monographs

Zoran Lutovac

POPULISM, STABILITOCRACY AND MULTICULTURALISM

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Introduction

Populism, stabilitocracy and multiculturalism are three social phenomena which have recently been in the spotlight of political science professionals, while simultaneously also capturing the attention of a wider public. This is particularly true of Serbia, where all the flaws and shortcomings of the political community, concerning political culture, constitutional, legal and political system, as well as political life in its wider and narrower senses, are reflections of these three phenomena. Studying these phenomena is important not only in order for us to better understand their nature, but also to be able to confront the consequences they produce.

The central topic of this book is populism, including: the term, usage, definition, manifestations, interpretations, types and nature of, and approaches to populism, as well as components, causes and consequences of the occurrence of populism. Stabilitocracy and multiculturality comprise political and social habitus of populism in Serbia, while liberal democracy and multiculturalism (i.e. interculturalism as its more advanced form) constitute political goals which lead to a well-regulated state and free society. Populism is manifested in different ways in different circumstances, while in turn also affecting those circumstances, which is an important aspect of perceiving and valuing this phenomenon in the book.

Furthermore, the book indicates the flaws of representative democracy, which facilitate the rise of populism, and stresses the structural and external causes for the expansion of populism in Europe, with a special emphasis on authoritarian populism. A separate section of this book is dedicated to

pro-European and anti-populist resistance, where the concept of Europe as a safeguard against the "Populist International" is considered.

All over the world, democracy and populism are intertwined, equalized, or made mutually exclusive, so their correlation is highly significant in understanding today's political trends. In this sense, it is particularly important to study the misbalance between democratic and liberal values in modern democracies. What could be learned from the populists? Can populism stimulate strengthening of democracy? What are the consequences and reach of economic populism? These are but a few questions which challenge the dominant attitude that populism is merely a negative phenomenon which erodes the foundations of democratic society. What is not arguable, however, is the fact that the widened gap between political elites and citizens is certainly an impetus for the occurrence of populism and its expansion in the societies involving different systems and levels of democratic development.

Populism in Serbia, i.e. manifestations of Serbian populism primarily through glorification of the people, anti-elitism and anti-pluralism comprise the central part of this book, in addition to considerations of the institutional and political framework in which this populism is manifested – stabilitocracy. In order to better understand populism in Serbia, the study includes the results of an empirical research concerning the perception of politics, the attitudes of citizens towards the people and political elite, and their attitudes towards representative democracy, leader and "dangerous others".

When in multinational societies populists homogenize the people, they usually homogenize their own national group, while the rest of the people are at the very least excluded, or even more frequently treated as "dangerous others". Due to their diverse nature, multicultural societies become fields of political confrontations concerning identity issues. In this political context, populism has advantage over multiculturalism when there are no rules involving democratic political culture, the rule of law, effective separation of powers and strong institutions protecting public interest. A consequence of the

populist homogenization of the people is anti-pluralism which erodes liberal values in political communities, since in multicultural societies, the fight for pluralism is the fight for the harmony of diversity, while multiculturalism is the manner of diversity management which leads to harmonisation of the political community and society. In that context, the book explores multiculturality and multiculturalism, civic identity and values, Europeanization and national identity.

POPULISM

The term, usage, definition, manifestations, interpretations, approaches to populism, types of populism, the nature of populism, components, causes and consequences of the occurrence of populism.

In political science and social sciences in general, once a discussion on or studying of populism is initiated, it usually goes hand in hand with much tentativeness, where this term is qualified as elusive, and being hard, almost impossible to define in a generally acceptable way. The "elusiveness" of populism is particularly contributed to by the fact that the phenomenon occurs in a wide range of manifestations, as well as in various social and political circumstances. There are many authors who consider it to be one of the least elaborated terms, or political concepts of our times (Taggart, 2002).

Not so long ago, theoreticians of politics ignored, neglected, or underestimated the significance of studying populism. In early 21st century, there were still few theoreticians that engaged seriously with this phenomenon. One of the reasons, apart from its elusiveness, is the multifaceted meaning of the term populism, referred to as "the many headed monster" (Hill, 1974: 181-204)

Even though its manifestation in the political practice could be traced back to the USA at the end of the 19th century, and a movement aimed at preserving the social foundations of the time,1 in modern political science, populism has only recently become a subject of any serious studying. Margaret Canovan is one of those who pointed to the need of systematic studying of populism, as she attempted to emphasize the importance of a more thorough and versatile studying of this phenomenon,

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[1] When it comes to political practice, populism first occurred in the USA, where the People's Party engaged voters with the motto that there was no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats, and that both of them are parts of the corrupted political elite which "stole" democracy from the American people. They failed to establish themselves as a lasting political force, even though they practiced easily digestible populism.

certainly wider than mere examination of populist movements and treating populism as a symptom of certain social pathologies (Canovan, 2004: 241-252).

Approaches and Major Characteristics of Studying Populism

Populism is a general phenomenon manifested in authoritarian societies, developed democracies and transitional societies. In modern scientific literature, populism is analysed as a *political style, manner of political communication, political discourse, strategy of political mobilisation, manner of political organisation*, and increasingly, as *a thin-centred ideology*.

An eclectic mixture of elements of different ideologies is articulated in populism through its major characteristics which remain constant, independent of the type of the concrete symbiosis of ideological elements in question. The major characteristics of populism include: invoking popular will, together with contesting and relativising representative democracy's institutions, and antagonistic attitude towards elites and "dangerous others" who jeopardise the state and/or nation.

In both consolidated and unconsolidated democracies, and especially in societies which are still in the initial phases of becoming developed democracies, populism may be present as a thin-centred ideology, quasi-ideology, or merely a technique, i.e. government style without ideological foundations of any depth. Social and political context essentially establish the limits and determine the nature and range of populism, and accordingly also its consequences. Anti-pluralism, media control and absence of a relevant autonomous civil society are generally among the characteristics of authoritarian populism in unconsolidated democracies.

The causes for the occurrence of populism in consolidated democracies are various and range from those originating in the very structure and manner of functioning of developed democratic societies, down to those concrete (contextual) which occur in times of political and/or economic crises.

It is exactly this eclectic nature, different manifestations, or "chameleonic" nature (Taggart, 2004: 275) which cause populism to be interpreted and defined in different ways and inspire different studying approaches: it is at times studied as a *political discourse, or a manner of political organisation* (Taggart, 2004; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014), it is at times identified with the *populist movement* (Canovan, 1999: 3; Torcuato di Tella, 1995: 985), sometimes it is a subject of studying as a *political mobilisation strategy* (Jansen, 2011: 75, 82), or merely as a *manner of political communication* (Tarchi, 20002; Moffitt and Tormey 2014), or *a political style* (Taguieff, 1995, Tarchi, 2002).

Studying populism as a **political mobilisation strategy** (Jansen, 2011: 82) is oriented towards mobilisation of marginalised parts of the society into a political force. The mobilisation is primarily implemented through nationalist and anti-elitist rhetoric, glorification of the people and contesting present political condition and order.

The approach to studying populism through **political discourse** is based on the presumption that it is necessary to study the practice of political parties and movements in order to identify them as populist or not, whether they are articulated around the keyword 'the people', or some other keywords (non-populist, or anti-populist) such as class, nation, freedom, natural environment. Another important determinant is the degree to which the image of the society they portray is antagonistic, and whether they divide the society into privileged elites and underprivileged people (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014: 123).

When approaching populism and a manner of **organisation of political parties**, Taggart emphasises a high degree of centralisation and the key role of charismatic leader. However, these are not exclusively the characteristics of populist parties.

Those who perceive populism as a **political communication discourse** (Werner Wirth-Frank Esser and others, 2016) or **political style** (Taguieff, 1995, Tarchi, 2002, Moffitt &Tormey, 2014) define populists as those who claim that they represent the interests of the majority of ordinary citizens, regardless of their ideology and manifesting simplicity and directness when invoking the people and claiming to work for the people. They

deem populism to be lacking crucial values, such as freedom, equality, or social justice, so they thus believe that populism cannot be an ideology.

Populism as a frame of thought, or relational concept. Combination of the ideas present in the work of Ernest Laclau (Laclau, 1980: 86) and the proponents of the framing theory, resulted in proposed rejection of the approach to populism as to a thin-centred ideology, and to simply perceive populism as a discursive (cognitive) frame. Discourse, interpreted through an objective framing analysis, becomes the right candidate to re-place ideology and contribute to a superior analytical and met-hodological perspective (Aslanidis, 2015: 1-17).[2]

Most definitions of populism suffer from "inherent in-completeness" (Taggart, 2004: 275). One of the reasons for it is the fact that populism manifests differently depending on con-textual conditions (Priester, 2007). Populism will be argued here within the context of contemporary political reality of Eu-rope and Serbia, starting with the notion that populism is "a distinct set of political ideas" (Hawkins, 2010: 5) which manifest in different ways. It therefore seems appropriate to consider populism as a relational concept (Priester, 2012; Rooduijn, 2013; Werner Wirth-Frank Esser and others, 2016). In order to describe constitutive elements of this concept and their mutual relations, we shall however use the definition of populism as a "thin-centred" or weakly founded ideology.

A relational concept is inherently determined by the rela-tions among the involved constituents. Relational network of populism can in short be described in the following way: soverei-gnty of the people is located in the centre of the network, as the main motive for all the assertions and activities, as well as

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[2] It is proposed that populism is rather conceptualised as a discourse, than an ideology. However, discursive conceptualisation of populism does not imply unselective application of Laclau's concept. On the contrary, the "flaws" are mended by implementing the framing theory perspective on studying populist discourse. The introduction of the term of "populist frame" deals with cognitive aspects of the populist argumentation. The implementation of framing analysis on populism may stimulate empirical efforts, especially quantitative analyses, creating avenues for a compara-tive cooperation within a wide interdisciplinary research project.

the principle of connection, or subject of consideration of all other elements included in the network. The remaining elements, i.e. people, elite and populist create a loose triangle surrounding sovereignty, where each of them holds its unique position in relation to this centre and individual relations. In short, populist ideology asserts that the people are entitled to sovereignty, elite and dangerous others threaten to deny the people this right, while populists aim to protect or return sovereignty to the people (Abts & Rummens, 2007: 408). Therefore, the antagonisms between the people and the elite, or others are naturally established (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 3; Mudde, 2004: 543), while populist maintains positive, or close relationship towards the people, as well as a negative or distanced relationship towards the elite and dangerous others (Barr, 2009).

The proponents of populism as a "thin-centred" (weakly founded) ideology rightly emphasise that populism can be combined with other ideologies, such as socialism, in order to create a more comprehensive outlook on the world. While populism as a "thin" ideology refers to the relation between the people, elite and populists, the populism as a "thick" ideology determines who is included in, or excluded from these groups. Left-wing populism, for example, defines the people as a class and perceives them as an opposition to economic elite; right-wing populism, conversely, defines the people as ethnos and perceives them as an opposition to political and cultural elite.

Sovereignty of People

Sovereignty plays an important role in any given concept of democracy, yet within the populist ideology, it is the essential principle. When criticising the weaknesses of representative democracy, the rule of the people represents the central populist argument. The populist conception of democracy differs from the constitutional and liberal. While, according to these two lines of reasoning, the area of power should remain "an empty space" (constitutional democracy, or be "replaced with entirely anonymous rule of law" in liberal democracy, the populist reasoning implies that the people should exclusively occupy

that area. Politics should be based on a direct expression of the general will of the people (Abts & Rummens, 2007: 406-408). Elites are accused of denying the people this right, and this is the core of the antagonism which populists give primacy to, attempting to impose themselves as a natural solution for the antagonism, while simultaneously presenting direct democracy as a way to overcome this antagonism.

People

People are the holder of sovereignty and as such, represent the key actor of populism (Taggart, 2000: 9; Stanley, 2008: 102; Panizza, 2005: 4; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 6; Canovan, 1999: 4). In populism, the people are designated as homogenous (Stanley, 2008: 102; Rensmann, 2006: 64; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 4), a monolithic group (Taggart, 2000: 92), which form social unity, or community (Baumann, 2001: 12; Jansen, 2011: 84). The people are endowed with certain virtues and described as an inherent and most important good (Taggart, 2000: 93; Jansen, 2011: 84; Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008: 6). Taggart claims that the people can be deemed "silent majority", while populists are those fighting for the people's voice to be heard over the "clamouring minority" (2000: 93).

However, according to Mudde, the people in the populist sense are neither real, nor all-inclusive, but rather a mythically built sub-set of the total population (Mudde, 2004: 546). Such conception of the people originates in the "heartland concept" (Taggart, 1996), an imagination casting glances backwards in an attempt to construct what has been lost by the present (Taggart, 2000: 95). Priester (2012) uses "Middle America" or "La France Profonde" as the examples of the heartland. Bearing in mind the many possible interpretations of the people or the heartland, to create a universal definition seems impossible. 'The people' can instead mean different things to different populists in different circumstances.

Three separate conceptions of 'the people' have been identified in the populist discourse: the first is the **political**, describing the people as being sovereign, as demos, or "United

People". The people as demos consist of all the people in a single political community. The second conception is the **cultural** one, perceiving the people "as a nation", or as "our people" (Canovan, 1999: 5; Kriesi, 2013: 3). This is the people in the ethnic sense, while populism excludes all those who do not belong to the ethos (e.g. foreigners, or others). The third conception – **economic** – describes people "as a class" and makes distinction between the people and the elite.

Elite

In the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, elitism is defined as a "belief in a selected group, or advocacy for leadership or domination of the selected group". Those who support their speciality and above-averageness (elitists) believe them to be the natural social leaders, while their naysayers describe them as self-reproducing, exclusive and non-meritocratic. Elitism is the rejection of populism, just as populism is the rejection of elitism (Skorupski, 2000), not only when not based in meritocratic principles, but even then, since in their essence, elites are perceived as alienated, egotistical and prone to corruption.

Due to the negative connotations of the term elitism, the term meritocracy is increasingly used among liberal democrats to designate the system of social organisation where one's position within the community is based on their ability, rather than wealth, familial descent, or affiliation with a class. In short, this is the society ruled by the most capable. Its critics, the populists being the most vociferous among them, believe that this is merely another way to legitimise the dominant roles of elites in the society.

Within the populist relational network, the people confront "elites" (Mudde, 2004: 543). The antagonistic relationship between these two groups is a characteristic of every type of populism (Hawkins, 2009: 1042; Decker, 2006: 12; Meni & Surel, 2002: 12); is "the main element of populism" (Panizza, 2004: 4; Stanlei, 2008: 102). The antagonism is so powerful and unresolvable that it is described as Manichean (Mudde, 2004: 544). The people and the elite are perceived as originating from two

different realms, those of the good and the evil, the light and the darkness.

Depending on the context and structure of the power, "elites" can be designated as a rather diffuse and heterogeneous groups (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 5). They are usually classified as political elites (government, or political establishment), economic (bankers, managers), cultural (media), intellectual (scientists, authors). What they do have in common are the attributes ascribed to them, making them homogeneous in the populist narrative: elite is represented as "corrupt" and "exploitative" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 4), "immoral" (Jansen, 2011: 84), "selfish" and "arrogant" (Rooduijn, 2013: 6), or being characterised by "incompetence" (Meny & Surel, 2002: 9).

In populism, the identity of elites is simply reduced to alienation from the people, which makes them homogeneous in relation to the people. Conceptualised as the people's antagonist, elites are accused of betraying the people (Jansen, 2011: 84) or for being "unable to deliver on the promises they have given" (Meny & Surel, 2002: 9), or merely working in their own interest and representing themselves only. Abusing the power vested in them by the people, corrupted elites have usurped, deformed and exploited democracy, sometimes to the point of its total degeneration (Albertazzi i McDonnell, 2008: 4). The people, as the true democratic sovereign, lost their rightful place (Rensmann, 2006: 64).

Populist

The third actor in the populist relational network is the populist, the one criticising the elite for usurping sovereignty of the people (Rooduijn, 2013: 102) and strives to return the power to the people and to represent them (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008: 4; Rensmann, 2006: 64). In literature, populists are represented as a movement (Kriesi, 2013), parties (Mudde, 2004), or a single person: charismatic leader. Some scientists believe the existence of charismatic leader to be inherent to populism (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Canovan, 1999; Decker, 2006; Hartleb, 2014; Kriesi, 2013). Others see such leaders as a frequent ingredient of

populism, but do not believe them to be its essential component (Hartleb, 2014; Mudde 2004; Panizza, 2005). Charismatic, eloquent spokespersons of the people are often outsiders of the political establishment (Kriesi, 2013: 7). They implement the people's will (Barr, 2009: 40) and present themselves as people's representatives (Hartleb, 2014: 52).

Dangerous Others

In addition to elites, dangerous others are also excluded from the people: national religious and linguistic minorities, as well as immigrants – they all compromise the homogeneity and purity of the people, they jeopardise and can become a threat for the people. Thus certain authors (Albertazzi & Mc Donnell, 2008: 5) classify them as one of the crucial terms in defining populism, while others do not perceive them as a necessary element, but connect them to radical right-wing populism, i.e. just one of the manifestations of populism. It seems, however, that dangerous others cannot be connected exclusively to radical right-wing populism, providing that left-wing populism, for example, also has its dangerous others, such as big corporations, banks and large capitalists perceived as a threat to the people. The enemies of the centrist, moralist populism are those that undermine the values and moral of the society, and are not reduced merely to elites.

Populism as a Thin-Centred Ideology

For the purpose of this book, we shall use the conception of populism as a thin-centred ideology. The term *"thin-centred ideology"* was first introduced by Freeden in 1996, using it to define thin, weakly founded ideology which becomes complete only in combination with some real and well-founded political ideologies, such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, or nationalism (Freeden, 1996). Political ideologies are interpreted here as political conceptual maps intended for citizens to allow them to better navigate and understand political space (Freeden,

2003) or "*more or less coherent set of ideas that provides a ba-sis for organized political action" and its central features are an account of the existing power relationships* (Heywood, 2002: 43). They mutually differ in relation to the three major components: 1. *account of the existing order*, 2. vision *of the ideal society* and 3. *manner in which the existing condition co-uld be overcome* (Heywood, 2002). When it comes to populism, one might say that it shares the core of these three compo-nents, yet it differs from other ideologies in these three aspe-cts: 1. it blames alienated and corrupted political elites for the bad existing condition, 2. it imagines the ideal society as a so-ciety in which the will of the homogeneous people is exercised, and 3. believes that the way to achieve this is for the people to take the matter into their own hands and decide on all the im-portant political issues (Šalaj-Grbeša, 2017: 328).

Apart from the concept of populism as a thin-centred ideology, we shall herein take into account the typology of po-pulism, including essentialist (radical) and instrumentalist (ma-instream) populism, as well as the fact that in practice, the phe-nomenon of populism is characterised by a number of special traits, and that there is a continuous thread connecting these ideal-typical models. The space between liberal democrats and essentialist populists is quite wide in the political sense, and it accommodates different elements and modes of the populist style, action, or thin-centred ideology. Thus conceived, populi-sm is not only a political discourse, or style, but also a kind of political map which makes it easier for the citizens to navigate the political space, and it will primarily be considered as such.

Starting from the **definition of populism** given by the Dutch political scientist Mudde (2007) and accepted by an in-creasing number of authors who perceive populism as somet-hing more than the manner of political communication, political style, movement, or political mobilisation (Meny and Surel, 2002; Albertazzi & McDonell, 2008; Mouffe, 2013), populism can be designated as a thin-centred ideology which at its core has the idea that politics should reflect the will of the people, the politics which positions pure and moral people in opposit-ion to corrupted elites, as well as dangerous(unwanted) "others"

who, through their action, jeopardise, or compromise the rights and values of the people.

The central idea of populism is that of the existence of pure, honest people and corrupted elites, thus neglecting classes, special interests and individual need. Margaret Canovan perceives this central idea of people's sovereignty as an emphasis of democracy, or the direct reflection of the political will of the majority, contrary to the politics as the art of negotiation, agreement and compromise. Simultaneously, populists perceive themselves as the only true democrats (Canovan 2002: 25-44).

The starting definition that we used is value neutral when compared to those that perceive populism solely as a defect of democracy, such as that proposed by Jan Werner Müller who claims that the populist politics (democracy) is a kind of anti-pluralism, this being its characteristic wherever it is manifested (Müller, 2017). According to this perception, populism renders itself negative, providing that it is anti-pluralist in orientation, while the consequences of it are negative for the society. However, in principle, populism can also have positive effects, providing that it serves as an inspiration for the correction of negative phenomena, when, for example, it opposes the efforts of the political and economic elites to usurp the institutions and mechanisms of representative democracy.

So, populism can, on the one hand, seriously compromise the democratic process and have a negative impact on the protection of human rights, while on the other, it could in principle create options for the recovery of democracy. In other words, populism should be considered within the context, not as an *a priori* threat to democracy, but is also a serious warning about disturbances in democratic processes, or a symptom of the crisis of democracy. Namely, populism can warn about the flaws and weaknesses of democratic orders, as well as about the disturbed relationship between citizens and their political representatives.

Through their radicalisation and simplification of politics, populist actors can disturb traditional democratic standards and values, but can also initiate processes towards de-escalation of social inequalities and motivate a greater number of citizens to become involved

in political processes. Populism can render visible the advocacy for the inclusion of certain groups of citizens into political life, those that have previously been excluded from political processes, while it can also mobilise the society to repair the existing defects and thus contribute to democratisation of the political community. Furthermore, in principle, depending on the aims it adopts, its method and manner of action, populism can be more or less reactionary, or progressive (it can advocate for social justice and more just distribution of wealth), and more or less democratic (vying to involve in the decision-making process those who have been involuntarily excluded from it), or non-democratic (urging for certain social groups to be excluded from the process of making important decisions).

Symbiotic Nature of Populism as a Thin-Centred Ideology

It can be said that symbiosis is a term which is inextricably linked to the phenomenon of populism in both sense and essence: on the one hand, due to their "chameleonic nature", the fundamental elements of the thin-centred populist ideology are symbiotically bound to elements of real ideologies, while on the other, the leader, as the unavoidable implementer (or creator) of the populist idea and programme, is in a symbiosis with the media, via which he/she reaches his/her followers. Populism can, therefore, conditionally be called a symbiotic phenomenon.

Providing that, **apart from the conceptual core of people-elite and wider core which involves its attitude towards representative democracy – dangerous others**, the remaining concrete elements of populism are filled with different contents, depending on the political and social circumstances, populism is often eclectically merged with the elements of other ideologies. Thereby, for example, opposition to the elite as an important element of populism can be manifested in different ways: if elites are liberal, populists act from the right-wing position, and if elites are conservative, populists occupy a part of the left-wing political spectrum. The attitude towards the unwanted "dangerous others" can be either reactionary or

progressive, "leftist" or "rightist". As evidenced by history, populism can also be a foundation for a national movement of heterogeneous organisational structure, but also be connected to a single political party, or a number of them, related to workers' unions, and be either urban or rural phenomenon.

