistic, inclusive narrative of its founders, Dejan Nebrigić and Lepa Mlađenović. As Lepa Mlađenović recalls, *"some people started to laugh, and we heard sentences such as: 'I don't want to be in the group with Gypsies,' and 'I don't want to be with Šiptari,'"* (in Gočanin 2014, 339). Finally, a decision was made (by Mlađenović and Nebrigić) that the group would function with "*less members, since at that moment they did not have the strength to fight against chauvinism inside itself.*" (Ibid).[18] Faced also with a lack of support from other civil society organizations,[19] Arkadia continued to exist until 1995, focusing their activities on creation of safe spaces for lesbians and gays, dealing with issues of visibility, acceptance, even discussing the possibility of the legalization of same-sex marriages (Ibid.). Nevertheless, most of these activities remained invisible to the public, due to the general hostility of Serbian society in that period towards all kinds of differences.

The breaking point in the development of LGBT activism in Serbia happened in 2001, when a group of activists from Labris and Geten attempted to organize the first Pride Parade in Belgrade. Believing that the overthrowing of Milošević in 2000[20]

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[18] According to Lepa Mlađenović, it was hard for her to work at the same time with female victims of war violence and lesbians, who did not want to know anything about the war. See "Crveni vez" documentary, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 5EatvM0UIQs

[19] In 1994 Arkadia was forced to leave its working space from the Centre for Women Studies in Belgrade. The office was shared with another project related to refugee assistance, whose team claimed that it was not "compatible" with Arkadia's activities. The project's claim was supported by its international donor, and the board of the Centre decided to cancel its hospitality to Arkadia members. The relation of the first lesbian and gay initiatives with the feminist movement is also often mentioned as crucial, but without precise information on what this relation really looked like. Mojca Drobnikar, an activist and founder of the feminist group Lilit, out of which later emerged the lesbian group Skuc LL, recalls that it was hard for lesbian activists to "find themselves" on the existing feminist agenda, since it included topics such as parenthood, pregnancy or abortion. Although feminists were open to lesbians, they were not "sensitized" to topics that were important for them (Gočanin 2014, 337).

[20] The regime of Slobodan Milošević was established in 1989, and was followed by the disintegration of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia through a line of bloody conflicts. During his regime, Serbia was placed under international sanctions, was actively involved in conflicts and war crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The economy was destroyed and poverty reached its peak. The regime was overthrown after the elections held in 2000, and on the 5th of October 2000, with massive demonstrations on the streets of Belgrade, Milošević was finally overthrown. He died at the International Tribunal for War Crimes in The Hague, in 2006. His legacy, though, remains pretty much alive in modern Serbia. See more: Lazić 2011; Dinkić 1995.

and the establishment of a new democratic regime also meant a new era for LGBT community, they tried to organize a walk in Belgrade city center. It never happened and the event is remembered as one of the bloodiest on the streets of Belgrade, due to the severe violence committed by organized groups of hooligans and minimum police protection.[21] Nevertheless, this violence boosted the LGBT scene in Serbia, increasing the visibility of the community and pointing out that homophobia, discrimination and violence against LGBT persons is real in Serbian society. Thus, during the 2000s, other organizations working on LGBT rights, even outside Belgrade, were founded and developed with the assistance of international donors (see Savić 2011).

These *post-Pride* LGBT organizations should be understood in the larger context of civil society in Serbia, especially after 2000 and the change from Milošević's regime. Almost all of the identified trends and problems in the development of civil society in that period are applicable to LGBT organizations, too (see Lazić 2005; Bilić ed. 2016; Bilić and Kajinić ed. 2017; Blagojević and Dimitrijević 2014). The overall "NGOisation" of the civil society sphere (Bagić 2016) indicated a professionalization of these organizations and their severe dependence on international donors' funds and agendas. The focus of their work shifted to advocacy and lobbying activities, cooperation with institutions and an overall lack of civic initiative: *"interests coming from the outside, identified and articulated by experts and NGOs as service providers, where members of the communities whose needs are addressed are seen as 'clients'"* (Lazić 2005, 80, see also Sejfija 2006; Stubbs 2007; Vlaisavljević 2006; O'Brennan 2013; Bilić ed. 2016, 2015). Completely dived into the human rights narrative and politics of representation (see Fraser 1997; Merkel 2014: 126; Moyn 2017; Kennedy 2002) CSOs adopted the aura of "emancipatory" actors, leading Serbia toward modernization, democratization, EU integration, protection of human rights and diversity (Bilić ed. 2016; Lončarević 2014; see also Listhaug, Ramet and Dulić ed. 2011; Bojičić-Dželilović, Ker-Lindsay, Kostovicova ed. 2013).

A very similar pattern occurred in the LGBT civil scene, with organizations focusing on advocating and lobbying for legislative improvements and LGBT human rights. Cooperation with institutions, i.e. sensitizing police, judiciary, social workers and medical professionals, became a prerogative, especially for those organizations who provided support to LGBT persons in situations of violence. *"Activism is not on the street anymore, it is in the courtroom that is the main frontline. When I was attacked, I realized that I cannot do anything (...) because there is no system. Today, activism means pushing for your basic human rights. It is a privilege to live*

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[21] See more in Kajinić, in Bilić and Radoman, 2019. Also, archive video on the first Pride Parade in Belgrade is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdoPQwB9erg

outside the system, and I do not have that privilege." (D. B, 36) Nevertheless, this focus on the issue of violence, human rights protection and the importance of co-operation with institutions poses several issues for LGBT organizations today (see also Buterfield 2016).

Firstly, it narrows the perception of the LGBT community as a homogenous group, constantly in a situation of violence and in need for protection — i.e. a constant victim of society's homo/bi/transphobia and exclusion (see Rexhepi 2016). This poses an important question: what is this "community" that LGBT organizations are actually representing and advocating for? For D. B. (36), *"The community is the people who share a certain experience of oppression."* According to another interlocutor, *"We are getting 0.001% of the community, usually the ones that are in problem — emotional, legal, psychological, etc. We are not doing anything on mobilizing the rest of the population, for example reaching out to lesbians in business sector."* (J. V. 42) Without trying to minimize the level of homo/bi/transphobia in Serbian society (see Stojčić and Petrović 2016), this insistence on the victimization of LGBT persons and the importance for cooperation with institutions implies that LGBT organizations largely adopted the role of "care givers" — i.e. services for those "clients" among the LGBT community who are in a specific state of need: concrete cases of violence or discrimination. Thus, the needs and problems of LGBT individuals (citizens) that are shared with the general population — unemployment, economic and social security and rights, free health protection, etc. seem to be out of scope for local LGBT organizations (see in Dioli 2017). What is missing is a frontal, joint approach of the civil society sector toward structural social problems, regardless of the identity they represent: *"That is the question for the whole civil society sector, where 100 organizations are working on the same problem — the identities change, but that kind of front does not exist anywhere in the world."* (A. Č. 29)[22]

Secondly, by focusing on human rights and institutional change, LGBT organizations are implying that institutions are *neutral* from the wider political and social context, as *non-political* counterparts of civil society organizations, both operating solely on a policy level. This technocratic vision of the state and civil society is crucial for neoliberal politics, embedded in the "politics of equality" (Duggan 2003). Based on the idea of a "third way" suppressing the extremes of left and right*, "presented not as a particular set of interests and political interventions, but as a kind of non-politics — a way of being reasonable, and of promoting universally desira-*

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[22] One of the interviewees, A. Č. (29) also points out to the lack of will to cooperate with LGBT organizations among other CSOs: *"LGBT organizations are much more opened for cooperation".*

ble forms of economic expansion and democratic government around the globe." (Duggan 2003: 10) This approach is dominant among LGBT organizations in Serbia, seen as *"purely practical"* (A. Č. 29), allowing them to focus more on the concrete problems of the LGBT community in Serbia. Nevertheless, this insistence on providing concrete solutions for concrete problems seems to prevent their involvement in dealing with issues that are structural and sensitive for the ruling political establishment in Serbia, including then legacy of the 1990s, both in terms of nationalistic narratives and derogation of social and economic rights.

"Our society is divided and, whatever you say, you will create an enemy. The sole fact that you are protecting LGBT rights is enough, without mentioning war crimes, 1990s, etc. For marketing and pragmatic sake, we should stop ourselves on LGBT issues" (P. A., 42)

"(Our organization) deals with hate speech, and (...) we should fight against hate speech based on nationality, but not in the sense that we are reporting it, but to raise capacities for the others who are specifically dealing with it" (D. B. 36)

"The war was done by politicians, right? Let them do that. We are the ones getting beaten up, let's deal with that first. (...) why would we deal with something that only raises the anger of the majority against us? (...) Let me deal with the basic existential issues, and we will easily politicize everything later." (H. V., 46)

"We have to cooperate with anyone who is elected in the government — finally, we do not cooperate with the person, but with the system and institution that this person represents. We can ignore the system, continue to hide, or we can say, OK, you are here, whoever you are, whatever you did, and you have to serve me now, in 2020. Yes, we have to be aware of what happened during the 1990s, but we also deal with generations who were born after, and have no memory of that period." (A. Č. 29)

Certainly, this hesitation in dealing with the neoliberal politics of distribution established after 2000, the destruction of public property and increase in economic and social inequalities is not eminent to LGBT organizations — it is a failure of the civil society sector in general (see O'Brennan, in Bojičić-Dželilović, Ker-Lindsay, Kostovicova ed. 2013, 37). Nevertheless, these issues are important for understanding the context in which the initiative for the legalization of same-sex partnerships is happening — narratives of nationhood, reduced economic and social rights and welfare are framing discourses of current pro-natalist politics. In the next subchapter, I will present in detail the perspectives of LGBT activists on the legalization of same-sex partnerships, and its potential to challenge existing family politics in Serbia.

"Light at the End of the Tunnel": Perception of Same-sex Partnerships among LGBT Activists in Serbia

J. K. (24 years old) was the youngest activist I interviewed for the purpose of this paper. He currently lives in Belgrade, working for a local NGO. He is "out" to his family and friends — even publicly, — and decided to get "more involved" in LGBT activism after he volunteered in the organization where he is employed today. He thinks that the LGBT activist scene is conflicted and unnecessarily divided, and that there are organizations whose work and results are not transparent or visible — and this has contributed to the increase of mistrust among the LGBT community towards such organizations. But, Pride Parades that have been organized in recent years have significantly changed this situation: *"There were these older people, who were out like a hundred years ago but now we have younger ones, who are following and supporting these organizations."* As a young gay man, he sees the legalization of same-sex partnerships as something that would prove him that he is *"No lesser than a straight man, below straight couples, just because of who I am. When someone is born with a higher economic status than you, it's different, but this is an issue about rights."* If he ever decides to *"get married"* the wedding would be *"nothing fancy",* but it would provide him insurance in various situations — *"when one of us is in hospital, or prison, or any other difficulty... And when you've signed something, it puts some kind of pressure on you — you have to be better."*

The wider LGBT community also wants same-sex partnerships to be legalized, and that is why legalization was one of the key demands of Belgrade's Pride Parades in 2018 and 2019. *"People see this as a light at the end of a tunnel, although I believe that there are other important things to be done. For me, it is much more important for trans persons to have rights to documents. And when you open that one tunnel, you see that there are 50 other tunnels that you have to go through..."* Other activists I interviewed also emphasized that legalization of same-sex partnerships is based on the need that was recognized inside the community. For the majority of them personally, this issue is not important, since they do not intend to get married or have kids. Some of them also see it as *"fitting into existing patriarchal social values"* (D. B., 36); or as an initiative that *"no one is dealing with, since gay men are not interested — the issue is pushed by lesbians, who are completely invisible in the political or activist scene,"* (J. V. 42). P. A. (42) one of the prominent gay activists in Serbia stated: *"I am only afraid that we will get the law and, in a year from then, the media will publish that only three couples registered. And then we are fucked, because everyone will say how small and insignificant you are, and whatever else we demand it will be ignored because of that. Kids are tricky. But I can't deal with that, I don't like kids, don't have them, and that should be pre-*

sented by someone who does, as a personal story. On the level of the organization, we would never initiate that issue, I expect Labris to do that with women who have children. We can support it through the media.”

In spite of these hesitations and doubts on a personal level, and the overall reluctance on an organizational level in getting more actively involved in advocacy for the legalization of same-sex partnerships, all LGBT organizations in Serbia supported Labris's initiative and the draft legislation that was done in 2009. A. G. (40), a Labris activist, was involved in the process almost from the beginning. *“We expected that, after the adoption of Anti-discrimination Law,*[23] *this is the next, logical step, but it wasn't. The hardest part was to find a political party that would present the draft in the Parliament and push for its adoption.”* In 2012, Democratic Party lost its majority in the Parliament and the Serbian Progressive Party took over power. In 2013, when the draft was finally supposed to be presented, a scandalous media campaign started, announcing that Democrats wanted to allow gays and lesbians to get married and have kids. *“They hesitated from the beginning but after that media attack they got scared and withdrew. It is a topic that is always used, beside Kosovo, as an argument for the defamation of opponents — the traitors who allowed gays and lesbian to get married and betrayed Kosovo. After 2012, we have a drama of the absurd: a prime minister who is a lesbian, living with a partner and they have a kid. She is also without any rights, or maybe she has some that we are not aware of. For the first time we have a politician in a position of power that can do something for this law, but nothing is happening.”* (A. G. 29)[24]

The legalization of same-sex partnerships was, from the beginning, presented in a manner that wouldn't directly provoke the ideal of the traditional, patriarchal family. It never used the term “marriage” — according to the Constitution it is a unity between a man and a woman. In public presentations of the idea, they focused more on rights that should belong to everybody, like inheritance, joint property, so-

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[23] Anti-discrimination Law in Serbia was adopted in 2009, after long and furious debates in the Parliament, due to the opposition of some political parties on inclusion of sexual orientation as forbidden ground of discrimination. Nevertheless, the Law includes sexual orientation, gender identity and sex as forbidden grounds of discrimination.”Zakon o zabrani diskriminacije”, available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zabrani_diskriminacije.html

[24] In January 2020, representatives of several local LGBT organizations held a meeting with the Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Rights. One of the conclusions was that the Ministry will intensify its activities on “developing a draft of the legislation for the legalization of same-sex partnerships”, in cooperation with local LGBT organizations. J.T.:“Ministar za rad održao sastanak sa aktivistima/kinjama LGBTIQ organizacija“. Published at: transserbia.org, 01.02.2020. Available at: https://www.transserbia.org/vesti/1653--ministar-za-rad-odrzao-sastanak-s-aktivistima-kinjama-lgbtiq-organizacija

cial protection, etc.[25] *"Traditional, patriarchal family is a wasted and empty concept, but it is not ours to attack it directly. We are picking at it, question it somehow, but I just can't imagine that this kind of revolution and change of system is headed by LGBT organizations, LGBT or any other minority group. It takes someone who is in a privileged position, ready to put his/hers privileges at stake, so that some revolution might happen."*

This prudence of LGBT organizations when it comes to challenging dominant (patriarchal) family politics becomes especially visible in relation to children. The hesitation to take more decisive attitude in the public toward parenthood rights of LGBT persons is a consequence of harsh public opposition to the idea that same-sex couples can have children,[26] but also of various existential fears that existed inside the LGBT community, which wasn't ready to even think about parenthood, much less to ask for this right. The right to adopt children or have ones of their own is perhaps the most challenging aspect of advocating for the legalization of same-sex partnerships. This certainly does not mean that children do not exist in these units, so we can speak of same-sex families as "new forms of family" (Radoman 2019: 38) and already part of family reality in Serbia.

