

Lilijana Čičkarić*Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade*

lcickaric@idn.org.rs

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6994-0063>

Representing Women in Right-Wing Party Politics – Case of the Serbian Movement Dveri*

Abstract: The objective of this article is to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the representation of women in the political right-wing Serbian Movement Dveri. The aim is to examine how women politicians advocate for women's issues and gender equality within their public discourses. A further objective is to assess how women members of this party espouse anti-feminist and anti-gender attitudes in their public discourses, as a result of the impact of nationalist, conservative and patriarchal political ideology. This case study employs critical discourse analysis of party documents, speeches and interviews with women members and officeholders published on the official website of Dveri. The findings confirm that women politicians associated with this party utilize a range of strategies with the objective of attaining respectability and authority. One strategy involves the instrumentalization of family politics and motherhood, while another prioritizes issues such as national unity, national identity, and traditional values. The anti-gender and anti-feminist orientation is evident in all speeches and public statements. The primary conclusion of this study asserts that the utilization of women's political representation serves to legitimize right-wing populist political values and to reinforce the fundamental concepts of gender backsliding and de-democratization processes in Serbia.

Keywords: women, political representation, right-wing party politics, case study, Serbian Movement Dveri

Introduction

In a multitude of European countries, conservative, nationalist, right-wing political parties and movements have begun to address a variety of gender equality issues within the context of their parliamentary activities and electoral campaigns. According to the extant feminist scholarship, right-wing populism

* This paper was written as a part of the Research Program of the Institute of Social Sciences in 2024 supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.

employs gender identity issues to construct, mobilize, and consolidate the so-called ‘people’ (Ajanovic et al. 2018; Dietze and Roth 2020; Krizsan and Roggeband 2021). These political actors strategically re-politicize gender around issues such as familiarism, heteronormativity, and anti-feminism (Saresma 2018). For right-wing populist parties, gender functions as a meta-language, an “affective bridge”, and a “pivotal domain” (Ditze and Roth 2020:16). In their adaptation to gender balance within mainstream parties, right-wing parties have been observed to increase their share of female candidates and leaders. This shift has the “potential to influence the representation of women in these parties” (Erikson and Josefsson 2024, 11).

The purpose of the article is to provide an examination of the impact of right-wing Serbian Movement Dveri on women’s representation in contemporary politics. The aim is to explore how women politicians advocate for women’s issues and gender equality within their public discourses. A further objective is to assess how women members of this party espouse anti-feminist and anti-gender attitudes in their public discourses, as a result of the impact of nationalist, conservative and patriarchal political ideology.

Women and Right-wing Political Parties

The gender approach to the study of the right-wing populism involves the examination of the quantitative and qualitative representation of women and the relationship of those parties with gender issues, heteronormativity, and sexuality (Čičkarić 2019). The researchers on the topic have identified two distinct orientations. The first focuses on the under-representation of women in right wing political parties, while the second examines the membership, activism, and electoral culture of women with a right-wing political orientation (Givens 2005). A representative study of women’s population in Germany found that 20 percent of women are members of right-wing parties, 10-30 percent participate in the work of various organizations, 5 percent engage in terrorist activities, 33 percent vote for right-wing orientations, and 50 percent of the female population shares right-wing views (Bitzan 2017, 70).

A comparison of the activities and political ideas of women in National Democratic Party in Germany and the French National Front in the period 1980-2012 reveals a clear shift in women’s participation in political processes and distribution of power, with a notable increase in both parties (Dubslaff 2017). It is noteworthy that women within these parties have been observed to assume prominent leadership roles and exert a discernible influence. Those who advocate for right-wing political views are often socially marginalized individuals, including unemployed young whites, football fans, and ideological extremists of various

categories (Bitzan 2017). Women most often belong to the first group, and in that case, the concept of marginalization appears as a key factor in understanding women's participation in right-wing parties. Therefore, it is not surprising that a considerable proportion of women with limited financial resources, such as single mothers working under strenuous and low-skilled conditions or those with limited prospects for career advancement, often experience a nostalgic longing for the traditional values associated with the past. For these women, an idealized version of the past, in which the role of the female homemaker and mother was held in high esteem, can be particularly appealing.