Special types of populism have developed in Latin America, due to specific historical and socio-economic circumstances. The rulers there often utilise the populist discourse, style and manner of government, without firm ideological foundation, or they seek their ideological foundation through eclectic collaging of often disparate elements of both left-wing and right-wing ideologies. Often quoted as the most famous example was *Peronism* in Argentina, which changed the elements of its thin-centred populist ideology depending on the requirements of certain historical moment (Stanišić, 2014: 31-55). The fact that a populist movement such as *Peronism* can easily replace the essential elements of its contents, supports the thesis of populism as a thin-centred ideology. This is evident in the example of economic nationalism and opposition to elites and "dangerous others", where *Peronism* as the general populist movement gave primacy to different ideologies, named after its currently dominant leaders (classical Peronism, Menemism and Kirchnerism were all different variants of the general populist movement). Namely, since its establishment, the Peronist Party changed its ideological grounds a couple of times, depending on the economic and political situation in the country and the power balance between the fractions, and accordingly, a charismatic leader would take the leadership of the party and change the crucial elements of the thin-centred populist ideology at will (Stanišić, 2014: 31-55).

Idealisation of the People and the Heartland (State)

In addition to elitism, pluralism is also confronted with populism. The central idea of populism is that of the existence of the pure, honest people and corrupted elite, and such conception neglects classes, special interests and individual needs. Paul Taggart connects the populist conception of the people

with the concept of **heartland**, implying the idealised communi-ty tailored by and for the populist. That community is often not the ideal to be strived for, but rather an **idealised community which used to exist** before it was corrupted by political and bu-siness elites (Taggart, 2002; 2004).

Essentialist populists believe that the people have (or need to have) the universal and clear will which is properly re-presented by them only, and this does not leave space for di-versity. Political opponents are negated legitimacy of being aut-hentic representatives of the people's will. For essentialist populists, politics is not harmonisation of different interests though political institutions and procedures, but rather "the clash between the good and the evil" where any kind of com-promise is undesirable. The populist concept of the rule of the people represents criticism of the institutions of representative democracy, which are fertile ground for the corruption and alie-nation from the people's will. The established political parties are particularly targeted by the populists who perceive them as the source of artificial divisions of the people, the generator of corruption and usurpers of the public interest.

Everything is much easier in populism than in life, or esta-blished politics. Even though in principle it should not have only negative connotations, populism in practice often manifests its negative traits, sooner or later, which resultes in the fact that when referred to in everyday conversation, populism today commonly implies ostentatious style, demagogy, unrealistic promises and unprincipled sycophancy towards the people (Lu-tovac, 2017a: 50). Just like kitsch in art, populism lacks originali-ty and is showy, cheap, colourful and snazzy, and accessible to all. Populist ideology, weakly founded, but often represented in the media as a grandiose political creation, is commonly but a soap bubble deprived of lasting value.

The attraction of populism is based on calls for immedia-te implementation of the people's will, simple folk speech, uni-fication of the people, or homogenisation in relation to some important issues. It is therefore quite similar to the idea of de-mocracy, yet with simplified interpretation and reduced to the will of the majority, simultaneously marginalising the essentially

important respect for the minority. Instead of pluralism, pushed to the fore are the necessity of people's unification, and direct communication in place of respecting "complicated" procedures (Canovan, 2002: 26).

Those who study populism as a political ideology reduce the essence of populism to the idea that society is divided into two homogeneous, mutually opposed groups – corrupted elite and honest people. Unlike other political ideologies, populism neglects social differences among individuals, including social status, profession, class, or any other socio-cultural or socio-economic diversity. All those differences are negligible for populism, when compared to the common antagonising position in relation to political elites. "Simultaneously, political elite, i.e. political class is treated as a homogeneous category, whereby it is emphasised that there are declarative differences between certain political elites, so we have Christian democrats, liberals, or social democrats, yet there are no true differences among them" (Šalaj - Grbeša, 2017: 326).

Therefore, the mobilisation of the people is aimed at essential changes within the society and political system, towards the abolishment of monopolies and domination of the elite and with the ambition to impose the will of the people. The concept of sovereignty of the people's will is, thus, an important segment of the thin-centred populist ideology. Instead of the alienated and corrupted politicians, the management of social and political processes should be taken over by the people, of course via people's (populist) representatives – i.e. "non-politicians", political volunteers dedicated to interpreting and exercising the people's will.

Essentialist (Radical) and Instrumentalist (Mainstream) Populism

For a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon of populism, theoretical scientific literature differentiates between populism **in the narrow sense** (radical or essentialist populism and populism **in a wider sense** (mainstream or instrumentalist

populism). The former is a "people's" anti-elitist and **anti-syste-mic thin-centred ideology** which divides the society into "us" (just people) and "them" (opponents – enemies of the people); it tends to avoid the common democratic processes and thus weaken political institutions. So, radical populists call into question, and often even reject altogether the model of representative democracy and democratic institutions. Instead of the pluralist political model which is characteristic of liberal democracy and unconsolidated democracies on their path to be transformed into liberal democracies, radical populists tend to create a black and white picture of politics and the society, a representation in which they are the true representatives of the people, opposed to the alienated political elite which, with the aid of alienated democratic institutions, presents its own interests as the interest of the people.

In addition to political elites and ideological opponents, for the right-wing essentialist (radical) populists, the category of unwanted others ("those that we exclude"), i.e. "enemies of the people", also includes foreigners, immigrants, or national minorities. Empirical research (Mudde, 2007; Flecker and others, 2004; Norris, 2005) has shown that the persons who incline towards the right-wing radical populism, apart from the anti-elitist attitudes which are characteristic of every type of populism, also have affinity to authoritarian positions, xenophobia and nationalism. In other words, they make a symbiotic connection between this thin-centred ideology and some elements of the extreme right-wing political discourse, imposing themselves as authentic representatives of the national interest and interpreters of the people's will.

Right-wing essentialist (radical) populism is not a phenomenon associated exclusively with the poor part of the population, as it is often implied in the public discourse. A major share of the citizens with the affinity to right-wing populist parties are those who do not wish to lose their socio-economic positions, whatever they may be, due to, for example, influx of immigrants (Mudde, 2007). Essentialist populist parties gain support when they succeed in mobilising the voters on the basis of the instigated fear, and quite often to supplement their radically

right-wing programmes or rhetoric with some left-wing attitudes when it comes to the socio-economic aspect (opposition to austerity measures and proposing some elements of a strong social state) in order to win over as much voters as possible (Lefkofridi and others, 2014). Right-wing radical populists base their action on the production and exclusion of "unwanted others" on the one hand, while on the other they champion enclosing into the boundaries of the national. As a result, the space is cleared for the advent of authoritarianism, while pluralism is being stifled either indirectly, or immediately.

For the right-wing populists, *the dangerous others* (primarily immigrants and minorities) are also economically dangerous, as they *steal jobs* from "the people", as well as culturally intimidating, as they *jeopardise the culture of the people*.

On the other hand, when it comes to the left-wing populism, the unwanted or dangerous others are often large capitalists, or world powers who exploit the people in collusion with the exponents of their politics in the country. **The left-wing populists leave class approach** in their political discourse, placing the people into the centre of their politics, **looking to involve as much people as possible**. Simultaneously, left-wing populists are not averse to minorities and immigrants that their right-wing counterparts perceive as dangerous others.

What left-wing and right-wing populists have in common are anti-elitism and appealing to people, with dangerous others being social groups not belonging to political elites, yet not being a part of the people either, who are dangerous as they jeopardise the people and/or the state. Another common characteristic is their political capitalisation on the fears from "dangerous others", as they found both their political programmes and their prioritised values on this concept. There are also politicians whose discourse does not contain the concept of dangerous others (like Miro Cerar in Slovenia), so some theoreticians classify them as **centrist populists**. In the centre of their attention is **ideologically neutral need of returning moral values into politics**.

Relationship towards other is the composite element of identity, i.e. the perception that only in relation to other, one can

build awareness of oneself. This is also applicable to peoples and states. Max Webber wrote that ethnic identity is built on difference, that the awareness of belonging is not created in isolation, but on the contrary, by emphasising differences in the process of establishing ethnic borders (Veber, 1976: 323-337; Gadamer, 1989; Eriksen, 2004). Here lies a great potential for the development of populism and its inherent concept of dangerous others. The examples of the states created in dissolution of the SFR Yugoslavia confirm this thesis (Lutovac, 2015: 23-28; Popov, 1993).

Targeted by the radical populists are political elites, as well as some liberal democratic institutions. What fuels these attacks is the criticism of implementing democracy in practice, perceived in the context of "true democracy", democracy as they perceive it (Meny & Surel, 2002: 8).

Essentialist (radical) populists polarise societies, disqualify their opponents in different ways, generate fear of foreigners and incite hostility towards "people's traitors", presenting themselves as the voice of the people which would "remove" all that is standing in the path of people's prosperity. Simultaneously, essentialist (radical) populists represent a danger for the political community and the society, but also a sobering warning to everyone who perceive the attained liberal democratic values as a natural condition and unchangeable fact.

Instrumentalist (mainstream) populism could be primarily defined as a manner of political communication of non-radical political actors, the actors who use populism to win as much support as possible at the elections. They can use a style which contains some elements characteristic of radical populism, yet the actors using it preserve their pluralist perception of the political system, without calling into question the crucial institutions of liberal democracy, or antagonising the society by dividing it into "us" and "them" – political elites and "dangerous (unwanted) others". However, it is possible that, even though they formally do not call into question the crucial institutions, they devalue their importance and influence through their action. Similarly, by utilising for their own benefit the danger of "unwanted or dangerous others", they could also create antagonism in the society.

The demagogy they use does not make them radical po-
pulists, yet the success they have with their demagogy might
encourage them to cross the imaginary line between instru-
mentalist and essentialist populism. The crucial role in this can
be played by the media, especially tabloids, but also tabloidisa-
tion of the so-called "serious media". Successful mainstream po-
pulists amply use media in their self-promotion and reduce the-
ir politics to marketing techniques (Canovan, 1999). Thus
quasi-politics suppresses real politics which becomes unintere-
sting when confronted with sensationalism. The cooperation of
mainstream populists and tabloids/tabloidised media via marke-
ting intermediaries becomes a firm foundation for the domi-
nance at the political scene. Thereby, even though pluralism
and institutions are not called into question, they practically re-
side in the deep shade of the populist manner of communicati-
on. Compromise is despised in political communication, while
"the people's will" interpreted in the populist key represents a
real threat in transforming instrumentalist into essentialist po-
pulism.

In modern Western democracy, the term populism is not
used only for the politics which confronts common people with
the establishment, but also for the politics implemented by
"the insiders", politicians in power practicing a kind of catch-all
politics, using inclusive language to address the people as a
whole (**mainstream, instrumentalist populists**). That kind of
politics was practiced by Tony Blair, who used his success in the
elections to reform the Labour party, distancing it from its so-
cialist workers' image (not differentiating the people on the ba-
sis of this) presenting his Government as a service which wor-
ked in everyone's interest (Canovan, 2004: 243). When it comes
to Serbia, the very same thing can be said for the Serbian Pro-
gressive Party (SNS) and its leader Aleksandar Vučić. This is a
political organisation without firm ideology, which appeals to
all and includes in the ruling coalition everyone they can, regar-
dless of their programme or ideology, and all this is done "in
the people's interest".

Both radical (essentialist) and mainstream (instrumentalist)
populists often try to present themselves as actors outside the

political arena – **non-politicians**, i.e. as those who want to make politics different by demonstrating that they are not like politicians, yet they are forced to engage in politics to achieve the common good that established politicians do not care about.

The role of the populist leader in the operation of populist parties and movements, either essentialist or instrumentalist, is highly prominent (Canovan, 1999; Panizza, 2005; Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008; Šalaj, 2012). The populist leader is prone to messianic behaviour and he/she builds campaigns and overall image on the role of "people's saviour" (Arditi, 2005), direct communication with the people, his/her organic link to the people and aversion to political elite, even though that he/she frequently belonged to that very same elite up to the "moment of enlightenment", or even after it. A major role in this is played by the media with their support of the populist leader in the constructive criticism, but also the demagogy that they transform into political profit. Simultaneously, populist can be objectively interesting to the media, as they make the media more attractive with their rhetoric. This symbiosis proves to be beneficial for both the leader and the media.

Value Neutral Approach to Populism

Different types of populism have inspired authors to different approaches in studying this phenomenon, while different approaches led to ascribing different characteristics to populism: from being a "different face of democracy" and "shadow of democracy" (Canovan, 1999), to "mirror of democracy" (Panizza, 2005) and "spectre of democracy" (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2008). Populism may manifest in countries of developed democracy and economy, countries in transition, economically underdeveloped countries and developing countries (Arditi, 2005). What they all have in common is that populism is related to democracy and its weaknesses. Social and political context, especially in the times of crises, give impetus to populism and it is thus often perceived as a symptom of a crisis of democracy. So, **populism is a consequence rather than cause**

of a crisis of democracy – the consequence which could gene-rate further crisis, or be a warning and motive for its defusing and solving. In other words, the occurrence of populism can deepen the crisis or help in its resolving, which largely depends on political actors in different countries. Important indicators of such crisis include a high number of the poor and unem-ployed, as well as increasing inequalities (Pikkety, 2014). Populi-sm can occur as a reaction to some severe social crisis, or to the dominant feeling that the main political actors or social forces are unable to resolve such crisis (Taggart, 2002).

Democracy on the other hand, is not a given, unchangeable condition, but a process of constant adjustment to social changes (Meny & Surel, 2012: 17). In principle, populist actors can pave the path to reconciliation of economic inequalities and inclusion of a gre-ater number of citizens into democratic processes, can lead to pro-moted tolerance in the society, yet practice shows that things usually move in an entirely different direction. Expansion of the strong lea-ders' politics, of "people's saviours" who "directly" communicate "the people's will" and engage the people emotionally, while making the majority principle absolute, create risk of having the politics which is *superficially democratic, but essentially authoritarian*.

Substantially important ingredient that makes populism relevant, and especially when populism is dominant, is the occu-rrence of a "charismatic" leader and the mass media that su-pport him/her. In unconsolidated (illiberal) democracies, the ground is even more fertile for the occurrence of populism, providing that there is no tradition of democratic political cul-ture, while state and social institutions are underdeveloped, the rule of law is but a designated aim, while authoritarian poli-tical frame of mind is susceptible to the emergence of a messia-nic leader who, with the support of the media, reconceptualises democratic political postulates, or prevents them from beco-ming established. Populists as major political actors are prone to avoiding or abolishing the limitations established in the de-mocratic process, the limitations which safeguard general inte-rest and fundamental rights and freedoms.

In everyday life, populism has become synonymous with demagogy, easily promised swiftness of change for the better,

unrealistic promises, flirting with wide popular masses, indecent flattery to electorate, offering easy solutions for complex problems... In everyday speech, populists are those ready to smear others, incite low sentiments and stir up emotions in order to win easy political points and obtain support. They are designated as tricksters, demagogues, opportunists. It is not uncommon for populism to be similarly interpreted in academic community, among those who, by virtue of their occupation, should be more cautious in using and interpreting concepts and terms.

Populists themselves, either supporters, or immediate actors, perceive populism in an entirely different way than those criticising it or using the term in its predominant everyday meaning. Invoking its original meaning from the times of its initial occurrence, they perceive it as the rule in the name of the people, i.e. the essence of democracy (Dahrendorf, 2003:156).

Populism can be of leftist, rightist, or centrist origin, or rather inspiration, providing that it is often thoroughly changed once it has created a symbiosis with an ideology. It therefore might be better to concentrate on the fact whether a concrete manifestation of populism has a progressive or reactionary outcome; whether it contributes to social changes for the better or for the worse, or it actually prevents any changes from happening.

Whether populism is a defect of democracy, pathological form of democracy similar to right-wing radicalism (Betz, 1994), autoimmune disease (Jan Verner Miler, 2017), or it can in fact be put into a different perspective, as a corrector of anomalies, or at least an initiator of confrontation with the flaws of liberal democracies – this largely depends on the very definition of populism, on the perspective from which populism is perceived and the consequences that it produces.

More and more prevalent opinion is that populism is not a foreign body in the system of democracy, but that it has become rather mainstream in the politics of Western democracy – "populist Zeitgeist" (Mudde, 2004: 542). This has been amply supported by the results of the elections in the European Parliament in 2014, when the majorities voted for the National Front, and the parties which opted for the independence of the UK, as well as for the Danish Popular Party in their respective countries (European

Parliament, 2014). Regardless of whether we talk of populism as a disturbing phenomenon, or popular Zeitgeist, it retains its elusive nature. The phenomenon of populism is not easily studied, especially empirically. Thus the studies of populism employ different research paradigms, rooted in different theories.

Use of the Term 'Populism'

Unselective and frequent use of the term 'populism' led to the constant re-examination of the use of this term. It is not uncommonly heard that the "populism theory" is in fact a quasi-theory which renders relative the meaning of some established phenomena, concepts and ideologies. Is this in fact a theory or simply a conceptual deception (Ziegler, 2018), or possibly both, depending on who deals with populism? On the one hand, a deception which attempts **to ascribe to newer manifestations of the old phenomena more neutral, or less abrasive meaning than the one that these or similar phenomena had in the past**, which as a rule turned into bad practice, while on the other, a deception **which lends negative connotations to justified social and political initiatives**.

So, inappropriate use of the term of populism in the public discourse may serve to **make some dangerous phenomena seem banal, but also to downgrade some justified demands**. On the one hand we have an attempt to depersonalise some dangerous extreme rightist movements and their demands through the use of the term, while on the other, some serious social initiatives such as those concerning better healthcare or investments in education are designated as being populist. Vesting the characteristics of "scientific objectivism" to the inadequate use of the term of populism, additionally contributes to the general confusion in relation to populism.

Historically speaking, populism has been used for **1. Strengthening of the democratic aspect of liberal democracy** – involvement of a larger number of people in decision making process, but also for **2. Weakening of the liberal**, when the demands for strengthening of the democratic have disturbed the balance of these two values, and **3**. Formulating and utilising **unrealistic promises for the purpose of political profit**.

The motives which led to mobilisation of the people also define the very nature of the populism, together with the manners of utilisation and achieving results in the process.

When political parties are chauvinist, racist, anti-minority, and parties which see enemies all around them – then their designation as populist is in fact camouflaging their dark essence. When, for example, anti-liberal and essentially anti-democratic parties are ascribed the attribute of populism, this actually makes them more acceptable in the public discourse. Such parties erode democracy, or embryo of democracy where democracy is still not fully developed. Upon coming to power, they create or strengthen electoral autocracy, abolish control and balance of power, monopolise media and public institutions.

For the right-wing radicalism, the term of **populism is an anaesthetic substance – the agent of their socialisation** and the danger of banalisation is all the greater as the radicalism of the right-wing ideas is more pronounced3. On the other hand, identification of populism with left-wing traditionalist parties primarily represents dilution of justified social demands.

The essential difference between radical right-wing actors and mainstream populists is that the former are anti-systemic, while latter are anti-establishmentarian actors (this includes both left-wing and right-wing radicalism). The fact that someone is a radical rightist does not mean that he/she does not practice populism, yet his/her dealings cannot be reduced to populism, or be designated as such, because this camouflages the substance of right-wing radicalism, while populism is reduced to a single manifestation of the phenomenon. It is thus necessary to emphasise the symbiotic nature of populism and make distinction between these terms and phenomena. This is also true for radical leftist actors and the use of the term of populism in this context.

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[3] In 2017, Germany saw more than 23,000 hate crimes, around 900 asylum houses were attacked, 1,313 physical assaults committed, 18 murders attempted. The so-called "populist" parties, such as the AfD, create proper atmosphere for this hatred. Tamas Dezso Ziegler, "The Populist Hoax – Getting the Far Right and Post- Fascism Wrong", *Social Europe,* 2 February 2018.

Marginalisation of the Left and Breakthrough of the Radical Right under the Auspices of Populist Relativisation

The Italian election of 2018 confirmed further strengthening of populism and marginalisation of the Left, as well as that the rise of populism and nationalism is not limited to the "margins of Europe", as it has frequently been stated (Rae, 2018). However, there are considerable differences between right-wing radical political parties and movements and those profiled as left-wing.

Regardless of this fact, the parties and movements such as Syriza, Podemos and to an extent British Labour Party are lumped together on the basis of their populism with the parties such as Alternative for Germany (AFD) or National Front in France. These examples confirm that populism may be and is used for relativisation of radical rightist ideas. Also, none of the aforementioned left-wing options is exceedingly radical in their ideas, manifestation and action, so they can by no means be designated as extreme.

The problem does not lie in the very definition of populism, but in wide definitions intended to relativise right-wing extremism. In other words, a definition is not problematic if it excludes the possibility of such relativisation. However, if no clear distinction exists, then this serves to perpetuate the fallacy that no essential difference exists between leftist and rightist extremism. This position has gained momentum in the last couple of years, developed from the theory of "totalitarian twins" of fascism and communism (posited by German historian Ernst Nolte) into **the idea that the acceptable politics is primarily focused on excluding the extreme options from the left-wing and the right-wing sides of the political spectrum**.

Deviation of "The Third Way" from the Left

The idea of removing both leftist and rightist extremes was promoted by the Blairists, their initial thesis being that the old Left and Right did not exist anymore and that the

Progressivists should occupy and widen the political centre. It is important to note that this idea won many a supporter in the age of the prosperous post-materialist capitalism, and that one of the main messages concerned the importance of **widening the middle class** on the basis of post-materialist values, thus providing social and political foundation for the rising political centre. However, "bursting of the financial bubble" in 2008 and the major financial crisis that ensued, called into question such strategy. Namely, on the wave of the idea of widening the Centre, mainstream European social democrats became accomplices to the protagonists of financial capitalism, which induced a drastic fall of these parties' ratings all over Europe (Rae, 2018). In both the West and East of Europe (countries such as Hungary and Poland), social democrats openly embraced the ideology of the "third way" and economic programmes which fully empathised with the dominance of financial capital, which seriously degraded their credibility in the eyes of the voters. Their defeats cleared the way for the rise of populism.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Experience shows that populism can be stimulating for the process of destroying the democratic substance encrusted with formal democracy, yet its identification with malignant social phenomena adds confusion in studying the populism of these very phenomena, since it serves to relativise its contents and significance. Those who used to be called extremists, Nazis, or fascists are now designated populists in the public discourse (Bar-On, 2019), i.e. they are made equal to those political groups who utilise populist narratives to add attraction to certain social demands and leftist ideas.[4] To give the same name to those who demand healthcare for all and want pensions to be adjusted in line with the inflation, and those who relativise the

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[4] In Serbia, the process is reversed: benign phenomena are ascribed malignant characteristics. By using too strong a terminology, inadequate characteristics are ascribed to people and things. This is particularly true when it comes to the use of the term fascism by the ruling parties and the media under their influence, but also by some opposition parties.

universality of human rights, is unacceptable, both scientifically and socially. The demands for a better access to universities cannot be given the same name as the outcry for the abolishment of migrants' rights. So, the term populism should not be used as a synonym for aggressive and radical rightist movements, let alone for the political movements and groups which fight for elementary justice and social protection (Ziegler, 2018).

However, what brings together these ideologically opposed political options is their negative attitude towards political elites, weaknesses of representative democracy and their sycophancy to the people who should "take the matter into their own hands". What does make the difference, however, is their attitude towards "dangerous others", differently perceived and interacted with by these two political options.

Many an anti-democratic party uses democratic mimicry to camouflage itself. These parties are actually thoroughly anti-democratic, which is best revealed once they come to power. They do not believe in democracy and its fundamental values, such as pluralism, or equality, where every human being is assessed in line with his/her merit, rather than some inherent biological characteristics. "Most of these parties are based on the same anti-enlightenment attitude which served as the core of historical Fascism" (Ziegler, 2018).