In general, parenthood rights of LGBT persons can be achieved through various forms of bio-medical assisted reproduction such as in vitro or surrogate motherhood (Ibid, 41). The relation between parents and children in same-sex families can be regulated through various forms of adoption: joint adoption, step-parent adoption, full joint adoption, or adoption by a single LGBT person (Ibid, 39). Although biomedical assisted fertilization is allowed for single women (Article 25)[27]

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[25] In 2015, the USA-based organization, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted a poll on the acceptance of the LGBTI community and their rights in 6 Western Balkans countries (B&H, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania). In regards to "same-sex marriage", for 73% of questioners same-sex marriages are completely unacceptable. Nevertheless, opposition to this idea was mitigated once the participants were asked about specific rights. 39% of them think that LGBTI persons should have the right to visit their partners in hospital or prison; 32% agree with the right for LGBTI persons to have health insurance based on their partner's insurance. See more at the following web pages: https://www.ndi.org/LGBTI_Balkans_poll and https://www.slideshare.net/NDIdemocracy/ndi-public-opinion-poll-in-the-balkans-on-lgbti-communities

26NDI research on LGBTI rights in the Western Balkans indicated that only 10% of respondents agree with the right for LGBT persons to adopt children. See more at the following web pages: ttps://www.ndi.org/LGBTI_Balkans_poll and https://www.slideshare.net/NDI-democracy/ndi-public-opinion-poll-in-the-balkans-on-lgbti-communities

[27] Single women have the right to biomedical assisted fertilization according to the Law: "Zakon o biomedicinskoj potpomognutoj oplodnji". Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_biomedicinski_potpomognutoj_oplodnji.html. Also, the Law anticipated the creation of a sperm bank, which significantly reduces the costs of IVF processes. Nevertheless, in March 2019, the Ministry of Health adopted the changes in regards to the se-

and there are announcements that Serbia might decriminalize surrogate motherhood in its new Civic Code,[28] same-sex parenthood is not present topic of discussion when local LGBT organizations are presenting the idea of same-sex partnerships. In the same time, they do recognize the fact that more and more LGBT persons and couples want to, or already have, children, *"and that has to be recognized in the law."* (A. G. 29, see also Radoman 2019). How these possibilities are perceived by LGBT activists and what these measures mean for pro-natalist policies in Serbia will be discussed in the following subchapter.

Negotiating a Family in Populist Times: LGBT Organizations and Pro-natalist Policies of the Serbian Government

So called "anti-gender" movements include various organizations, initiatives, political parties and academics, for whom "gender ideology" is an agenda of academic and activist circles related to gender and sexuality, implying the destruction of the traditional family and "normal" understanding of sex as a biological, natural dichotomy between men and women (see Jongen 2017; also Corrêa, Paternotte and Kuhar 2018). Proponents of "gender ideology" advocate separation between gender and sex, and the right to self-determination and self-identification of one's own sexual and/or gender identity, as well as the legalization of same sex families (Ibid.) The fact that these agendas are being presented to the citizens as "promotion of gender equality", makes it even more tacit, as stated in a Pastoral letter issued by the Slovak Bishop Conference in December 2013: "(they) ... *want to convince the public, that none of us has been created as a man or a woman; and therefore, they aim at taking away the man's identity as a man, and the woman's identity as a woman, and the family's identity as a family, so that a man does not feel like a man, a woman does not feel like a woman and marriage is no longer that God-blessed partnership possible exclusively between a man and a women. On the contrary, promoters of gender equality want the partnership of two men and women to be equal to a marriage between two people of different gender"* (Durinova 2015, 111, 112).

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lection criteria of the sperm and egg cell donors. Article 4. states those persons who have "history of homosexual relations in the past 5 years" are not allowed to be donors. In spite of the reaction from LGBT organizations and the Ombudsman for Human Rights, this criteria hasn't been removed, and the Ministry of Health hasn't made any official statement on the matter. The criteria are available on the following link: http://www.pravno-informacioni--sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/ministarstva/pravilnik/2019/27/8/reg

[28] Article 2277, "Zakon o rađanju za drugog". Available at: https://arhiva.mpravde.gov.rs/lt/articles/zakonodavna-aktivnost/gradjanski-zakonik/

The opposition to "anti-gender" movements are so called "progressive" forces, recognized among various human rights organizations, especially ones dealing with women and LGBT rights; academics with a background in social sciences and especially gender studies; feminists; and leftists, all considered to be "progressives" or the "new left" (see Kováts and Põim, ed. 2015). Some authors (see Kuhar and Patternote ed. 2017; Corrêa, Paternotte and Kuhar 2018; Lazaridis, Campani and Benveniste ed. 2016; Kuhar and Zobec 2017) see "anti-gender" movements as an articulation of attempts to restrict or completely diminish achievements in the fields of women and LGBT rights, especially in regards to reproduction and same-sex marriages. Kováts and Põim (2015, see also Kováts 2018) see the conflict over "gender ideology" as more than a mere clash between human rights-based progressiveness and back warded traditional populist forces (see Kováts 2018). "Anti-gender" narrative is using gender as a "symbolic glue" for articulating various fears and opposition to the negative outcomes of (neo) liberal transition in Central and Eastern Europe, and some of these do not necessarily have anything to do with "mainstream" gender politics (Kováts and Põim 2015; Kováts 2019; Kováts 2017/2018).

For Kováts (2018, 2019, 2017/2018) one of the key causes of "anti-gender" movements' success in CEE countries is the de-contextualization of gender politics that are uncritically "copy-pasted" from the West into the post-socialist contexts, ignoring legacies of local feminist struggles and experiences (Kovats 2019; Kovats 2017/2018). Having in mind the fact that not even the word "gender" is properly translated into local languages (Kováts 2019) it is not so hard to understand the success of an "anti-gender" interpretation of "gender egalitarianism" as *twentieth-century totalitarianisms and global terrorism, or even the deadly Ebola virus"* (Korolczuk and Graff 2018, 797; see also Kayta 2018; Corrêa, Paternotte and Kuhar 2018). Another problem, which can also be traced in modern gender policies, is their submergence in "identity politics" and ignorance of issues related to social and economic rights and inequalities (Kováts 2017/2018 ,9). What seems to be the focus of gender politics today is the promotion of *gender identity* and *"ultra-individualism (...) based on the idea that gender is freely chosen, not constrained by norms, nature, and biological sex"* (Kováts 2018, 6). The "anti-gender" narrative offers simple answers to this criticism of "normal" and "natural": *"They offer a livable, and viable alternative to this by centering issues on family nation, religious values and freedom of speech which is attractive because it rests on positive identification, promising safe and secure community as a remedy to individualism and atomization."* (Kováts 2017/2018, 10) Thus, "progressive forces" have to turn their attention from politics of identity to the politics of distribution, in order to articulate a more comprehensive response to these "anti-gender" strategies (Kováts 2017/2018; also Mészáros, in Kováts ed. 2017).

There is also another important, but so far neglected, aspect of anti-gender narrative indicated in the work of Korolczuk and Graff (2018). The dominant understanding of "anti-gender" movements relates them with right-wing populism, especially in the context of Europe, both being based on the "politics of fear" (Wodak 2015), raising *"anxieties of people about the future of their family, and particularly their children"* (Kuhar and Zobec 2017, 35). Nevertheless, there is a strong relation between "anti-gender" initiatives in Europe, especially CEE and Balkan countries, and neo-conservatives that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s as "cultural programme" of neoliberalism,[29] promoting its main values: private property and personal responsibility, supported by *"shifting costs from state agencies to individuals and households"* (Duggan 2003, 12-14, see also Korolczuk 2019). For neo-conservatives (and neoliberals) the promotion and protection of a stable family and family responsibility against sexual liberties, single parenthood or reproductive rights became crucial in securing the transfer of social welfare from the public into the personal realms (see Cooper 2017; Duggan 2003; Mulholland 2012, 278). The neoconservatives' insistence on family stability, priority and responsibility was a narrative that was in line with the neoliberal vision of society, comprised of *"... smaller, more efficient governments operating on business management principles, and (...) 'civil society' (or 'the voluntary sector') and 'the family' to take up significant roles in the provision of social safety nets."* (Duggan 2003, 10; see also Cooper 2017).

After the downfall of communism and transformation into neoliberal peripheries[30] (Berendt 2001; Jakupec 2018; Horvat and Štiks ed. 2015; Suvin 2014) SEE and

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[29] The dominance of neoliberalism as an economic system began at the end of the 70s of the 20th century, not only due to the economic crisis during the 70s, but also due to demands for more firm state intervention in the economy, which posed a threat to capitalist elites (Harvey 2005. 15). As a theory, neoliberalism insists on the establishment of a global free market, protected from the state — seen as a key guarantee for the protection of human dignity and individual freedom that can only be achieved through *liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills* (2005, 2). In practice, though, neoliberal freedom is restricted to *"private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations and financial capital"* (2005, 7) and it can be defined as a *political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites* (Ibid, 19). This new elite arose from the "new class of entrepreneurs" (2005: 31), such as CEOs, managers, financiers and other leaders of the financial economy and 4th industrial revolution (see also Lazić 2011; Dumenil and Levy 2011). Of particular importance for the new system in all countries where it was established, was the annihilation of a social welfare system, since any kind of state assistance or interference in the market (through legislative regulations of labor, for example) was seen as an obstacle to achieving full individual potential (see Harvey 2005; Mulholland 2012; Duggan 2017; Cooper 2017).

[30] At the moment when transition from socialism to "liberal democracy" began — 1989 — the model of Keynesian liberal capitalism, with a strong social welfare component, was greatly replaced with this neoliberal version, based on the idea of unfettered enlargement

Balkan countries significantly reduced social welfare and social rights on the idea of "social inclusion" and "social protection", strictly separated from the economy (Lendvai 2007, 31). The publicly-owned social security system and health protection were mostly privatized or left to "alternative forms of social care", with NGOs becoming key institutional partners in this regard (Maglajlić Holiček and Rašidagić 2007). These profound economic and social changes, inevitably, have had an enormous impact on the family. During socialism, women were able to have full time employment and achieve economic independence. This was mainly possible due to state-funded social services, such as kindergartens, day cares, public canteens, etc., which removed numerous housekeeping responsibilities from women, but also due to the strict legal protection of maternity rights (Burcar 2014, 122, Vilenica ed. 2013; Drezgić 2011; Čakardić 2015). Nevertheless, in the neoliberal model of family, women work in low-income economies with little or no rights protected, additionally taking over the role of family care-givers, replacing the social welfare responsibilities of the state (see Vilenica ed. 2013; Cooper 2017; Fraser 1997; Burcar in Kostanić ed. 2014).

Ironically, these negative trends of the destruction of the social welfare system have been presented as inevitable consequences of democratization processes, and a necessary step in the final "purification" of the socialist collective system, which did not allow individual freedoms and private entrepreneurship (see Berendt 2001; Roth 2012).[31] This new system urged the ideal heterosexual, nationally pure and patriotic, middle-class family as its pillar. Therefore, I would suggest that "anti-gender" narratives shouldn't be analyzed solely in relation to illiberal tendencies and attacks on the human rights of women and LGBT persons, but in the context of the neoliberal transformation of CEE and Balkan societies, as new/old discourse on the

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of private property and personal responsibility for taking care of oneself — instead of the state. For post-socialist countries this meant the complete deconstruction of the known social protection system, labor rights, health protection — caused partially due to the strict loan conditions posed by international financial organizations, partially due to the senseless embracement of the new economic philosophy — and the eagerness to remove state control from all aspects of public life.

[31] In one of the rare empirical researches on populism and young people conducted in Croatia (Derado, Dergić and Međugorac 2015), young participants in the research — born long after the period of Yugoslavia and its dissolution — expressed *nostalgia for a more egalitarian economic system, or at least support for its fundamental elements, such as full employment, social housing, minimal social inequalities and overreaching economic and work security. In addition, most of our interviewees spoke negatively of the current economic situation and about the rising economic inequalities and poverty, which some perceive as the result of Croatia's transition to a market economy and its accession to the European Union.* (2015, 156)

family and its role as a key replacement for the lost social welfare in post-socialist, neoliberal peripheries.

The Strange Case of Surrogate Motherhood: Pro-natalism and LGBT Organizations in Serbia

The thing that connects current governmental politics of the "Law and Justice" Party (PiS) in Poland, the "Hungarian Civil Alliance" (FIDESZ) in Hungary and the "Serbian Progressive Party" in Serbia is their passionate devotion to the strengthening of the family and, consequently, the development of effective pro-natal strategies. In April 2016, Poland launched its "Family 500+" program, with the aim to "improve the financial situation of families and increase the fertility rate" in the country, by securing tax-free benefits for families with children.[32] The Hungarian government introduced its own family strategy: announcing that an interest-free, all-purpose loan would be granted to every married woman between the ages of 18 and 40 years and employed for a minimum of three years, and annulled in the case that she has a third child; subsidies for purchasing a home for families with two or more children; exemption from personal income tax for mothers of four or more children; and a non-repayable grant for purchasing a car for families with three or more children.[33] Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia and the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, also in 2019 proclaimed an increase of the birth rate as a top-priority for the current government, which is to be achieved by set of actionable measures including financial aid to families with three or more children and other social benefits. The existing population policies provide financial assistance in accordance with the number of children in the family; a one-time financial assistance for the gaining of baby equipment; compensation for maternity leave; and allowing bio-medical fertility assistance at the state's expense for the couples without children.[34]

Governments and officials of Hungary, Serbia and Poland also exchanged their experiences and ideas on strategies for increasing the birth rate at international conferences.[35] Apparently, they are united in the final aim of these initiatives — to in-

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[32] See in: "Evaluating 500+ Program in Poland". Published at: 4liberty.eu, 27. 6. 2019. Available at: http://4liberty.eu/evaluating-500-program-in-poland/

[33] See in: "All you need to know about the latest in Hungary's pro-family policy". Published at: fidesz-eu.hu, 19. 2. 2019. Available at: https://fidesz-eu.hu/en/all-you-need-to-know--about- the-latest-in-hungarys-pro-family-policy

[34] See in: "Mere populacione politike". Published at: mdpp.gov.rs. Available at: http://www.mdpp.gov.rs/latinica/populaciona-politika-mere.php

[35] I am referring to the Third Demographic Summit held in Budapest in September 2019, where high representatives of the Hungarian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Czech and Slovak governments took part. See more in: TANJUG: "Vučić sa Orbanom u Budimpešti". Published at

crease the number of "our" nation (white, Christian, Hungarian, Polish, Serbian) against the enemy (immigrants, Roma, Muslims, Albanians). Also, their joint approach is not based on policies of family planning, whose focus is on the improvement of overall social and economic conditions that would encourage couples to decide to have children. Instead, they push pro-natalist politics, which imply a direct influence of the state on this decision through taking restrictive (or even punishable) measures (see Drezgić 2011). For example, three years after its launching "Family 500+" in Poland, it has proved to be a failure: it did not increase the fertility rate or improve the financial situation for poor families, but it did contribute to the withdrawal of thousands of women with low-income jobs from the labor market and imposed additional expenses on the public budget. Also, none of these strategies seriously challenges the issue of labor rights and legal financial compensation for pregnant women and mothers, which directly targets the business sector. Basically, the proposed measures indicate that having children is not a matter of individual choice, but of personal and national responsibility, which is conveniently in line with neoliberal family values, as envisioned during the second half of the 20th century.

In the Serbian context, the government's concern for the survival of the family went even further, with the announcement that surrogate motherhood will be decriminalized in its new Civic Code, as part of the government's efforts to increase natality (Dekić 2019). Although it presents one of the most controversial methods of biomedical assisted fertilization (van den Akker 2017), mainstream media in Serbia presented it as assistance to childless, heterosexual, well-off Serbian couples to finally "gain descendants" (see Dekić 2019; Vilenica 2019). The opposite voices came from feminist circles and representatives of women CSOs, for whom the surrogacy presents the legalization of trafficking women and children, opening up possibilities for severe abuse and misuse (Macanović 2019).

Nevertheless, the voices that remained completely absent from the public debate are those for whom surrogacy might bring the most benefits — LGBT persons. Surrogacy can provide for gay couples to have a child that will bear the genetic material of one of the parents; lesbian couples can also use this method, with one partner carrying the pregnancy, and the other donating the egg cell. For transgender persons who wish to become parents, surrogacy is even more important, having in mind that medical transition implies forced sterilization. Moreover, surrogacy essen-

rts.rs, 4. 9. 2019. Available at: http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/politika/3649119/vucic-sa-orbanom-u-budimpesti.html. Also, "Demographic Summit to be held in Budapest for the third time". Published by the Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungary, 2 .9. 2019. Available at: https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-human-resources/news/demographics--summit-to-be-held-in-budapest-for-the-third-time

tially deconstructs the idea of the traditional family, founded in blood relations and "nature". There is nothing *natural* or *traditional* in surrogacy — it changes the idea of motherhood (and parenthood) by strictly separating its biological aspect from the social one. The act of reproduction is not based on heterosexual sex, resulting in pregnancy and birth of new members of the family and, consequently, the nation (van den Akker 2017, 6, also Dekić 2019). Although current draft law on surrogacy in Serbia does not mention LGBT persons as possible users of this method, it leaves place for various interpretation of Act 2277, which states that a single man or woman can use surrogacy if they can prove "especially justified reasons" for their wish to become single parents.