The study which examined the gender perspective in the family policies of six right-wing parties in Europe indicated that all adhere to the traditional concept of the family and family policies (Akkermann 2015). Research on the gender discourse of right-wing parties in Austria revealed that traditional family values and the right to choose for women and LGBT people play an important role in defining their gender ideology (Mayer, Ajanović, Sauer 2018). A subsequent study examining the public presentation of women and their roles within right-wing parties in Spain, confirmed a robust correlation with traditionalist and conservative family concepts (Ramos and Büttner 2017, 111). One rationale for employing women as leading figures by political parties is to promote their ideology and the superiority of mothers over fathers in transmitting the values to children. This assumption is grounded in the "specific role that motherhood plays in right-wing ideologies" (Kottig, Bitzan, Peto 2017, 57).

The subject of anti-gender and anti-feminist politics has also gained traction within academic circles (Kováts and Pőim 2015). Two comparative studies on women's participation in right-wing parties in Italy and France, as well as in Hungary and Greece, demonstrate the necessity to examine anti-feminist and anti-gender politics within a broader context, as their prevalence indicates a deeper social, economic, political, and cultural crisis of liberal democracy (Scrinzi 2014; Félix 2015). The motivation of women to become involved is influenced by a combination of contextual factors, discourse, biography, and potential opportunities, rather than solely by their specific interests. Félix identifies three distinct profiles among women members of the right-wing parties. The first, designated as the "guardians of national culture", is characterized by a primary focus on biological, material and cultural reproduction (Félix 2017, 98). The second comprises women who "engage in military, militia, or security structures" (Félix 2017, 101). In this case, women are positioned on an equal footing with men, as they are permitted to participate in traditionally male-dominated professions. The third category comprises individuals who "utilise radical ideologies for personal advancement and an image of superiority" (Félix 2017, 102). These women are typically well-educated and often come from medical and health-related professions, with a notable presence of both conventional and

alternative medicine practitioners. They often perceive themselves as 'national healers', and their primary objective is to disseminate right-wing propaganda, ideological beliefs, radical attitudes and quasi-historical facts through virtual communities on the Internet.

Strategic Use of Women's Descriptive Representation

The right-wing's embrace of certain aspects of women's rights is often a strategic tool rather than a genuine commitment to gender equality. Bolstering women's descriptive representation is a relatively low-cost tool for right-wing populist parties to broaden their electorate and increase their vote share. Rather than enacting costly shifts of their policy platforms or adding new issues which require messaging and explanation, right-wing populist parties often choose to run more women for election (Coffé 2019). The key question concerns the significance of this strategic use of representation in terms of its long-term implications and the quality of representation and gender equality in society. While the newly elected women may potentially introduce their own policy ideas and priorities, thereby diversifying party platform, the strategic use of women's descriptive representation may also forego important structural changes within the party in favor of visible symbols, potentially undermining democratic representation and the substantive impact that women can have (Catalano Weeks, Meguid, Kittilson and Coffé 2023).

A notable increase in the presence of women leaders in right-wing political parties has been observed across Europe. This phenomenon is accompanied by a growing emphasis on gender-sensitive issues, which have been integrated into the electoral campaigns of these parties. This development suggests that women within right-wing parties incorporate selected elements from the agendas of feminist, left-wing, and social democratic movements, strategically leveraging these elements to engage with a more diverse audience, including the female electorate. Prominent figures such as Marine Le Pen of the French National Front and Giorgia Meloni of the Brothers of Italy, the current Prime-minister of Italy, exemplify the appeal that populist and right-wing parties hold for women in contemporary European societies. These politicians have been described as "Europe's most dangerous women" due to their proficiency in "packaging" and "selling" their political agendas (Geva 2020, 7; Indelicato and Magalhaes 2024, 8). The public personas combine feminine caregiving qualities with masculine traits of proactive toughness and power.

Women's representation in right-wing political parties in Serbia reflects a complex interplay of strategic positioning and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles. While there has been a notable increase in the number of women

participating in these politics, their roles often serve to legitimize ideologies that are not aligned with broader feminist goals (Cventinčanin Knežević 2018; Čiċkarić 2020). It is a paradox that the democratic backsliding evident in Serbia has been accompanied by increased attention to gender equality (Lončar 2023). In recent years, the Serbian parliament increased the gender quota for national and local parliaments to 40 percent and adopted the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (2016) and the Law on Gender Equality (2021). A large number of women have also been appointed to executive government positions. The autocratic regime presents these developments as democratic reforms, while at the same time advancing conservative, anti-gender and anti-feminist mobilization.