Populists do not wish to appeal to all, but only to those that they designated as the people. On the contrary, populists need dangerous (unwanted) others in order to establish themselves as people's representatives, protecting them against those dangerous others. These may include national (ethnic) minorities, political opponents discredited as enemies, or external dangerous others – certain states, neighbours, global forces, international companies, nongovernmental organisations… Populist have their finger steadily on the pulse of those that they designated as the people and they tell them what they want to hear, offering them the very things that they would like to have, or achieve.

Populism – A Global Phenomenon

The weaknesses of representative democracy: space for the rise of populism – Structural and external causes of the expansion of populism in Europe – Authoritarian populism – Populism in Western and Eastern Europe – Pro-European anti-populist resistance

Apart from the systemic preconditions for the appearance and strengthening of populism – primarily those related to the weaknesses of representative democracy – significant factors in it strengthening also include some global phenomena such as **the increase in inequality and terrorism, or the great migration wave**. Searching for solutions to these challenges, populists all around the world have found favourable atmosphere to develop and carry out their own political agenda.

In addition to the traditionally "favourable" atmosphere in Latin American countries, populism has been finding strongholds in the USA, the United Kingdom, Greece, Russia, Turkey, and Europe-wide… Authoritarians are growing stronger, and the range of their rule is only limited by the amount of strength possessed by the institutions, democratic practices, and political cultures in the countries where they rule.

What connects them? What do all of them have in common? What are the characteristics they all share?

The Weaknesses of Representative Democracy: Migrants, Alienated Elites – Space for the Rise of Populism

People's struggle for sovereignty against alienated elites and the weaknesses of representative democracy is the common thread that links different populists. Distrust of and even doubts about democratic institutions frequently appear in times of economic crises such as the one in Greece, or in times of "dangers to cultural identity" and security, which have spread on the wave of mixed migration via Turkey and Greece farther across Europe. Of

course, the losers of globalisation, that is, victims of the global la-
bour share and development of technology, nearly complete the
picture of those who are potentially dissatisfied and thus prone to
supporting populist responses to life challenges.

In many countries, institutions and established political par-
ties have not managed to cope with such challenges by means of
standard democratic practices, so populist parties, movements,
and individuals entered the empty political and social space, offe-
ring simple solutions for facing these challenges. The narratives of
populists, as well as extremists, were reduced to the established
parties having missed the opportunity they had, institutions being
in the service of corrupt and estranged politicians instead of the
people, and new social forces (movements) appearing which wo-
uld, on behalf of the people, for the benefit of the people, and in
direct communication with the people, solve the problems that
the established parties could not or did not wish to solve.

The empty space **in Greece** was filled by the left-wing popu-
list Syriza and the far-right Golden Dawn, which criticizing the
system managed to upstage the established PASOK and New De-
mocracy precisely because citizens equated the latter two with
the system. The trigger for this was financial crisis, the decline of
the standard of living,5 as well as the migration wave, which brou-
ght up the questions of security and threatened identity. The lea-
der of Greek's Syriza, Tsipras, is one of the populists who promised
to overcome institutional obstacles once his politics for the people

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5 "Enterprises, trade unions and professional groups sought political favour
   to advance their interests, each at the expense of others. New Democracy
   and PASOK, the two parties that exercised power alternately from 1974
   until 2011 favoured the groups that supported them by offering protection
   to groups that felt threatened by the market and by increasing employ-
   ment in the public sector. The logical outcome was a generalized opposi-
   tion to structural reforms. ... The accumulation of debt did not preoccupy
   politicians, since they could secure credits from the European Central Bank.
   This politico-economic model was obviously irrational. It was dominated by
   state-dependent oligopolistic enterprises, trade unions, protectionism at
   all levels and subsidized enterprise. This model crumbled with the world
   recession of 2008. The Greek economy as well as society suffered a rude
   shock. Unemployment rose to more than 25%, and accumulated debt had
   to be repaid." Dimitris Dimitrakos, "An Anti-liberal Challenge – Populism in
   21st Century Greece," in Proceedings: *Abusing the People: Global Challenges
   of Authoritarian Populism*, Libertarian Club – Libek, Belgrade, 2017, p. 72).

was achieved (2017), but the same kind of populism had also been promoted by Andreas Papandreou, the leader of the established PASOK (1989), who said that "institutions should not stand in the way of the people's sovereign power" (Dimitrakos, 2017: 71). Just like this early populism, the modern one also does not entirely call into question the political or social system, and it is therefore not revolutionary although the very fact that it calls for "bypassing" the system and institutions gives it a measure of destructiveness. Such an approach is not anti-democratic – on the contrary, it purports to present itself as popular and democratic, although it is deeply anti-liberal, anti-pluralistic, and inimical towards open society. The limitless rule of the majority over the "defeated" minority is a banalized and deeply wrong interpretation of democracy, whose roots can also be traced back to the undemocratic political culture and tradition of the recent political history of many countries, including Greece.

Nevertheless, in the elections of 7 July 2019 Syriza lost the majority support of citizens. This could not be called a defeat, although the party won over 30% of the vote and New Democracy nearly 40%, because it practically did not fulfil any of the promises made in the previous elections and, additionally, it resolved the dispute over North Macedonia's name in a way that was not so popular in Greece. Hence Syriza lost the election formally though not in essence, bearing in mind the relation between promises made and fulfilled. On the other hand, the radical right-wing Golden Dawn did not cross the 3% electoral threshold, which could be brought into direct relationship with the fact that migrant crisis in Greece was not in the forefront of the campaigns.

The example of Greece confirmed some earlier experiences of populists being unsurpassable at making promises, but it also confirmed that fulfilling promises is a huge problem. Therefore, the example of Greece also showed that populists rise and fall precisely on easily given unfounded promises.

The peak of populism **in the United Kingdom** can be seen in the Brexit referendum results. Regardless of the strong campaign of public opinion makers, the political and economic elite, and the university (or is it due to this campaign?), the

citizens of the UK voted "leave" in Brexit. The role of immigrants in the campaign was important. It is generally believed by the supporters of Brexit that *immigrants* from the EU brought benefits for the rich and educated middle classes, whereas their presence has been perceived as a realistic threat to manual labourers and rural manpower.

Additionally, the same syndrome was developed in the UK as in the wealthier republics of Yugoslavia, which on the eve of the breakup of SFRY considered that they were financing unproductiveness and laziness of the citizens of those less developed republics. The opinion was widespread in the UK that vast amounts of money were being sent to *Brussels* to be spent without a clear purpose by *the irresponsible elites*, and that that EU administration was parasitizing on the UK tax payers. What is more, the EU administration was also imposing a whole lot of unnecessary regulations to curtail the freedom of small businesses or business in general. In accordance with the evolution of populism in other developed democracies, the citizens here also viewed the political and economic elites, as well as journalists, as a special political class (or caste) which was completely alienated from ordinary people and absorbed in nothing but their own interests.

In Italy, Beppe Grillo came into power promising to take power from the self-sufficient geriatric "political caste" and fight for a more modern and tolerant Italy. When the Five Star Movement became strong enough, it soon assumed anti-systemic narratives, in accordance with the matrix of populism. Grillo's attacks on certain politicians' corruption and affairs gradually turned into a radical rejection of the key aspects of the political system, including the parliament itself. Dissatisfaction with the political establishment is one of the key initiators of populism-related engagement, and one so strong that it launched a proliferation of conspiracy theories and open lies about political opponents, thus turning from an anti-establishment into an anti-systemic discourse.

In Eastern Europe, populists have more and more frequently been defeating traditional parties in the elections or have otherwise become strong enough to be inevitable coalition partners, or the main opposition at the very least. Of the 15

Eastern European countries, populist parties in 2018 were in power in seven, part of the ruling coalition in two, and main opposition in three. Populist parties in 2000 had 20% or more votes in only two Eastern European countries, and this result was by 2018 achieved in ten Eastern European countries (Siera-kowski, 2018). The onslaught of populism would look even more dramatic if various forms and contents within the established parties were also taken into consideration.

There is more and more evidence to sustain that we are in an era of populism. The question is to what extent this will affect the basis of liberal democracy and the "democratic world order." Democracy is stable when all main political actors stick to the basic rules of the game of democracy. Some of these rules are formal, and some are customary, tacit, implied. The president or prime minister shall not obstruct justice during investigations of government members. The freedom of the press shall not be restrained, journalists shall not be persecuted or blackmailed. When the election is lost, power shall peacefully be given over… Certain limitations to party interests have to exist so that the rule of law would not be turned into a one-party state. There are more and more countries in which this, thanks to the populists, does not any longer go without saying. And this is the key factor for the phenomenon of populism persistently being one of the main themes of political science.

Structural and External Causes of the Expansion of Populism in Europe

The strengthening of populism in Europe is on the one hand related to the strengthening of **resistance to economic globalisation**, whereas on the other hand the rapid strengthening of populism corresponds to the **migrant crisis**, which reached its peak in 2015 and 2016. Both these causes (occasions) for the strengthening of populism also opened the questions of the place and role of **national states within the EU**.

Or is this perhaps a mere coincidence? Are the stated causes overrated when compared to the **structural**

weaknesses of representative democracy? If not, it certainly is a challenge for social sciences to perform research to determine the extent to which the migrant crisis influenced the expansion of populism. Associations to populism are varied and numerous: the strengthening of Jarosław Kaczyński's Law and Justice Party in Poland confirmed in October 2015, followed by Brexit in the UK in June 2016. The rise of popularity and influence of the far-left has also been noted in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and then the Eastern Europe, particularly Hungary. "The defence of Europe against immigrants" is becoming a significant political topic.

Populists came into power in Italy at the beginning of 2018, and in March that same year Putin showed his power in the Russian elections. In April 2018 Viktor Orbán led the populist campaign against "dangerous others," the enemies of the Hungarian state: migrants and the external enemy from the world of finances, embodied in George Soros – and he won a convincing majority. Erdoğan grew factually and institutionally stronger before and after the referendum on power concentration, attacking both internal and external enemies… The sharpening of rhetoric and politics by the strongmen rulers within and among the Balkan countries is more or less connected to populism, and the strengthening of populism in turn also related to the great migration wave, although this is still not the dominant political theme in the Balkans.

Fear manipulation and manipulating threats dominate over the international political scene, which is in the growing number of European countries used by the right-wing populists, whereas left-wing populists deal with the **redistribution of economic power**, thus upstaging the faltering social democrats from whom voters wish to hear less and less.

Populism is precisely the phenomenon which is with more or less justification being related to these seemingly incomparable states and regimes. On the other hand, the question is raised of whether populism, in itself controversial, can be the least common denominator of research into the political events and phenomena in such different states.

Populist movements and narratives search for and find their strongholds not only in the great migration crisis but also in traditional sources: **nationalism, anti-elitism, anti-liberalism, nativism, and increasingly in anti-globalism**. It is precisely anti-globalism that has been recruiting a great number of populism makers and supporters, thus dominantly marking the phenomenon of populism for the 21st century.

Populism manifests through manipulations of the media, the production of pseudo-events, politicisation of court verdicts, proclamation of political opponents as enemies, production and formation of "dangerous others."

Populism does not only appear as an "alternative" to the established parties – it is at the same time infiltrating them as well as society on the whole. The narrative of populism widens the gap between the political class and society, **but it does not provide rational answers to the crisis of representative democracy**. Populism grows in the atmosphere of political and social divisions and favours the destruction of "the people's enemy" over compromise. It is formed on and developed from citizens' loss of confidence in the established parties as well as institutions of representative democracy, but it also disappears due to failed expectations. **It finally turns out that easily given promises are not fulfilled, and therefore populists lose their trust**. This is how the circle of distrust, easily given and unfulfilled promises, and failed expectations is closed.

Apart from the examples of populist breakthrough, there are also examples of **successful resistance to populism**: from Macron in France, through the formation of the great coalition in Germany, which united CDU/CSU and the moderate-right and moderate-left SDP, "everything-but-the-populists" in the Netherlands, to the moderate left in coalition with the radical though pro-European left in Portugal (Botopoulos, 2018).

Austria presents a completely different example of facing populism: the co-opting of right-wing populists into the ruling coalition. Although it can instigate processes for the removal of the defects of representative democracy, the example of Austria shows that populism is in its essence most usually irrational and of anti-pluralistic orientation, as well as dangerous to democratic values – and therefore

cannot be suppressed by any similar populist methods or means. It is exactly the opposite – it is necessary to search for the ways to remove the defects of democracy and allow for a more direct and active participation of citizens in the formulation and fulfilment of political goals through adequate rational narratives, better communication, more frequent contacts and closer connections with citizens.

Authoritarian Populism
Reducing populism to leaders' personal characteristics and ways of communication

Apart from the listed structural causes, it is with more and more frequency that leaders' personal characteristics and ways of political communication are being stated as what populists have in common: xenophobic language, attacks on "the elites," and despise and disgust for international institutions of all kinds. What links Donald Trump, Viktor Orbán, Andrej Babiš, Jarosław Kaczyński, and Marine Le Pen, according to Anne Applebaum, is one simple personal characteristic: hypocrisy. These politicians are not people's tribunes, they are hackers. They are not enemies of the Western system: they are frauds who strive to profit from xenophobia, anti-elitism, anti-globalism, nationalism.[6]

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[6] "How else to interpret the news that Trump's Bedminster, N.J., golf club, the one his aides refer to as the 'Summer White House,' has employed illegal immigrants ... a similar story appeared in Prague. Babis, the Czech prime minister, is another politician who likes to talk up his opposition to migration. Yet the factories controlled by his holding company, Agrofert, employ a wide range of underpaid foreigners: Vietnamese, Mongolian, Ukrainian. A journalist who recently visited one of the factories found Vietnamese families living in company-owned accommodation. Again, these aren't accidents or small slip-ups: These are long-standing policies going back many years. Hypocrisy is also the signature character trait of Orban, the Hungarian leader who has cleverly styled himself as the enemy of 'immigration' and the European Union. Follow the money, and the story is different: Even as Orban's anti-immigration rhetoric reached hysterical levels, his government was running a 'Golden Visa' program that allowed more than 19,000 people, including some well-connected Syrians, to buy residency in Hungary. Naturally, people close to the prime minister appear to have benefited; unsurprisingly, many people close to the prime minister have also personally benefited from E.U. funding programs. ... Hypocrisy is not limited to those "populists" in power. Le Pen's anti-European party long sustained itself using money from the European Parliament. Hypocrisy does not only concern immigration, either. Kaczynski, the Polish 'populist' leader,

So, hypocrisy, or rather the way of acting and communicating, does help explain why all of these leaders, as soon as they get anywhere near power, instinctively seek to undermine the press, to remove judicial independence and to control prosecutors and police. It also explains why they are such "notorious liars." Their private agendas are very different from the ones they declare in public, and they don't want any of us to find out (Applebaum, 2019).

In order to survive as competition for the authoritarian populists, mainstream politicians should understand the causes of citizens' (popular) dissatisfaction and renew the founding principles of democracy. "Until recently, liberal democracy reigned triumphant. For all its shortcomings, most citizens seemed deeply committed to their form of government. The economy was growing. Radical parties were insignificant. Political scientists thought that democracy in places like France or the United States had long ago been set in stone, and would change little in the years to come. Politically speaking, it seemed, the future would not be much different from the past." (Mounk, 2018a).

However, citizens are disappointed with parties, governments, and politics in general; they have become anxious, angry, bitter even. They have also become essentially unhappy with representative democracy and all of its specific weaknesses. Authoritarian populists, on the wave of this dissatisfaction, are in expansion globally. Neither they nor their voters see any problems in it. On the contrary, authoritarians consider themselves to be the real response to all the weaknesses of representative democracy, whereas their voters vote for them for

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has railed against supposed networks of former communists in Poland, claiming they've been making money out of former state property. Yet he has recently been accused of serving as the de facto controller of a company that did a deal to procure land from the state in the 1990s; the company has big plans to build skyscrapers on the land and employs a former secret police informer as its nominal chairman. Hypocrisy isn't even limited to "populists" on the right: Hugo Chávez's crusade on behalf of Venezuela's poor quickly turned into a kleptocratic money grab that left the people around him extremely wealthy." Anne Applebaum, "It's not xenophobia that links the 'new populists.' It's hypocrisy" https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/02/11/its-not-xenophobia-that-links-new-populists-its-hypocrisy/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.619ce7231012

different reasons, but with common dissatisfaction as to **how democracy works** and **why the political elites are alienated**.

The example of Donald Trump is often cited as the most striking manifestation of democracy's crisis at the global level. He is a typical example of the populist who appeals to the people. However, he defines the people in typically populist terms: the people are those who support his politics. Thus, on 7 May 2016 Trump declared that "the only important thing is the unification of the people – because the other people don't mean anything," clearly implying that among the USA citizens there are those who do not belong to the people. He referred to the media as the enemies of the people, thus ticking one of the obligatory boxes for a clear profiling of populism. So, the other people either do not matter, or else they matter as the people's enemies, which is marked as the central characteristic of authoritarian populism.

In Russia and Turkey, elected strongmen successfully remove the limitations to their own rule institutionally or outside institutions. In Poland, Hungary, and Serbia, populist leaders are using almost the same mould to destroy the free media, undermine independent institutions, and muzzle the opposition.

The populists who are in symbiosis with radical ideas are on the rise, just like those who actually form the radical right in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and even Sweden, and hide their extremism behind patriotic slogans. "Hiding" was in the public sphere aided by the public opinion makers, who reduced their extremism to populism.

As has already been stated, right-wing extremists are not the same as populists, and designating them as such leads towards a dilution of their extremist nature. They use populist narratives and populist ways of public communication, but their activities are more detrimental to political culture and the founding institutions of representative democracy than the populism of more moderate political groups of any ideological background. In Greece and Spain, the victories of the populists, or rather the defeats of the established parties, have challenged the very foundations of the multi-party system, but these cases still did not entail extremism of the kind that would undermine the foundations of European values.

In some other countries, the extreme right-wing options, designated as populists with attenuation, directly shake those very fundamental values. In Austria, the far-right candidate came close to becoming president. In France, the extreme right-wing politicians united everyone in support of the opponent of their candidate in the presidential elections. The political atmosphere throughout Europe is changing rapidly, right-wing extremism is becoming more and more visible, the Left has lost its traditional voters due to its flirtations with large capital and their more or less open support for financial fundamentalism.

And this is where a clear line should be drawn between right-wing populism and right-wing extremism: along questioning (that is, not questioning) the European values of democracy and liberalism.

The extreme right has even on a cultural level been imposing topics and bringing into question the basic European values: Jörg Haider undermined the value foundations of liberal democracy with a re-evaluation of Austria's Nazi past, claiming that "our soldiers were not criminals, at most they were victims." Geert Wilders, the leader of the Dutch Freedom Party, has said that Islam is "a dangerous totalitarian ideology." While other extremists who have been called populists have sought to outlaw minarets or burkinis, Wilders has gone so far as to demand a ban on the Qur'an (Mounk, 2018a).

Italy – A Complete Triumph of Populism

A real political earthquake in the generally shaky Italy was caused by the populists of the Five Star Movement and the League. They made Italy into the first Western European country to be entirely in the hands of populists (Cotta, 2018).

The populist Italian Five Star Movement (M5S), which surfaced during the 2013 parliamentary elections, was created from the great rallies organized by comedian Beppe Grillo against "the caste" – his derisory name for what he considered the ruling class of the country's professional politicians and journalists. With 32% of the vote, the Five Star Movement became the

strongest political group in Italy. The success of the populists was made complete by the runner-up League, which had gone through a successful transformation from the regional Northern League into the National League, and Forza Italia, another populist group which had since 1994 been dominant in right-wing coalitions. This populist trio completes the picture of the general expansion of populism in Europe and indicates the dominance of the politically versatile and party-wise unstable Italy. Between 1994 and 2008 Forza Italia led the government three times, but the populists had never before had so many votes as in 2013. That year the populist narrative of Forza Italia was not so attractive, partly because of the populist competition, and partly because their campaign lacked focus and leader Berlusconi's appearance was limited. That was how the thus far greatest populists were replaced by even greater ones.

The two greatest populist groups, which make up more than 50% of the vote, are characterized by pronounced **criticism of current national and European policies**, that is, of the elites at home and the administration in Brussels. Their critical attitudes towards the governing coalition and the EU were the crucial points of their campaign, together with the promise of a referendum on the Euro. From the structural point of view, key reasons for the success of the populists include a mix of contextual and political factors: apart from their negative stance towards the EU, the citizens do not perceive that enough has been done economically to alleviate the consequences of the deep recession after the Great Economic Crisis, which has given rise to fear of unemployment and the decline of the standards of living. The Five Star and League leaders based their electoral platforms on very salient and popular issues: the former on **moralisation** of political life and criticism of the political elite that gives shape to the political life, the latter on **the migration question** and **the EU challenges** (Cotta, 2018).

There are, therefore, elements of both right-wing and left-wing as well as centrist populism. They are, of course, much more heightened in the campaign than when the real opportunity is obtained to rule the state and its political processes. In other words, it can be expected – as in the cases of other

populist movements – that the sharpened campaign rhetoric is attenuated once the opportunity to govern the country is obtained. To this effect, it is expected that threats to Brussels should be reduced to looking for compromise solutions and not to refusing cooperation, as was announced during the campaign.

The general tendency of the decline of support for the left-wing parties was also seen in Italy when the ruling Democratic Party lost the elections. In this case too, just like throughout Europe, it became clear that **the established left was losing its social basis**: Milan suburbs, for example, voted on a mass scale for the nationalist populist League, whereas the poorest areas of Rome and Turin voted for the Five Star Movement. In all three cities, the Democratic Party, which belongs to the established left, received the most votes in the richest urban zones (Melloni, 2018).

In the industrially developed North, the voters supported the League, which put an emphasis on the reduction of tax rates and opposed the arrival of immigrants, whereas the economically less developed regions in the South, with a high rate of youth unemployment (somewhere even up to 60%), voted overwhelmingly for the Five Star Movement, whose campaign centred on the struggle against the corrupt elite and the advocacy for a guaranteed basic income (Reichlin, 2018).

The ideological turn towards neoliberalism in the once individually strongest Communist Party destroyed its social roots, thus pushing away its traditional voters. Opting for the "Third Way" and striving to expand their electoral base, social-democratic parties in Italy as elsewhere lost what base they used to have ("in what looked like a solid two-bloc political system," Nicola Melloni). The democrats spoke of financial markets and responsible economic policy – and never of exploitation and inequality, which their former and potential voters wanted to hear. And while they pointed to the significance of pro-market ideology, the inequality and poverty that eroded the middle classes became the topics of the populists.

Furthermore, Branko Milanović has pointed that both the working and the middle class are the real losers of globalisation. Elections are now also fought on the extremes, not from

the centre (in England, the USA), through populist platforms. The protest vote in Italy could not find any significant leftist representation. The Free and Equal Party, formed from the Democratic Party, did not win more than 3% of the vote. It transpired that there was not one credible leftist party that could gain the trust of the working class. The Free and Equal Party grasped the full extent of the loss of support for the Democratic Party, but it did not realize that merely facing the past mistakes would not suffice and that *the voters wished more than an ameliorated and more presentable version of the establishment.*

Confirming the nature of populism as a thin-centred ideology which forms a symbiotic relationship with the established ideologies, the Five Star Movement had classical electoral components of the radical left in its programme, which helped them win the elections in the poorest regions of the country and among the youngest voters. They also obtained support and the vote of 50% of the unemployed (Nicola Melloni, 2018), thus capitalizing on the voters' **frustration with the political class** (the people versus oligarchy, "the corrupt political caste") and trying to relax the economic insecurity of the voters pleading for a universal basic income. In other words, the populists offered all the things that the established left did not, thus taking over their electorate. *Still, their programme or narrative did not contain any essentially important answers to the economic questions such as the relationship between the workers and capital, inequality, or capitalism itself.*7 This seems to be the case outside Italy too. The left would have to ask some crucial questions and offer a realistic alternative to the functioning of neo-liberal economy, that is, the economy of market fundamentalism.