In spite of this, I would argue, remarkable chance to challenge the traditional family perspective, most of LGBT organizations in Serbia remained silent on the issue, and lesbians, gays and transgender persons were not even mentioned as possible users of surrogate motherhood. For my interlocutors, that was a wise thing to do, since it would only initiate a backlash among the public if gays and lesbians started to advocate for surrogate motherhood and talk about children: *"I am OK with that as long as there is no misuse or abuse of any kind. But, we are not the ones who should be talking about it (...) there are other, more burning issues to be taken care of."* (A. Č. 29). Labris also remained silent, partially because of the fact that values or the organization are based in radical feminism which harshly opposes the idea of surrogacy, but also because they estimated that their voice would not contribute to the debate: *"It would only cause a pointless backlash, with right-wing voices over ours. We will get scared and withdraw from the public again. And yes, that is terrible because all these important processes are happening in half-light — some men in some working groups, deciding about something without taking into account all aspects of the problem. But, that is our experience — it's best if you can avoid public discussion and do everything under the table."* (A. G. 40).

A. G. also points out that even these positive legislative changes, present a possibility for those LGBT persons and couples who are well-off financially, and who can *"pay the sperm bank, in vitro process or surrogacy. Not everyone can afford that."* She, herself, is a biological mother of three, living with her female partner, which remains completely invisible in terms of her family and partnership rights. *"She was not allowed to see the babies in the maternity hospital, she cannot take them anywhere without me, because she is not a 'legal' parent. But, she is their mother, and if something happens to the two of us, I want her rights to be insured and secured,"* A. G said. For her, it is equally important to have same sex partnerships legalized, as well as to have state's assistance and secured economic and social rights as a mother: *"Legally, I am recognized as single mother. Based on that position, I have received financial help from the state that was minimal, securing*

only partially basic necessities for the babies. I can't afford a babysitter, so they are going to a public kindergarten, in which one educator is taking care of 30 children. But I am not a single mother. I have support from my family, my partner. And that is why I want my family to become recognized for what it is, to have that securi-ty," says A. G.

At the moment, the advocacy campaign for the legalization of same sex part-nerships in Serbia includes three strategic litigations on discrimination. Based on the example of Italy,[36] three same-sex couples have filed a complaint on discrimination in regards to marriage rights on the basis of sexual orientation, and is heading to-ward European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg. *"If we manage to avoid any kind of possible crazy situations over Kosovo, the legislation will happen. It is on-ly a question of whether we will manage to add amendments on children or not,"* A.G. concludes.

Conclusion

The idea that two men or two women could be joined in marriage and have chil-dren seemed impossible until the end of the 20th century. Also, the idea that *"chil-dren have no right to the property of their parents, or parents to the property of their children"* (Ginsborg 2014, 31) prompted in Family Code in post-revolutionary Russia in 1918, seems impossible, even unnatural, in the 21st century. However rad-ical these visions of family and family relations might seem, they were both mitigat-ed in contact with reality. The Russian government adopted amendments to the Code which allowed the inheritance of smaller properties (Ibid.). Advocacy for le-galization of same-sex families did not even question issues related to property rights, inheritance, economic and social inequality, urging with the rise of neoliber-al hegemony: it just slides into the ideal of a *normal, well-off* neoliberal family mod-el, disregarding its injustices and limitations. Thus, when discussing the final suc-cess of the advocacy campaign for the legalization of same -sex marriages in the United States, it is worth of noting Melinda Cooper's (2017) insight that two neolib-eral theoreticians, Richard A. Posner and Tomas J. Philipson were pioneers of ad-vocating "gay marriage" as an effective exit strategy for the state from providing so-cial and health care to the persons infected with HIV and AIDS (2017, 173). In this

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[36] The litigation is based on the case of Orlandi and others vs. Italy: "The applicants alleged that the authorities' refusal to register their marriages contracted abroad, and more gener-ally the impossibility of obtaining legal recognition of their relationship, in so far as the Ital-ian legal framework did not allow for marriage between persons of the same sex nor did it provide for any other type of union which could give them legal recognition, breached their rights under Articles 8, 12 and 14." Full information on the case is available at the fol-lowing link: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-179547%22]}

way, the care given to infected members of gay and lesbian community was trans-ferred from the state and public sphere into the sphere of family responsibility and privacy (Ibid, 210). Family — regardless of its members' sex and gender identity — became the central point of social welfare, and a pillar of social and economic sustainability of the individual.

Another aspect of "gay marriage" that has to be taken into account, especially in relation to the rise of right-wing ideologies in Europe, is its presentation as an "*ideal of European values*" (Puar 2017, 20) of tolerance, diversity, liberal freedoms that have to be protected against regressive and violent *others* (see Brown 2006; also Rexhepi 2016). Defining it as "homonationalism", Jasbir Puar (2017) also sees this trend as part of a normalization process of gay and lesbian identities, due to which "homosexuality" becomes a legitimate part of nationhood, of *us*. In this way, Western democracies provide themselves with the aura of *"liberty fortresses", "defenders of civilization and tolerance"* (Puar 2017:21) against the backward, conservative, and fanatical other — Muslims, Arabs, Asians, the East — everyone who does not belong to the white, Christian entity. Moreover, these perceptions seem to be accepted by LGBT mainstream organizations (as well as LGBT voters in these countries), eager to protect LGBT human rights in "intolerant" and "repressive" others, but remain silent when human rights of "others" are being violated by the same system that respects rights of sexual minorities (see also Bruster, 2015. 23).[37]

It can be stated that the key role of the family in Serbia is to replace public social welfare and sustain the neoliberal ideal of private property and personal responsibility. Unfortunately, in this regard, the sharp contrast that seems to exist between "anti-gender" and "progressive" forces is blurred, since none of these actually proposes strategies that would seriously challenge these values and offer a radi-

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[37] In regard to the ambiguous relationship between right wing parties and LGBTQI persons, it is important to remind ourselves that the former leader of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a right-wing party, is Alice Weidel, a publicly out lesbian, who has very "'controversial'" attitudes toward immigration, but also on the introduction of sex education in schools. See more at: https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/alice-weidel-lesbian-against-gay--rights Also, in Serbia, since 2017, Ana Brnabić, also a publicly out lesbian is prime-minister, closely attached to the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, has highly controversial attitudes toward Serbia's role in the wars during the breakup of SFRY in the 90s. Brnabić herself stated that there was no genocide in Srebrenica, but a "terrible" war crime (see at: https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/alice-weidel-lesbian-against-gay-rights). She also does not see Serbia as a "homophobic country" (see at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40297480). This statement has been in the public focus since the 21st of February 2019, because her partner gave birth to their son; the media and LGBTQI organizations are asking the question: can she be a legal parent to the child, bearing in mind that Serbia does not recognise same-sex partnerships or adoption rights for gay and lesbian couples? See more at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47312826

cally alternative vision of family politics. Just a glance at the drafts of the law on the legalization of same-sex partnerships in Serbia might induce us that similar patterns are happening, as in Western democracies. The legalization of same-sex partnerships will secure social and economic rights and benefits for gays and lesbians, making them equal to heterosexual partnerships, contributing to the reduction of homophobia in Serbian society and, finally, Serbia's EU integration processes. Social and economic rights and benefits for those who live outside the registered partnership (single persons, single parents, "chosen families", etc.) remain out of the scope of the same-sex partnership paradigm. Critical interpretations of EU processes are also not on the agenda of advocating same-sex partnerships in Serbia.

The current initiative of Serbian LGBT organizations on the legalization of same-sex partnerships does not present a real alternative to the government's pronatalist policies, primarily because they do not perceive themselves as carriers of this kind of revolution in family politics. Fear of violence and "backlash" were indicated by several of my interviewees, emphasizing the negative consequences of such a move — withdrawal and marginalization from and in the public sphere, which might bring into question all other aspects of their work. Also, as Dušan Maljković (2017, 321) rightfully claims, there is a significant shift in the Serbian right-wing paradigm on LGBT rights — the new border that cannot be exceeded are not Pride parades, but the legalization of same-sex partnerships and adoption of children. LGBT organizations in Serbia seem to be reluctant in opening this frontline, arguing that family rights should be advocated "under the table". Having in mind overall homo/bi/transphobia in Serbian society and public reluctance to the idea of same-sex families, this might seem as rational decision.

Nevertheless, this narrow approach prevents LGBT organizations from tackling more structural issues concerning family policies in Serbia, such as the lack of adequate and sufficient social and economic support for families with children, the protection of maternal rights, as well as working rights of mothers. Once we realize that there are gay and lesbian families with children, these issues become extremely important. Although interviewees were aware of this reality, the way in which same-sex partnerships are portrayed at the moment indicates that they are economically well-off, secured in terms of their social rights, and that state's assistance for raising a family is not needed. The remark of one of my interviewers, a representative of Labris, that creating a family through biomedically assisted fertilization processes is extremely expensive and unreachable for the majority of LGBT persons, is extremely important. Thus, the hesitation of LGBT organizations to get involved in debates over these issues is even more surprising. Another aspect of pro-natalist policies in Serbia is the one related to the protection of the nation, which can be defined as a legacy of the 1990s (see Drezgić 2011; Krek and Veljan-

ović 2019). The initiative on the legalization of same-sex partnerships ignores this issue, too. This leaves us with the question: if the current government accepts same-sex families and legalizes their existence, does that mean that children brought up in these families are equally valuable in defending Kosovo, or not? Is that an acceptable option for same-sex parents, or not?[38]

Having all these aspects of the initiative on the legalization of same-sex partnerships in Serbia, we might conclude that LGBT organizations have failed in providing a radically alternative vision of family politics. As a matter of fact, we cannot even speak about *politics* in this regard, since they are not offering a different vision of the family and its place in Serbian society, but a set of policy measures (such as draft laws, advocacy campaigns, public campaigns) that are more applicable to the overall context in which these organizations operate — a highly technocratic and neo-conservative vision of state and civil society, focused solely on the needs of *our* group. The creation of family politics would comprehend, for example, the inclusion of various interest groups and their family rights or pressures on the state to shift from pro-natalist policies based on nationhood, misogyny and restrictive social and economic measures towards mothers to the more inclusive and sustainable politics of family planning. It would also have to include topics that are already addressed by LGBT organizations, such as family violence against LGBT members, violence in same-sex partnerships, or the protection of older (LGBT) members of the family.

Nevertheless, this comprehensive approach to the family is not happening, at least not at the moment. Although LGBT activists I have talked to are aware of all the shortcomings and negative aspects of the traditional family model, as well as pro-natalist policies that are pushing for it, they somehow believe that this model will eventually fall apart by itself, and that their work will at least contribute to its abbreviation.

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[38] I am referring to the speech of Aleksandar Vučić, in which he presented his vision of demography in Serbia in which he stated that Serbia will certainly lose Kosovo, if there are no Serbs who can live in it, comparing the natality rate in some of the Serbian municipalities with the ones in Kosovo inhabited dominantly with Albanians: "Vučić: Nizak natalitet ključni problem Srbije". Published on 17. 3. 2018. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=py5FyvU3dLs

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"OTHERING" OF LGBT MOVEMENT AS AN ELEMENT OF CONTEMPORARY POPULIST DISCOURSE IN POLAND[1]

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Abstract

The article explores how LGBT movement is "othered" as an element of contemporary right-wing populist discourse and as a political strategy used by right-wing populist actors. I focus on the current ruling Polish party, Law and Justice, whose anti-LGBT rhetoric increased ahead of the 2019 parliamentary election. By conducting Critical Discourse Analysis (using Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl's analytical framework) of the selected texts and visuals from the party's official website and Twitter accounts of its prominent members, I analysed by which discursive means the party representatives "other" LGBT Poles, how they frame homophobia within their broader populist discourse, and instrumentalise it for political gains. I compare my findings to the findings from an analysis of Law and Justice's anti-migration discourse ahead of the 2015 parliamentary election, and draw comparisons. The study is conducted within a larger study on "othering" and enemisation as manifestations of contemporary right-wing populist discourse in Central and Eastern Europe.

Key words: *LGBT, homophobia, right wing, populism, Poland, Law and Justice, discourse*

Introduction: the situation of LGBT community in Poland

LGBT (Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) is an umbrella term most often used to refer to the community of non-heterosexuals as a whole. . Other frequent abbreviations include LGBT+, LGBTI, LGBTQI. In academia, nowadays the preferred umbrella term is "queer", as it is inclusive of all not heterosexual people. Originally an abusive term, it has now been reclaimed by many persons of the community. For the purposes of this paper I choose the term LGBT movement, as it is how the object of the research, Law and Justice party, refers to it, and since they are most often not talking about LGBT persons per se but the movement for LGBT rights as a whole.

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As a conservative society, characterised by a very strong grip of the Roman Catholic Church, Poland has never been very accepting towards the LGBT community. However, during the past decade, following Poland's accession to the EU, "attitudes towards LGBT groups have eased in Poland, with polls showing rising support for civic partnerships and gay marriage. But this year, the increasingly fraught political environment has begun to take its toll." According to Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS)'s statement from last year, "previously, research showed a slow increase in openness to gays and lesbians. The last survey indicates that this trend has stopped." According to a CBOS poll, in 2014, before Law and Justice party (PiS) coming to power, 77% of the surveyed Poles would accept a homosexual as their neighbour. A recent CBOS poll from 2019 reports that "not much more than a quarter of Poles agree that gay and lesbian couples, i.e. two people of the same sex in an intimate relationship, should have the right to marry (29%) and publicly show their way of life (28%), while every eleventh person (9%) would allow these couples to adopt children." In 2019, "several Polish municipalities have declared themselves free from "LGBT ideology", while a right-wing magazine *Gazeta Polska* distributed "LGBT-free zone" stickers with one of its editions." Tensions escalated in July 2019, when hooligans and far-right groups chased, beat and threw bottles and other items at participants of the first equality march in Bialystok, a conservative city in the east. Slava Melnyk from Campaign Against Homophobia (KPH) has summarised, "Bialystok and the things that happened around the march were a tipping point in the public discourse regarding LGBTI issues in Poland and this part of Europe as well…Physical violence was very rare, at least in this decade in Poland. Previously there were instances of hate crime, but violence to the extent that there was hunting of people and an almost pogrom-like atmosphere, this hasn't happened before."

Many claim that this increased homophobia was fuelled by the ruling Law and Justice party ahead of the 2019 European elections. "(The) Law and Justice party has sought to rally its conservative base by presenting itself as a bulwark against LGBT groups, which it portrays as a threat to Catholic family values". This strategy of creating or revoking enemy images in order to gain fear-based support in an upcoming election is already a repetitive pattern for Law and Justice. "Last time [in 2015] refugees were the candidate for the government to frighten people… Now the gays are the new enemy for the government."

This is the problem that has been studied in this paper. I have carried out a Critical Discourse Analysis of Law and Justice's discourse related to the LGBT community, based on material from their official website, Twitter, and Twitter accounts of its prominent members with the aim of studying the process of enemization of the LGBT community by Law and Justice.

264

Background: Law and Justice's success and discourse

Law and Justice, or in the original Polish "Prawo i Sprawedliwosc", hence the acronym PiS, is a national-conservative, Christian democratic and right-wing populist party, according to the Popu-List. In the European Parliament, they are a member of the European Conservatives and Reformists Party. They have been continuously in power in Poland since 2015, and avoided defeat in most major elections since then. In the 2015 parliamentary election, Law and Justice won the majority of seats in both the lower and upper chambers of the parliament: the Senate and the Sejm. They also won the presidential election that year. In the 2018 local elections, Law and Justice received the biggest number of seats in Regional Assemblies. In the latest European election, Law and Justice also came first. Its result rose by 13.60% compared to the previous European election, which then was its best result ever. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, yet again Law and Justice beat its competitors in both the Sejm and the Senate.

How did they achieve such impeccable success? Many academics, such as Klaus, Krzyżanowski, and Łaciak & Segeš Frelak, to name a few, agree that an important factor behind Law and Justice's success in 2015 was how it managed to utilize in its campaign the so-called European migration crisis, that unfolded immediately before the election. They were inciting fear of Muslim refugees, a message that they tried to reuse later in the local elections. Law and Justice presented migrants as "an issue of security, both national, and cultural, direct and symbolic" (Klaus), and presented themselves, Law and Justice, as a Messiah that could save Poland from this threat, thereby gaining fear-induced support. Klaus (2017) states that: "the discourse about refugees is usually based on the differentiation: us vs them", where "us" are primordially good and them are primordially bad. This is an antagonism that is inherent to right-wing populism.

Thus, I will now discuss how Law and Justice has created a very successful right-wing populist narrative by presenting the LGBT community as others, and even as enemies.

Theory: right wing populism and enemy images

Firstly it is necessary, to provide a suitable definition of a right-wing populist narrative.