A preliminary observation indicates that the strategic appointment of women to prominent and visible party roles within the party is of particular importance, as it has the effect of enhancing the party's public image (Čiċkarić 2019). Conversely, the appointment of women to political roles may give the impression of a certain degree of political influence. However, in reality, these women lack the requisite political power to influence decision-making processes on significant matters (Čiċkarić 2020). Women pursuing political careers frequently adopt a strategy of loyalty, predominantly driven by economic gain and career advancement, whereas women's interests and gender equality remain secondary to their political activities (Čiċkarić 2015). This phenomenon is believed to be a primary factor behind the increased presence of women in higher positions within right-wing and populist parties.

An analysis of speeches delivered by female deputies in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia over the span of two decades period reveals a persistent focus on maternal concerns, particularly the "birth rate and the survival of the Serbian nation" (Lončar 2023, 89). This emphasis underscores the notion that women are regarded as a "means to achieve state objectives rather than as independent entities with their own interests" (Lončar 2023, 89). The main findings indicate that ideology exerts a significant influence on political discourse, with the most substantial transformations occurring within the right-wing political parties. These parties have strategically balanced anti-gender rhetoric with traditionalist stances, a maneuver designed to maintain electoral support.

Methodology

This case study entailed a critical analysis of the discourse surrounding women members and officeholders in the Serbian Movement Dveri (Dveri), a party that is recognized as a nationalist and right-wing political organization.¹

¹ Dveri has exhibited strong nationalist tendencies and pro-Russian and EU-skeptical orientations, which have been particularly pronounced since the early 1990s. Following

This political party was selected as the representative for a number of reasons. It promotes right-wing, conservative, and traditionalist ideas and attitudes concerning family life, the role of women in society, motherhood, gender equality, and the rights of the LGBTQIA+ population. Despite its exclusion from governing structures, this party has been the most vocal in the public sphere regarding the promotion of such values for many years. Its active involvement in political life and presence in the Serbian Parliament for two mandates, have rendered it as a prominent actor in the establishment of the value-normative framework of Serbian society.

The critical discourse analysis is selected as an interdisciplinary approach for it focuses on how language, in both spoken and written forms, reflects, reinforces, and challenges power structures, ideologies, and inequalities in society. It considers both, political and sociocultural context, intertextuality and representation (Wodak and Meyer 2009). The analysis covered the period from 2018 to 2023, and included the following sources: the first component focuses on the party's political program, particularly its sections pertaining to family policy and the social status of women; the second encompasses documents (45) concerning women's issues that have been published by Women's Force Dveri; the third part involves interviews with prominent women politicians from Dveri (6); and the fourth analyzes speeches and press conference statements by politicians and party leaders from Dveri. Most of the relevant documents are still accessible on the official website of this political party.

The analysis entails the examination of the language and communication strategies employed by female politicians to convey their messages, shape public opinion, and influence political debates. It investigates how Dveri utilizes discourse to construct women's identities and promote anti-gender and anti-feminist orientation. It was hypothesized that women politicians would demonstrate a positive orientation towards the reproductive role of women, patriarchal and traditional family values, and nationalist issues. On the other side, anti-gender and anti-feminist orientations would be identified as the foundational principles and core values of the ideological party's framework. In accordance with this objective, four categories were identified to capture discursive patterns and communication strategies in the construction of femininity narratives: family and motherhood, national identity, traditional values and anti-feminist rhetoric. These categories function not only as thematic anchors but also as ideological tools that position women within a narrowly defined framework of acceptable

the organization of the movement politically from 1999, it has undergone a process of rebranding and repositioning its political discourse. In the 2016 elections, it even succeeded in entering the National Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. In 2022, in a coalition with two other similar right-wing political organizations, they entered the Serbian Parliament for the second time.

roles and behaviors. Such discourses contribute to a broader strategy of social regulation, reinforcing conservative or nationalist agendas, as well as heteronormative and patriarchal structures, by aligning femininity with domesticity, reproductive labor, and cultural preservation.

Findings and Discussion

The individual who has garnered the most attention within the political party is the coordinator of the Women's Force, who concurrently serves on the main board and the presidium. The Women's Force initiative is a programmatic endeavor that places emphasis on the status of women in society, with particular attention to its implications in both the public and private spheres. The section of the party's political program dedicated to the status of women in society comprises the "Declaration on the Protection of Women's Health" and the guidelines for enhancing the status of rural women and safeguarding women's labor rights. These components of the program, in conjunction with the segment pertaining to family policy, have played a pivotal role in fostering the discourse within the Women's Force. A thorough analysis revealed that the political program and party ideology are rife with four problematic concepts.