The EU would have to carry out institutional reforms to strengthen the processes of integration, its value system, and the democratic political culture, so as to have further influence on its member states and candidates, particularly as regards restraining populist tendencies and curbing the liberal elements of representative democracy and, finally, pluralism itself.

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7 "Rather, they are a populist but centrist political force – opportunistic enough to ride any battle that can bring consensus, but **without any ambition to change, or even reform, the system**. This is exactly what is missing in Italy," Nicola Melloni, Nothing s Left", *Social Europe*, 14 March 2018.

The Temptation of Populism in Germany

Considering the fact that populism is not in itself ideology but needs a symbiotic relationship with certain complete ideologies, numerous established political parties of different ideological and programme orientation use populism as a means of communication in order to obtain the majority support: the Republicans in the USA, the Conservatives and Labourists in the UK, and the new Republicans in France. This phenomenon is also manifested in Germany's ruling CDU-CSU, especially after the worse results it had in the 2017 parliamentary elections and the success of the radically right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which caused turbulence (especially within the CSU).

Except in the former communist states of East Germany, the AfD achieved the best results in the CSU stronghold in Bavaria, so the right-wing defence against the AfD became one of the CSU's priorities. With this in view, the long-serving leader of CSU Horst Seehofer gave the party a new populist makeover. As the newly appointed Minister of Interior in the great new governing coalition of Chancellor Angela Merkel, he gave a symbolic hint at the populist turn including the word *motherland* (Heimat) into the name of his Ministry and damaging relations with the CDU. In addition, Seehofer is famous for his firm connections and relationships with other authoritarian populists such as Orbán and Putin.

In public discourse, Seehofer has sharpened the right-wing populist rhetoric (in an interview for the Bild tabloid he stated provocatively that "Islam does not belong to Germany") so as to win, or rather take over the AfD's voters of anti-migration orientation. In March 2017, while Merkel was preparing for her first meeting with the US president Donald Trump, Seehofer went to Moscow, demonstrating his sympathy for the Russian president Vladimir Putin. He has been consistently opposing any sanctions against Russia ever since, on any grounds. Seehofer has also spoken benevolently of the ruling populists in Poland and publicly expressed sympathy for the Hungarian populist Viktor Orbán (Sierakowski, 2018).

Under his leadership, the CSU shifted attention **from economic towards cultural and identitary themes**. This, however, is not a tendency exclusive to Bavaria or Germany – it is also present all around both Eastern and Western Europe: in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy… At the same time, Chancellor Merkel, who has announced her intention to step down, advocates anti-populist attitude. She *has pointed out that nationalism and populism in Europe are on the rise, she pursues pro-immigrant policies and instead of nationalism, she supports the strengthening of the European Union and bilateral cooperation within it.* Those who support diametrically opposite policies refer to identity threats.8

What Is Specific about
Germany when It Comes to Populism

Notwithstanding the rising popularity of the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) and the stable rating of the Linke Party, which some people consider left-wing populists, it can be claimed that Germany has been struck by the wave of populism less than other European countries. Some authors believe that there are structural reasons for this: 1. the historical experience which makes the Germans more cautious – the experience of the right-wing and left-wing totalitarianism, the heritage of the Third Reich and Real socialism in eastern part of the country; 2. economic strength – unemployment rate is lower than it has ever been, the growth was at stable 10% from 2013 to 2017, and the social system is functional (Bröning, 2017).

There are, however, certain conditions which are favourable for the rise of populism: distrust in the government (71% of the voters in Germany do not have trust in it), in mainstream media (70% do not trust them), and 80% of Germans have little

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[8] Those who "worry" about German identity refer to the data such as those published in *Die Welt*, which state that in Berlin and Duisburg only 8.2% of first-grade elementary school students speak perfect German, 16.4% of them do not speak German at all, and 51.1% come from the families in which German is not the mother tongue.
https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article188404953/Erstklaessler-in-Duisburg-und-Berlin-haben-Defizite-bei-Sprache-und-Motorik.html

or no trust in politicians, while 60% do not see them as capable of solving problems (Bröning, 2017). In "trustworthy professions" lists, politicians come last, and attacks on them and their belongings have tripled, according to the Global Trust Report, since 2016. The gap between the politicians and citizens is also visible in respect of the stance towards some of the crucial political questions, such as immigration: unlike the establishment, the majority of citizens would like to keep immigrants out, and as many as 70% believe that "Islam does not belong to the Germans" (Ibid).

To sum up – in addition to structural reasons such as the devastating historical experiences and taboos formed on these past experiences, as well as economic expansion, there are grounds for the development of populism in Germany and the question is when this structurally suppressed potential will come to the fore. One option to release this potential is by relativizing the dark past, the other is through the weakening of economic power.

Aachen Treaty – Opposing Nationalism and Populism

It is in this context that the treaty signed by Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron on 22 January 2019 should be observed. It is a new agreement of cooperation between France and Germany, which renews the decades-long friendship between the two countries. The treaty was also presented as a sort of message and support to the European Union, weakened by the growth of nationalism and populism: "*Populism and nationalism are on the rise in all our countries*," the German Chancellor said to the French, German, and European officials gathered in Aachen Town Hall. Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron signed this new treaty in the town of Aachen in Western Germany, 56 years after Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer signed the historical Élysée Treaty of reconciliation in 1963, which set the tone for a close friendship between the two countries after the conflicts which ended with the Second World War.

"*It has been 74 years, a whole human life, since the end of the Second World War, and what seems in itself obvious is again brought into question. This is why we should, above all, renew our*

dedication to our own responsibility within the European Union, the responsibility shared by Germany and France," Angela Merkel said on signing the Aachen Treaty.

French President Emmanuel Macron spoke in a similar vein, pointing to the "growing anger" within the EU states and the pressures from the outside. He condemned the "lies" spread by France's extreme right, regarding the treaty signed by Germany and France. "Those who mock or spread lies cause damage to our history and our people," French President said in a message addressed to those who spread false information on this treaty in France, such as the one about France conceding, according to the Treaty, the position of the UN Security Council permanent member to Germany.

German Chancellor confirmed the wish shared by Germany and France to form a European army: "*The new treaty, which envisages a closer cooperation when it comes to defence, should be a contribution to the formation of European army.*" One of the Treaty's clauses details common defence plan in case of an attack, similarly to the model envisaged by NATO. The clause provides for the use of common resources in case of a terrorist attack, or cooperation in big military programmes, such as those related to tanks or war planes (Agencija Beta/Beta Agency, 2019).

The aim of the Aachen Treaty is to promote cooperation across the 450-kilometer-long border, as well as to improve coordination between the two countries as regards tackling international problems such as climate change and terrorism. The Treaty envisages that economic, international, and defence policies of the two countries should be aligned and a joint parliament formed of 100 French and German members.

The Aachen Treaty is a sort of pro-European anti-populist manifesto which should serve as a bastion to fend off the right-wing radicalism and populism in the two most influential EU countries.

Populism in Scandinavia

Denmark is yet another example of the rising tide of populism in Europe. Some twenty years ago the nationalist National Party of Denmark was a small and almost uninfluential party, whereas today it is the second strongest. Additionally, the policies and stances that twenty years ago were considered as extremist today form part of the narratives and policies of the majority of political parties, including those classically liberal, which have come to be promoters of anti-Islamic policies. So, it is not only that the radical right anaesthetically termed itself populist in the public sphere and thus made itself more socially acceptable – such treatment, among other things, also enabled its growing support among the citizens.

According to some evaluations, the causes for these changes were external: the influence of 11 September and the imposed theme of Islamic terrorism, the inflow of Syrian refugees, but also internal nationalist responses to these challenges from without. Meanwhile, *"the new right" has appeared, which keeps deepening the questions of identity and culture*, not risking in this way to be left on the margins but on the contrary – getting closer to the parliament as it *spreads sharpened rhetoric, manipulates fear, causes divisions, and apocalyptically announces a civil war against* Islamists (Brygger, 2017). Brygger warns about how easily willing mainstream politicians are to accept nationally extremist positions once these become part of the political mainstream and in case they have a practical use value in everyday political life: "As soon as nationalism becomes mainstream, people seem to forget how political extreme such a position is. ... *the authoritarian nationalist movement is the fastest growing and most dangerous political movement globally* ... this movement has different forms in different countries, but there are some common characteristics to these ideas. The first and foremost is the idea that the country should somehow be the citizens' first priority. Trump's 'America First' comes to mind as a perfect example." (Brygger, 18, 16).

The rise of extremism in Scandinavia, where it was least expected, is a warning indicator of the general radicalisation of Europe and the shifting focus of policies from the socio-economic sphere towards the questions of identity.

The Economic Base of Populism –
The Example of Sweden

The success of right-wing and xenophobic parties in Sweden is usually explained with the "us against them" populist platform, which is based on creating a perceived **conflict between the people and the elite**. In those right-wing populist movements that have demonstrated the greatest growth there is clear **criticism of openness, globalisation, and liberal democracy**, which is a typically populist narrative. Additionally, one of the most common explanations for the increased support for right-wing populism is **immigration**. A lot of politicians and leaders in Sweden have profited from pointing towards the "the generous migration policy" of the governing coalition.

There are, however, also those who point to the other causes of the strengthening of populism. The Stockholm-based think-tank Futurion indicates that the rising populism can be explained by people's concern about what is going on in the labour market. Politicians and numerous experts have underestimated the importance of economy and employment as well as overestimated the immigration question. This is the reason why the established parties' reaction to the strengthening of populism is often wrong (Melin, Carl- Enarsson, Ann-Therése, 2018).

Futurion's report (The true causes of populism – automation and other changes in the labour market) points to the fact that the election results in Sweden and elsewhere do not show any correlation between immigration and populist support. It is precisely on the contrary: support for the populist parties and candidates is frequently the strongest in the areas where immigration is on the smallest scale. It is not even related to any significant changes of attitudes regarding this issue. According to the SOM Institute, the stance of the Swedish towards immigration has become somewhat more negative over the last years, but the long-term tendency is opposite. It is exactly this essential though not so visible tendency that is emphasises: when the democrats in Sweden double their support in 15 years, this cannot be explained away with the scale of immigration, which differed considerably over the years of the party's growth. The

point is not in racist values either. It cannot be claimed that the Swedish have become intolerant or that racist orientation in Sweden is on the increase; the long-term tendency is in fact the opposite (Melin, Carl and Enarsson, Ann-Therése, 2018).

The report instead shows that changes in the labour market and economic tendencies matter. For instance, it refers to the study by economist Sirus Dehdari from the University of Stockholm, which points to **a strong correlation between excess unemployment and support for the right-wing populist democrats in Sweden**. When people – and particularly those with less developed skills – become superfluous, the chances are greater that they will vote for this option. Yet another study by Carl Benedikt Frey from the University of Oxford confirms that support for the Republicans in the USA had the biggest growth rate between 2012 and 2016, in the areas where many work positions were threatened by automation. Changes in the labour market will not affect all groups in the same way. Routine tasks are more prone to automation, and a lot of low-qualified men, who often perform jobs with a relatively high status and income, are more vulnerable than others. However, traditional labourers are not the only ones who are affected since digitalisation and artificial intelligence can also bear impact on many employees. Historically speaking, the Swedish people believed that new technologies resulted in the creation of new work positions. Futurion's study in collaboration with the SOM Institute reveals that the picture is today changed. The majority of the people now have a negative opinion on the correlation between new technologies and work positions.

It is not only automation but economic tendencies too that have been causing concern in the labour market. In the last ten years, global economy has been heavily hit by the financial crisis that befell the United States in the autumn of 2008. The CES IFO research institute in Germany proved that there is **a strong correlation between financial crisis and support for the right-wing extremists and authoritarian movements** (Melin, Carl and Enarsson, Ann-Therése, 2018). The growing populist tendency that we have witnessed in the last decade brings back to mind what happened during the Great Depression in

the 1930s, when the extremists took power in Germany, Italy, and Spain, with catastrophic consequences, and the allergic reactions to this process throughout Europe are therefore understandable.

In citizens' fear of losing their jobs the populists see a topic to increase their ratings and not a problem to be systemically solved by reducing fears and anxiety as well as the personal costs of technological changes. Requalification and additional training for new jobs are the most important instruments, which also effectively insure against unemployment. But instrumentalising fear can be more profitable in political terms. In many countries, even the established parties have been on par with the populist in this respect. Sometimes they are also on par when it comes to anti-immigration rhetoric and xenophobia. This, however, is one battle that the populists will always win. If non-populist politicians focused on economy and work positions instead, they would stand better chances of success, and citizens would in turn have better chances to improve the quality of living. Populist parties rarely have any solution to that.

Spain

In the snap parliamentary elections in Spain, in April 2019, the ruling socialists won, but without sufficient majority to form the new government even in coalition with the leftist Podemos. These elections were also marked by Vox Party entering the parliament, the right-wing populist party which fights against separatism, improvements in women's rights, immigration, tolerance, and openness of society. "Twenty-four nationalist members of parliament will be proud of being Spanish, and they will not keep quiet when the lawmakers breach the constitution, mock our flag, or try to destroy national unity," the Vox leader Santiago Abascal said.

Under the pressure of growing unemployment and nationalism, socialists also focused on the struggle against Catalan and Basque separatism in their campaign. They received the greatest individual support, but they needed at least 12 votes

of the opposition to form the government: "The future won, and the past lost. The single condition I have for forming coalition is respect for the Spanish constitution and aspiration towards social justice, living together, and political purification," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said. The socialists achieved better results than they had announced, which came as a sort of prize for raising minimum income and providing a better protection and promotion of women.

Still, even after these elections, Spain remains a deeply divided country. Political stability is nowhere in sight, and national themes are in focus. Catalonia's striving for independence has shaken entire Spain, which in these elections responded with a new and stronger form of nationalism. Reform plan was pushed in the background. Support for the conservative People's Party, Spain's leading until May 2018, was considerably reduced. The party obtained its worst result ever, with 66 parliamentary seats (in the previous convocation, it had 137 members of parliament).

These elections confirmed that traditional two-party system was becoming a thing of the past in Spain. In the last 40 years or so, the socialists (PSOE) and people's party (PP) were alternately governing the country, and their domination started to crumble in 2015. Since then, these were the third parliamentary elections which confirmed that none of the parties can individually obtain the sufficient number of votes to form the government.

High unemployment rate and corruption were triggers for citizens' dissatisfaction and search for alternative politicians and parties, and that was how new political actors appeared, such as the leftist Podemos, the centrist Citizens, or the right-wing Vox. But since democracy was introduced 40 years ago, Spain has at the national level never had a coalition government.

So, European tendencies have also caught on in Spain: even in the places where the leftists received majority support, nationalist themes were dominant, and the support was not sufficient for the formation of a stable government. The European trend of making an ever greater political fragmentation and complex coalitions continued. Another trend that continues is that of the rise of the right-wing populism, which is in close connection with the heavy defeat of the conservatives

due to corruption scandals. Taking the heaviness of their defeat into consideration, the success of Vox is not so great, even though entering the parliament with 10% **of votes** is an exquisite result. Their success is also not so great because the campaign's key topics were such that the results could have been better: corruption, immigration, and Catalan independence.

Podemos was punished for its internal divisions, scandals, and not so firm positions on crucial questions, especially that of Catalan independence – the epilogue was that it lost nearly one third of its support as compared to 2016. All in all, social and political circumstances have been and still are favourable for the development of populism, and it can therefore be said that the protagonists of right-wing and left-wing populism in the given circumstances could have done better.

Populism in Eastern European Countries

In the post-communist East, populists have for years continually been defeating traditional parties in the elections, or else are strong enough to be coalition partners or the main opposition. As was already noted in the introductory part, in 2018, populist parties governed seven out of 15 Eastern European countries, they belonged to the governing coalition in two more, and formed the main opposition in three countries (Siearkowski, 2018). Eiermann, Mounk, and Gultchin also point out that in 2000 populist parties won 20% of the vote or more in merely two Eastern European countries, whereas today they manage to do so in ten countries. What are the main reasons for this? How do they differ from the developed liberal democracies of the West? It has nearly become a commonplace in any research of Eastern European political parties and systems, as well as in any research of the phenomenon of populism, to place emphasis on structural differences from the liberal democracies of the developed Western countries, such as illiberal political tradition and political culture, underdeveloped and loosely founded institutions and parties, and the specific social base that originates from such a framework.

1. **Undeveloped liberal tradition and political culture**:
   Liberalism in Eastern Europe is an "import from the
   West with high duty rates," and civil society is not only
   weaker – it is oriented differently and focused, in
   terms of values and programme, more on humanita-
   rian activities or entertainment than on political que-
   stions (Siearakowski, 2018a). Phenomena such as
   Trump or Brexit can be socially and politically absor-
   bed with more easiness in the USA or the UK, where
   the cultures of political and social liberalism are dee-
   ply rooted, than autocrats can be restrained in Hun-
   gary or Poland. Shaping citizens as subjects instead of
   free people over a course of years and the strong do-
   mination of ideology in a one-party system created
   the social atmosphere and behaviour patterns which
   are slow to change and prone to "chameleon" populi-
   sm.

2. **Lack of the balance and control of the government**
   as the founding principles of liberal democracy. One
   of the main social and political factors which has made
   populism different and much stronger in Eastern than
   Western Europe is a systemic lack of the tradition of
   balancing and controlling the government, on which
   the developed liberal democracy of the West rests.
   Thus, for example, the influence of the executive aut-
   horities on the judiciary originates from the former
   Real socialist government, which was based on the
   unity of government principle. Such political and so-
   cial grounds are more favourable for the formation of
   the authoritarian populism of Kaczyński or Orbán than
   liberal democracies, in which there is a traditional divi-
   sion of the government, the judiciary is naturally esta-
   blished and accepted as a special authority – a contro-
   ller and not transmission of the executive authority.

3. **Loosely founded and underdeveloped institutions**.
   Eastern European societies are more prone to attacks

on liberal institutions such as the freedom of speech or the press, or the independence of courts, precisely because of the fact that these institutions are not solidly rooted. This is so because in Real socialism they had a different ideological, social, and political role: to defend and preserve, within the one-party system, the order which was to lead towards a classless society, "the society made to fit every man."

4. **In the public sphere and the narratives of key political actors, the party system is organized as the "patriot-enemy" dichotomy, not in accordance with the ideological and programme division lines**. The left in Eastern Europe is either very weak or completely absent from the political mainstream due to the former sins of the communist elite, from which it primarily originated. The main line of political division does not separate the left and right wings, which differ in their ideologies and programmes, but instead "patriots and enemies," political actors "for the people and against the people." Eastern European countries are much more prone to the "friend-enemy" dichotomy, spoken and written about by German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt. Each side sees itself as the only true representative of the nation and treats its opponents as those who should be removed from political life – not merely defeated in the election.

Some authors do consider that populism could determine the essential cultural and political borders of the European Union. But if the politics of Poland or Hungary have proved to be more similar to Russian than French or Austrian politics, does that mean that the EU borders were drawn too far away? Should their place be next to Russia and not Western Europe? Does this mean that the EU borders cannot possibly be maintained for a long-term period (Sierakowski, 2018a)? Or will the liberal democracy institutions simply influence a change in the

societies and political cultures of these countries after several cycles of government changes (Sartori) and thus place the question of cultural and civilizational borders in Europe within a historical instead of topically political context?

The Rise of Right-wing Populism in Hungary

Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz), led by Viktor Orbán, again won a convincing majority in the 2018 parliamentary elections. Previous victories, in 2010 and 2014, enabled Orbán to radically change the Hungarian constitution. He managed to systemically weaken the mechanisms of democratic control and balance of power, thus building what is today referred to as illiberal democracy. Orbán's latest victory in the elections firmly consolidated his position of the populist policy leader in the right-wing spectrum of Europe. Orbán and Fidesz won 133 out of 199 parliament seats in the elections with a high turnout (68.13%), with the rise in voters' support of more than 3.6%. Two-third majority allowed him to additionally marginalize the opposition and open the space for a further institutionalisation of his supremacy.

The success of Fidesz in the elections was based on its right-wing populist messages – its Eurosceptic, anti-immigrant, and xenophobic rhetoric. This is a great challenge for Hungarian society as well as for the group of the European people's parties to which Fidesz belongs (Butler, 2018).

Victory in the 2018 elections makes it possible for Orbán to reach the continuity of 12 years in power by the next regular elections in 2022, which is a long period in politics, and which also signals the threatening possibility of autocratic populism further strengthening. But usurping institutions and levers of power control can cause a counter-effect: a movement formed outside the institutions to liberate the enslaved society and state. This was demonstrated by civil protests in December 2018. Usurping institutions and refusing to control the authorities can be successful only to the extent to which citizens are ready to obediently accept it.

In February 2019, the citizens who protested in Budapest formed a "living wall" around the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, symbolically defending academic freedom. The demands of those who protested were actually not focused on academic freedom only, but on all those freedoms that make a democracy liberal. What also testifies to the relationship between the democratic and liberal in Orbán's Hungary is the fact that Hungary is the first EU country to be categorized in Freedom House report as partly free.

Populism in Poland

Like many other authoritarian populist parties and organisations, Polish *Law and Justice* tends *to limit the rule of law in the name of the people*, that is, to remove limitations to its own rule to the greatest extent possible. It also tends to question the standards and values of the EU and some aspects of globalisation, as well as to place security above freedom in value hierarchy. Some liberally oriented authors also see the manifestation of populism in Poland at the economic level, through the so-called "re-Polonisation," that is, the re-nationalisation of some companies – "instead of ending privatisation, the government is strengthening state-owned companies" (Tatal, 2017).

Tatal points especially to the economic costs of populism, which are in Poland generally hidden or dispersed, and in particular to the fact that long-term economic growth and stability are sacrificed for short-term political gains, and that this is the main characteristic of economic populism. The governing Law and Justice reaches for short-term economic effects for political support, and they do not have any serious response to the real challenges such as the low growth rate of private investments, insufficient productivity rise, low employment rate, or demographic problems (Tatal, 2017: 78).

Tendency towards authoritarian populism is manifested through attempts to control the media, electoral legislation which strengthens the governing groups, or political influence on the judiciary. Strong resistance on behalf of the citizens, expressed through protests for the defence of the

independence of courts, and two vetoes from the President of Poland which followed the citizens' will showed the strength of civil resistance to the authoritarian intentions of the government, however strong and stable it is. The example of Poland shows that the strongest bastion against the strengthening of authoritarian populism is the strengthening of the rule of law and individual freedoms, and in order for this to happen, a developed civil consciousness is needed, as well as readiness to use non-institutional forms of fighting in defence of freedom.