I take Mudde and Kaltwasser's ideational definition of populism and I only work with a variation of the thick type of populism, the right-wing populism, which is the combination of populism with nativism and authoritarianism. This allows an analysis of populism in terms of a triad or a two-dimensional space (Brubaker 2017), where on the horizontal axis, the "pure" people are threatened by "enemies"

and on the vertical axis, they are separated from the "corrupt" elites. Moreover, the elites often ignore or even exacerbate the danger that "aliens" pose, — the "aliens" usually being immigrants (external others), minorities (internal others) — but could also be very abstract, like an ideology itself. As we see, enemy-making is an inherent part of right-wing populism, as the "pure" people have enemies both "above" and "outside". This is constructed through discursive manoeuvres, which set up *symbolic boundaries* between the imagined groups and define their *cultural substances* (Kubik 2018).

Gerő, Płucienniczak, Piotr P. Kluknavska, Navrátil and Kanellopoulos (2017) write that there has being a rise of politics based on antagonism in contemporary Europe, including populist radical right parties winning elections in CEE, "blame games" between countries, anti-immigration discourse. While analysing this process, Wodak refers to this as "politics of fear". Gerő et al. (2017) argue that besides the analytical lens of populism and right-wing ideologies, it is essential to focus on the "images of the enemy" that political actors construct and their context. According to the authors, even though enemy-making has always being part of politics, its intensity at this moment in time is quite strong and diverse. "The use of the 'enemy' narrative is now intense, regardless of electoral campaign cycles that have regulated it before. Enemies are invoked to fuel various mobilization efforts outside of elections: popular votes, pro- and anti-government protests, mobilizations pro- and against refugees, consultations, petitions, contentious activities of the left and right wing, and so on".

Note on methodology

This paper deconstructs this triad for the case of Law and Justice's discourse in 2019, and explores how LGBT community is used as an enemy image within the right-wing populist triad.

The main method of my study was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its aim is to critically examine the use of language to explore social issues (Regmi 2017). In particular, I applied the analytical framework to CDA proposed by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl (2003), as it was developed specifically for research purposes such as mine. Thus, in my research I uncover the nomination, predication, and legitimization strategies that Law and Justice used in regard to the discursive othering of Polish LGBT community.

I have analysed the news, interviews and other publications from the official web-site (pis.org.pl) of the Law and Justice party. The research sample was selected by search by keywords: "lgbt" (4 articles, all from 2019, identified) and "homoseksual" (3 articles, all from 2019, identified), "lesbian" (1 article from 2019 identified), "family values" — 1 article from 2019 identified, "Christian values" — 1 arti-

cle from 2017, "gay" — 1 article from 2019, "same sex marriage" — no matches. Some of the identified articles overlap, all of them were analysed.

Additionally, I analysed tweets from the official Twitter account of Law and Justice @pisorgpl, and 11 of its leading members: Andrzej Duda (@AndrzejDuda), Mateusz Morawiecki (@MorawieckiM), Beata Szydło (@BeataSzydlo), Mariusz Błaszczak (@mblaszczak), Elżbieta Rafalska (@E_Rafalska), Jacek Sasin (@SasinJacek), Jadwiga Wiśniewska (@j_wisniewska), Marek Kuchciński (@MarekKuchcinski), Paweł Lisiecki (@lisieckipawel), Piotr Gliński (@PiotrGlinski), Stanisław Karczewski (@StKarczewski) as well as The Chancellery of the Prime Minister (Kancelaria Premiera) (@PremierRP) and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny) (@MRPiPS_GOV_PL). The sample was selected by searching for the same keywords as above. The results were the following: "lgbt" — 68 matches, "homosexual" — 3 matches, "lesbian" — 1 match, "gay" — 2 matches, "family values" — 227 matches, "Christian values" — 216 matches. Many of those results overlap. Primary focus was put on the sample generated by keywords "lgbt", "homosexual", "gay" and "lesbian", as per the objectives of the study. The material generated by search by keywords "Christian values" and "family values" was used as supporting material. Results identified by "same sex marriage" were ignored, as due to the fact that in Polish the phrase consists of 5 words (małżeństwa osób tej samej płci), there were many false matches (overall 1514 matches). The material was collected and coded with the help of NVivo and Ncapture software.

All original data is in Polish, therefore the search by keywords was conducted in Polish, accounting for all possible grammatical forms of the nouns. All translation from Polish into English are the author's own. The main limitation of searching by keyword is that it does not account for subtle references and euphemisms. This, however, does not seriously limit this research, as its aim is to investigate purposive discourse on LGBT community. The research was conducted in November-December 2019.

Analysis

The first thing that became visible while analysing the data is the timing of the collected material. All but one of the articles analysed from Law and Justice's website are dated within two months from an important election: 3 from May 2019, 2 from March 2019 (before the European elections 2019), 2 from October 2019 (one of which right before the 2019 Polish parliamentary election), and one from November 2017. The same tendency to ignite debate around LGBT issues was also noticeable on Twitter, particularly in spring 2019. This allows us to suggest that indeed the issue was brought up in order to mobilise conservative voters.

Nomination strategies

I started my analysis by identifying nomination strategies for "others", in this case Polish LGBT community and movement. The names identified were either neutral or negative in their connotation. Below some of the most frequent and interesting examples can be seen in table 1.

Table 1 — Examples of names used to refer to the LGBT community and movement.

Neutral	Negative
"LGBT activists"[3]	"rainbow plague"[4]
"LGBT community"[5]	"leftist avalanche"[6]
"LGBT movements"[7]	"the sick ideology"[8]
"homosexual couples"[9]	"ideological revolution"[10]
"homosexual circles"[11]	"cultural war"[12]
"the LGBT case"[13]	"sexualization of children"[14]

It is noticeable that when it comes to negative nominations, these are derogatory ideologonims, such as "the sick ideology". They refer to the whole movement, rather than personalised offences against queer people. The second observation is that searching through the sample, there were very few matches mentioning "gays", "lesbians" or "homosexuals", rather "LGBT" as a whole, so again, not necessarily personalised attacks against the people. However, it was also mentioned in a tweet that: *the purpose of the acronym LGBT is to falsify (hide) reality*[15].

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[3] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[4] An especially vivid term was coined by the Archbishop of Krakow, but repeated in Twitter discourse by Law and Justice members. Retrived from Jadwiga Wiśniewska's Twitter account @j_wisniewska.

[5] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[6] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[7] Jacek Sasin, retrived from Twitter account @SasinJacek.

[8] By Zofia Klepacka, retweeted by Paweł Lisiecki.

[9] Jarosław Kaczyński, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/polska-plus-czy-polska-minus-o-tym-bedziemy-decydowac-13-pazdziernika.

[10] Jacek Sasin, retrived from Twitter account @SasinJacek.

[11] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[12] Jarosław Kaczyński, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/polska-plus-czy-polska-minus-o-tym-bedziemy-decydowac-13-pazdziernika.

[13] Mateusz Morawiecki, retirieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/wybory-zdecyduja-czy--chcemy-polski-silnej-czy-uleglej.

[14] Beata Szydło, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/w-europie-glosuj-za-polska--wybierz-liste-nr-4-prawo-i-sprawiedliwosc.

[15] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

A lot of discourse on LGBT rights in Poland is mixed together with *"gender politics and sexualization of children"*[16], the latter phrase in particular putting a very negative connotation on the movement, especially in the light is numerous recent scandals concerning child molestation.

Predication strategies

Next I analysed predication strategies, that is identifying and analysing how the "others" are described, which qualities and features are attributed to them. Below is a table, where on the right there is a selection of ways LGBT Poles are described, and on the left implied meanings of such descriptions, as well as others analysed and presented further below.

Table 2 — Examples of predication strategies

Quotes	Meanings
"a constant attack on everything that constitutes our cultural circle, including, of course, the Christian religion"[17]	— Anti-religious — Demanding special treatment — Dangerous — Child molester — Provoker — Manipulator — Liar — Pretentious — Leftist/communist — Anti-Polish
"those who try to get to the children"[18]	
"offending religious feelings"[19]	
"walks with abortionists, leftists and communists, will fight with them against the Church and religion at schools, and bring refugees"[20]	
"He is hiding behind sexual orientation and LGBT. He claims to be persecuted"[21]	
„LGBTs could speak up and tell everyone how to live in fewer areas"[22]	

They themselves stigmatize the LGBT circle... a diversity tram, and the rest are to ride ordinary trams; lighthouse keepers in schools for LGBT, and the rest will go to a school psychologist; separate city hostels, and the rest waiting for a communal apartment for two years.[23]

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[16] Beata Szydło, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/w-europie-glosuj-za-polska--wybierz-liste-nr-4-prawo-i-sprawiedliwosc.

[17] Jarosław Kaczyński, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/polska-plus-czy-polska--minus-o-tym-bedziemy-decydowac-13-pazdziernika.

[18] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[19] Jadwiga Wiśniewska, retrieved from Twitter account @j_wisniewska.

[20] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[21] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[22] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[23] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

The quote above particularly illustrates the implication that LGBT Poles demand special treatment, implying that they want to be different from the rest, hence they are an "other", not one of the people, and they bring it onto themselves. So, Law and Justice wants to say, it is not us "othering" or discriminating against them, they are they ones "othering" themselves, and if we provide what they ask for, "normal" Poles will be discriminated against

Us vs them

Building upon the previous points, I dig further into what the thematic contents of "othering" are, and how the difference between "us" and "them" is linguistically constructed. Below are selected quotes.

> "LGBT want equal rights. Not true! They want privileges, because the possibility of adopting a child is a privilege thanks to which the basic goal is to be achieved... i.e. the child's right to have a father and mother."[24]

> "I have nothing against gays and lesbians but only against the privileges of belonging to LGBT."[25]

> "We laugh at Podlasie, Podkarpacie or Masurian villages, but I will tell you that there all this progressiveness, LGBT etc. will never arrive. These will be the last bastions of normality if we do not stop this leftist avalanche."[26]

> "This is an attack on our identity. On Polish culture."[27]

As mentioned above, these quotes illustrate the implied specialness of the LGBT community and their abnormality compared to the "normal" Poles. Furthermore, LGBT Poles, according to Law and Justice, threaten the unity and homogeneity of the Polish people as well as Polish culture and Polishness itself.

Legitimization strategies

The last and most important part of the analysis is identifying legitimization strategies. Here, I analysed, what the argumentation strategies used to legitimize the exclusion of "others", here LGBT, are.

Below is a table where on the left there are some selected topoi, and on the right conclusions from the analysis.

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[24] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[25] By Zofia Klepacka, retweeted by Paweł Lisiecki.

[26] By Zofia Klepacka, retweeted by Paweł Lisiecki.

[27] Mateusz Morawiecki, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/nowa-piatka-pis-to--inwestycja-w-przyszlosc.

Table 3 — Examples of Legitimization strategies

Quotes	Legitimization strategies
"NO to gender ideology and LGBT"[28]	— Protecting national sovereignty and Polish values, "Polishness"
"ideological war"[29]	
"a threat to the [EU] member states"[30]	— Protecting the Polish family and children
"defending the rights of parents and children"[31]	— Protecting Catholic values and religious feelings
"No to the attack on children. We won't be bullied. We will defend Polish families"[32]	— Abiding by the Constitution
"protect our values"[33]	— Sexual orientation — private, not public matter, and protecting privacy
"LGBT + declarations will be incompatible not only with laws, but with the Constitution in general"[34]	— Need for authorities to focus on more important problems
"I demand separation of LGBT from the state"[35]	

Law and Justice tries to position its anti-LGBT discourse within positive, not negative structures: saying we are "*not AGAINST gays and lesbians*", we are FOR Polish families and Polish values.

Comparison with migration discourse

In order to put this research into perspective, I compared my results with Law and Justice's migration discourse[36]. Below I present the common features identified:

— *Us vs them antagonism.*

— "us" or "self" stands for Law and Justice government, and by extension Poland or "normal" Poles "them" stands for "old EU", Western European countries and politicians, or "Brussels elites". In the migration discourse it was personalised to Donald Tusk and Angela Merkel, in the LGBT discourse to Frans Timmermans. Thus, firstly we notice "othering" of elites in both discourses. "Othering" of refugees or LGBT Poles comes second.

— *Political opponents are presented as enemies of the people*

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[28] Jadwiga Wiśniewska, retrieved from Twitter account @j_wisniewska.

[29] Beata Szydło, retrieved from Twitter account @BeataSzydlo.

[30] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[31] Beata Szydło, retrieved from Twitter account @BeataSzydlo.

[32] Stanisław Karczewski, retrieved from Twitter account (@StKarczewski).

[33] Jadwiga Wiśniewska, retrieved from Twitter account @j_wisniewska.

[34] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[35] Paweł Lisiecki, retrieved from Twitter account @lisieckipawel.

[36] Olena Yermakova, "Mythology of Law and Justice's Migration Discourse", unpublished.

— These could be either the EU or Law and Justice's biggest competitor — Civic Platform (PO) party. Below are some quotes to illustrate the statement:

"Sovereign states must have the ability to decide"[37]

"Parents have the right to decide"[38]

"The policy of pressure from the European Union is being applied. We can not give in to it."[39]

— *An overwhelming appeal to emotion, and little appeal to rationality* This is observed throughout both discourses. Both issues have become moral panic, and this was endused with the use of dramatizing vocabulary, such as "rainbow plague" or "refugee flood".

— *Refugees/LGBT are a threat, antagonists*

Both discourses are focused around presenting the "other", be it refugees or LGBT, as a threat, something that Poles and Poland need to be protected against.

— *Law and Justice as a Messiah*

In both cases, Law and Justice positions itself as the protector, who will defend Poland against the above-mentioned "threats", whereas their political opponents (particularly PO) will not. This missionary politics is typical for populists. Given the contexts of upcoming elections, this is a manipulation in order to gain voters sympathies. The picture below illustrates this, depicting Law and Justice as a protective umbrella for "normal" Polish families (white, heterosexual, heteronormative, with children) against the LGBT movement.

— *EU is an ideological opponent and a usurper, antagonist*

The EU in both cases is positioned as the reason of the above-mentioned "threats", the foreign power trying to convert Poland into their foreign and mad ideology. Below is a selected quoted by the Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki ahead of the European elections 2019 to illustrate the statement: *"The [European] elections will decide whether we want a strong or submissive Poland.*

The dispute at stake is the dispute over the world of values…a dispute whether to build modernity on the foundation of tradition, family warmth, or build on shocking moral revolutions, where a traditional family is ridiculed, and children subjected to aggressive indoctrination against the will of their parents. Tradition and

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[37] Mateusz Morawiecki, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/wspolnie-mozemy--wplynac-na-losy-europy.

[38] Beata Szydło, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/w-europie-glosuj-za-polska-wybierz-liste-nr-4-prawo-i-sprawiedliwosc.

[39] Beata Szydło, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/polska-broni-dzisiaj-wlasnych-interesow.

Picture posted by Stanis_aw Karczewski on Twitter (@StKarczewski)

modernity can not just be reconciled. And modernization does not have to be at the expense of respect for the past, our history and traditional values"[40]

Conclusion

If we deconstruct the right-wing populist triad for Law and Justice's LGBT discourse, we have the following result:

Table 4 — LGBT discourse of Law and Justice within the right-wing populist triad

Theory	LBGT discourse of Law and Justice
"pure" people	"normal" Catholic heterosexual Polish families
"corrupt" elites	the EU
"enemies/aliens"	"LGBT ideology"

The discursive discrimination of the LGBT movement serves the political goals of populists in Poland, who try to appeal to emotion, activate fears and prejudices, and claim to defend "normality". They take different "othered" groups and enhance their image as enemies, as well as the image of their political opponents in order to justify their positions and gain fear-based support.

In the LGBT case, the enemy is not so much LGBT persons, but what Law and Justice refer to as "LGBT ideology", different value systems, even modernity and

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[40] Mateusz Morawiecki, retrieved from: http://pis.org.pl/aktualnosci/wybory-zdecyduja-czy-chcemy-polski-silnej-czy-uleglej.

progressiveness, and everything that goes against the traditional norms. This neo-traditionalism and rebellion against modernity is a frequently observed feature of contemporary populists in power.

Many legitimization strategies for "othering" LGBT community and movement were identified, however, not many nomination and predication strategies. This might again suggest opposition to the movement as a "foreign import" from the West, incompatible with traditional cultural Polish norms, rather than "othering", de-humanisation or demonization of the LGBT persons. It is the "LGBT ideology", the movement for LGBT rights, that is presented as an enemy, not LGBT Poles themselves.

Overall, this paper is based on a relatively small research sample. Law and Justice discourse beyond what is available on its website and Twitter needs to be further researched in order to more definitively demonstrate the preliminary conclusions drawn above. However, this paper could serve as an illustration and as a point of departure for deeper investigations into Law and Justice's discourse, ideology, political strategies, and into their vision of the EU and Poland's role in it.