Family and motherhood: Right-wing political discourse on women's issues is rooted in a complex interplay of factors, including traditionalism, ethnocentrism, fear, and growing intolerance of diversity. This ideological environment provides a conducive setting for right-wing rhetoric on women's issues. The analyzed texts employ a conservative framing of gender roles and reproductive rights, emphasizing the preservation of what is regarded as the "natural order" or traditional family values. The political ideology has been observed to employ the imagery of women as mothers, often linked to the concept of the "motherland", in order to evoke nationalist sentiment. Women party members also cultivate an image of themselves as working mothers representing "authentic people".

The concept of family values is prevalent and widespread in Serbian society, appearing to be a matter of common sense and demonstrating the capacity to mobilize significant segments of the population. The term functions as an empty signifier, depending on the context, covering a range of meanings from the nuclear family to the organicist understanding of the nation as a patriarchal extended family with rigidly defined gender roles and clear hierarchies. According to the statements made by women members of Dveri, the "natural" family is threatened by various social and legislative interventions regarding reproductive rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, feminist values, and gender equality. In 2021, biology textbooks for the eighth grade of elementary school came under

fire from Dveri, its Education and Science Council, for “propaganda of homosexuality and transgenderism” (Jovanović 2023). It happened in the midst of the debate on the Same-Sex Marriage Law, which was eventually withdrawn from the legislative procedure, as were the textbooks from standard courses.

A salient strategy employed by women in Dveri entails the manipulation of family policy, motherhood, and the dichotomy between public and private spheres to disseminate anti-feminist messages. The proposed social policy reforms, while ostensibly aimed at safeguarding the interests of women and mothers, serve as a veil for the underlying tenets of the national socialist propaganda platform, which was a central theme of the electoral campaigns. The most frequently used slogan in election campaigns, *Women and mothers will save Serbia* (B.O.) encapsulates the prevailing discourse surrounding traditional women’s roles. The concepts of family and motherhood are pervasive in all official documents, media captions, and message boxes, encapsulated by the following slogans and statements:²

Homes full of children: that’s politics. (B.O.)

Working woman should be guaranteed protection against dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave (M.J.)

We are grateful to mothers, sisters, wives, for their invaluable contributions to the well-being of our families. (D.M.G.)

Proclaim May 15, International Family Day, as a public holiday (D.S.)

Reducing violence by strengthening the family. (N.R.)

National identity: Women politicians affiliated with Dveri are the most vocal in their public advocacy for the preservation of the ‘strength of the nation’ and the ‘strength of the national economy’. They espouse the heterosexual nuclear family as the guarantor of traditional values and the guardian of ‘national identity’. A strong reactionary equation exists whereby women are primarily associated with their role as mothers and educators, thereby implying that women are the ‘mothers of the nation’. The stance against abortion exemplifies a regressive reduction of women’s status to their reproductive role. Furthermore, the campaign aimed to enhance the birth rate as a core element of population policy, spearheaded by the Ministry of Family Care and Demography, underscores a prevailing sentiment that the interests of the Serbian majority supersede those of minority groups.

The central question, therefore, is whether attitudes toward women in politics can be separated from broader ideological agendas, which are primarily characterized by nationalist, isolationist, pro-Russian, and EU-skeptical politics.

² <https://dveri.rs/zasto-dveri/program/porodicna-politika> accessed May 22 2024

A thorough examination of the discourse reveals the following priority concepts: 'unity of the nation', 'national cohesion' and 'national pride'. In their political program, party representatives emphasize restrictive immigration policies, advocate economic protectionism, and refute feminist assertions that war, racism, hierarchy, and repression are not inherent in women's preferences. All these concepts are in direct opposition to gender equality and women's rights issues and are strategically employed to garner votes from a conservative and traditionally oriented elder population, reinforcing patriarchal values and challenging the hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates such a system of values. The statements issued by women members of this party serve as a valid illustration of the findings previously documented.³

Women do not require power and equality. They must be the pillar of the state, just as they are the pillar of every family and nation. (D.S.)

Abortion is a sin for both the woman and the doctor. (M. J.).

National unity and cohesion, especially in times of crisis, inside and outside the state, should be the priority values. (D. M. G.)