Populism and global Democracy

External and internal "enemies" of democracy, Populist view of the democratic-liberal misbalance – How populism spreads through the global liberal order – Liberal vs. Democratic - Different views of the liberal-democratic misbalance – What can be learned from populists – Can populism encourage strengthening of democracy, and what is the role of movements in it? – Widened gap between the political elites and citizens – Support for market fundamentalism – Widening of the gap between citizens and elites – Economic populism – The idea of Europe and the European Union in search of balance – The idea of Europe – A bastion against "Populist International" – European Parliament elections: Europe of the people vs. Europe of the citizens – The idea of Europe in Serbia

The expansion of populism throughout the world has raised the question of its influence on the global position of democracy and challenged some of its basic postulates. Using the populist mould, some theorists classify the enemies of democracy into external and internal. External enemies include global powers such as Russia or China, or global phenomena such as the migration wave or unjust redistribution of profit in economic globalism. The internal enemies of democracy can be pro-democratic or pro-liberal, depending on whether it is the liberal components that outbalance the democratic ones, or vice versa.

External and Internal "Enemies" of Democracy

The narrative of external and internal enemies is not always or exclusively populist; it is also a characteristic of mainstream political parties, analysts, and theorists. Even in the mainstream democratic discourse, the presence of this narrative is pronounced. Fukuyama, for example, speaks of the external threat in the first two decades of the 21st century, from authoritarian states such as Russia and China, which are represented as great undemocratic entities that in different ways bring the global order into question and "try to meddle – particularly the Russians – in the internal politics of democratic countries" (Fukujama, 2017).

On the other hand, there are internal challenges such as populist nationalism or authoritarianism, where democratically chosen leaders undermine the liberal element of representative democracy, endangering the rule of law, the independence of the court system, and independent media, and treating political opponents as national enemies. Whether this has something to

do with inequality and the fact that globalisation has led to an enormous increase in the wealth of states – the wealth not distributed properly – is debated in both scientific and media circles, but also directly relatable, often for good reasons, to citizens themselves. For example, half of the US citizens is actually less wealthy than 20 years ago, due to the de-industrialisation and salaries that have not managed to keep pace with the costs of living (Fukujama, 2017), as well as other similar socio-economic problems. It is here that the basis for the support given to populist leaders, parties, and movements can be found. They blame the system as a whole and social elites because they have created such a situation, and they profit politically from this wave of disappointment.

Still, notwithstanding the strong pressure of the losers of globalisation, Fukuyama considers that populism will not jeopardize global democracy in the long run because global democracy is a global and rational need. However, claims that something will not happen because it is not rational were confuted so many times throughout history, and especially recent political history, so they cannot in fact be taken as a serious political argument.

Populist View of
the Democratic-Liberal Misbalance

In the conflict and search for a balance between the democratic and the liberal within representative democracy, **populism** represents, among other things, **a product of striving to make the democratic primary in relation to the liberal**. In this process, aspiring to strengthen democratic legitimacy, populism disturbs the rule of law and even civil liberties as the most important components of liberal democracy.

As public opinion research shows, evaluating the functioning of democracy, citizens quote indecisiveness and inefficiency in respect of reaching major political decisions as one of its greatest weaknesses; this is the reason why countries such as Russia, China, or Turkey seem like examples which show that

exhausting procedures of adjustment can be evaded by means of more authoritarian systems in which leaders have greater licence and more efficient mechanisms of governing. When compared to the powerful leaders such as Putin, Orbán, or Erdoğan, democratic governments appear slow and indecisive, and parliaments appear as inhibitors of efficient ruling. And this is where a great potential for populists is contained, as well as a serious challenge to representative democracy, which rests on stable institutions and adjustment of different interests.

The European Union is at the moment facing the issues of functionality and efficiency. It has established a respectable set of membership criteria, but their application, or rather the evaluation of the fulfilment of these criteria, is brought into question. It seems that sometimes, regardless of any criteria, geostrategic interests are brought to the fore; sometimes it is security interests – stability is often above the qualitative liberal-democratic criteria. Additionally, the European Union has never made any rules for the countries integrated into the EU, which have in turn taken to bad practices such as corruption or openly authoritarian governments: the level of corruption is high in Romania and Bulgaria, and there are some undemocratic practices in Hungary and Poland. The European Union, in fact, has no way to discipline its member states which side-track off the beaten path of liberal democracy.

Spread of Populism through the Global Liberal Order

Immigrants and the elites are under the attack of populists all around the world. Populists call for the protection of home country by erecting physical and mental walls and employing market protectionism. Free media is also under attack, accused of producing false news and being enemies of the truth. The judiciary and parliamentary system are under attack, too, for being responsible for controlling the executive authorities, enacting and protecting valid laws… Is it any different in Serbia? The difference from the countries with developed

democracy is in that Serbia does not even allow that the rule of
law and independent institutions to control the executive aut-
horities be built. The media are under an even greater pressure
precisely because there are no mechanisms they could use to
protect their own freedom if the rule of law does not function
and there are no independent judiciary and free prosecution.

Populism has various appearances and specific modalities
in different political and cultural surroundings, which is why
confusion arises as regards its real content. Dealing with popu-
lism from the perspective of global liberal order, Fukuyama and
Muggah reduced it to three essential qualities:

1. Popular but unsustainable policies
2. Designating one group of the population as the single
   "legitimate" representative of the nation
3. Highly personalized style of leadership and direct com-
   munication with the people.

The belief is becoming widespread that populism poses a
serious threat to liberal democracy and international liberal order,
upon which peace and prosperity have rested for the last two ge-
nerations. Democracies rely on power division arrangements, on
the courts, legislative authorities, and free and independent me-
dia to control the executive authorities. Since these institutions
disturb the free reign of populists, they are frequently subjected
to unscrupulous attacks, especially from the variety of forms of ri-
ght-wing populism, which is spreading across the United States,
the Western and Eastern Europe. "There are also worrying signs
that populists are banding together, as in the Czech Republic, Hun-
gary, Poland and Serbia, with worrying implications for the integri-
ty of institutions ranging from the UN to the EU and NATO."
(Fukuyama and Muggah, 2018)

Several global factors have allowed for the spread of po-
pulism, according to Fukuyama and Muggah:

Economic factors associated with the decline of the mi-
ddle class and concentration of wealth in the hands of the
so-called economic elite. Next are the **intrinsic political wea-
knesses of democracies themselves**, whose shortcomings are

routinely exploited by charismatic leaders. There are also **cultural factors**, related to the resentment about newcomers, immigrants. In the cultural discourse of populism, the protection of cultural identity, way of life, and Western civilisation pushes class differences into the background.

In the opinion of these authors, the future of the global liberal order will to a great extent depend on the strength and direction of populism in the USA, the country that has been the architect and guardian of the world order for more than 70 years: if Trump wins the 2020 elections, the USA will become increasingly polarized and liberal institutions will likely continue to weaken. The USA will continue their retreat from the global order. The switch from the unipolar to a multipolar world will become quicker. Will liberal democracy survive such a transfer of global power? (Fukuyama and Muggah, 2018)

It is dubitable whether such a global liberal order, defined as it is by these two authors, can survive at all, and the question is even more important of whether it should survive as it is, or perhaps a substantial change is necessary? Can populism, with all the weaknesses justly attributed to it, have a positive impact on the strengthening of the democratic elements of liberal democracy, without destroying its essentially liberal foundations? Answers to these questions will to a large extent also provide answers to the questions of global directions which populism takes, as well as the questions of the future physiognomy of liberal democracy.

Liberal vs. Democratic

How liberalism undermines the foundations of liberal democracy and how can it be stopped?

Populists are ready to deny basic democratic procedures and customs, and this does not reflect negatively on their ratings. On the contrary. When a mainstream politician makes a gaffe, his popularity diminishes, and when a populist turns a gaffe into political programme, his popularity grows. But much more dangerous is the actual denying of basic democratic

principles and procedures. Undermining the basic rules of the game threatens to undermine democracy itself. Under the influence of populists, the representatives of old established parties have also become more willing to undermine the basic rules of the game, and this is the point at which the threat to liberal democracy increases dramatically.

Public opinion research shows that citizens' trust in democracy is on the wane and that they are considerably less committed to democracy than they once were. For example, while more than two-thirds of older Americans say that it is important to them to live in a democracy, less than a third of younger Americans do. The younger generations are also more open to authoritarian alternatives. Two decades ago, for example, 25% of Britons said that they liked the idea of "a strongman ruler who does not have to bother with parliament and elections"; today, 50% of them do. These attitudes are increasingly reflected in practical politics: from the UK to the US, and from Germany to Hungary, respect for democratic rules and norms has precipitously declined. "Democracy is no longer the only game in town" (Mounk, 2018a).

But the attraction of political extremes to the youth has grown over time. In countries like Germany, the UK and the US, for example, the number of young people who locate themselves on the radical left or the radical right has roughly doubled over the course of the past two decades; in Sweden, it has increased by more than threefold. Polling data for populist parties also confirm these findings. In many countries around the world, the general tendency is to vote for anti-system parties (Mounk, 2018a).

One possible explanation for this is that young people have no experience or reasoned opinion on what it would in fact mean to live in an undemocratic political system. People born in the 1930s and 1940s experienced, directly or indirectly, the threat of Nazism and fascism as children, or were raised by people who had actively fought it. They spent their formative years during the Cold War, when fears of Soviet expansionism were part of the everyday public life. It could be said they grew up right in the middle of a cold propaganda war. This is why

they perceive any alternative to democracy as a threat to peace. Unlike them, millennials have no such experience. The question of whether it is important to live in a democracy is for them far more abstract (Mounk, 2018a).

Education as the pillar of the defence
of liberal and democratic values

For these reasons, the questions that has been haunting democratic societies ever since Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, then Erasmus, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, are today as relevant as ever: how should young people be educated in the spirit of political virtue, how should they be raised to grow into free and exemplary citizens of their community, and how to teach them to care about the community? The questions are crucial to the political culture of all countries, especially those in transition, as well as those developed democracies which are focused on growing or nurturing liberal and democratic values.

Civic education has shaped contemporary democratic countries: the USA, the UK, Germany, or Scandinavian countries. Is this essential tool for shaping democratic political culture all but extinct (Mounk, 2018a), or is it merely neglected in the societies of prosperity, the societies that have nearly forgotten that democracy is both the process of building and the completed structure?

The answer seems to lie in the neglect which is a consequence of being lulled in the benefits of wealthier and more ordered societies. This neglect could cause immense long-term consequences to democracy in individual countries as well as globally.

Civic education should also contain both (self-)criticism and great achievements of liberal democracy, and aspire towards making students decisive in correcting social injustices so as to be able to defend liberal democracy. In his book *The People vs. Democracy*, Mounk claims that we shall be able to contain the growth of populism only if allow for the political system to overcome the actual shortcomings that caused it. Common people have for a long time considered that politicians do not listen to them when reaching decisions, the rich and powerful

have a worrying degree of influence on public policies, conne-
ctions between the lobbyists and lawmakers dominates the le-
gislative sphere, the role of private money in financing campai-
gns is improperly significant, and the connection between
politics and money in general improperly close (Mounk, 2018b).

All that has shattered citizens' trust in politicians and pu-
blic policies and opened a wide space for the activities of popu-
lists, who use it to the fullest. At the same time, the standard of
citizens' lives has been stagnating for decades in many coun-
tries of the developed West. Frustration about the lack of ma-
terial progress, as compared to the privileged caste, has ope-
ned additional ways for the populists.

In line with everything above, defence against populism
would on the one hand entail a limitation of the elites' influen-
ce through the influence of money on politics, and a greater im-
pact of the common man on politics on the other. The narrative
of the populists, however, is similar: more democracy for the
people, less influence for the estranged elites. What would be
the first step towards balancing democratic and liberal values is
a far more equal distribution of the fruits of globalisation and
free trade. Instead of nationalist patriotism, building inclusive
patriotism should be offered with a view to protecting the vul-
nerable minority from discrimination. The moral grounds of the
political community and just society need to be rebuilt from the
scratch.

People vs. Elites, or: Populists vs. Democrats
More Liberalism or More Democracy
Different Views of the Liberal-Democratic Misbalance

Are voters really that much indoctrinated, uninformed, or
irrational to make such wrong choices, as they appear to be
from the election results in Italy, the Brexit vote in the UK, or
Donald Trump's presidency in the USA? If so, the liberal demo-
crats' obvious next step is to further deny them making impor-
tant decisions, as Jan-Werner Müller cynically concludes. Critici-
zing Mounk's approach of defending the liberal from

democratic values as an instrument of populism, Müller takes the side of "common citizens" in the face of "the worried elites." Are the "common citizens" really so irrational and ill-informed that they make such horrible choices, Müller wonders. This is precisely what Mounk claims in *The People vs. Democracy*, according to Müller who points out that Mounk's diagnoses are deeply wrong because they focus on individual citizens instead of the structural causes that pose a direct threat to democracy: "If one really believes voters are incompetent or illiberal, the obvious next step is to take even more decision-making power away from them. But, rather than retreating to technocracy, we should tackle the specific structural problems that have aided the triumph of populist politicians" (Müller, 2018b).

One of the questions disputed by the theorists is the one of informedness or the availability of the information necessary for reaching electoral decisions. Müller points to the fact that there is a lot of evidence that citizens are not as well-informed as the theory of democracy would have them. However, he also adds that elections are not civic education tests or exams in MA studies, and that voters do not need detailed knowledge of every single political issue – this is a thing that politicians, journalists, and other experts should deal with. This is correct, but the point is in the fact that there are states in which citizens do not possess elementary level of informedness, while regimes prevent the flow of information and serve naked propaganda. Citizens in such political communities do not need detailed knowledge of every political issue, but they do need to be informed at least at the basic level so as to be able to take part in the elections.

Müller rightfully warns that it is imperative in the struggle against the damaging consequences of populism to face the structural problems that enabled the populists to become exposed in the first place. He also states that not everything that populists say about mainstream politics is wrong. These warnings, however, would have to be articulated and presented in a different way. In many countries, the media and party system are visibly deteriorating, and they require a substantial reconstruction because instead of influencing the

removal of systemic shortcomings, they often contribute to their maintenance.

And this is where we once again come to the issue of civic education, which should be crucial in helping citizens and the future generations to manage disagreements and recognize other citizens as legitimate opponents in democratic confrontations. Cultural and political differences will not be a subject of conflict if people learn to live with them, nurturing mutual respect. Populists will not be able to use them as a political tool for the production of "dangerous others" if new generations are brought up with adequate civic education.

Civic education is also important in understanding the significance of democratic and liberal values and the balance between them, for the functioning of the political community.

Misbalance between liberal and democratic values has been discussed at length, and diagnoses and suggested therapies vary depending on the point of view. Some authors such as Robert Dahl or Jan-Werner Müller mostly warned about the deficiencies of democratic values, whereas other authors warned about the deficiencies of liberal values.

The latter believe that liberal democracy is today seriously endangered even in the most developed countries of the West. Trump, Brexit, and the strengthening of populists throughout Europe are a warning signal against "illiberal democracy," which is characterized by the politics which lacks respect for the rule of law or the minority rights, and as such represents a kind of relativized democracy that could turn into electoral autocracy.

Warnings against illiberal democracy are actually indications of systemic postulations for the strengthening of populism. On the other hand, emphasizing the liberal at the expense of the democratic is also a systemic disorder which causes the counter-reaction of populism. In this kind of disorder, rulers are isolated from democratic responsibility – they impose limitations on a series of policies which should in fact serve to strengthen the democratic component of liberal democracy: the bureaucratic bodies, autonomous regulators, and other supplements to the real democracy.

In his book *The People vs. Democracy*, political theorist Mounk refers to this systemic disorder as "undemocratic

liberalism," which is the antipode to "illiberal democracy." He states that our political regimes have for long not been functioning as liberal democracies, and that they resemble undemocratic liberalism more and more (Mounk, 2018).

The European Union is often presented as an example of these trends. Establishing a unique market and monetary unification in the absence of political integration called for transferring politics to technocratic bodies such as the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the EU Court of Justice. Decision making is increasingly performed outside the public eye, which was one of the arguments of Brexit supporters and is easily comprehensible even outside the UK. It can be remarked that creating policies is still largely in the hands of regulatory bodies and global economy, which administrate these policies through international arrangements such as the World Trade Organisation of the IMF – through activities which many citizens consider to be against the interest of the workers or national interests (Rodrik, 2018). All these circumstances feed the narratives of the populists and are favourable for the development of populism.

On the one hand, limitations are needed as regards the achievement of political power in order to prevent the majority (or those in power) from violating the rights of the minority (or those not in power). On the other hand, the balance between the democratic and the liberal requires a public policy responsible to the preferences of the electoral majority.

Liberal democracy is inherently fragile because a reconciliation between two principles is not a natural state – it is rather a process of constant adjustment. When the elites are strong enough, they are not interested in sustaining the mood of the majority, and when the masses are moved towards requests for a redistribution of power, minority rights usually go neglected. Liberal democracy, therefore, has a tendency to disrupt the balance towards "illiberal democracy" or "undemocratic liberalism." It is up to political actors to maintain the balance through rational adjustment of interests. It is harder to maintain this balance in the countries with rooted and varied political rifts (ethnic, religious, cultural, ideological) and undeveloped political culture than in homogeneous political communities with developed political culture.

What Can Be Learned from Populists

Instead of complaining about the populists' lack of scruple, the established political parties could learn a lesson or two from the struggle for the trust of citizens. Above all, communication, style, and narrative should be adjusted to the "common man," and what is of substantial importance, programmes and the vision of development should be related to citizens' prosperity – through more direct communication; sometimes the narrative should go beyond the naked data and be enriched with emotions; instead of statistical data on the better state of economy, ways in which economic measures are reflected on individual citizens should be pointed out; tax policy should be directed towards a more just redistribution; the gap perceived by the citizens as the gap between the estranged elites and their own interests should be overcome with simple messages, etc.

Trustworthy people – efficient organisation – an attractive political offer. These are the necessary ingredients for the success of the established parties. The formula was abbreviated by populists, who left out the organisation part and emphasized the attractiveness of the political offer to the citizens. Certainly, having an efficient organisation can only be of help.

So, the lost trust needs to be regained, and the trust of new supporters acquired through more direct communication. It is obvious that reliance on the so-called party machineries does not have the role it used to have, but this does not mean that the machinery should be entirely rejected or neglected. Traditional voting is nearly extinct: that for family-oriented parties or based on class divisions. Those who did not grasp this fact are now faced with electoral defeats (Woods, 2018). But those who did understand it can have a comparative advantage over those who only dispose of populist instruments and mechanisms.

After a decade of economic weakness, voters are sceptical of the established politicians who offer promises of the growth and improvement of the living standard. Workers actually earn less than they did ten years ago. In the United States, 56% of households have reduced household incomes. At the same time, further threats of automation have made

employment even less certain and reduced negotiation opportunities for the workers.

Contrary to popular belief, a recent research study has confirmed that technology is not the main cause for the reduction of labour income. The conditions of the workers have instead deteriorated because of their loss of negotiation power, trade union density, the reduction of welfare state, and the growth of the financial share in economy. Yet another important factor is tax policy. According to *Financial Times*, effective tax rates "paid by the world's 10 biggest public companies by market capitalisation in each of nine sectors" have fallen by nearly one-third since 2000, from 34% to 24%. And since 2008, personal income-tax rates across all countries have increased by 6%, on average (Woods, 2018).

When the majority become poor, it necessarily reflects on the vote. Populists can use this in a much better way than the established parties and politicians. It is especially the case when it comes to communication with citizens ("the people"). The Brasilian example is often quoted as a drastic example of the brutal dominance, however inappropriate, of the populist narrative, style, and manner of communication over the usual "sterile" offer of the established politicians: whereas the former promise a gun to each Brasilian to defend themselves against the insupportable criminal, the latter speak about fiscal stability and economic growth. It is similar in developed democracies. However, some have learned their lessons, like Obama, who sent volunteers all over the country to listen to the voters' problems, or Macron, who followed in Obama's steps. They showed that there are things to be learned from populists and adapted to the established political mould. In the process, they used simple and easily understandable messages that brought politics closer to the citizens.

Discussions of economic growth only function when people can personally feel the benefits of this growth. If they want to be competitive in the political market, politicians would have to offer more direct answers to what the people expect or feel. In the British Brexit referendum, the government of the then Prime Minister David Cameron claimed that leaving the

European Union would result in reduced GDP, lost trade, and disorders in the financial sector (Woods, 2018). Such arguments did not suffice to prevent the majority vote for Brexit. Supporters of leaving the EU, on the other hand, promised border control and focused on emotions, primarily that of fear and allaying the fears of "the people." The elites that supported staying in the EU did not manage to reach the voters in the right communicative way, and this reflected on the results. It transpired that it was almost equally important to have arguments and possess operative abilities to transform the arguments into comprehensible and acceptable communication with citizens.

In difficult times and situations of crisis, people look for solutions to existential problems, but they also search for the political offer of hope that in the future life will be better. Depending on the political culture, citizens opt for the worthy or those with a vision. In the wake of World War II in Yugoslavia, the "worthy" revolutionaries systemically provided themselves with the privileges to last a lifetime, whereas the British voted for the opponent of the man who defeated Hitler, Winston Churchill. The communists in Yugoslavia offered a community that led towards a just classless society, at the same time creating a political system which made it impossible for the promise to come true. In the UK, the promises were more realistic, and the political system denied any privileges to the worthy. On the contrary! It encouraged a competition of ideas and programmes. The man who defeated the World War II winner, Clement Attlee, promised **a new social contract**. His government went on to provide free universal healthcare, unemployment insurance, pensions, decent housing, and secure jobs within the nationalized industry. On the other hand, the communists in Yugoslavia introduced the ideological and political monopoly by instating a one-party system.

Populism exists in different political systems, and its reach and extent are limited by nothing but the social and political context.

Can Populism Encourage Strengthening of Democracy, and What Is the Role of Movements in It?

Starting from a neutral evaluation of populism, that is, from the hypothesis that populism, apart from being dangerous to democracy, can also encourage a greater participation of citizens and corrections in a political system made rigid with bureaucracy, we shall refer to some manifestations of populism such as the movements that have spread across Europe.

More and more voters in democratic states believe that traditional political parties are largely turned towards their own interests and the strengthening of their own power. Traditional (established) parties formed their cartels to such an extent that they have become repellent to the voters: they use state resources and abuse state and public institutions to remain in power. This is even more pronounced in Serbia due to the absence of the rule of law and the undeveloped critical public opinion and press freedom.

In search of a real alternative, the voters are looking for something new and different. Young voters especially show less and less interest in party activism, unless the party in question is the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, which has enough money to pay them. Those who see more than money in politics consider that parties are overly bureaucratic and boring. Jan-Werner Müller believes that "[n]ot surprisingly, then, the most innovative political experiments in Europe in recent years have emerged from street protests and mass assemblies that eschewed hierarchical forms of organisation." (Müller, 2018a)

Formed spontaneously from street protests, they achieved success in the elections, but somewhere along the way they lost some of their principles: although they continued promoting horizontal forms of organisation and participatory democracy, their charismatic leaders had more power than ever concentrated in their hands. Created in protests and demonstrations, these movements later turned into something different from what they initially proclaimed to be. This refers to the Spanish leftist Podemos, formed after the 2011 mass protests, as well as to the Italian Five Star Movement, but also

to some other movements. In Serbia, such movements include Enough Is Enough or the Movement of Free Citizens.