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CONCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES OF EXCLUSION IN ANTI-MIGRANT RHETORIC EXPANDING IN SERBIA

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A b s t r a c t

Questions about cultural difference and "adaptability" of cultures and civilizations are dominating the contemporary migration debates and turning it into a debate about Muslims. Through the literature analysis and the analysis of anti-migrant rhetoric, I aim to examine these questions, define them within broader conceptual principles of exclusion and show how they are being raised in Serbia after 2015. Previous research analyzed in this paper show that cross-national far-right networks contribute to the establishment of anti-migration platform, intelectually rooted in European New Right. In a world where more and more tensions are explained by conflicting cultural identities, this paper calls for another reconsideration of less visible conceptual principles of exclusion.

　　　　Keywords: *cultural difference, cultural fundamentalism, Islam, anti-migration, right-wing populism, European New Right, Serbia*

Introduction

Migration from Muslim and Middle East countries has become one of the central issues in discussions about cultural difference in post-9/11 world and, lately, in the aftermath of 2015 "refugee crisis". In this paper, it is argued that anti-migrant, right-wing movements in Serbia are absorbing the existing conceptual principles of exlcusion, from European New Right, at the moment of strengthening of EU border regimes, which put the pressure on Serbia. The research goal is to examine these conceptual principles of exclusion and to review how they are being spread in Serbia.

　　The paper consists of two parts. In the first part, the focus is theoretical consideration of principles of exlusion behind anti-migrant rhetoric. Three main conceptual principles are identified: cultural fundamentalism, islamophobia and welfare chauvinism. Each principle is rationalized and suproted by several arguments in anti-migrants rhetoric. In the second part, I consider the position of Serbian movements using anti-migrant rhetoric, by relying on previous theoretical and empirical research on the influence of European far-right networks in the aftermath of 2015

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"refugee crisis" (Jovanović and Ajzenhamer 2017, Lažetić 2018). The term "refugee crisis" is put under the quotation marks, because I agree with the border regime school of thought, that interprets this phenomenon as the crisis of European border and migraiton policies (Apostolova 2016, 34; Kallius 2016, 136), rather than as the crisis of refugees.

Theoretical framework of this paper is a combination of contemporary post-cultural, anthropological theories (Stolcke 1995; Wright 1998; Grillo 2003; Abu-Lughod 2002), sociological and political studies of far-right and right-wing populism (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016; Yılmaz 2012; Taguieff 1990) and border regime studies (Kallius 2016; Apostolova 2016). Research is primarily theoretical, rather than empirical, so methodological tool used in this paper is literature analysis and the analysis of rhetoric. I rely most on the existing far-right and anti-migrant networks empirical research (Lažetić 2018). Anti-migration in Serbia is a new and under-researched topic, so this paper is rather a call for further research, than an attempt for sytematic understanding of this emerging phenomenon.

"Old" meaning of culture and "new" principles of exclusion

The concept of "culture", which is today a central term in immigration debates (Yılmaz 2012, 369), has been a major research topic of anthropologists for decades (Stolcke 1995, 2; Wright 1998, 7). Anthropologists have been thinking and rethinking this concept throughout the whole history of discipline. Anthropological understanding of culture can be divided in two basic categories: "old meanings of culture" and "new meanings of culture" (Wright 1998). In the first case, the culture is represented as a closed, natural system of knowledge inherent for a particular people or nation, while the latter portray culture as a process, and cultural identities as "dynamic, fluid and constructed situationally" (Wright 1998, 9). North American diffusionism and cultural relativism, Anglo-American evolutionism, British structuro-functionalism and French structuralism have all operated with old definitions of culture. Post-colonial world open up a space for rethinking of cultures (Wright 1998, 8) and alternative visions appeared (Grillo 2003, 159). Old meanings of culture mostly left the academic, anthropological discourse, but they have entered into the public, political and everyday discourses, with many people referring to "culture, in an anthropological sense" (Wright 1998, 7). The disjunction between vernacular, common-sense, and essentialist conceptions of culture dominating public discourse on the one side, and theorized and intellectualized accounts of academics on the other side, has never been greater (Grillo 2003, 168).

Anti-migrant rhetoric reaffirms old definitions of culture, by emphasizing that the culture is uniform, localized and natural entity defined by ethnicity, and introduces is as a criteria for exclusion. In literature, there is a debate whether anti-migrant rhetoric, which places culture in the center of migration debate, should be classifed as cultural racism or cultural fundamentalism (Stolcke 1995). Pierre-André Taguieff defined cultural racism as a doctrine that rejects "true", traditional racism and instead adopts the idea of cultural difference (Taguieff 1990, 111). His theoretical understanding of cultural racism is based on the study of Europen New Right. Similarly, cultural fundamentalism is a principle of exclusion, which presumes that "relations between different cultures are by 'nature' hostile and mutually destructive because it is in human nature to be ethnocentric; differenct cultures ought, therefore, to be kept apart for their own good" (Stolcke 1995, 5). Although these two concepts designate the same principle of exclusion, based on the cultural instead of the biological difference, Stolcke advocates the adoption of latter concept, because she tends to avoid any confusion with racism. The contemporary discourse against the immigrants "is not simply disguised racism" (Grillo 2003, 165), although there are certain elements. Both Taguieff and Stolcke agree that this principle of exclusion doesn't divide cultures hierarchically (like traditional racism), but spatially (Stolcke 1995, 8; Taguieff 1990, 117). Also, both are grounded in the more general and older idea of "cultural essentialism" (Grillo 2003, 165). In this paper, I will use the term cultural fundamentalism, because I also believe that it explains better the socially contested reality behind this principle of exclusion.

Cultural fundamentalism

Several ideologists and politicians, belonging to the European New Right and Anglo-American New Right traditions, were responsible for creating and spreading the principle of cultural fundamentalism in anti-migrant rhetoric. While European New Right could be understood as a "distinctive metapolitical cross-national network" (Shekhovtsov 2009, 699), that combines ethno-pluralist, culturalist and populist elements with the rejection of liberalism and individualism (Richards 2019, 2), Anglo-American New Right is rather characterized by the juncture between neoconservatism, economic liberalism and market capitalism (Wright 1998, 10). European New Right originates from French *Nouvelle Droite*, with Alain de Benoist, the founder of the think-tank "Research and Study Group for European Civilization" (GRECE), as the leading ideologist (Taguieff 1990, 111; Wollenberg 2014, 313; Shekhovtsov 2015, 37; Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 52; Richards 2019, 3). By establishing the relationships with foreign right-wing intellectuals, other "new rights" (German *Neue Rechte*, Italian *Nuova Destra*, Belgian *Nieuw Recht*) started to appear in the 1970s. Margaret Thatcher in the UK was one of the most important political figures

of Anglo-American neoconservative New Right (Shekhovtsov 2009, 699), and her famous statement that England might be "swamped by the people with a different culture" (Wright 1998, 10; Stolcke 1995, 3) shows how anti-migrant rhetoric is articulated by presenting immigrants with "different culture" as a possible threat. Both New Right traditions together "capitalized on the increasing attention paid to immigration, turned it into a cultural question, and then managed to push the culturalized immigration debate into the center of political discourse" (Yılmaz 2012, 376).

The first type of argument in anti-migrant rhetoric, through which the principle of cultural fundamentalism is expressed, is the argument about "incompatibility" (Yılmaz 2012, 376), "incommunicability, incommensurability, and incomparability" (Taguieff 1990, 117) of cultures. The idea "that differences between cultures are unbridgeable", that could be found in some older anthropological accounts (Grillo 2003, 165), today represents one of the main anti-migration arguments. An "ideological shift" that places the notion of culture to the forefront "is leading radical and far right organizations to show themselves as spokespeople of cultural identity that is supposed to show be threatened by outsiders" (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 50). Moreover, "new commonplaces concerning cultural identity and difference have crystallized around the question of immigration" (Taguieff 1990, 116). These "cultural anxieties" about immigration are reflected in the public political discourse (Grillo 2003, 168), often through "the rhetoric of 'end' or 'failure' of multiculturalism" (Pišev and Milenković 2013, 984).

Another paradigmatic example of prevailing cultural fundamentalism and related cultural racism is the argument about "clashing cultures", derived from Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory, popularized by Bernard Lewis (Wollenberg 2014, 309). Huntington's basic hypothesis, that the fundamental source of conflict in "new world" will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic, but cultural (Huntington 1993, 22), was willingly embraced by politicians and ideologists of the European New Right. According to Huntington, differences among eight major civilizations ("Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilization") are "not only real", but "they are basic" (Huntington 1993, 25). Hence, according to this cultural fundamentalist picture of the world, national cultural identities are grouped into larger-scale, conflicting cultural identities.

Islamophobia

The second conceptual principle of exclusion present in anti-migrant rhetoric is islamophobia. Gabriele Marranci offers an interesting explanation of islamophobia. She defines it "not as unfounded hostility against Islam", but as fear of multiculturalism and its potential to transrupt and challenge the existing social norms (Marran-

ci 2004, 105). Consideration of islamophobia in contemporary political discourse in Europe is important, especially if we have in mind that "the immigration debate has turned into a debate on Muslim immigrants and Islam" (Yılmaz 2012, 370). In this political postulation, inspired by Huntington, Islam, Europe and West appear as natural and conflicting "cultural entities" (Marranci 2004, 106; Wollenberg 2014, 316). Anti-migrant and anti-muslim rhetoric "claims moral issues, which often hides a conception of the clash of civilisations" (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 57). Although immigration has been traditionally the topic of the far-right, Muslims have been "constructed as the quintessential 'other'" (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 50), through which the questions about cultural difference are being raised.

Generally, the rise of islamophobic immigration discourse could be traced back to the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 58). Since then, islamophobia has become institutionalised (Marranci 2004, 110) through the securitisation practices (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 63), not only in the United States, but also in Europe and elsewhere. The 9/11 attack became a turning point for spread of the fear of terrorism, but also for framing migration as a security threat and Muslim immigrants as potential terrorist. For right-wing actors, "terrorist attacks have been used as 'proof' of cultural incompatibility" (Lažetić 2018, 27). The protection from terrorism and 'Islamisation' of Europe. is, therefore, the first argument through which islamophobia is rationalized.

According to islamophobic right-wing actors, Muslims pose a security, political and cultural threat because "Islam does not separate religion from politics, mosque from State [...] Islam is seen and represented as a 'totalitarian ideology', in which religious radicalism easily transmogrifies into political radicalism, and ultimately in the 'Trojan horse' of Islamic fundamentalism, inevitably culminating into terrorism" (Forlenza 2018, 136). When Victor Orban declared that migration is the "Trojan horse" of terrorism (Brunsden 2017), he legitimized restrictive border and migration policies, which resulted in creation of a distinct "buffer zone" against migrants seeking asylum in EU member states (Kallius 2016, 143). Annastiina Kallius argues that Orban's anti-migrant border policy is not as an exception, but "a direct continuation" of EU asylum policy (Kallius 2016, 147), meaning that he consistently applied the existing asylum policies such as safe third country readmissions, designed to deter migrants from seeking asylum in EU. Orban's rhetoric and actions show exactly how islamophobia is institutionalised (Marranci 2004) in Europe — by framing of Muslim asylum seekers as the destroyers of European Christian heritage (Forlenza 2018, 137) in order to provide "a way of legitimising exclusionary policies and practices against certain categories of migrants, which would otherwise be condemned as racist and/or unlawful" (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 65).

281

Muslims immigrant's assumed "lack of secularity" is another "proof" of cultural incompatibility between "Western" and "Islamic" civilization. In book "Why the French don't like headscarves: Islam, the state, and public space", John R. Bowen showed how controversies around veiling and the law against religious signs in public schools in France were permeated by questions of multiculturalism, integration, secularity, democracy and gender equality (Bowen 2007). The "veiling" argument (Abu-Lughod 2002, 785) is often used by right-wing populists to construct the otherness of Islam and "its allegedly illiberal nature", where "Europe is presented as the fortress of democracy and tolerance, while Islam is portrayed to be the religion of bigotry and intolerance, a 'barbaric' or 'medieval religion'" (Benveniste, Lazaridis and Puurunen 2016, 62). Lila Abu-Lughod further elaborated how the mission of liberating and saving of Muslim women became one of the excuses for military intervention, but also how cultural relativism in anthropology prioritized culture over agency (Abu-Lughod 2002). In right-wing anti-migrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric, the discourse on barbaric nature of Muslim men is fueled by the alleged rape stories, which often turn out to be fake news.

Welfare chauvinism

The last conceptual principle of exclusion elaborated in this paper is *welfare chauvinism*. At first glance, this conceptual principle is different than the previous two, in a way that it employs the socio-economic, rather than cultural criteria to delegitimise the presence of migrants. However, we can not observe welfare chauvinism apart from other principles of exclusion used in anti-migrant rhetoric. Welfare chauvinism is "the unwillingness of natives to share welfare state benefits with certain immigrant groups and asylum seekers who are perceived as 'intruders'" (Faist 1994, 61). This "unwillingness" is perceived as natural and logical for many natives. Furthermore, welfare chauvinism is "a strategy of introducing cultural identity criteria in an area in which belonging is determined on the basis of social policy criteria, such as health, age, disability and employment" (Huysmans 2000, 786). This conceptual principle of exclusion is about *who* has the right to social welfare. It appears in the moment of the "crisis of the welfare state", economic recession and unemployment, in the late 1970s (Faist 1994, 53-54). Conservative and right-wing parties in Germany who used the discourse of migrants as economic competitors to native population took over "key terms such as 'difference' from the French New Right" (Faist 1994, 63).

Today, welfare chauvinism is reflected in institutionalized division between "genuine" refugees (escaping political violence) and economic migrants (escaping bad economical situation). In the aftermath of 2015 "refugee crisis", many muslim migrants are being labelled as "economic migrants". Therefore, migrants are pre-

sented not only as a threat to cultural, moral and security order, but also as a threat to material order. However, the division between true refugees and economic migrants is politically constructed in order to exclude Muslim migrants (but not only them), and it does not correspond to multiple realities behind complex migration movements (Apostolova 2016). It is important to emphasize that this division exist not only in far-right populist discourse, but also in official, government and legal discourse. Asylum seekers are often rejected for asylum on the basis of that argument.

Welfare chauvinism also reflects popular distrust in welfare government institutions. It has been recognized that "there is a growing propensity in the popular mood in Europe to blame all the socioeconomic ills resulting from the recession and capitalist readjustments — unemployment, housing shortages, mounting delinquency, deficiencies in social services — on immigrants who lack 'our' moral and cultural values, simply because they are there" (Stolcke 1995, 2). Many scholars agree that far-right populist parties managed to introduce anti-immigration and anti-muslim discourse to the political mainstream because they turned social and economical anxieties into immigration anxieties (Yılmaz 2012, 371). For example, high unemployment rates are fueled by the fear that migrants will "steal our jobs".

Anti-migration in Serbia: the influence of European New Right and Neo-Eurasianism

Serbian far-right populist movements which use anti-migrant absorbed these three principles of exclusion because of the strong influence of European far-right and Russian far-right. A recent empirical, theoretically and contextually grounded research on European far-right movements showed that Serbian far-right organizations and parties consolidated collaborations with far-right actors from Europe in the aftermath of 2015 "refugee crisis" (Lažetić 2018). One of the most prominent collaborations with the European far-right was the opening of the Serbian branch of Generation Identity, a widespread far-right political movement originating from France, with strong anti-migrant agenda (Vio 2019). The need for preservation of national and cultural identity, which is at the heart of Generation Identity's political rhetoric, is the embodiment of the principle of cultural fundamentalism. GI anti-migration rhetoric is strongly anti-Muslim and dedicated to the spreading of the idea that Muslim immigrants are part of the "Islamization of Europe" plot (Richards 2019, 10). Its entire political agenda is a paradigmatic example of the conceptual principles that I presented in the previous section. Generation Identity ideologically derived from French New Right (*Nouvelle Droite*), but it is also using the ideas of non-Western Europe ideologists such as Alexandr Dugin (Richards 2019, 7).