Traditional values: The primary conflict in the discursive patterns of right-wing populism emerges in the defense of so-called traditional family values against the 'attack' of progressive actors, who are characterized as 'domestic and foreign traitors'. The defense of the traditional family is framed as a defense of the 'natural order of the world', grounded in gender complementarity, sexual and physical differences, and biological determinism. The insistence on a traditional family structure based on gender asymmetry and its attendant hierarchies' forms part of a broader rejection of ideas and practices of social and human equality.

The primary objective appears to be the deliberate neglect of the underlying causes of sexism, misogyny, and violence, while simultaneously minimizing the role and contribution of key actors in engendering such adverse phenomena. Such policies are inherently incompatible with the promotion of gender equality because they deny the existence of a plurality of identities and experiences. Consequently, they underestimate the diversity and gender differences that are present in society. This approach is problematic because it fails to consider the distinct needs and interests of women. Instead, it equalizes the rights and privileges of women and men.

It is imperative to employ media strategies recruited by women in Dveri to neutralize and relativize sexism under the guise of an objective view of women's position in society. A pervasive notion exists that sexism is a matter of individual conduct, rather than a systemic manifestation of class, social, and gender oppression and inequality. Moreover, the assertion is frequently made

³ <https://dveri.rs/novosti/zenska-snaga-dveri> accessed May 22 2024

that women have a propensity to exaggerate in their pursuit of rights. This approach, frequently adopted by women politicians affiliated with right-wing and populist parties, involves the deliberate decontextualizing of women's emancipation, replacing it with the experiences of individual women. In this manner, the discourse surrounding gender issues is manipulated to serve as a vehicle for disparaging women through the guise of a pseudo-feminist rhetoric. This practice undermines the concept of gender equality.⁴

Genderization of society, or gender equality, is a smokescreen to hide the globalist oligarchies' war against the common people. (N.R.)

Sex education in primary schools is viewed as promoting promiscuity or "anti-family" values. (D. S.)

Anti-abortion stances are aimed to increase the national birth rate. (K. B.)

Anti-feminist rhetoric: The rhetoric employed by women politicians in Dveri exemplifies a radical anti-feminist discourse, a phenomenon that has been observed among right-wing political actors. These politicians have been known to successfully conceal their anti-feminist attitudes through rhetoric that superficially appears to espouse feminist values. This enables them to create a softer image that can be adapted to a specific social context. Upon entering the political arena, women affiliated with such parties employ a variety of strategies to gain respectability and authority.

In the context of discourse surrounding women's rights, the prevailing objective is to affirm the acceptability of women's position. However, the concept of gender is often met with denial, belittlement, and ridicule, leading to its characterization as 'fabricated', 'fake', 'quasi-feminist', or 'absurd'. This prompts the question of whether women from Dveri genuinely espouse women's rights and what lies behind their slogan and pre-election rhetoric, such as the assertion that 'women do not require additional rights, but rather more privileges'. This discourse is characterized by a pervasive anti-feminist sentiment, accompanied by leftist rhetoric, twisted in assertion that 'in genuine democracy, women are expected to play an important role'. Typical statements that illustrate previous observations are the following:⁵

False narratives about so-called gender equality and the promotion of feminism as values that are not based on the real struggle for the betterment of women in society. (K.B.)

False feminism has placed women in an unnatural and challenging position, requiring them to work hard and shoulder unnecessary burdens in order to equalize with men. (M.J.)

⁴ <https://dveri.rs/zasto-dveri/program/porodicna-politika> accessed May 22 2024

⁵ <https://dveri.rs/novosti/zenska-snaga-dveri> accessed May 22 2024

Right-wing and populist parties have historically relied on women to substantiate the legitimacy of their policies, particularly within the electoral base that will guarantee their involvement in governing. This phenomenon, termed “right-wing feminism,” deviates from the original feminist movement, which it ostensibly disparages as “false feminism.” This dichotomy is exemplified in the political program of Dveri. It has been replicated across the European political context, where it is referred to as a post-feminist agenda, characterized by politicians from right-wing and populist parties who appropriate the legacy of left-wing politics in order to mobilize the female electorate.

Conclusions

This case study examined the position of women’s issues and gender equality within the discourse of the politicians from right-wing political party Dveri. In accordance with this objective, four categories were identified to capture discursive patterns in constructing a femininity narrative: family and motherhood, national identity, traditional values, and anti-feminist rhetoric. A critical discourse analysis of statements made by women politicians revealed a favorable stance on the traditional role of women, nationalist and patriarchal values, as well as a rejection of feminist ideals and promotion of anti-gender politics. These issues were identified as the foundational principle of this party’s ideological framework. Starting from Butler’s theoretical insights into the performativity of gender, as well as the critiques offered by McRobbie regarding post-feminism and anti-feminism, the analysis confirmed that politicians from Dveri use retrograde narratives to discipline gender identities and delegitimize feminist struggles for gender equality (Butler 2015; McRobbie 2013).