Podemos Secretary-General Pablo Iglesias, for instance, has been criticized by the activists in the movement for his "hyper-leadership" and "online Leninism." An example of extreme repulsion to political parties was given by the Five Star Movement "guru" Grillo, who holds no official position in the M5S and spreads his influence through the blog that has been key to the movement's success. He defined the M5S as a "non-association" and has revoked M5S members' right to use the symbol, for which he owns the copyright, for supposedly breaking the "rules" – or what is officially called the "non-statute" – of his "anti-party." He also asked that those running for public office under the M5S banner must sign a contract promising to pay fines if they violate the anti-party principles. (Müller, 2018a)

Of course, political movements are not necessarily populist in nature. As the Green and feminist movements have shown, a movement can contest traditional forms of politics without claiming to represent "the real people" or the "silent majority." But today's political movements also tend to be less pluralistic than the large parties that dominated post-war European politics. This makes sense, given that "movement" implies not just dynamism, but also a presumption that all members are in complete agreement about the path forward. The problem is that when everyone already appears to agree on where they should be going, there seems to be no need for extensive democratic deliberation. Therefore, the movements that have emerged in Europe in recent years – on both the left and the right – have focused more on strengthening their respective individual leaders than empowering their rank-and-file members, even when they emphasize participatory democracy (Ibid).

Emmanuel Macron's "Republic on the Move," which won the presidential and parliamentary elections in Spring 2017, had built its strength on the strengthening of its leader, which made sense regarding the presidential elections, but it extended to parliamentary elections too. Sebastian Kurz became Chancellor of Austria when he was 31, having reshaped the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) as the movement called "Sebastian Kurz List—the New People's Party."

Both leaders used their "sense of dynamism and purpose," which is usually a key feature of movement politics. Kurz, for his part, bent the entire ÖVP to his will. In addition to giving it a new name, he reorganized its internal structures and changed its official colour from black to turquoise. Still, the party's conservative platform hardly changed at all, suggesting that Kurz's moves are aimed at marketing and asserting his personal authority more than anything else. (Müller, 2018a)

It can be said that Kurz's populist measures and methods have revitalized the party, and that these same methods have dulled the blade of populism by subsequent inclusion of radical right-wing populists in the government. Time will tell whether in this way Kurz managed to dull the blade of populism or simply slid into populism himself in order to obtain power, and what the price he will have to pay to remain in power is. Macron was the leader of the movement which opposed radical right-wing populism, but he had something of a populist in himself, as he pointed out the weaknesses of the alienated elites and expressed sympathy for populist leadership. However, Macron does not bring into question the representative democracy system or pluralism, and neither does Kurz, which sets them apart from real populists.

The importance of the movements such as "Podemos," "Republic on the Move," and "Momentum" (a young movement that helped Jeremy Corbyn reshape the platform of the British Labour Party) is in the fact that in times of representative democracy crisis they offered an alternative to the citizens, especially to those frustrated with the prevalent political systems, usually dominated by the established political parties, all virtually the same in their attitudes towards key political views on society and the political community.

But it would be naïve to think that movements themselves can make politics in Europe "more democratic." They could operate even less democratically than traditional parties, owing to their "strong plebiscitary forms of leadership" (Müller, 2018a).

The importance and meaning of the movements can primarily be located in initiating changes within the democratic systems and parties, which would in turn lead to a larger-scale

inclusion of a greater number of citizens into political processes – not in their replacing the role and significance of the parties. This might change in the future, but the change is still not happening at today's level of social development.

Widened Gap between the Political Elites and Citizens

Why have the moderate democrats remained overshadowed by populist autocrats who successfully exploited inequality, economic unscrupulousness, and decrease in standards?

A possible answer could be: because they did not have any solution to the ever-wider gap between the elites and common citizens; instead, they worked on widening this gap by their lack of any understanding of the moment and circumstances in which they found themselves.

The question remains open of whether, if they had had better, clearer, and less calculating solutions, they would have impeded the strengthening of right-wing populism? Essentially, the key solution that was and still is missing concerns greater inequality: greater inequality breeds the need for further redistribution, and this entails higher taxes for the rich and encouraging consumption by those with lower incomes. Political parties, especially leftist, could not give proper shapes to these processes, so they failed to receive support from those who would benefit from such an arrangement – and that is the majority of citizens. Instead of offering solutions comprehensible to the citizens, the practice created wider and deeper gap between the voters and political class.

The practice, on the contrary, also produced something quite different: the political elites moved in the opposite direction, damaging not only their own but also the reputation of representative democracy itself in the eyes of the citizens. Income tax progressivity was reduced, reliance on regressive consumption taxes increased, and the taxation of capital follows the global trends, which involve decreasing thereof. Instead of increasing investments in the infrastructure, the governments have introduced austerity measures which are particularly

pernicious to workers with low qualifications. Big banks and corporations get paid, but households do not. For example, in the United States the minimum wage has not been adequately adjusted, so the actual standard is constantly declining despite the rise of the GDP (Rodrik, 2018b).

Citizens wanted further discussion and more work on how to stop the decline in standards, whereas the political parties imposed the issues of identity (gender, racial, ethnic, sexual) and liberal values. Instead of jobs and wages, they dealt with the topics of liberal values that for the voters were abstract. It transpired that competing with populists about such topics, the established and clearly profiled moderate parties stood no chances.

Support for Market Fundamentalism and Widening of the Gap between Citizens and Elites

One of the key reasons for the growth of populism is the fact that democrats of different colours, including centrist and left-wing parties, have become too close to the big capital, financial caste, and great corporations. Big banks have become especially influential not only through financing but also through their control of key positions in politics.

Once the Keynesian consensus with the post-war gold reserves had been abandoned, and progressive taxation suppressed, that is, when the European welfare state "had gone out of fashion," the vacuum was filled with market fundamentalism (neoliberalism), which was in politics most successfully advocated for by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Instead of developing a trustworthy alternative, moderate democrats on the Centre and Left accepted the new rules of the game. It is precisely the "third way" leaders (Clinton, Schröder, Blair) that are reproached for being uncritical promoters of globalisation instead of searching for alternatives to market fundamentalism. French socialists were criticised for having become supporters of releasing control over international movements of the capital. On the other hand, approaching the centre from the right was reduced to promises of encouraging expenditure on social programmes and education, which was

rarely realized. That was how the populist relativization of ideologies developed, which went so far that there was talk of the end of ideologies, the inevitable merging of the Left and Right which annuls any meaning that ideology might have.

"The alienated elites" reduced the significance of redistribution, appealing to meritocracy (where efforts and results are rewarded), whereas on the other hand trust in the government's capability to solve the inequality problem was at a very low level. The general impression was that the alienated elites were more interested in saving banks from the financial crisis than in the politics of fighting poverty. The argument was that the survival of banks and the existing financial order was more important to fighting poverty than any political projects of redistribution, or politics of fighting poverty. But fewer and fewer are those who accept this argument, and there are more of those who expect an alternative political and economic offer to be established, an offer that would strive towards a more just society in the fiscal, social, and environmental sense (Boujou et al., 2019).

Economic Populism

However, this is where the space for populism opens. Injustice, inequality, exploitation, poverty… These topics are of greatest interest for the majority of the population in nearly all countries, regardless of their level of development. Populists usually offer solutions in the name and for the benefit of "the people," opposing the elites and the limitations imposed by liberal democracy. Populists would prefer to remove the limitations of the executive authority once they obtain this authority. Considering the fact that they represent "the people" with capital P, they believe that any limitations to their exercising of power in fact undermines the will of the people. Such limitations can only serve "the enemies of the people" – the minorities and foreigners (for right-wing populists), or the financial elites (for the leftist populists).

This is a dangerous approach to politics because it is deeply anti-democratic and anti-liberal. Also, because it banalizes

and absolutizes the majority principle and allows for a complete marginalisation of the minorities. Periodical elections under the authoritarian populist government and undemocratic circumstances become the means to legitimize usurping politics. It is the kind of politics that disrupts state and public institutions, the executive and judiciary authorities, the media and the entire public space in general: they form their own NGOs, their media, their critics, their opposition…

Limitations explained by populism extend to the economy, too, where exercising absolute control is "in the interest of the people." But, while populism in the political sphere is nearly always pernicious, economic populism can sometimes be justified (Rodrik, 2018a). This thesis deserves some debate. First, politically speaking, populism is not necessarily always pernicious because it can initiate democratic processes, which has already been explained. The claim that economic populism can sometimes be justified leaves a lot of space for debate. Sometimes? Is "sometimes" enough to mark economic populism as positive?

Economic politics: short-term interests often undermine the search for policies that have far more long-term desirability. Monetary politics: politicians with the power to print money so as to increase production and employment in a short time, say, before the elections. But this makes economic stabilisation more difficult because companies and households adjust to the inflation expectations. Such monetary politics has harmful long-term effects because it does not yield desirable results. The solution is an independent central bank, isolated from politics, which relies exclusively on its mandate in sustaining monetary stability.

The costs of macroeconomic populism are well-known in Latin America. Populist parties periodically produced painful economic crises, which hit the poor most severely.

Another example is the official treatment of foreign investors. Once a foreign company makes an investment, it essentially gets embroiled in domestic troubles. The promises made with a view to attracting the company are easily forgotten and substituted by policies which suppress them in favour of the state budget or national companies. On the other hand, foreign

investors can also be privileged at the cost of the public inte-
rest, as is the case with Serbia, where they come for subventi-
ons and the privileged position; once the effect of these privile-
ges wanes, they retreat. For a regulated state it is more
important to have a stable political and legal system with clear
rules and procedures and an independent legislative system to
protect anyone who wishes to do business in accordance with
the given rules, in fair conditions of equality.

Economic Populism against Liberal Technocracy

The global tendency to give a disproportionate privilege
to the capital at the expense of work has caused reactions in
certain states (Iceland). International rules and international co-
urts protect international investors. Banks and other financial
institutions have been particularly successful in obtaining privi-
leges and a special status.

This kind of "liberal technocracy" is also present in the
European Union, where economic rules and regulations are de-
signed in such a way as to remove any possibility of democratic
consideration at the national level. Even practically speaking, in
every EU member state this political gap – the so-called demo-
cratic deficit of the EU – has led to the strengthening of popu-
list Eurosceptic political parties.

This is why the demands are being put forward more and
more loudly for the return of the higher degree of autonomy as
regards economy in the member states. On the other hand, we
should constantly remain cautious in respect of the effects of
economic populism, or any populism, as it endangers political
pluralism and undermines the norms of liberal democracy.

Danica Popović has pointed to short-term positive effects
of economic populism which are later inevitably turned into
extremely negative measures – negative to the extent that se-
rious reforms are required because economy is brought into a
condition far worse than before the implementation of econo-
mic populism (Popović, 2017: 26-34).

Pro-European Anti-populist Resistance
The Idea of Europe and the
European Union in Search of Balance

The balance between the democratic and the liberal is important at the European, supranational level, as much as it is important for the democracy in each individual member state. On the one hand, there are demands to preserve the values upon which the EU rests, while on the other there are calls for more democracy within the EU. The best example of the attempts to make the EU better are the initiatives launched before the European parliamentary elections, from 23 to 26 May 2019: the initiative to preserve the idea of Europe and the initiative to improve the functioning of the EU as a political community.

As an alternative to these initiatives, there are national values and the delegation of competences from the national to the supranational level. The informal "Populist International" is formed; its members are ideologically diverse – as populism itself is – but they do have a common trait: they all support authoritarian tendencies and bring into question the values and institutions of liberal democracy. This is what makes Orbán from the EU closer to Putin from Russia than, for example, to Macron. The CSU attitudes to Russia differ considerably from the attitudes of the German government and the European Union. The Czech or Italian populists present a similar case. They all have fine mutual relationships and similar attitudes on many questions: above all, migrants, bureaucracy in Brussels, and the strengthening of individual states instead of the EU.

Before the first direct elections for the European Parliament in 1979, national parliaments had delegated their representatives. This is exactly what Eurosceptics and the opponents of the strengthening of the supranational character of the EU would do if given the opportunity.

Voting is still done on different days under different election laws. Candidates are selected by national parties of different political groups in Europe. The very fact that there is no authentic pan-European party system makes these elections essentially national. Transnational lists of candidates still do not

exist. The established parties, naturally wishing to protect their own interests in the European Parliament, resist the attempts to define quota for pan-European parliament members. A special problem for the strengthening of the reputation of the pan-European idea is posed by the fact that European Parliament elections are in individual states treated as second-order elections.9

Although they look like and are in practice often treated as the elections of lesser significance in the states of the EU, the attention they cause still gives them importance, primarily among the pro-European politicians, in the media, and in academic circles. The attention is directed towards a reconsideration of the attitude towards the **idea** of Europe and towards the European **supranational community**. Hence the alarming warnings from intellectuals, the academic community, and pro-European politicians about the vulnerability not only of the Union but of the very idea of Europe. The warnings are in the first place directed to those who would at least like to preserve the existent level of integrity, but also to those who would like to raise the integrity to a higher level and confront the strengthening of the Eurosceptic group inside the EU Parliament, which would in turn like to refurbish the common European house in its own custom – strengthening national specificities at the expense of the community.

The Idea of Europe – A Bastion against "Populist International"

New Wave – A Letter to the European Public

In intellectual circles, the reaction to pan-populism was organised and vociferous. European intellectuals dramatically warned that The Idea of Europe is in danger. They warned

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9 Slovakia in 2014 is given as a drastic example of the lack of interest in these elections. In the Czech Republic merely a fifth of the voters took part, and as contrasting examples there are Luxembourg and Belgium, where elections are mandatory, and where the turnout was about 90%.

against criticism without offering viable alternative, and even against desertion: "It has been abandoned by the two great allies who in the previous century twice saved it from suicide; one across the Channel and the other across the Atlantic. The continent is vulnerable to the increasingly brazen meddling by the occupant of the Kremlin. Europe as an idea is falling apart before our eyes."10

The intellectuals cautioned against the resurrected nationalism – instead of supranational community, what is offered is the Europe of national states and values: "Enough of 'building Europe'!" is the cry. Let's reconnect instead with our "national soul"! Let's rediscover our "lost identity"! This is the agenda shared by the populist forces washing over the continent. Never mind that abstractions such as "soul" and "identity" often exist only in the imagination of demagogues (Kundera et al. 2019).

In such atmosphere, European parliamentary elections were held. The intellectuals dramatized the state of the affairs to the fullest, invoking "a new spirit of resistance" to prevent the catastrophic outcome of those elections: "They will give a victory to the wreckers. For those who still believe in the legacy of Erasmus, Dante, Goethe and Comenius there will be only ignominious defeat. A politics of disdain for intelligence and culture will have triumphed. There will be explosions of xenophobia and antisemitism. Disaster will have befallen us." (Ibid.).

The signatories of the call said that they "refuse to resign themselves to this looming catastrophe":

"We count ourselves among the European patriots (a group more numerous than is commonly thought, but that is often too quiet and too resigned), who understand what is at stake

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10 Signatories, among others, included: Milan Kundera, Salman Rushdie, Elfriede Jelinek, Orhan Pamuk, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Vassilis Alexakis, Vassilis Alexakis, Svetlana Alexievich, Anne Applebaum, Jens Christian Grøndahl, David Grossman, Ágnes Heller, Ismaïl Kadaré, György Konrád, António Lobo Antunes, Claudio Magris, Ian McEwan, Adam Michnik, Herta Müller, Ludmila Oulitskaïa, Rob Riemen, Fernando Savater, Roberto Saviano, Eugenio Scalfari, Simon Schama, Peter Schneider, Abdulah Sidran, Leïla Slimani, Colm Tóibín, Mario Vargas Llosa, Adam Zagajewski.
Libération, 25.01.2019. The Guardian, 25.01.2019.

here. Three-quarters of a century after the defeat of fascism and 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall there is a new battle for civilisation.

Our faith is in the great idea that we inherited, which we believe to have been the one force powerful enough to lift Europe's peoples above themselves and their warring past. We believe it remains the one force today virtuous enough to ward off the new signs of totalitarianism that drag in their wake the old miseries of the dark ages. What is at stake forbids us from giving up.

Hence this invitation to join in a new surge.

Hence this appeal to action on the eve of an election that we refuse to abandon to the gravediggers of the European idea.

Hence this exhortation to carry once more the torch of a Europe that, despite its mistakes, its lapses, and its occasional acts of cowardice, remains a beacon for every free man and woman on the planet.

Our generation got it wrong. Like Garibaldi's followers in the 19th century, who repeated, like a mantra, "Italia se farà da sè" (Italy will make herself by herself), we believed that the continent would come together on its own, without our needing to fight for it, or to work for it. This, we told ourselves, was "the direction of history".

We must make a clean break with that old conviction. We don't have a choice. We must now fight for the idea of Europe or see it perish beneath the waves of populism.

The EU's core values are under attack as never before. It must defend them

In response to the nationalist and identitary onslaught, we must rediscover the spirit of activism or accept that resentment and hatred will surround and submerge us. Urgently, we need to sound the alarm against these arsonists of soul and spirit who, from Paris to Rome, with stops along the way in Barcelona, Budapest, Dresden, Vienna and Warsaw, want to make a bonfire of our freedoms.

In this strange defeat of "Europe" that looms on the horizon; this new crisis of the European conscience that promises to tear down everything that made our societies great, honourable, and prosperous, there is a challenge greater than any since

the 1930s: a challenge to liberal democracy and its values."
(Kundera et al. 2019).

It is here that it becomes visible that the call is in fact much more than a plea for the citizens of Europe to come to their senses – this is a demand for preservation of the values that Europe is founded on, together with the global political order of liberal democracy. It is the call for conscience and consciousness, sense and political responsibility, to preserve the procedures and institutions that the free world is based on.

Manifesto for the Democratisation of Europe

The lack of democracy and excessive independence of administrative and bureaucratic "elite" alienated from those they should represent are among the most frequent reproaches addressed to Brussels. On the International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2018, political and academic elites published the Manifesto for the Democratisation of Europe (120 European politicians and academicians). Immediately after its publication, the Manifesto gathered more than 110,000 signatures. It, inter alia, predicted the European Assembly and the policy for real fiscal, social and environmental justice in Europe (Manifesto for the Democratisation of Europe, 2018).

Primarily, the proposals are based on precisely targeted taxes, providing that a large portion of the proposed expenses is aimed at public spending; e.g. funding the research of new technologies at universities and division of the migration expenses among the state parties. Furthermore, the new common taxes are aimed at reducing inequalities within the countries. There are wealthy Greeks who do not pay sufficient amount of taxes, as well as poor Germans who pay too much.

The Manifesto for the Democratisation of Europe enables the willing states to sign the agreement on the establishment of the new European Assembly which would consist of 20% elected pan-European Manifest members, and 80% members elected on the national level. The European Assembly would undertake the task of democratically controlling and steering economic policies implemented by the ministers of finance of the constitutive countries.

The new taxes would be targeted at the profit made by big companies, or the wealth of the richest citizens of Europe. It would be secured thus that those who profited the most from the development of Europe would contribute proportionately to the financing of European public good, such as the development of ecologically healthy environment, or the solution of the problems such as reception and integration of migrants.

It is quite hard to predict transnational majorities that might be created in the Assembly. There is, for example, nothing to indicate whether the social fractions of the main European Christian-democratic parties would or would not side with the leftist parties who could guarantee more social justice in our European societies. Both of these currently identify populist forces as the greatest danger.

The key message is that Europe cannot ignore the issues of real democratic legitimacy and fiscal justice. The keepers of the "federalist flame" and fighters for democratisation of the EU and constitution of a democratic community within the European Parliament still see an important base for "More Europe", regardless of the fact that they have long been a clear minority. Hence the calls, manifestos, warnings... Eurosceptics, however, have entirely different ideas – relying more on the verified national values, than on the uncertain projections for the bright future.

So, more social justice and more democratic legitimacy is needed to achieve "More Europe" – is the main message of the initiators of the Manifesto for the Democratisation of Europe.

European Parliament Elections
Europe of the People vs. Europe of the Citizens
Nationalists vs. Globalists

The elections for the European Parliament failed to meet the expectations of the radical Right and populists, and the fears of the liberals and the Left did not become reality: the results of the former were not bad, but they were far from the promised triumph, while the fears of the latter are still keenly

felt after these elections. The results in Italy, France and Great Britain, as well as good mutual communication and joint messages sent by the leaders of the radical Right concerning *peaceful revolution* and *national (nationalist) vision of Europe* confirm the dominance of the populist *Zeitgeist* of the radical rightist variety. They speak of the Europe of the people which must replace the Europe of neoliberal elites. They speak of dangerous others: immigrants and Islam, but also elites in Brussels, as those who represent a threat for the peoples of their respective countries.

They speak the language that people understand, but instead of classes, they speak of nations, instead of public policies they impose identity related topics, instead of inequality they speak of immigrants. Instead of speaking of social justice, they impose the topics concerning "dangerous others".

While the proponents of The Third Way in early 2000s expanded margins towards the centre and there were talks that the radical political polarities would diminish and gradually disappear, today's talks are entirely different: the centre is fully marginalised and the main fight is between radically rightist and radically leftist. At the centre of attention are identity issues, which are given primacy over the issues of social justice.

Steve Bannon, ex-Chief Strategist of Donald Trump's administration, together with Mischaël Modrikamen, the leader of the Belgian People's Party, founded in 2017 in Brussels "The Movement". That NGO has the task of supporting nationalists in Europe and connect them into a network. Months before the election for the European Parliament in 2019, Steve Bannon was touring Europe.

"After the election, each new day in Brussels will be a new Stalingrad. Nationalists will act together. Their networking will facilitate what I call "command by negation": you may not be able to realise your own will – as you don't have majority – but you can block things." (Serrao, 2019).

Bannon talks of two politics for Europe: on the one hand there is Macron with his alliance "Renaissance" the goal of which is realisation of the programme Globalist: United States of Europe. According to the plan, Germany should become a kind

of North Carolina, while France would be South Carolina. Simply said: nations as administration units of a single central bureaucracy. Macron wants to centralise foreign policy and create EU army. The other politics advocates the old Westphalia system in which national states represent interests of their citizens. They comprise a single Union which inclines towards a stronger economic and weaker political integration, especially when it comes to foreign and immigration policy. And there is no EU army. Ones propose national sovereignty, while others advocate the creation of a supranational community in which nation states lose their sovereignty... "As far as I know, 70% of all legislation currently in effect in Germany, are adopted in Brussels" (Serrao, 2019).

On the other hand, there are calls within the Left for the creation of their own vision of Europe – pan-European democratic revolution (Ypi, 2019) – not only as a response to the networked and synchronised radical Right, but also as an integrated concept of creating a different Europe, the Europe of more firmly and functionally interconnected states and peoples.

The hard negotiation on who would become the new EU officials after the European elections actually supported the claims of the populists that the citizens of the EU only vote, but they do not elect. The alienated elites choose from within their ranks, say populists, but also some well-intentioned democrats who would like to change the nature and functioning of the EU.

Populists in fact speak of alienated elites which negotiate among each other on the division of functions, and the voters cannot do anything about that. They remind that Macron perhaps does not want Weber who is the lead candidate, yet he is willing to accept a proposal by Angela Merkel. So, the nomination and subsequent election of Ursula von der Leyen for the President of the European Commission showed where the real power in the EU actually lay – both actually and institutionally. Attempts of democratizing the EU after this seem to be increasingly needed. The will of the European Parliament was ignored, as the main candidates of the both leading groups were not taken into account, and the candidate was elected that had the support of Angela Merkel and additional support of Macron (Rásonyi, 2019).