Dugin is a Russian political pseudo-philosopher, with strong anti-Western attitudes, and an important figure for both European and Russian new right. In his most influental books, "Fourth Political Theory", Dugin opens the introduction chapter by quoting Alain de Benoist (Dugin 2012), which undoubtedly confirms his special connection with French New Right (Laruelle 2010, 22; Shekhovtsov 2015, 35). Although he builds his arguments on "the 'Atlanticist New World Order' (principally the US and the UK) against the Russia-oriented 'New Eurasian Order'" struggle (Shekhovtsov 2009, 697), deeper analysis of his work in different phases reveals the rootnes of his ideas in European New Right tradition (Shekhovtsov 2015). "Fourth Political Theory" combines the elements of Russian imperialism, Eurasianism, populist nationalism, non-Marxist socialism, (selective) anti-Westernism and post-structuralism (Dugin 2012; Laruelle 2010; Lažetić 2018). Also, he employs Huntington's idea about eight civilizations (Dugin 2012, 64), by emphasizing that the Islamic world is "undoubtedly, united religiously with the constantly growing awareness of its own identity" (Dugin 2012, 66), which is the argument that uses "unification of Islam" mechanism (Jovanović and Ajzenhamer 2017). Even though Dugin's rhetoric is not exclusively nor explicitly anti-migrant, Laruelle points to recent ideological shift on Russian far-right "in the image of the enemy from the West to the migrant" (Laruelle 2010, 22).

Anti-EU and pro-Russian Serbian far-right organizations focusing on anti-migrant rhetoric (such as "Eurasian way"/"Evroazijski put"), however, heritage Dugin's political ideas (Generacija Identiteta 2017). Serbian pro-Russian right-wing scene is under his influence, which can be seen through his frequent visits in Serbia (Lažetić 2018, 11). He founded a branch International Eurasian movement, within which "Balkan School of Geopolitics" is organized in Belgrade. On the accompanying online platform of this project, it is claimed that the platform proceeds "from the basic principle of cultural anthropology (F.Boas and his school), which states that there is not and can not be a common universal measure when comparing cultures and civilizations" (Savin 2019). This interpretation of classical anthropological concepts shows how cultural relativism can become "huntingtonized", politically instrumentalized and transformed into cultural fundamentalism. However, as Shekhovtsov notices, Dugin does not emphasize culture and cultural identity as prominently as French New Right, and when he does, it is in order to show that culture is "the manifestation of an ethnic comuunity, an *ethnie*" (Shekhovtsov 2009, 703-704).

Another noteworthy collaboration, according to Lažetić, is the hosting of the European Solidarity Front for Syria (ESFS) representative Rima Darius, organized by local Serbian anti-migrant movement in September 2015 (Portal Pravda 2015). In her speech, Rima Darius, a Syrian herself, claimed that people coming from Syria are economic migrants who do not fight for their own country and that EU and Serbia

should not welcome these people. Her speech was a part of anti-government protest organized by the members of the Serbian Radical Party (Lažetić 2018, 23). In fact, the founder of that local Serbian movement "Anti-Imigracija" ("Anti-Imigration"; later, the name was changed into "Movement for Freedom and Independence" / "Pokret za slobodu i nezavisnost"), was the member of the Serbian Radical Party (Lažetić 2018, 22-23), which confirms the already existing connections with cross-national far-right networks, reinforced by the moral and cultural panic behind the 2015 "refugee crisis" construct.

All anti-migrant movements in Serbia have a strong anti-Muslim sentiment, often drawn from the alleged suffering of Serbs under the Ottoman empire. Scholars noted that "to right-wing populist parties, movements and politicians the influx of refugees and asylum-seekers from Muslim countries is a threat to Christian European civilisation, not dissimilar to the Arab (in the seventh and eight centuries) and the Ottoman (in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) invasions" (Forlenza 2018, 133). Current immigrantion debates are portrayed as "virtually eternal and unresolvable struggle between Judeo-Christian Western heritage and Islam" (Wollenberg 2014, 310). Hence, Islamophobia used in anti-migrant rhetoric, fits perfectly into the existing narratives of the right-wing interpretations about the Ottoman conquest in Serbia.

Even though Serbia has never been a welfare state with strong mechanisms of social and economic support to those who need it, welfare chauvinism as a principle of exclusion does exist in Serbia. The most common targets of welfare chauvinism in Serbia, fueled by far-right propaganda, were Muslims and Roma communities (Lažetić 2018, 5). From 2016, migrants coming from Muslim countries have become another target of welfare chauvinism. Anti-migrant movements often write fake news how migrants are receiving several hundred euros per month as a financial aid. They compare this false information with low salaries in Serbia, trying to prove how Serbian government is being generous towards foreigners and hostile towards its own people. Often, these issues are connected with EU skepticism and anxieties derived from distrust in political institutions.

Anti-migration movements in Serbia is a relatively new and under-researched phenomenon. Usually, they are connected to other groups, which may or may not be exclusively anti-migrant. However, the creation of anti-migration platform is a strategy of constructing the common enemy from outside of the Europe (Laruelle 2010, 29), and a question of interest "of all the far right actor, regardless of their differences in relation to certain internal or external political issues", which has a potential to unite actors on national and cross-national level (Lažetić 2018, 71). Far-right movements, right-wing movements and right populist movements often have different agendas and disagree about certain issues, but they do find a common ground when it comes to anti-migration attitudes. "Whereas some of these groups

are openly neo-fascist or neo-Nazi, others represent a new right: populist movements that distance themselves from the post-Holocaust taboos of explicitly racist or fascist imagery and language to appeal to a wider electoral base" (Wollenberg 2014, 312). Even though some members Serbian anti-migration groups are openly using fascist symbols, their basic rhetoric is culturally fundamentalist and harmonized with the tools established by European New Right.

Conclusion

"Old" meaning of culture almost completely abandoned contemporary anthropological thought and found their place in "new" principles of exclusion on the basis of national and ethnical belonging. Extreme interpretations of cultural relativism, which naturalize and overemphasize the concept of cultural difference, today can be found in work of far-right ideologists and their followers, such as Alexander Dugin. European New Right, and French New Right in particular, popularized cultural fundamentalism. By introducing culture as a criteria, New Right distances itself from classical racism and fascism. Although cultural racism, in a way that Taguieff explained it, persists (sometimes even in a combination with traditional or nazi racism), in a case of Serbia, it is perhaps more accurate to speak about cultural fundamentalism and islamophobia. Also, although Serbia has never been a welfare state, the principle of welfare chauvinism is being reproduced. Expansion of conceptual principles of exclusion comes from the European Far Right, ideologically and practically. Presenting migration from Muslim countries as a cultural problem masks processes of securitization that stand behind border and migration policies. Moreover, cultural fundamentalism justifies these processes, which would otherwise be perceived as unlawful and fascist.

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PROTECTING EUROPE AGAINST MIGRATION. LAW AND JUSTICE'S POPULIST DISCOURSE IN THE POLISH PARLIAMENT[1]

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Abstract

From the 2015 migration crisis up to the 2021 border crisis with Belarus, migration has become a growing subject of concern in Poland. Migration has been considerably politicised and mediatised, and has also been increasingly discussed in relation to other issues, including the further development of European integration. Migration has been one basis for questioning the current role and functioning of the EU, as well as the place that Poland should have in it. The aim of this paper is to analyse how migration and the critique of the EU are associated and instrumentally referred to in populist claims of members of parliament (MPs). The analysis of the discourse produced by the right-wing populist political party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS) constitutes the main case study of this research, which has been carried out by studying parliamentary debates collected during the Sejm's 8th parliamentary term (2015—2019) and analysed through a qualitative analysis. The paper contributes to a further understanding of the nature of PiS's discursive opposition to migration and the EU in the Polish national parliament. The research points out to different layers of critique, as well as their articulation used by PiS MPs as a strategy to construct their vision of what they want for Poland and of what Europe ought to be. In this perspective, PiS MPs put forward the protection of Poland and of Europe as their main aim facing growing migration concerns, which crucially echoes the PiS government's reaction to the 2021 border crisis.

Key words: *populism, Poland, migration, European Union, Parliament*

Introduction

From the 2015 migration crisis up to the 2021 border crisis with Belarus[3], migration remains high on the political agenda in the European Union (EU). The so-called migration crisis which happened in Europe in the years 2015—2016 indeed triggered huge challenges for European member states (EUMS) as diverse approaches, poli-

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[3] The Belarus-EU or Belarusian-Polish border crisis is unfolding at the time of writing this paper.

cies and rhetoric have been witnessed across Europe, posing serious questions regarding solidarity within the EU (Matuszczyk 2017). The EU-Belarusian border crisis unfolding in the second half of 2021 engendered similar challenges, although the way forward — moving towards more security — seems to have created less controversy between EUMS and the EU. In addition to migration as a significant issue in the EU, populist political parties are on the rise in Europe. Populist leaders are frequently portrayed as a threat to the future development and further integration of the EU. Furthermore, migration usually makes up part of their claims and criticism towards contemporary society, underlining a double distinction between (1) "the people" vs. "the (national, European and/or international) elites" and (2) "us" vs. "them" (Rooduijn 2019).

Against this backdrop, the EU is facing several crucial on-going challenges, which tend to question its role, values and future. From an ever-closer EU to completely disintegrated European nation-states, diverse scenarios are being developed as to what the future of Europe could be. Theoretically, this re-consideration of the future of European integration is exemplified with different constitutional models that the EU could possibly shift towards, notably cosmopolitan, intergovernmental or federal (Fossum 2021).

This paper addresses these linked challenges — populism, migration and the future of Europe — by investigating how migration and the critique of the EU are referred to and associated in populist claims. Whilst populist parties have been flourishing across Europe, this paper zooms in on one particular case study: the Polish right-wing populist political party Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* — PiS). The aim of this paper is therefore to analyse how PiS members of parliament (MPs) discursively refer to and link issues of migration and the EU; in other words, how anti-migration and anti-elitism unite in populist claims. This research focuses on the supply side of political populism by analysing the party's populist rhetoric on migration and on the EU during debates held in the Polish parliament. In order to do so, a qualitative analysis has been carried out on a selection of parliamentary debates from the *Sejm* during the 8th parliamentary term (2015—2019). This paper investigates Polish discourse during the 2015 migration crisis and argues that the analysis of previous debates on migration helps to understand the more recent Polish-Belarusian border crisis and the subsequent response of the PiS government to this direct — in a territorial sense — challenge.

After introducing the understanding of populism used throughout this research, the Law and Justice party and its reactions to the migration crises are presented. The results of the analysis show the reference to the people, the discursive representation of migrants and the opposition to the EU. The last developed point touches upon the vision of Europe according to PiS MPs and the role given to Po-

land in it. Eventually, the paper concludes by relating analysed discourse to the re-action of the Polish government during the 2021 border crisis.

Populism as a Political Communication Strategy

The term populism has become more popular in recent years (Stavrakakis et al. 2017; Rooduijn 2019), although its definition has remained quite elusive (Canovan 2004; Mudde 2004). Populism might easily be conflated with other concepts, such as nativism and Euroscepticism (Rooduijn 2019), which makes defining and opera-tionalising populism as an analytical concept more challenging. Whilst populism might be used to describe a thin ideology (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008), this paper focuses on populism as referring to a communication strategy that advances a set of ideas based on people-centrism and anti-elitism (Rooduijn and Akkerman 2015). In this perspective, populism can be defined as a "style of political communication that utilizes particular communicative practices and routines that simultaneously connect and divide, and construct and reconstruct identities in the pursuit of pow-er" (Block and Negrine 2017, 190). Taking this definition as a starting point, popu-lism is defined as a political phenomenon articulated around conflict and character-ised by a strong discursive component of opposition. Through expressive and emo-tional language (Holtmann, Krappidel and Rehse 2006), populism can hence be de-fined as the use of discourse and speech to connect to "the people" and, by the same token, confront those who are not part of it (Block and Negrine 2017).

When discussing the links and overlaps between nationalism and populism, Brubaker conceptualises populism as a "double constitutive relation of vertical and horizontal oppositions" (2019, 14). According to him, "the people" can be charac-terised in populist discourse in various ways, e.g., as plebs, sovereign or a bound-ed community of values. However, if the nodal point of populism is "the people", what demarcates populist rhetoric from nationalist discourse is this double construc-tion:

— Vertically, in that "the people" are constructed against those who have more or less — typically the elites;

— Horizontally, in which "the people" are defined as a community in opposi-tion to those outside the political entity — e.g., migrants — but also those within — as might be the case with elites (Ibid.).

Accordingly, populism can be defined as a political communication style based on three core elements (Jagers and Walgrave 2007): (1) reference to the people con-sidered as a monolithic entity (Canovan 2002), (2) elite critique — on the domes-tic, European and/or international level — and (3) exclusion of certain groups, which are said not to fit in the previously-described society. In academic literature, we can find definitions of populism ranging from thin (usually in opposition) to

thick; *thin* referring to only the first criteria, i.e., appeal to the people for identification purposes; *thick* as a combination of the three aforementioned elements. In between the thin and thick definitions, populism can be anti-elitist — a combination of (1) and (2) elements, i.e., focusing on elite critique — or excluding — a union of elements (1) and (3), i.e., especially excluding certain groups of people (Jagers and Walgrave 2007). Populism is hence characterised by its antagonist nature towards different groups, i.e., elites and/or minorities. Brubaker further argues that populism is not only about defining "the people", but can also be considered as a double opposition and how populists "link vertical and horizontal oppositions by positioning "the elite" as both on top and outside" (2019, 14).

This study therefore focuses on these two elements — elite critique and exclusion, as used when characterising the thick definition of populism — and analyses if and how exclusionary claims[4] and elite critique unite in populist discourse. Focusing on a particular context — parliamentary debates on migration and on European affairs — this paper investigates how anti-migration statements are linked to a broader criticism of elites, elites situated on the European level.

Rhetoric, media and identity have been identified as three key features used by populist parties and politicians in their communication to gain electoral support (Block and Negrine 2017). Whilst rhetoric refers to the use of emotional elements to trigger connection with the audience, the media's role in the development of populism has often been underlined and analysed as a means of promulgation (Ibid.). Eventually, identity is a key feature in this paper: identity is understood as being mobile and socially constructed through different elements such as "the resources of history, language and culture" (Hall 2011, 3) and implies differencing dynamics, in the sense of excluding certain groups — usually portrayed as significant others, in opposition to the auto-portrayed self — and in this case, migrants.

This paper investigates populist anti-elite claims in connection to statements on migration, as well as the reverse. Whilst elite critique might be addressed both to national and European elites, in this research I pay particular attention to the European ones, as the migration crisis in Poland has been mostly considered in relation to the EU rather than on the national level. In this perspective, populism is said to possess a strong link with Euroscepticism — as understood as the disapproval of European integration (Kneuer 2019; Harmsen 2010). However, one needs to point out the different degrees of disapproval that exist and, therefore, the diverse forms of Euroscepticism (Ramswell 2018).

Populism also possesses strong links with nationalism (Brubaker 2019), especially when considering a thick definition of populism. Indeed, both concepts pre-

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[4] Conceptualised as anti-migration statements.

sent exclusionary discourse and/or practices that can be considered as harmful to the democratic order, as "[i]n the European context, populism is habitually associated with xenophobic politics and parties of the extreme or radical right (and therefore considered to be dangerous)" (van Kessel 2015, 2). This paper consequently investigates the exclusionary dimension of populist discourse and its interconnection with elite critique in the discourse of PiS MPs.

PiS and the Migration Crises

The Law and Justice party was created in 2001, and from the 2005 parliamentary elections essentially transitioned from being a party focused on crime and corruption issues to becoming a "genuine populist party" (van Kessel 2015, 62). The party also embraces conservative and nationalist discourse (Dakowska 2010), as well as a soft Eurosceptic position towards the EU (Szczerbiak 2004; Ivaldi 2019, 123). When it comes to migration, the party favours a restrictive migration policy (Ivaldi 2019, 266). Analysis of populist members of the European Parliament's discourse on the EU's democracy promotion highlights the sovereignty and nativist dimensions of PiS claims, especially when confound with migration concerns (Buzogány, Costa and Góra 2021).

The PiS party won all major elections since 2015 (parliamentary, presidential and European) and has remained in power since — being the dominating party within the ruling coalition United Right (*Zjednoczona Prawica*). From 2015 onwards, the PiS-led government has had a tumultuous relation with the EU, criticising several of its policies, not only in relation to migration and asylum policies, but also touching upon the environment, the rule of law and judicial independence. In this perspective, one could question the aim of the Polish government towards the European Union. Even regarding the case of Białowieża — a forest located on the border between Poland and Belarus that has been a site of contestation between the PiS government and the EU since 2016 — it has been argued that "the activities in the forest do not qualify as public safety measures, but rather as demonstrations of the reluctance of the current Polish government to observe the rule of law" (Douma 2017). Whilst, on the discursive level, the Polish government continues to stress the fact that Poland actually belongs to the EU and is not thinking about exiting it (Orłowski 2017), several manoeuvres clearly question the willingness of the PiS government to respect the Union's values. These controversial political moves — often considered as an illiberal turn (see e.g., Appel 2019) — notably resulted in the triggering of Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union (TUE) in December 2017 and continuous tensions between Poland and EU institutions.