In light of the contextual constraints imposed by the case study method and the limitations inherent in critical discourse analysis, particularly with regard to subjectivity, reduced interpretation of messages, and exclusive focus on dominance and ideology, many inquiries remained unresolved. Despite these limitations, certain conclusions can be derived concerning the representation of women in right-wing politics.

The main conclusion is that women’s political representation is utilized to legitimize the right-wing populist political values and to foster the key concepts of the gender backsliding and de-democratization processes in Serbia. The specific gender discourse of the right-wing party Dveri implied the use of gender prejudices and stereotypes, anti-feminism, sexism, and nationalist approach as dominant patterns in the construction of women’s identities. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the impact of the negative consequences that this kind of politics produces in the political life of Serbia. Politicians from Dveri weaponize gender equality to

target racialized others. They espouse heteronormative family ideologies and join forces with conservative religious actors in opposing gender equality.

The second conclusion is that women politicians in Dveri are acutely aware of the role they are expected to perform and endeavor to justify their involvement in high positions by demonstrating a willingness to follow the instructions of their party leaders and to foster patriarchal norms and prejudices. Upon entering the political arena, they employ a variety of strategies with the objective of gaining respectability and authority. One strategy involves the manipulation of family politics and motherhood, while the other prioritizes issues such as national unity, cohesion, and identity. The objective of these issues is to garner votes from the general population, thereby reinforcing patriarchal values and challenging the hegemonic masculinity that perpetuates such a system of values.

The third conclusion reveals several specific discursive tactics and communication strategies employed by Dveri politicians in practice: a) marking gender ideology as a conspiracy and threat to tradition, nation and moral order; b) protecting family and children from indoctrination; c) using natural order rhetoric with reference to motherhood; d) employing mockery and irony; e) focusing on certain gender issues that provoke (gender sensitive language, school curricula, transgender rights, parental rights). The repercussions of such a political agenda would be detrimental and far-reaching. This phenomenon has been observed to lead to a decline in public support for gender equality and LGBTQIA+ rights, particularly among less informed or more socially conservative demographics. It also exerts a significant influence on media discourse, contributing to the normalization of skepticism and hostility towards feminism and gender equality. Finally, it ultimately gives rise to gender backlash and societal polarization. Although much anti-gender discourse focuses on LGBTQIA+ issues, it often comes with rollback or resistance to feminist claims (abortion rights, violence against women) by denying systemic gender discrimination, or by emphasizing traditional gender roles. For example, claims by Dveri politicians that gender discrimination is no longer a problem in many respects limit the perceived need for feminist policy reform.

The relationship between right-wing politics and women's representation is an issue that merits further investigation. However, the increasing presence of women in leadership roles within right-wing political parties challenges the prevailing notion that there is a direct correlation between the two. The proliferation of right-wing populism on a global scale has enabled the interconnection of national initiatives with the repatriation of society. Moreover, it has exposed the inherent contradictions of the oppressive status of women. Backsliding and de-democratization processes worldwide pose a series of important challenges to established understandings of gender policy change in various social and political contexts.

References

Ajanović, Edma, Mayer Stefanie, Sauer Birgit. 2018. "Constructing 'the people'. An intersectional analysis of right-wing concepts of democracy and citizenship in Austria". *Journal of Language and Politics*, 17 (5): 636 – 654. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.18013.may>

Bitzan, Renate. 2017. "Research on Gender and the Far Right in Germany Since 1990: Developments, Findings, and Future Prospects". In *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, edited by M. Köttig, R. Bitzan, A. Petö, 65–79. Palgrave, Macmillan.

Butler, Judith. 2015. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University Press.

Catalano, Weeks Anna, Meguid, M. Bonnie, Kittilson Caul Miki and Hilde Coffé. 2023. "When Do Männerparteien Elect Women? Radical Right Populist Parties and Strategic Descriptive Representation". *American Political Science Review* 117 (2): 421–438. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000107>

Coffé, Hilde. 2019. "Gender, Gendered Personality Traits and Radical Right Populist Voting". *Politics* 39 (2): 170–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263395717745476>

Čičkarić, Liljana. 2020. "Representation of Women in National Assembly of Serbia. In *Parliament in Serbia from the Perspective of Women*. OSCE Mission to Serbia, Belgrade, 11-30.