In the poll by "Deutschland Trend" ordered each month by the ARD public service from the German "Infratest Dinag" institute, the citizens were asked whether Ursula von der Leyen is the right woman for the position of the President of the European Commission. As much as 56% of the participants responded "No", while only 33% believed that the German minister was a good choice for the function (Infratest dimag, 2019). Yet she was elected all the same, which once again confirmed that the real, fundamental power is outside the European Parliament and outside the reach of the voters' will, which actualises the demands for more democracy in the EU.

The Idea of Europe in Serbia

The idea of Europe is in peril in Serbia. When listening the announcements and statements of state officials after their meetings with EU representatives, one might think that there is no danger. However, in Serbia, high state officials do not speak directly and openly against Europe, with the exception of some minor coalition partners. They talk against Europe via their controlled media and "their" analysts. What is even more detrimental for the idea of Europe in Serbia is that the politics is deeply anti-European in values, while in a wider sense this politics is anti-civilisational.

Not only that there is no promotion of the European values and the idea of Europe, but there is even an indirect and very strong promotion of anti-European values while the idea of Europe is derided. European integrations may be implemented without European values, just as European values can exist without European integrations. It would be the best if they would go hand in hand, but it unfortunately is not so.

Democratic political culture does not exist, nor is it worked on its establishment. On the contrary, what is promoted is the political culture of exclusivity instead of tolerance and integrativity. Opposition is treated as an enemy, rather than a legitimate representative of those with different political attitudes. Citizens are treated as subjects instead as the holders of sovereignty who elect

and control all political representatives. Instead of the politics of good neighbouring relations, the relationships with neighbours are used in increasing national tension.

The way in which politics is implemented is deeply anti-European and anti-civilisational, just like the very values of such politics. Liberal-democratic system does not exist, nor the ethics and practice of responsibility. There is no separation of powers, or control of powers and authorities. Executive authority, i.e. one man controls everything: from institutions right down to media. These are not only state institutions, but also NGO and social institutions, with the exception of few truly dedicated to European values.

Elections are neither free, nor fair. Quite the reverse, they are merely called elections, but they are not that in their essence. Voters are blackmailed and threatened, public resources are abused for the benefit of the dominant ruling party, the conditions before and during campaigns are entirely undemocratic, a great majority of the media do not inform the citizens, but publish propaganda for the benefit of the ruling party. Electoral will is not freely formed, and there are no conditions for it to be expressed freely. Electoral administration is not independent. The rule of law does not exist. The autocrat controls everything in the society and the state. The authorities publicly demonstrate their powerlessness before hooligans and criminals, while simultaneously being contemptuous of their own citizens. Party membership is more important than the law.

According to the assessment by the Freedom House, Serbia has been demoted to the category of partly free countries. Human rights are sometimes respected, and sometimes not. The key criteria is one's political affiliation and proximity to the authorities (Trivić, 2019). These are no European values, but rather anti-European, anti-civilisational, dehumanising practices.

In the times of authoritarian populism, 2012-2019, Serbia found itself in a seemingly absurd situation that we have the number of the MPs who declare themselves as pro-European which is the greatest ever, while simultaneously the support to European integrations among the citizens of Serbia is at its lowest. The media controlled by the regime lead a constant

anti-Western campaign. This only confirms the thesis of the pro-European politics which is rhetorical, rather than practical. There are two key reasons for such situation: non-European politics of the regime and support of the Brussels administration to such politics.

Populism in Serbia

Manifestations of Serbian Populism: Glorification of the People, Anti-elitism and Anti-pluralism

Populism in Recent Political History of Serbia – The Roots and Manifestations

The modern populism in Serbia has grown under the auspices of totalitarianism, based on the "exclusive right of the communists to political organisation, ruling ideology of Marxism-Leninism and domination of state (social) ownership over the main means of production and marginalisation of private ownership as the basis of economic independence of the citizens from the government" (Popov, 1993: 26). At the peak of the Yugoslav crisis, in the second half of the 1980s, populism became the dominant political phenomenon.

Created on the foundations of the "partisan populism" and its slogan of *Death to the Fascism Freedom to the People*, in the "soft" totalitarian order of the *Second Yugoslavia*, populism was reduced to "a mere ritual of government in the name of the people, without the possibility of politically constituting the people." For the purpose of ideological propaganda, a narrative of the *working people* was being developed and finally even constitutionalised, while from time to time, the *masses of people* gathered in the streets and at public squares, to affirm their loyalty to the regime and the leader (Popov, 1993: 25).

The people were politically used to consolidate the system of government in the single-party state. Providing that there was no party pluralism, the only opponent to the ruling elite of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) was party elites within the very LCY which advocated the ideas of strengthening the statehood of the republics, i.e. national identities within the federation. This phenomenon dating from the 1960s reached its peak with the adoption of the 1974 Constitution. The federation weakened both formally and factually, while the

cult of the personality of Josip Broz became the pillar of such state organisation. It could already be guessed that the life of such federation would coincide with the life of the president, "the greatest son of all the peoples and nationalities," while the guarantees for his lifelong rule were integrated in the Constitution. This very constitutional guarantee evidences the scope of the personality cult in the totalitarian state. The personality cult was the connective tissue of such community, it compensated for the lack of political pluralism, separation of powers and, generally, democratic institutions and procedures. All this defined the social and political context for the specific type of populism.

Serbian nationalism and populism were more overtly manifested and strengthened on the basis of the 1974 Constitution which stimulated the factual creation of sovereign republics, except for Serbia (Popov, 1993: 26). "Serbia divided in three will be united again" was the mantra of the awakened Serbian nationalism, which was fuelled by the "injustice" of Serbian position within the SFRY and resulted in the populist mobilisation against the elites which neglected the interest of their own people.

Additionally, the populist mobilisation was stimulated by the messages against dangerous others, which ignited fear and hatred: "The spiritual fathers of nationalism imposed on their own people the belief that the governments of national states would disappear, that they would be destroyed by some other peoples, not merely be abused and exploited by those peoples" (Popov, 1993: 27). The slogan of poet Matija Bećković which was appropriated and instrumentalised in the public discourse – "Serbs are the remnants of the slaughtered people" – is the best illustration of the way in which the fear of extermination, which had been created during WWII, especially in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, was instilled in the people.

Heading the populist movement and ideology in the second half of the 1980s was the leader (Slobodan Milošević) and the dominant state-run media favouring him, which completes the necessary elements defining populism. Contextual reasons for its occurrence included: political and economic crisis of the totalitarian state which started to come undone along national

borders and a wide discrepancy between the external image of the SFRY and what the state essentially was. The one-party political system of self-governing socialism and "fraternity and unity" was giving in before the changed international circumstances, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Milošević won majority support within the Communist League of Serbia once he "descended to the level of the people," which was reported by the state-run media that had begun to support him. His patronage of Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija, reflected in the slogan "No one may beat you!," was shaped by the media so that it assured all Serbs that they had found a leader who cared for the entire Serbian people, rather than guarding his partisan privileges like other members of the political elite of his time. What ensued was the famous "occurrence of the people," i.e. organisation of a series of meetings, where through his direct appealing to the people, he cleared the way towards his complete domination on the political scene of Serbia, the domination which relied heavily on his empathic attitude towards the people and harsh criticism of the communist elite.

Being "different" among communists, Milošević questioned the established political dogmas and started addressing the people directly, goading them against the estranged political elite. At the moment of his emergence, he stood out from the standard party officials, and he rather quickly won the attention and support of a great number of Serbian citizens. His support allowed him to change everything which was expected to be changed after the fall of the Berlin Wall: from introducing a multiparty system, down to amending restrictive ideology and means of political communication. Yet he did not want pluralism, nor some essential changes in the society, but he rather abused populism to usurp strong levers of power.

Serbia adopted a new Constitution which did not pave the way for necessary changes, but it rather reflected the attempts to secure and define the government tailored to suit the leader and his associates. Additionally, he started using a more inflammable rhetoric when it came to "dangerous others," i.e. archenemies. He used nationalism as a mean of gaining power, consolidation of his position of authority and,

finally, to stay in power. The leader and the media, the key actors of the populist structure, attained a victorious symbiosis. The symbiosis was aided by the established Communist League of Serbia, subsequently renamed into Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), using its inherited infrastructure and privileged position in society.

The undisputed leader won all the levers of power, and he could use them to start building liberal democracy, yet this had not been his intention. Instead of multiparty democracy, he offered a modified single-party system, with the Socialist League of the Working People of Yugoslavia, which should have served as a non-partisan substitute for multiparty pluralism.

Dissolution of SFRY and Populism – Glorification of One's Own Nation and Instigation of Fear and Hatred against "Others"

"Serbian populism became the dominant phenomenon at the peak of the Yugoslav crisis and it gained strength throughout its dissolution, participated in by identical, or similar actors in other parts of Yugoslavia, and they all came into power" (Popov, 1993: 50).

The Constitution adopted in Serbia in 1990 was a political reflection of the complete lack of understanding of and resistance to changes that had affected international order. Instead of being the foundation for general changes in society, the Constitution was the reflection of the confusion caused by the fact that the main actors were still burdened by the dying ideology of self-governing socialism and infatuated by the ideology of the ever-growing nationalism. Simultaneously confronted with the democracy – "the guiding idea of the 20th century," they found themselves in identity and legitimacy confusion which directly impacted society in general.

The political heritage was not a framework which would facilitate construction of the new political and constitutional identity of Serbia. On the contrary, the experience of the socialist political community which had not been based on

constitutional democracy was a serious obstacle to thorough changes. The fact that such political community was described as a milder and more liberal variety of Real socialism, was partly favourable, yet it also represented a mitigating circumstance. What was favourable was the fact that certain elements of the democratic liberal world had already reached such community, yet this deescalated political and social energy and the readiness for radical political changes.

Serbia inherited the condition of unfinished statehood (Đinđić, 1988), yet it failed to overcome such a condition, and it continued functioning as an unfinished state (Dimitrijević, 2003: 57-71) regardless of the international and internal circumstances. In other words, the order of "façade" statehood of Yugoslavia was not transformed into constitutional democracy. The socialist order of Yugoslavia was based on the will, ideology, and power of the Communist Party, the state was an agent in the hands of this real sovereignty,11 while the constitution, legislation, and political institutions created a semblance of a well-regulated state. The single-party system, wrapped in the seductive ideology of brotherhood and unity and self-governing socialism, was in fact a political *perpetuum mobile* to formally secure legitimacy of the Communist League, to guarantee peace and stability and defence against external and internal enemies.

The Party Produces and Dispels Fears through Populism

Not only that the party gave contents to ideology and institutions, it was also established outside and above the system that it had shaped and constituted itself. The League of Communists of Yugoslavia had established such social order where the supra-constitutional position and role of the party was not to be questioned. And just like political participation of the

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[11] "It is not that the state obtains more sovereignty, but on the contrary, the state in socialism is not sovereign at all. It is but a tool in the hands of the true sovereign who has no status of a public-legal person, but rather of meta-physical-political subject." Đinđić, op.cit. p 171.

citizens was simulated through delegate system and the accepted political oxymoron of having elections in the one-party system, the autonomy of social activities was imitated by the Socialist League of the Working People of Yugoslavia. Similar to all other elements of public importance, the Socialist League was a construct made by the party, their generous political gift to the citizens that allowed them to express pluralism of interests and creativity.

It was actually the negation of social autonomy, an institutional channelling of quasi-pluralism under the auspices of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Party control and supervision of institutions, political and public life, and the party's universal presence support the claims of those who warned that Yugoslav socialism was an undemocratic order.12

Populism as a thin-centred ideology acted in symbiosis with the established ideology. Instead of the constitutional and democratic concept of the rule of law, the Yugoslav socialism established rule by law.13 Law was understood and treated in practice as an instrument for the realisation of the ideological and political construct of building socialism, i.e. paving the way towards communism as the social ideal, ideologically and politically formulated by the communist party. In this sense, determination of constitution as the supreme legal act is merely declaratory, since the constitution does not guarantee rights, nor does it limit authorities and power. Constitution merely represents yet another transmission of the party's sovereign power, the power which in itself is not limited by the constitution (Đinđić, 1988: 42-47).

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12 Nenad Dimitrijević, referencing Zoran Đinđić, speaks of "the non-state organised order."

13 *Rule by Law* was a characteristic of both Eastern and Central European countries. See: Sajo, A./Losonci, V, "Rule by Law in East Central Europe: Is the Emperor's New Suit a Straightjacket?", in Greenberg, D, et al (eds.) *Constitutionalism and Democracy. Transition in the Contemporary World,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p.327.

Transitional Post-communist Populism

Serbian 1990 Constitution was adopted by the single-party Serbian Parliament after the populist "anti-bureaucratic revolution" conducted by Slobodan Milošević within the Communist League of Serbia. At the time, Serbia was still a member to the SFRY and it thus contributed to delegitimising of the previously practically disempowered federal state. Federal republics' branches of once powerful and undisputed sovereign of SFRY, embodied in the LCY, were taking over full control in their respective republics, renouncing their (quasi)leftist identities and embracing the ideology of nationalism with the aim to preserve their own legitimacy.

Accordingly, the constitution was treated as an instrument of power, rather than being the supreme legal act and social contract. Instead of becoming the foundation for the termination of the practice of façade constitutionality and democracy, the 1990 Constitution was primarily intended to allow for the rule of extra-institutionally imposed decision-making centre to be glossed over. Instead of limiting the power and guaranteeing rights and freedoms as the foundations of a constitutional democracy to be built through the process of transition, the Constitution of 1990 became an integral part of the newly established dominance.

It is probably not too harsh an assessment that the 1990 Serbian Constitution failed to meet the most elementary constitutional criteria of a legal state, characteristic of the modern political community. This primarily refers to the absence of an adequate treatment of the fundamental human rights and freedoms, the essential lack of the control and separation of powers, and inadequate treatment of political parties as pillars of the newly established multi-party system and representative democracy. In addition to this, a semi-presidential system was founded, which obstructed the formal balance of power, tipping the scale towards the excessively powerful president of the state, the pillar of autocracy.

Starting from the predominant position that constitutions are primarily instruments limiting political power and

putting its implementation under control (Sartori, 2013: 223), it can be said that the Constitution of 1990, in addition to the series of other integrated solutions not only dealing with the position and role of the President of the Republic, also reflected the contradiction between the desire of the ruler to rule without limitations, and his simultaneous wish to secure a constitutional semblance of democracy for this extra-institutional rule. One of those controversial solutions was to significantly limit the autonomy of Kosovo and Metohija, presented as "reinstitution of the united Serbia." It would turn out later that what was done and the way in which it was done, would persistently remain the hot topic of national, as well as international politics throughout the 1990s, and to this very day.

When it comes to political identity, the Constitution attempted to address the contradictions between the *civic rhetoric* and *nationalistic ideology* of the ruler for whom it had been written: the state ethnically and democratically founded (preamble), only for the principle of civic-democratic sovereignty to be inconsistently derived in its normative section (art. 1&2). The issue of national minorities' loyalty was certainly not defined with this attempt at constitutional seesaw between national and ethnic, yet it is a proper illustration of the ideological and identity confusion.

Serbia was just one of the countries in the region and wider geopolitical area where ethnic had priority over civic, so that the loyalty of national minorities in all those countries was primarily oriented towards their own ethnic community, or nation, and only secondarily to the countries in which they lived. Furthermore, practical politics was much more important to the members of national minorities than what had been written in the constitution or legislation (Lutovac, 1998). However, in addition to everything else that could be said on the subject, it is a fact that the chance was also missed to reach the widest possible consensus on constitutional level, and to establish with this constitution a social contract concerning the kind of state and society that should be built. This is understandable, providing that it is in the nature of authoritarian populists to "appropriate the people" and build factual, and if possible even formal monopoly on communication with the people.

The rights and freedoms in this Constitution, though being addressed very thoroughly, do not represent the real foundation of this supreme legal act. On the contrary, it can be said that for this Constitution "the state authority is the source of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, rather than their guarantee."14 Even though it contains most of the generally accepted international norms and principles of human rights, this constitution relativizes them through the provisions which indicate that the conditions for the realisation of such rights and freedoms are stipulated by the law, which calls into question direct constitutional applicability of the rights and freedoms. Namely, such provisions are in contradiction with contemporary standards of protecting human rights and freedoms, which require them to be limited exclusively by the constitution. Furthermore, there are no constitutional guarantees that legislator would not limit some of these rights and freedoms in prescribing the conditions and manners for their realisation.

Essentially, such an attitude towards human rights and fundamental freedoms largely illustrates the nature of the order and society, as well as political identity of the community at the beginning of the process of transition. This constitution thus preserved *the continuity of subjugating citizens to the order and human rights to ideology.*15

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14 *Ustavne pretpostavke za demokratsku Srbiju (Constitutional Preconditions for Democracy in Serbia)*, Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, Beograd, 1997, p.10.

15 "The 1990 Serbian Constitution copied one of the most problematic provisions contained in article 203, paragraph 2 of the 1974 SFRY Constitution, on the reasons to prohibit the realisation of rights and freedoms. That provision represents the constitutional basis for the proclamation and simultaneous denial of rights and freedoms. It is, namely, "action with the aim of a forcible change in constitutionally stipulated order, breach of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and rights of a man and citizen, instigation of racial and religious intolerance and hatred". The Constitution of Serbia quotes this constitutional basis in two cases – when it guarantees for the freedom of political, union, and other organisation and action (art. 44) and when it guarantees for the freedom of print and other means of public information (art. 46, para. 6). Through their diction, these constitutional reasons for the prohibition of realisation of the aforementioned political rights and freedoms became a kind of *rubber* terms which can be interpreted (i.e. abused) in a myriad of different ways by the competent authorities. *Ustavne pretpostavke za demokratsku Srbiju (Constitutional Preconditions for Democracy in Serbia)*, p. 11.

Populism, as a thin-centred ideology in the times of the one-party state of SFRY survived on the basis of ideological settings of that society, and once the times of nationalism had begun, it swiftly readjusted and created symbiosis with it. This transformation of populism from one ideology into another reaffirms the "chameleonic nature" of populism and its symbiotic, i.e. parasitic character.

Observed from the perspective of those who champion representative democracy, or the rule of law, it was quite easy to transform the state and society: to cancel one party's monopoly, establish a multi-party system, adopt new constitution as a proper social response and the foundation of the new democratic community based on the rule of law, delimit and bring under control the implementation of political power, and functionally regulate organisation of the state. This, however, did not happen in the 1990 Serbia. Instead, the overwhelming, almost undisputed, ideological tide of democratic ideas was used to cover up for the narrower pragmatic political aims, by creating constitutional and legal fiction and quasi-democratic institutions.

On the wave of the ideas of representative democracy and nationalism, the political project of attaining a modern democratic national state was constructed. It turned out, however, that this was but a pragmatic shaping of the idea to legitimise the rule of the old ruling class in new circumstances.[16] It was required to present oneself in a favourable light before international community and one's own citizens. This was achieved with the aid of those intellectuals and citizens who, even when they had realised that this was but a democratic façade, were ready to support it, believing that this would result in the creation of a democratic space where in the future they would

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[16] First political parties in Serbia were created by the design of the ruling Communist Party. Soon after political pluralism was accepted in principle in late 1989 and early 1990, first opposition parties were formed, yet the laws regulating the establishment and operation of political parties were not adopted until July 1990, so in the interval between this general acceptance and legal regulation of political parties, the parties operated thanks to the "good will" and tacit agreement of the still dominant communist parties in both republics. More on political parties in Serbia and Montenegro in: Goati, Vladimir, *Partije Srbije i Crne Gore u političkim borbama od 1990. do 2000. (Parties in Serbia and Montenegro in the Political Struggles from 1990 to 2000)*, Bar, Conteco, 2000.

fight for real democratic reforms. It would turn out, however, that this first stem was more important than one could assume and that it left quite serious consequences on further development of political and constitutional identity of Serbia.

It can be said that the era of the rise and rule of Slobodan Milošević was marked by populist overtones in all its defined segments: *opposition between the suffering Serbian people and estranged elites which took care only of their own interest, mobilising the people by means of the fears of existential threats, hostile surroundings and domestic traitors, as well as of an international conspiracy* which introduced the "unjust economic sanctions" to the people fighting for justice and survival.

However, this transitional post-communist populism failed to engage the entire people the way the main actors of the regime populism wished to present. The period from the beginning of the 1990s is referred to by Nebojša Popov as the era of regime and opposition populism (Popov, 1993: 49). However, the circumstances of unfinished state and the inexistence of developed institutions allowed for the absolutist politics to be led with a relative majority, which confirms the thesis that in illiberal democracies, i.e. illiberal countries in transition, the negative consequences of populism combined with conflict-inducing political programmes are detrimental to such political communities.

Populism in the Transitional Momentum 2000-2003

The overthrow of Milošević on 5 October 2000 is referred to by some as the Revolution of 5 October since it involved mass involvement of citizens (the people) who protected their election will and opposed to the usurpation of power. In addition, an essential change of the political order was promised, not merely a change of government. Milošević gained legitimacy at a formally democratic election, yet this election was not fair or free. The power was in the hands of one man, the leader, regardless of the function he occupied and his authorities, or competences. Political processes took place under his control and the supervision of his associates.

The changes of 5 October took place on the wave of wide and deep people's (civil) dissatisfaction, in the conditions of a grave economic and social situation and the international isolation of Serbia. In terms of political programme and ideology, DOS (Democratic Opposition of Serbia) was a movement which gathered different actors united with the aim of overthrowing the regime and starting essential reforms of the state and society. It had certain elements of a populist movement and style, yet its goals were reformatory. The actual leader of DOS (Zoran Đinđić) did not care much for building his own charisma and rating, but was instead turned to reformatory changes. Vojislav Koštunica, posing as the leader due to his rating potential and general acceptability was not inclined either to build his own personality cult but from the very start had the tendency of confronting "the people's will" with "unworthy elite" in the proper populist style. His vision of the changes was different: gradual changes without revanchist attitude towards those who used to rule the country, and even abused their power in the era of Milošević.

It can be said that Đinđić's leadership of Serbia was rather an incident, a result of coincidence, than the reflection of the majority expectations in the political public opinion. Đinđić was not a populist leader of great popularity. On the contrary, he was probably the only leader who had a weaker rating than the movement (DOS) and party (Democratic Party) that he led. He tried in a short time to change what could be changed, on the ruins of the unfinished state and pre-modern society, devastated economy, impoverished and cheated "people." Not paying attention to his rating, unreformed and non-lustrated security services, or numerous enemies of the reforms that did not want changes, especially those sudden and essential – he soon faced resistance within DOS and outside of it, as he became an open target for demagogic and quasi-patriotic criticism. The shots at him were shots at quick reforms that he implemented in Serbia.

Post-Đinđić Period 2004-2012

In line with the newly established separation of political powers, quite soon after the assassination of Đinđić the focus of political attention shifted from the essential reforms to populist issues, which could euphemistically be referred to as to the adjustment of the politics to the expectations and specific characteristics of Serbian people. Pro-European orientation and rhetoric remained, but it was no longer dominant. The question of the relationship towards Kosovo and Metohija was given equal treatment, if not if not even prioritised over European integrations. Populist rhetoric and communication were present among the politicians in power, yet it could not be said that populism was in power. It is more realistic to say that it was with the opposition and that it slowly crept from the realms of deep opposition to the open political scene, ever closer to the structures in power.