Happening also in 2015, the increased number of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants coming to the European Union's territory has raised controversy in Europe.

Migration has been considered and framed as a crisis, as EUMS and EU institutions were disunified on how to handle the situation. Nonetheless, the migration crisis did not affect all European countries in an equal manner, principally due to the migration routes taken to enter Europe. Due to this, Poland has been largely detached from the migration crisis. However, in an attempt to better manage the crisis, the European Union set up several measures whose implementation impacted every EUMS on the domestic level. The main problematic decision for PiS has been the relocation mechanism set up by the European Commission in May and September 2015. PiS has firmly opposed refugee quotas — alongside other countries from the Visegrad group — since the party's return to power in 2015, leading to a fierce fight against EU institutions. Accordingly, migration has been a topic of considerable importance in the past few years in Poland, during which the homogeneity of the Polish society has often been underlined in opposition to security concerns, as well as the diversity that accepting migrants could bring to Poland. Identity-based arguments have been central when discussing migration, stressing the importance of Christian values in Poland, especially by Polish populist radical right parties (Styczyńska 2018). PiS anti-migrant rhetoric has been considered an important factor in the party's electoral success in 2015 (Klaus 2017). Eventually, the discussion on migration since 2015 has resulted in a greater politicisation and securitisation of immigration in Poland, in both discourse and law-implementation (Pędziwiatr 2019).

Contrary to the 2015 migration crisis, the 2021 border crisis presents a direct challenge for Poland, which shares a border with Belarus — this border being both Poland and the EU's external border. Since late summer 2021, an estimated number of 2,000 people attempted to reach the EU through the Polish-Belarus border in a controversial move by the Belarusian regime. Poland as well as Lithuania have indeed been confronted with an unprecedented number of people trying to cross the border. The arrival of migrants has been facilitated by the Lukashenko regime in retaliation for sanctions imposed by the EU following the 2020 Belarus presidential elections. Criticised as a "inhuman instrumentalisation of migrants" (European Parliament 2021), the situation resulted in new border fences being built and increased border patrols. Poland declared a state of emergency along bordering regions to Belarus (in over 180 localities in Podlaskie and Lublin Voivodeships), thus limiting humanitarian assistance and reporting from the border area (Cienski 2021). The security dimension of the crisis outstripping humanitarian considerations and the pushbacks at the border have been met with criticism from civil society, aid organisations and several political groups on both national and European levels (Wesel 2021). Whilst being in the middle of a fight with EU institutions regarding the rule of law in Poland, the hard security stance of the PiS-led government during the border crisis has been mostly supported within the EU (Erlanger 2021). The Polish gov-

ernment hence attempted to change the narrative to actually present itself as the defender of Europe (Kranz 2021).

Whilst the two crises impacted Poland to a different extent territorially, both presented challenges intrinsically linked to the EU. Before presenting the results of the analysis, the following section briefly outlines the methodology used in this research.

Data Collection and Methodology

The research carried out in this paper focuses on parliamentary debates in the Polish *Sejm* during the 8th parliamentary term (2015—2019). Parliaments and the produced parliamentary speeches — which are part of the broad denomination of political discourses (Wodak and van Dijk 2000) — can be considered as significant institutions in democracies, as "they tailor national legislation, represent different interests and exercise a strong impact on public opinion formation" (Maatsch 2011, 36, see also Liebert 1995). Parliamentary debates are usually not given a lot of attention — notably in comparison to media when it comes to the circulation of ideas within the society — as they do not possess as much widespread public visibility. Nevertheless, parliaments can be considered primary and highly significant arenas for national debate, which "started to open up a wide public dialogue" (Ilie 2010, 1).

A total of 18 debates have been analysed. Parliamentary debates have been selected when words related to migration — "*uchodźca*" (refugee), "*migracja*" (migration) and "(*i)migrant(ka)*" ((im)migrant) — occurred in the title of the debates. This way, seven debates on migration have been selected. 11 debates on European affairs are also part of the analysis. Indeed, MPs in the *Sejm* proceed to review European affairs every semester; these debates have been included in the sample of data for analysis. All selected debates are plenary sessions. The analysis has been carried out on the written transcripts of debates available on the website of the *Sejm*[5]. The present research does not exhaustively review all debates on migration in the *Sejm*, but focuses on a selection of parliamentary debates on migration as an illustration of the discourse produced by MPs from PiS[6] in the Polish parliament.

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[5] The full list of selected parliamentary debates including links is available in the references.

[6] The author is well-aware that MPs might individually have different points of view or rhetoric on the issues, however the paper refers to PiS as a relatively homogenous entity — not due to a generalisation or disregard of the possible heterogeneity amongst the party, but because of the mitigating effect of parliaments. Indeed, party cohesion and (voting) unity hold a central place in legislatures, which have been analysed through diverse lenses (see e.g. Hazan (2006) for institutional and sociological explanations, Saalfeld (1995) for ration-

The analysed period of time focuses on the 8th electoral term (from October 2015 until November 2019), in which the PiS held the majority in the Polish parliament with 235 seats out of 460 (Sejm 2015). The paper strictly presents a qualitative analysis of the speeches.

Linking Anti-Migration and Anti-Elitism: How Does It Manifest in Populist Discourse?

The analysis of parliamentary debates focuses on the three elements constitutive of a thick definition of populism (understood as a communication style) — i.e., references to "the people", exclusionary claims (towards refugees and migrants) and elite critique.

The Polish Nation and Its Identity

As previously stated, reference to the people is at the very heart of populist discourse. Speeches during parliamentary debates are usually not considered as directly addressing the electorate. However, research shows that parliamentary debates have gained media visibility in the past few years, notably when touching upon European affairs (Auel, Eisele and Kinski 2017). References to "the people" can be made by MPs to define who they are representing through their work in parliament. PiS MPs, holding a majority in the *Sejm*, often referred to the people as "our" and in that sense ought to be prioritised:

> First you need to take care of the safety of your loved ones, family, *your own nation*, and then the whole world.
>
> (Konrad Głębocki, MP, 28. 1. 2016)[7]

This discursive conception of belonging and unity was made in an attempt to define and address the people that PiS MPs represent and that they consequently ought to protect:

> It is *our duty to ensure the safety of Poles*, it is our duty to ensure that we do not allow the situation that is taking place in Germany, which is taking place in Sweden. We have all witnessed the number of rapes and crimes committed.
>
> (Dominik Tarczyński, MP, 9. 3. 2016)

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al choice analysis or Russell (2014) for a psychological approach). Consequently, MPs disagreeing with their party's line are usually given less chances to speak during parliamentary debates, which usually results in a rather homogenous discourse at the party level inside legislatures.

[7] All translation from English to Polish are from the author of the paper, as well as emphasis marked in italics. Quotes are taken from PiS MPs and government representatives' addresses to the *Sejm* during the selected parliamentary debates.

In PiS discourse, "the Polish people" were clearly constructed as a subject exclusively linked to the concept of nation. This observation highlights the links between nationalism and populism, as in the Polish case the definition of "the people" coincides with the notion of "the nation". PiS MPs stressed a civilizational gap with migrants depicted outside of the nation and considered in total opposition to Polish values, which ultimately gave rise to claims supporting the exclusion of migrants.

Discursive Representation of Migrants

As previously mentioned, migration has become a growing topic of concern in Poland since 2015, as it has been heavily politicised and rhetorically associated with a criticism of the EU concerning its management of the migration crisis. In this sense, the crisis asserted a divide between Western and Eastern Europe, based on identity-centred arguments (Mach and Styczyńska 2016). In Poland, migrants have hence been subject to numerous myths (Pawlak 2018) and emotional anti-immigration statements (Frelak 2019) in public discourse.

References to refugees and migrants — which are different categories implying the implementation of protective measures for refugees — were mixed together in discourse. Indeed, PiS MPs fused both categories stating that the EU and EUMS were "unable to effectively separate actual war refugees from economic immigrants" (Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk, MP, 9. 2. 2016). This way, MPs created a category of "unwanted immigrants" linked to different depreciative predicates, e.g., "economic" or "illegal" migrants. MPs discursively associated migrants with illegality, violence and lies:

> Well, Western European countries have made huge mistakes in immigration policy, mindlessly letting in a large number of *culturally foreign immigrants*, and there are problems that we are all aware of — burning cars in the suburbs of Paris, figuratively speaking. The honourable MP [Marcin Święcicki (PO)] spoke about the excellent development of London as a multicultural city. It should also be remembered that it was on the street of London that a British soldier was stripped of his head with a machete, and not by Native British. This is the kind of problem we do not need in Poland, that we should not take in.
>
> (Marcin Horała, MP, 9. 3. 2016)

Thereby, a seeming clash of civilisations was depicted, in which Poland was highly threatened by migrants coming to Europe. It was through the Catholic denomination of the homogenous Polish nation and these references to violence that MPs appealed to their people and stressed specific Polish characteristics and values

depicted in total opposition to those of migrants. These two distinct societal entities were discursively framed as incompatible:

> Because we have to look into the future, how will the whole of Europe behave and what will be the *impact of Islam* on European civilization.
> (Michał Wojtkiewicz, MP, 28. 1. 2016)

Therefore, the reference to "the people" was made in contrast to the "lack of values" of migrants, through a "positive—negative antithesis" (Stanley 2008, 106) based on religion and identity-driven arguments. Hence, it can be argued that "the people" as characterised in PiS's discourse is defined as a bounded community threatened by the outside, i.e., by refugees and migrants coming to Europe. In this respect, the discursive representation of migrants — and their exclusion — constitutes a horizontal opposition — as previously described as a feature of populist claims — following which migrants are seen as undesired outsiders. These anti-migration and exclusionist arguments were intrinsically linked to criticism of the EU.

Critique of the European "Elites"

This paper argues that after the PiS regained in 2015, the anti-elite discourse produced by this party partly transformed from anti-establishment to anti-European elite claims. It seems logical that as the party held the majority in the parliament, the main adversary shifted from the former party in government — i.e., Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska* — PO) — to the EU as being an entity "above" the national level for certain political decisions, including when it comes to migration. For PiS MPs, migration has thus been a political opportunity used to firmly disapprove of the EU actions.

From 2015 onwards, PiS MPs adamantly opposed the EU's decisions regarding the relocation scheme for refugees, which was "imposed from above" (Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk, MP, 13.04.2018). MPs usually stressed the fact that the decision related to accepting refugees and migrants on European territory was not their choice, but was actually made by foreign entities — EU institutions — and those decisions "somehow excludes the sovereignty of a member state in who and how many refugees, in what amount, to accept" (Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk, MP, 1. 12. 2016). As one could expect, this imposition by a foreign power strongly resonates with Polish history. This strategy of picturing the country in a weaker position in comparison to other EUMS and the EU as imposing decisions on Poland can be interpreted as part of a populist communication strategy.

Whilst the term "elite" was barely used during debates *per se*, it is interesting to analyse the images and vocabulary used to talk about the EU, especially in reference to European decision-makers. In addition to picturing them as above and imposing decisions, PiS MPs also used a different discursive strategy. References to

illness were made by PiS MPs when describing the EU. In fact, the EU and its policies were often depicted as pathological:

> We oppose only this *faulty, pathological*, automatic relocation system, because we think it is absolutely contrary to the interests of not only Poland but also of Europe.
>
> (Jakub Skiba, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Internal
> Affairs and Administration, 21. 10. 2016)

In this way, the EU was depicted as sick, but even more so as the EU was said to be threatening its own existence by accepting migrants:

> From a *suicidal* European Union policy of accepting immigrants from Africa and the Middle East and the intention to relocate them in many countries, including Poland, there must be a retreat and it seems that it is slowly happening, not only from the societies of individual countries — some have already tried it — but also from prominent politicians.
>
> (Krzysztof Szulowski, MP, 1. 12. 2016)

This mix of elites depicted as imposing decisions of Poland whilst being sick and suicidal has been done as a way to legitimise the party's discourse on migration and on Europe. Indeed, PiS positioned itself in contrast to the EU, which did not know what to do regarding the migration situation.

Whilst the study of populism initially conceptualises that the critique of the elites is linked to corruption, some scholars have noted a change in rhetoric in that elites tend to be "seen as living in different worlds, playing by different rules […] out of touch with the concerns and problems of ordinary people and condescending towards their values, habits and ways of life" (Brubaker 2019, 11). Additionally, in line with Brubaker's argument (Ibid.), the (European) elites are subject to both vertical opposition — pictured "on top" of the Polish people and imposing decisions on them — and horizontal opposition — as being "outside" of the Polish reality and affecting people's identity by their otherness. The portrayal of the EU as sick and unable to deal with migration, constitutes a horizontal opposition, in which the European elite is portrayed as a significant other unable to understand Polish reality. PiS MPs therefore regretted that the EU, in its current shape, was "making the European nations a multicultural mass, in which it will no longer be possible to return on a larger scale to the Christian roots of the continent" (Konrad Głębocki, MP, 28. 1. 2016).

The Role of Poland in and for the EU

Both anti-migration and anti-European elites' statements brought MPs to describe what they would like the EU to be and what the role of Poland should be in it. To

299

begin with, PiS MPs demanded a more restrictive migration policy that should be decided upon only on the national level:

> We believe that immigration and refugee policy should remain in the hands of the Polish state and should be applied restrictively.
>
> (Szymon Szynkowski vel Sęk, MP, 9. 3. 2016)

Additionally, PiS MPs further stressed the importance of Poland for the defence and for the future of the European Union, in which it ought to have the role of protector against both migrants coming to alter Polish (Christian) values and European elites depicted as ill and suicidal. In this perspective, PiS MPs praised the Polish fight against EU decisions on migration, and pictured themselves as the sane ones in opposition to the sick EU:

> It is worth fighting hard for your interests, it is *worth fighting hard for common sense*, because the adoption of Poland's position by the entire European Union regarding immigrants is a *triumph of common sense* in the European Union.
>
> (Jan Dziedziczak, MP, 13. 9. 2018).

Whilst firmly criticising the EU, PiS MPs did not mention leaving it. Conversely, they rather attempted to influence it more:

> The European Union is heading towards solutions proposed consistently by Poland, so Poland has pushed solutions into the forum of the European Union that are *rational solutions* that solve the problem but respect other people.
>
> (Jan Dziedziczak, MP, 13. 3. 2019)

As a result, PiS MPs emphasised Poland's relevance for the EU's defence and future, presenting the party as a constructive actor protecting Europe. Indeed, Poland, and *a fortiori* PiS, claimed the role of protector against both migrants coming to alter their (Christian) values and an irresponsible EU imposing decisions on member states.

Concluding Remarks

This paper attempted to give an overview of the populist discourse produced following the 2015 migration crisis by PiS on migration and the European Union, to both of which the political party is critical of and even in deep opposition to. Building on populism as defined as a political communication style based on three elements — (1) reference to the people, (2) critique of the elites and (3) exclusion of certain groups — this paper displayed the articulation between these elements in the specific case of PiS discourse in the Polish parliament during the 8th parliamentary term.

Due to the nature of parliamentary debates, the appeal to the people might not be directly observed *per se* as one could argue that the content of parliamentary discourse is more addressed to political actors than to broader society. Yet, throughout all debates what is understood as "the people" was clearly defined by MPs. The "Polish people" were depicted as a homogenous mass of people thinking alike and sharing similar (Christian) values. This definition was linked to an understanding of the nation as essential in the establishment and further development of the Polish nation-state. The nation is in this sense considered as an exclusionary concept in which only culturally-fitting people are seen as legitimate in the political arena. Additionally, "the Polish people" were also depicted by the negative of what they are not, i.e., migrants and European elites.

With regard to the elite critique and exclusion of certain groups — in this case of refugees and migrants — the analysis of parliamentary debates on migration and on the European Union has proven to be a significant method to investigate this discursive political strategy. The excluding element of a populist communication strategy was heavily present in discourse. Furthermore, MPs' references to — and representation of — migrants were more often than not linked to a harsh critique of the EU. As argued by Brubaker, populism might be characterised as this "two-dimensional space in which vertical and horizontal oppositions are constitutively intertwined" (2019, 15). The horizontal opposition is highly noticeable when it comes to refugees and migrants, who were depicted as outsiders to and others from the Polish people due to their foreign civilisation, culture and religion. This horizontal opposition was linked to a critique of European elites, as the latter were criticised for imposing decisions on Poland regarding migration — decisions that endanger the Polish nation — which is characterised as a vertical opposition to the Polish people. Consequently, MPs advocated for the protection of national sovereignty and values. Furthermore, the horizontal opposition exists in PiS discourse regarding refugees and migrants, as well as regarding European elites. Indeed, European elites were framed as outsiders in their holding of multicultural values. Additionally, European elites were seen as being ill due to the nature of international relations and the presence of migrants on European territory. Thus, in reaction to European elites depicted as sick and suicidal, PiS MPs stressed the role of Poland in the defence of the Polish and *a fortiori* European civilisation, of which Christianity was considered as a core component. One could consequently wonder if this strategy of picturing European elites as "sick outsiders" rather than "corrupted dictators" has been a factor influencing the electorate and leading to political gain.