Čičkarić, Liljana. 2019. "Women in far-right politics – is it a postfeminist agenda?" *European Conference on Politics and Gender* (ECPG). July 4 – 6. University of Amsterdam.

Čičkarić, Liljana. 2015. "Reconsidering Gender and Women in Politics". *South East European Journal of Political Science* 3 (1): 95-105.

Cventinčanin-Knežević, Hristina. 2018. "Žensko lice desnice: studija slučaja Srpskog pokreta Dveri". *Godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka* 20: 145-161.

Dietze, Gabriele and Roth Julia (eds.) 2020. "Right-wing populism and gender: A preliminary cartography of an emergent field of research". In *Right-wing populism and gender, European perspectives and Beyond*. Transcript Columbia University Press.

Dubslaff, Valérie. 2017. "Women on the Fast Track: Gender Issues in the National Democratic Party of Germany and the French National Front (1980s–2012)". In *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, edited by M. Köttig, R. Bitzan, A. Petö, 159–175. Palgrave. Macmillan.

Erikson, Josefina, Cecilia Josefsson. 2024. "Adverse Contagion? Populist Radical Right Parties and Norms on Gender Balance in Political Institutions". *Politics and Governance* 12: 8179. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.8179>

Félix, Anikó. 2015. "The Hungarian Case". In *Gender as Symbolic Glue. The Position and Role of Conservative and Far Right Parties in the Anti-gender Mobilizations in Europe*, edited by Eszter Kováts and Maari Põim, 85-111. Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Brussels and Budapest.

Geva, Dorit. 2020. "Daughter, mother, captain: Marine Le Pen, gender, and populism in the French National Front". *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 27(1): 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxy039>

Givens, Terri E. 2005. *Voting Radical Right in Western Europe*. University of Texas, Austin.

Indelicato, Maria Elena, Maira Magalhaes Lopez. 2024. “Understanding populist far-right anti-immigration and anti-gender stances beyond the paradigm of gender as ‘a symbolic glue’: Giorgia Meloni’s modern motherhood, neo-Catholicism, and reproductive racism”. *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 31(1) 6–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068241230819>

Jovanović, Marija. 2023. *Nasilje, rod i pomoz’ Bog. Analiza antirodnog diskursa u Republici Srbiji*. Beograd. Udruženje Da se zna. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

Köttig, Michaela, Bitzan Renate, Petö Andrea (eds.). 2017. *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*. Palgrave. Macmillan.

Kováts, Eszter, Maari Pöim (eds.). 2015. *Gender as symbolic glue: the position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilizations in Europe*. Brussels. Budapest. Foundation for European Progressive Studies. Friedrich EbertStiftung.

Krizsan, Andrea and Roggeband Conny. 2021. *Politicizing Gender and Democracy in the Context of the Istanbul Convention*. Palgrave Pivot Cham.

McRobbie, Angela. 2013. Feminism and the New ‘Mediated’ Maternalism: Human Capital at Home. *Feministische Studien* 31(1): 136-143.

Ramos, Miquel, Büttner Frauke. 2017. “Women and Gender Ideologies in the Far Right in Spain”. In *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, edited by M. Köttig, R. Bitzan, A. Petö, 111-127. Palgrave. Macmillan.

Saresma, Tuija. 2018. “Gender populism: Three cases of Finns party actors’ traditionalist antifeminism”. In *Populism on the loose*, edited by E. Kovala, et al., 177-200. Research Centre for Contemporary Culture.

Scrinzi, Francesca. 2014. *Gendering Activism in Populist Radical Right Parties. A Comparative Study of Women’s and Men’s Participation in the Northern League (Italy) and the National Front (France)*. CORDIS. European Research Council.

Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael (eds.). 2009. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London. Sage.

Internet sources

Women Force Dveri. Accessed May 22 2024 <https://dveri.rs/novosti/zenska-snaga-dveri>
Serbian Movement Dveri. Accessed May 22 2024 <https://dveri.rs/zasto-dveri/program/porodicna-politika>

Ljiljana Čiškarić

Institut društvenih nauka, Beograd

lcickaric@idn.org.

*Репрезентовање жена у политици деснице –
случај Српског покрета Двери*

Намера овог текста је да олакша свеобухватно разумевање заступљености жена у десничарском Српском покрету Двери (Двери). Репрезентација жена се може тумачити као сложена и на први поглед контрадикторна интеракција стратешког позиционирања у политици и јачања традиционалних родних улога и вредности. Иако је дошло до значајног повећања броја жена у странкама десног политичког спектра, њихове улоге често служе легитимизацији идеологија које нису у складу са циљевима заштите права жена и родне равноправности. У складу са уводним појмовима, спроведено је квалитативно истраживање коришћењем критичке анализе дискурса страначких докумената, говора и интервјуа са женама чланицама и функционеркама у странци Двери. Изабрана је ова странка за студију случаја, обзиром да се истиче својом антифеминистичком оријентацијом и идеолошким манипулисањем категоријама мајчинства, породице, нације, вере и традиције, у сврху конструисања специфичног политичког идентитета жена, промоције антиродне идеологије и мобилизације подршке конзервативног бирачког тела.

Анализирањем дискурса, дошло се до увида да политичарке у овој странци заступају изразито антифеминистичке и антиродне ставове у својим јавним наступима, као резултат утицаја националистичке, традиционалне и патријархалне матрице друштвених вредности на статус и улогу жена у српском друштву. Њухови ставови о роду су заправо амбивалентни. С једне стране, користе родну равноправност као оружје како би привукли оне који су другачији, а са друге стране, заступају хетеронормативне породичне идеологије и удружују снаге са конзервативним верским актерима како би се супротставили концепту родне равноправности.

Резултати потврђују да жене у овој стрнаци уласком у политику, свесно заузимају више рангиране позиције и користе разне дискурзивне и комуникационе стратегије да би: а) родну идеологију означиле као заверу и претњу традицији, нацији и моралном поретку; б) породицу и децу заштитили од индоктринације; ц) користили реторику природног поретка у вези са мајчинством и породичним вредностима; д) подсмевали се и карактирали садјаје родне равноправности; е) фокусирали се на одређена родна питања која провоцирају (родно осетљив језик, школски програми, транс права, родитељска права). Последице такве политичке агенде су

штетне и далекосежне. Приметно је да овај феномен доводи до пада јавне подршке за родну равноправност и права сексуалних мањина, посебно међу мање информисаним или друштвено конзервативним групама. Он врши значајан утицај на медијски дискурс, доприносећи нормализацији скептицизма и одбојности према феминизму и родној равноправности. На пример, тврђење политичара из Двери да родна дискриминација није никакав друштвени проблем, у многим аспектима ограничава борбу за поштовањем женских права и феминистичким политичким реформама.

Кључне речи: жене, политичка репрезентација, политика десних странака, студија случаја, Српски покрет Двери

*Défense des intérêts des femmes dans la politique des partis de droite:
L'exemple du Mouvement serbe de Dveri*

L'intention de cet article est de contribuer à la compréhension globale de la représentation des femmes dans le mouvement politique serbe de droite, *Dveri*. L'objectif de l'article est d'analyser de quelle façon les femmes politiciennes plaident dans leurs discours publics pour les intérêts des femmes et l'égalité de genre. Un autre aspect important est celui de mettre en relief la manière dont les femmes membres de ce parti prennent des positions antiféministes et anti-genre dans leurs discours publics comme résultat de l'influence de l'idéologie politique nationaliste, conservatrice et patriarcale. Dans le travail est effectuée une analyse critique discursive des documents, des discours et des interviews avec ses adhérents et ses cadres femmes, publiés sur le site web officiel du parti. Les résultats de l'étude confirment que les femmes politiciennes liées à ce parti utilisent une suite de stratégies dans l'objectif de gagner en réputation et en autorité. Une des stratégies consiste en la manipulation par la politique familiale et par la maternité, alors qu'une autre donne l'avantage à des questions telles que l'unité nationale, l'identité nationale et les valeurs traditionnelles. L'orientation anti-genre et antiféministe est évidente dans toutes les allocutions et déclarations publiques. La principale conclusion de cette étude est que l'utilisation de la représentation politique des femmes sert à la légitimation des valeurs politiques populistes de droite et au développement des concepts fondamentaux de régression de genre et des processus de dé-démocratisation en Serbie.

Mots clés: femmes, représentation politique, politique des partis de droite, étude de cas, mouvement serbe de *Dveri*

Primljeno / Received: 5.05.2025.

Prihvaćeno / Accepted for publication: 18.07.2025.