Coming back to the present-day situation, the discourse of PiS during the 2015 migration crisis assuredly informs the PiS government's position during the 2021 Polish-Belarusian border crisis. Indeed, PiS putting itself forward as the protector of

Poland and by the same token of Europe — territorially, by protecting EU's external border — is an image used by the Polish government during the crisis. Commentators actually noted the instrumentalisation of this rhetoric (Erlangen 2021), which could lead to a shift in the way Poland is acting and perceived in the EU. Indeed, after years of tensions with EU institutions, managing to change the perspective and present Poland as safeguarding Europe in the geopolitical game with Belarus might be of crucial important for the future of Europe and the role of Poland in it. Further research on discourse around the 2021 crisis is needed to investigate whether a similar populist communication strategy is being used, as well as its impact for Europe.

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List of selected parliamentary debates

2016-01-28 Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec-grudzień 2015 r. (przewodnictwo Luksemburga w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) (druk nr 181) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (druk nr 196). http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/92FE1C9F4182365AC1257F4800622AE9/%24File/09_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-02-09 Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskim projekcie uchwały w sprawie polityki imigracyjnej państwa polskiego na forum Unii Europejskiej (druki nr 18 i 50). http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/CFEA3265E15B757CC1257F54005D968F/%24File/11_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-03-09 Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskich projektach uchwał w sprawie: — polityki imigracyjnej państwa polskiego na forum Unii Europejskiej, — polityki imigracyjnej Polski. http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/7995B0D85FD508D9C1257F77002F157D/%24File/13_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-04-01 Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskich projektach uchwał w sprawie: — polityki imigracyjnej państwa polskiego na forum Unii Europejskiej, — polityki imigracyjnej Polski (druki nr 18, 230, 250 i 250-A) — głosowanie. http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/49D91ACEDB27E6B0C1257F88005E9B82/%24File/15_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-10-05 Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń-czerwiec 2016 r. (przewodnictwo Holandii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) (druk nr 712) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej (druk nr 714). http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/4D6FCFA93E71D570C1258043006EDA2C/%24File/27_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-10-06 Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń-czerwiec 2016 r. (przewodnictwo Holandii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej. http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/2CC2EAA17CCB10F4C12580440077C333/%24File/27_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

2016-10-21 Pierwsze czytanie komisyjnego projektu uchwały w sprawie propozycji ustanowienia unijnego korekcyjnego mechanizmu alokacji uchodźców oraz mechanizmu solidarności finansowej (druk nr 894). http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/6F74FA41DE269CF0C1258053007AE55D/%24File/28_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf.

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A BALANCE IN THE FORCE?
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE
HUNGARIAN ELECTIONS IN 2019

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A b s t r a c t

Using social media no longer acts as a novelty in political life, it has become a permanent instrument of political and electoral campaigns and political communication. Although political populism may not have gained space in recent years through social media alone, its impact on this process is unquestionable. Communication through social channels in principle can make a strong contribution to maintaining the social support of so-called populist governments. However, the question arises whether social media can be successfully used solely by the governing forces to enforce their political interests? In 2019, the general election of local municipal councillors and mayors in Hungary produced a very different results from the previous elections. In addition to the majority of the capital's districts, the opposition political forces have been successful in many of the municipalities that had a government-wide majority earlier in several electoral cycles.In our study - taking into account the results of the most recent elections — we examine the role of social media used by the political forces to influence the results.
Key words: *local elections, social media, local governments, Hungarian municipal system*

Foreword

The main topic of our research is the role of the social media in context of the local government elections of Hungary held in October of 2019. This paper is one of the first publications of the topic, so the reader should keep in mind that there isn't enough statistical data available yet, but it's findings still could be a first step of a long-term and wider research.

To analyze the results of the Hungarian local government elections of 2019 the changing role of the social media in the last decade should been discussed, just as the system of the Hungarian local governments, the condition of the domestic broadcast media and its connections with the political parties, and finally the use of the broadcast- and social media during the elections.

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The role of social media

The technologies we call social media have unquestionably changed our world in the past. decade. According to the literature (Miller et al. 2016, 2), before the appearance of the new technology, there were two main ways in which people communicated using media. The first was public broadcast media (such as television, radio and newspapers). With that kind of media anyone could be the audience. The other was the private communication. People could share their thoughts via telephone or direct e-mail, but it was mostly an interaction between two (or a few) persons.

As a result of the development of the internet, the polarization between public and private communication started to change. With web 2.0 many online forums appeared, and people finally had an opportunity to create or comment blogs. Those blogs and forums usually included just a few hundred people, so information couldn't be shared among many people this way.

Digital social media changed it all. The first platforms, like Myspace or especially Facebook were created to improve the private communication, with the possibility of making nearly unlimited numbers of so-called pages or groups, or share your thoughts to great audiences worldwide. In the short space of time since then social networking, video/picture sharing and 'tweeting' have become arguably the defining feature of contemporary Internet usage. It lead to a phenomenon we often call as the user-generated internet.

As a result of the high popularity and easy accessibility of the social media platforms led to two consequences: First, the broadcast media appeared on the social media platforms. Newspapers, TV-channels and radio stations created their social media profiles or pages and started to share content on these platforms. So the differences between the public and private media slowly started to disappear.

The other consequence is the political impact. In 2011 the so-called "Arab spring" protest movements openly utilized social networking and file sharing tools to publicize and organize demonstrations (Abbot 2011, 30).

Based on those results political parties, movements and even the politicians themselves started to use the channels of thesocial media. In 2019 we are already able to see the role of using the social media on the presidential elections of the USA or the Brexit.

In the next chapters of this paper we will analyze the use of the social media of the Hungarian political parties in the context of the Hungarian Local elections which were held in 13th October 2019, but before this we have to examine the municipality model of Hungary.

308

The Hungarian model of local governments

During the 1990's the disappearance of centralized socialist forms of rule has led many countries toward increasingly minimalist government. The modern liberal democracy quickly became the dominant model for government. "In an effort to slim down and foster good governance, national governments have shed responsibility for providing citizens with basic services and implemented policies favouring decentralization. This increased the role for local governments who increasingly provide services that citizens have come to expect". (Lazin 2014, 59)

The Hungarian system of municipalities — transformed a couple years ago — was established at the time of the regime change, and its characteristics can in a large part be understood from the context of the regime change. As Gajduschek writes, "The intellectual context of the regime change can mostly be understood as the radical refusal of the former <communist> system. The most important characteristic of the former council system is that it operated basically as the part of a centralized system, therefore in the case of these bodies there could be no actual autonomy of municipalities. The negative feelings of the population concerning the council system were increased by the establishment of joint community councils." (Gajduschek 2012, 61) This happened in about the seventies. In the course of this such communities were forced into a single joint council between which centuries old conflicts existed, sometimes ethnical or religious, usually traced back to long forgotten reasons. Units created this way of course could not be interpreted as actual communities for the persons living in the individual settlements. Besides, the non-seat settlements of the joint councils felt that the central authority condemned them to gradually decline. As opposed to all this, the municipality act (Ötv.)[3] created in the course of the regime change created new grounds for the municipality system. This act made it possible for all settlements to establish municipality organizations. This way the number of municipalities increased to double the former number, and the average number of residents became one of the lowest in Europe (Gajduschek 2012, 61). The domestic literature often refers to the so-called Southern and Northern municipality models. An example of the former is the French system, where every settlement is an independent municipality, but the municipalities have rather few independent tasks. The Northern systems (e.g. the British or Scandinavian municipalities) are characterized by a wide range of competences, but in these countries, larger municipalities operate, in which several smaller settlements belong to one municipal organization. In Hungary there is a third, mixed model, with all of the disadvantages of the two models. The country has nearly 3200 mu-

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[3] Act 65/1990 on local municipalities.

nicipalities, and before the 2010's every one of them had a high number of independent tasks and a high level of autonomy.

Realizing this, after 2010 the government decided to make some changes in this unsustainable system. The Parliament created the new act on municipalities in 2011. The governments answer was a significant reduction of the autonomy of municipalities, increasing state hierarchy (just like in the French system). The political system itself was a taboo, the reform did not really changed the political bodies, and the number of local politicians.

At this point we have to clear the numbers of the Hungarian local governments' political mandates. Budapest is the capital city, which has a capital mayor and twenty-three district mayors. There are two types of cities: cities with a county's rights (tipically one in a county) and smaller towns, which the Hungarian laws also call cities regardless their size. The overall number of the cities is three hundred forty five. We call the other two thousands and nine settlements villages. Despite these high numbers all the cities and villages have a local mayor.

As we mentioned before the number of local representatives remained quite high compared to the less than 10 million inhabitants of the state. The more than three thousand settlements has more than three thousands mayors, and nearly seventeen thousands local representatives overall. The counties (middle-level) has also more than four hundred representatives so the elections was a race for more than 17,000 political mandates.[4]

The Hungarian broadcast media and the political parties

From the general elections of 2010 the FIDESZ party (with coalition of the small Christian-democratic party, the KDNP) has a constant, high majority in Hungary. The FIDESZ party clearly won all the three general elections in the period between 2010 and 2019. During this political era many important Hungarian acts were modified or repealed and new acts have been pronounced, including the constitution or the rule of elections. The Prime Minister Orbán Viktor often refers the new political system of Hungary as "illiberal democracy".

If we take a closer look to the traditional, public broadcast media (like newspapers, TV-channels and radio stations) we can see that most of them is connected somehow to the FIDESZ party, the supporters of the party or the government itself (Figure 1).

In this context it's a bit surprising that the parties of political opposition clearly won the local elections in the capital city and a in a great number of the major

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[4] See it detailed: https://www.valasztas.hu/elnyerheto-mandatumok_onk2019
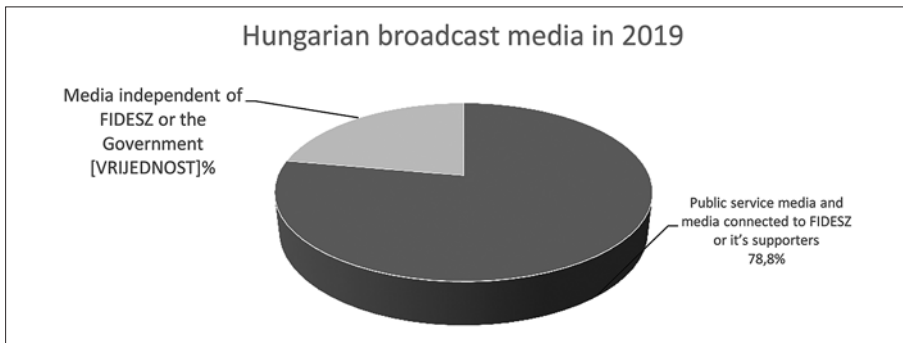
Figure 1 — Hungarian Broadcast media in 2019. Source: Mérték (2019).

cities in Hungary. The capitals's mayor became Gergely Karácsony from one of the opposition parties and only six of the districts' mayors remained FIDESZ-KDNP members. In nearly the half (ten of twenty-three) of the cities with county's rights (greatest cities of Hungary) the members of the political opposition's parties won the elections. The opposition wasn't as successful in the smaller cities and in the villages. The FIDESZ- and/or KDNP-supported candidates won the elections in nearly 71 percent of the lesser cities (population between 10,000 and 40 000). In the villages the situation is almost the same. According to the relevant statistical data 34% of the FIDESZ- and/or KDNP voters live in villages and 33% live in lesser towns. In contrast, the strongest party of the opposition (DK) is supported only a 13% of the village population [K.Á. — Szémann Tamás (2018)].

Summarizing the above, we can state that despite the strong urban results the opposition did nothave won the elections, but the results are still suprising.

Social media — a key of success?

Why could the parties of the opposition could be so successful in the local elections of 2019? One reason is probably the cooperation against the FIDESZ. In Hungary we can't talk about a main political opposition party. The Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Democratic Coalition (DK) came from the political left wing, while the JOBBIK was originally a radical national party. There are also some quite new political formations: the LMP (founded in 2009) and MOMENTUM (founded in 2017). The latter is mainly referred as a liberal party by the parties of the right wing. This kind of diversity gave a kind of competitive advantage to the FIDESZ until now. In the local government elections those smaller parties could make an agreement and supported only one candidate asking their supporters to vote on this person. Could it be enough? The smaller parties tried this strategy on the general elections in 2018 too, but it didn't seem to work that time.

According to the most public opinion surveys the FIDESZ party has the weakest, and the relatively newly founded MOMENTUM has the strongest support among the people of the age between eighteen and twenty-nine. (Table 1.).

Table 1 — Supporters of the Hungarian political parties by age in 2019 (%).
Source: Median (2019).

	18-29 yrs	30-39 yrs	40-49 yrs	50-59 yrs	60+ yrs
FIDESZ	35	50	43	45	43
DK	4	8	6	11	15
MSZP	3	4	10	7	12
Momentum	16	8	4	4	2
Jobbik	9	5	9	6	4
LMP	2	6	2	4	1
Other	4	1	2	4	3
Has no preference	27	18	24	19	20

The oldest group of people (age sixty or above) supports mostly the FIDESZ, but the support of the relatively old Socialist Party and the Democratic Coalition (led by the socialist party's last prime minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány) is also high amongst them. We have to notice that the support of the newly formed parties of the last 10-15 years (Momentum, Jobbik, LMP) is quite low in the oldest people of the country.

The members of this latter group are hard to reach with the tools of the social media, so public broadcast media is probably a better way to contact them. Unlike this, people of the age between eighteen and forty-four are the most reachable using the tools of the social media (Figure 2.). These generations don't seem to be too supportive for the socialist parties, but many people amongst them prefers the newer and smaller parties.

The next question is what did the FIDESZ and the political opposition do with those numbers?

The FIDESZ and media organizations connected to Fidesz spent a total of four hundred-eleven thousand euros on Facebook ads, while the opposition spent six hundred and eight thousand euros (Facebook Ad Library Report 2019). As the results show us, the opposing forces used the potentials of the social media better, and they probably could mobilize more people this way. Due to the lack of traditional media interfaces available to it, the opposition had no choice but to use social media as vigorously as possible (László and Molnár 2019, 33). We also have to keep in mind that the key of success is not only that how much we pay for ads on Facebook, but we also have to learn how to use it. One analysis (Ynsight Research
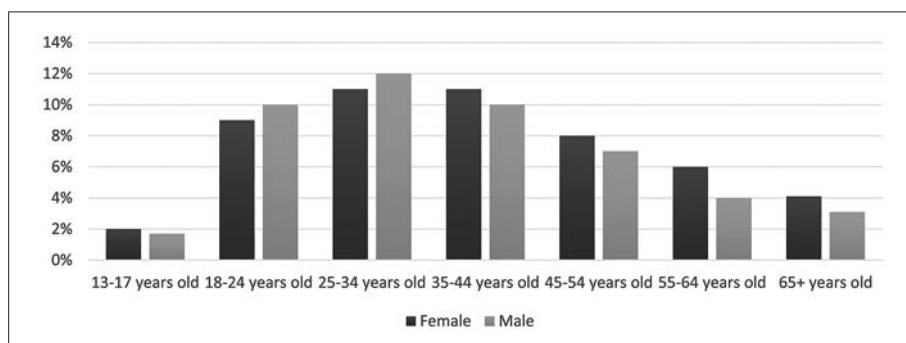
Figure 2 — Social media audience in Hungary (2019). Source: WeAreSocial (2019).

— Silberstein and Partners 2020) pointed out that less candidates of the FIDESZ-KDNP had an own Facebook page than the oppositionist.

The candidates of the FIDESZ-KDNP had a lower level of activity on social media and they have reached a very low level of engagement of the followers.

The reactions of the FIDESZ-supporting media confirms that. One of the most influential pro-government online portals came to the following conclusion: "The next election and the future itself depends on how could we reach them (the younger generations) with the suitable messages on the online platforms they use" (Ferkó 2019).

Conclusion

In the paper we have presented that the proper use of the social media's tools could affect the results of municipal elections. We could see the impacts of it during the latest local governments' elections of Hungary. In a country where the governing party has a very high influence on the traditional, public broadcast media the use of the new, social media tools can be a true counterweight.

The government recognized that, so we are waiting for new tendencies of their communication techniques, especially on the field of the social media.

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