Populist episodes were present even with Boris Tadić (a true democrat of European orientation, who advocated civic values), primarily in his style and public appearances that he paid much attention to, and in his attempts to present himself as a pro-European politician who understood his own people and worked for their benefit, as he went to presidential elections as a candidate of the citizens, not his own party. He also revealed his populist tendencies in "listening to the will of the people," often formulating his daily politics in line with the endless public opinion polls which, among other things, indicated that political parties were not popular. Apart from his indirect communication with the people via public opinion (and direct, at the elections), in practice he demonstrated a tendency to ignore not only his own party, but also state institutions when he appointed Cvetković as Prime Minister, a man of undeniable expertise whom he could use to exert factual political influence when as the president of the state he had no extensive competences but did have the legitimacy of being elected by the people. However, the style of Tadić's government could by no means be called populism in the narrow, radical sense of the term. Tadić's utilisation of populist techniques and methods never jeopardised the essence of representative

democracy, or pluralism as its natural habitat. It could thus be said that he was a democratic leader who did not call into question the fundaments of liberal democracy, nor did he base his politics on producing and clashing "dangerous others" in the vein of true populist leaders.

The Coalition of Quasi-Rightist and Quasi-Leftist Populism 2012-2019

If for the 1990s it can be said that they were characterised by the clash between quasi-leftist (post-communist) and quasi-rightist (anti-communist) populism, than this period is characterised by the coalition of these two populisms. They are both still quasi since they invoke some values of the Left and the Right, while in practice they are a far cry from either – they could rather be referred to as to poor copies of the Left and the Right.

After the political changes of 5 October 2000, an immense job started of building state and social institutions and restoring confidence in one's own agency and potentials on all social planes (Lutovac, 2014: 395-406). The expectations of the citizens (people) were also huge, which proved to be a double-edged sword. It would turn out that the velocity and scope of the changes did not live up to those expectations, and were below realistic potentials, which all contributed to the triumphant return of the main actors from the 1990s. However, some things did significantly change: pro-Europe politics, for example, became almost universally embraced by the relevant political parties; national exclusivity was no longer part of the political mainstream, while NGOs did not represent "unwanted others" anymore.

It seems, however, that such a change was primarily the result of a pragmatic assessment that this could contribute to the coalition potential of the involved parties without being an obstacle to international recognition, rather than a genuine change of political course.

Populism's triumphant return to power came with the establishment of the parliamentary majority of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), and the

formation of Ivica Dačić's Government in 2012, in which the First Deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vučić, was the de facto leader who waited for the first proper opportunity to make his domination formal at the snap election. The SNS-SPS coalition announced the beginning of the reign of the two populisms: quasi-rightist and quasi-leftist, as well as the era of the rule of one man, Aleksandar Vučić, who embodied everything that authoritarian populism was, or was thought to be: from usurpation of all the levers of power, destruction of state and social institutions, suppression of pluralism, over the noticeable control of the media, demagogy, political style of building the cult of personality, right down to creating the image of ruling in the name of the people, legitimised through confrontation with the "corrupted elite" of the earlier ruling clique and the fight for people's interests by protecting them from "dangerous others" embodied in the enemies of the people – those from the international community and the neighbourhood, as well as internal enemies.

What is characteristic of Serbia is that one party – Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) which was created from radically rightist SRS (Serbian Radical Party) – made a U-turn when it comes to ideology and programme, and after it had seized power, it started to externally act as a movement, simultaneously preserving internally the characteristics of a strictly organised leader party. Vučić turned the SNS into an umbrella party which gathered all those who supported him: parties, movements, associations, individuals. He governs and controls all his coalition partners as a movement of ideologically and programmatically heterogeneous parties. The difference between the SNS and movements in the developed, democratic European countries is that this party has no undisputed programme aims, and it operates in Serbia, a country which lacks the rule of law, developed institutions, or media freedom. This makes the party's position monopolistic, and leaves no space for an equal and fair fight for the support of the voters. Betrayed promises, political turns, affairs, deceptions of voters do not influence SNS and Vučić's rating negatively. On the contrary, their rating remains steadily high.

In the countries of developed democracy, the affairs such as unlawful demolition in Belgrade's Savamala district, or illegal

construction on the top of Kopaonik Mountain, the unfulfilled pro-
mise that there would be no reduction of pensions, and the like,
would at the least negatively impact the rating of the actors, and
maybe even bring down the government. It is not the case in Ser-
bia, primarily due to the lack of free media, independent judiciary
and state institutions, who would stimulate the citizens through
their unprejudiced operation to put pressure on the incriminated
politicians. Instead, one party, or actually one man has usurped all
the institutions in the country and he decides on everything, inclu-
ding the outcome of all the affairs. The virtual reality presented to
the voters is in fact the only one which is readily available to them.
There is no space for critical arguments and actions, which cause
the citizens who would be able to put a stop to all this to instead
withdraw into their private spheres.

In the media sphere, which is under his full control, Vučić has
demonstrated his populist style, presenting himself as merely a
man who always thinks how to make things better for the people.
His PR tactics included direct conversations with "ordinary peo-
ple", sleeping in army barracks, saving children from snowstorms,
and disqualifications of his opponents ("the yellow thieves"), or
"the catastrophic politics of the predecessors." Abusing his control
of the large majority of the media, he succeeded in presenting his
unfulfilled promises and political turns as consistent politics and
personal triumphs. Criticism has not been left any space in so stri-
ctly controlled media, while the term self-criticism has long been
erased from the political vocabulary.

In the economic field: protection of large capital and forei-
gn investors, protection of public enterprises as financial ha-
vens of the party. Austerity measures implemented by the ru-
ling coalition during this period led to the more pronounced
poverty of the citizens and created additional inequality in the
society. *In the social field,* implemented policies are presented
as socially responsible with the focus on the protection of the
poorest, however, in reality there is more and more poverty,
more people are leaving the country, and inequalities in income
have become the greatest in Europe.

Undemocratic political culture has become more and more
pronounced. Political opponents have not been treated as

contestants in a competition, but rather as enemies that need to be destroyed for the good of the people and the state.

So, since the late 1980s until today, populism in Serbia has changed its manifestations, leaders, dangerous others, political style, yet it has kept a common trait: efforts to put representative democracy institutions under direct control and subjugate to the will of the leader, i.e. the will of the people as interpreted by the popular leader.

The Clash between Reflexive and Generic Populism -Agreement with the People vs. "The Future of Serbia" -

Authoritarian populism practiced since 2012 caused the creation of a wide opposition front embodied primarily in the Alliance for Serbia, founded on 2 September 2018, and subsequently growing in scale, with all the signatories of the Agreement with the People dating from February 2019. The Alliance for Serbia was founded as a response of the opposition to the oppressive and usurping politics of the ruling clique, as a way to reach the citizens and try to offer an alternative.

Agreement with the People

Riding on the wave of the citizens' protests which had started in late 2018, the oppositional Alliance for Serbia responded to the calls of the citizens who had protested each Saturday for months, and gathered the remnants of the authentic opposition and gave political form to the citizens' demands. Agreement with the People is the document made on that occasion. It sublimated the demands of "the people," i.e. those who spoke in their name at the protests. These demands clearly professed distrust, not only of the ruling elites, but also those who preceded them and those who should come and change the system, rather than changing the people in the bad system.

The protests actually started in Kruševac, after a physical assault on an Alliance for Serbia leader. This was followed by a protest in the municipal hall of Belgrade's municipality of Stari Grad, and subsequently, the first protest in the open, in Belgrade. After

two months, the protests were being held throughout Serbia, in more than 50 cities and municipalities, and soon this number grew to more than 100. It is possible that the ruling clique had been unaware of the scope of the citizens' dissatisfaction, but the very fact that the street protests were attended by the supporters of the left and the right, those politically neutral and fervent political followers, side by side – evidenced the general dissatisfaction in society. The Agreement with the People was intended to politically articulate this dissatisfaction, and it largely succeeded in this, in line with the main demands of the citizens.

When it comes to the populist elements in the document itself, they are present in the very fact that it addressed the people, rather than citizens ("Responding to the demand by the people, and starting from the condition of the society which is deeply divided and usurped in its every segment by the regime…"), its attitude towards elites, through its professed intention to change the social and political system which does not serve the people, but rather the estranged elites ("We are ready to be the people's servants, rather than their government. We are ready to serve the system, instead of the system serving us."), through the intention to lustrate those who have abused their positions of power, through the expressed intention to annul all the acts adopted to the detriment of the people and the state, expressed determination to have a joint opposition election list, including the people's representatives, once the conditions for the fair and free election have been created, and finally, to appoint a transitional government of experts which would, in the people's name, create the conditions for normalisation of the political and social life in Serbia.17

"The Future of Serbia"

Reactions to the protests from the ruling coalition, especially by the most powerful man in the country, in addition to being populist, were mainly clumsy and deeply negative, and they just added fuel to the flames of the aroused dissatisfaction: from

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17 Proposal of the Agreement with the People, https://savez-za-srbiju.rs/predlog-sporazuma-sa-narodom/

derision, mocking and scorn for the protests, down to diminishing the number of the protestors and the arrogant attitude towards the demands of the dissatisfied citizens. Within the populist narrative, they were not treated as part of the people, but as a minority which jeopardised the people and the national interests. Already in the early phase of the protest named *Stop Violence, Stop Bloody Shirts,* the President of Serbia and of the strongest party in the ruling coalition sent the provocative message that even if 5 million citizens were to protest in the streets, he would not fulfil their demands. This was so abrasive that *1 of 5 Million* became the slogan of the ever growing protests.

The response of the president of Serbia and the strongest ruling party, Aleksandar Vučić, to the ever growing and widespread protests throughout Serbia, was to launch the campaign "The Future of Serbia" on 7 February 2019. He launched this campaign, which was populist in style and mobilisation method, in Aleksinac, while the Secretary General of the President, Nikola Selaković, on that occasion said that it was the most important for Vučić to talk to the citizens. Asked whether this was in fact the introduction of another election campaign, Selaković said that "for wise politicians, every day between two election cycles is election campaign." The entire campaign was directed to politically buffer the citizens' protests in the media, to show that the majority of the people supported the leader, while the protesting minority intentionally or unintentionally sided with the enemies of the state and the people.

However, the difference between the protests and the campaign "The Future of Serbia" is essential: tens of thousands of people throughout Serbia attended the protests willingly, expressing thus their dissatisfaction, while the attendance of the Government's campaign was organised, under threat, pressure, or being paid per diem. This proves that silver-tongued populism is not enough to obtain majority support, but is merely an auxiliary tool in the captured state of usurped institutions and media.

The Leader, Elite, and Plebs

The text authored by the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, which was published in the *Politika* daily on 10 July 2019,

may serve as a paradigmatic example of the attitude of authoritarian leader to public opinion. Even though the President daily occupies the entire media space, this text written by Vučić is special in its open expression of the authoritarian and populist essence of Vučić's rule. The text entitled "The Elite and the Plebs" abounds in the examples of populist rhetoric – he sends a message to the people, while the people include those who are not against him. Essentially, he addresses his target group, "the people" who are not bothered by the numerous contradictions present in the text.

With typical populism, he attacks the elite, by calling it quasi-elite. The quasi-elite includes those criticising him, i.e. the government. It is symptomatic that he published his anti-elitist text in the "elitist" *Politika* daily, rather than in some "people's" newspaper, or tabloid. Why was that so? First, it is of no importance to whom Vučić gives his statement, or where he publishes his texts, since these are bound to be quoted and reproduced everywhere, sometimes even for days, if needed. Second, Vučić addressed those supporting him, those forced to vote for him, those he deceived daily, by threatening them with external and internal enemies, those scared for their mere survival, and those he daily persuaded that he was simultaneously a member of the elite and people's man, that he was both a peacemaker and a warrior, in line with the need, that he would do everything for the people and that this was the purpose of his being.

The elites, i.e. quasi-elites, which he perceives with so much scorn are essentially quite a varied and heterogeneous group, usually divided into political, economic, cultural, and intellectual elites. Populists homogenise these subgroups into a single entity with the attributes of corruption, exploitation, immorality, selfishness, arrogance, incompetence. "They" are stupid, lazy and sloppy, in Vučić's words, or actually traitors, scum, thieves…

Not only does Vučić belong to the political caste in power, but he also determines who may become an exclusive member of this caste. Simultaneously, he rhetorically fights for the poor and disadvantaged, while in practice being the very person generating this poverty and disadvantage. He is

pro-Europe, yet everything he does is contrary to European va-
lues. He is a supporter of the EU, yet his media favour Russia,
and adopt anti-Western position. He paints himself a Robin
Hood, while the facts indicate that he is actually the one deepe-
ning inequalities in the society, transferring the burden of fiscal
stability to the poor rather than the rich.

Income inequality in Serbia is the greatest in Europe, and
expressed in "gini coefficient," in the previous three years it
amounted to 38 (the greater the coefficient, the greater the
inequality), as it was said at the symposium "Inequality in Ser-
bia," organised by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art in
late 2018. The information that 20% of the richest have nine ti-
mes larger income than 20% of the people with the lowest in-
comes proves this thesis. In the opinion of Prof Dr Mihailo Aran-
derenko of the Faculty of Economics, Belgrade University, this
situation is caused by the weak effects of the tax system and
social transfers. That the equality within the tax and social pro-
tection systems is poor is also shown by the fact that equality in
Serbia prior to taxation and social transfers is similar to that in
the EU, while afterwards, inequality becomes quite pronoun-
ced. In Serbia, 52% of the total tax revenue originates from
VAT, which is regressive and represents a greater burden for
the poor than for the rich, while in the EU countries VAT is res-
ponsible for 34% of the total tax revenues. On the other hand,
direct taxes such as employment, income and property taxes
are progressive, as they have more impact on the rich than on
the poor, and they are responsible for 16% of Serbian tax reve-
nues, while in the EU countries they amount to 33%.

So, the authoritarian president of Serbia advocates the
rule of the people, while he has usurped all the power and tre-
ats citizens as his subjects. He constantly refers to the citizens
as to the people, yet the people, as he perceives it, do not inclu-
de all the citizens, but only those who support him. He speaks
for the people, yet the people are only his supporters. As evi-
denced by all the aforementioned facts, he is a classic authori-
tarian populist. He is authoritarian in his abuse of authority and
aversion to criticism, he does not allow for his authority to be li-
mited, he stifles freedom, he generates and resorts to all kinds

of violence: from verbal and institutional violence, to violence against common sense. He has adopted creating illusions as his political style, while force, violence, and deception are his main political tools.

He is a populist because he is, inter alia, an anti-elitist, and he stifles pluralism, relativizes and ignores institutions, procedures and laws, he does not want any intermediaries between himself and the people, he pompously removes fences at the meetings full of attendees brought by force, receives them in early morning hours in the Government's building to talk with them about their problems, he sleeps in army barracks and dines on bean-soup…

A representative example of the era of post-truth and post-morality: he manipulates emotions when the facts do not support his position, or he uses facts in the virtual reality existing only in his head and his media. Even when he makes errors, he does that for the benefit of the people. He gives primacy to the ethics of good intentions over the ethics of responsibility, even though he often quotes Max Webber. And why wouldn't he, when no one else gets the chance or has a platform to refute any of this.

Populists do not wish to be liked by everybody, but only by those that they themselves have defined as the people. On the contrary, populists need those "dangerous others" in order for them to be promoted into the people's defenders, protecting them from the "dangerous others." These are sometimes national (ethnic) minorities, sometimes CSOs, and sometimes political opponents discredited as enemies. At times these are external "dangerous others" – certain states, neighbours, global forces, international companies, non-governmental organisations…

Aleksandar Vučić is the embodiment of an authoritarian populist, due to the fact that populism is his ideology, and because of the way he communicates, politically mobilises and organises his party, i.e. his style is populist… Therefore, his every public appearance is deprived in advance of any originality, it is identical to those of dozens of other populists who "protect" their peoples from imaginary "conspiracies of the elites." His tone, wording and messages are in accordance with his political

character and temperament. His causticity and sarcasm are the main characteristics of his polemical tone in fighting imaginary enemies.

Even a superficial semantic analysis of the text he authored for *Politika* indicates an autocrat who does not pick his words, or actually he does pick them in order to deepen the divisions. He uses conflicts to maintain power. He pays no attention to constitutional and legal limitations. He is the one delivering undisputable truths, he prosecutes and announces final judgements, and he defends what cannot be defended when protecting his loyal associates with his authority. A great number of affairs, each of them big enough to bring the Government down, was concluded with him offering public absolution. He sends the message to "his people" that he would be the one who will decide when to retire, as he cannot lose the elections. This kind of self-confidence originates in the fact that he has usurped all the levers of power and almost all media, that he defines electoral conditions and counts the votes.

In the era of Aleksandar Vučić, Serbia did not become a stable democratic country, but rather the reflection of the attempts to secure and define the rule fit to the leader and his associates. The leader used populism in all its manifestations and forms: he made the rhetoric against "dangerous others," i.e. arch-enemies, harsher, he used nationalism as a tool of winning, consolidating and preserving power. The key actors of the populist structure, the leader and the media created their mutually beneficial symbiosis, even more closely-knit than in the times of Milošević. It can be said that the control over media is even more pronounced than in the era of Milošević. The media became the pillar of the captured state and society.

The undisputed leader has won all the levers of power, just like Milošević before him, and has used them for the strengthening of his own rule, rather than for the development of liberal democracy, as it has been presented by the controlled media.

Impact of Social and Political Context
on the Nature of Populism in Serbia

Between 2012 and 2019, formal institutions in Serbia did exist, yet they were deprived of their contents. In practice, the holders of power have a favoured, i.e. absolutely dominant position. Through manipulation of the state resources and institutions, in an improved 1990s model, they have such an advantage in political confrontations that they render them entirely meaningless. The opposition political actors' position is entirely unequal. In that way, the fundamental democratic principle of equal participation in competitive elections is uprooted. Elections are held regularly, yet the opposition is disadvantaged in every possible way – due to financial engineering, influence on, or total control of the media, inexistence of independent judiciary, muted public opinion, and suppressed civil society. All this gave the ruling elite a major advantage, and thus such a system (competitive authoritarianism) is a hybrid order which naturally tends to suppress the elements of liberal democracy, especially where institutions are weak and where critical public opinion is underdeveloped, as is the case in Serbia. So, based on the defects of democracy present in the country, Serbia can be classified as competitive authoritarianism, or illiberal democracy. In other words, this is an underdeveloped political community in terms of political practice, political culture, as well as when it comes to state and public institutions.

If we tried to make conclusions pertaining to the outcomes of democratisation in Serbia based on the reports by the European Commission, we could say that democratisation, as a result of the process of European integrations, has only just begun in many a field, that there is a verbally expressed political will to take this process further, yet that this determination is often pushed aside when confronted with the narrow interests of political elites. The EC Report for 2018 left the diplomatic formulations and wording thus far used and pointed to the large gaps in implementing European agenda in a more direct and clearer way.

If we, however, informed ourselves of the outcomes of democracy exclusively from the sources of the Government, or

the media controlled by the Government, then the image pain-
ted would be of Serbia as an already stabilised democracy whi-
ch endures its "critiques" (those criticising the government) and
the unjust EU policy of conditioning. All in all, a perspective whi-
ch is entirely populist.

In reality, this is significantly different; there is no true
separation of powers; democratic processes are seriously
flawed, elections are realised in the atmosphere of the prono-
unced favouritism towards the parties in power, pressure is
exerted on the actors and voters in the field; political corrupti-
on became an everyday occurrence; no conditions exist for fair
political contest, the opposition is attacked by the private me-
dia receiving state support and privileged positions based on
their political influence, the state-run media are but a party ser-
vice of the strongest ruling party and bulletin of the most po-
werful man in the state.

Effective limitations of power do not exist. Parliament
acts as a service of the executive power. The overwhelming
majority of the media are under the control or pressure of the
executive power, and those that are not, are under constant po-
litical and financial pressure. Criticism is treated as an enemy
activity, and critics often as the enemies of the state. Critical
opinions could be read only in low circulation dailies and maga-
zines, on one privately owned television, and on social
networks. The attitude of the executive power and the media
towards independent state authorities is inadequate. The Om-
budsman who performed his duty professionally was under
constant political pressure and was exposed to media lynching
since the political elite perceived him as a potential political
opponent once his term of office expired in 2017. Citizens' ini-
tiatives and protests are not taken seriously. The Constitution
and legislation are subjugated to private interests, and instead
the rule of law there is the rule of the parties, i.e. the rule of
the single man and those subjugated to him.

The key principles and values of the EU are parts of the
programmatic commitment of a great number of relevant poli-
tical parties in Serbia; they are present in legal and political
science textbooks, as well as in the supreme legal act, yet in

practice, they are not sufficiently represented. The rule of law is overshadowed by the ruling party and its leader, who derives his legitimacy from personal popularity, transposing it to decision-making within and outside the scope of his authority. He positions himself as the supreme social arbiter, a *pater familias* who acts patronisingly towards other institutions and bases his politics on the "direct communication with the citizens."

On the other hand, the democratic political community of the rule of law, i.e. stabilised democracy, is a community in which human rights and democratic procedures are respected, where each branch of the government is effectively limited so that it could not exceed its respective authority. Formal advocacy of these principles and values is required, but is not sufficient. It is necessary to effectively implement in practice the democratic principles and promote the proclaimed values. On this path of many an obstacle, Serbia is still far away from the finish line.

Populism is not helpful here, as it does not aid mending the defects in building liberal democracy. Quite the reverse, in the name of democracy, these defects are concealed, modified, or even nurtured at the expense of building a democratic society which strives to strike the balance of democratic and liberal values.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The causes for the occurrence of populism in liberal democracies are various: from latent ones originating in the structure and functioning of the developed democratic societies, to concrete (contextual) which occur in the times of political and/or economic crises. A substantially important ingredient in the occurrence of populism as a relevant, and especially dominant phenomenon, is the appearance of a "charismatic" leader and the mass media that support him/her. In illiberal democracies, the ground for the occurrence of populism is even more fertile, since there are no traditions of democratic political culture, state and social institutions are underdeveloped, the rule of law is but a defined goal, while authoritarian political consciousness

favours the appearance of a messianic leader who, with the support of the media, reconceptualises the established political postulates.

Social and political context essentially determines the margins, nature and scope of populism, and ergo its consequences. Populists can basically have the same or similar understanding of politics, yet it is filled with different values, which depend on different traditions and experiences, as well as varying economic and social contexts.

Starting from the terminological definition and the presented concepts of democracy, today's Serbia could be classified as an illiberal democracy, characterised by the existence of regular elections that are, however, not always free or fair, while the elected political class is not inclined to respecting constitutional and legal limitations of their rule, but rather ready, in order to preserve their particular interests, to breach democratic principles and procedures, as well as freedoms and rights of the citizens. In other words, liberal constitutionalism is undermined by simplistically interpreted and similarly practiced democracy. The order which tends to avoid or cancel the limitations established in the democratic process with the purpose of protecting fundamental rights and freedoms is also called *populist democracy*. In such a community model, "people's will" is the measure and excuse for everything; any kind of limitation to that will is proclaimed an assault on democracy, and this in fact happens quite frequently in the political life of Serbia. The protection of people's will in practice is reduced to an aspiration to unlimited power and marginalisation of political minorities, as well as neutralisation of all those who seek to limit the power and authorities.

Starting from the literature on populism and different perspectives on the consequences of populism, i.e. staring from the position that populism can, on the one hand, be perceived as a threat to the ideal and practice of liberal democracy, while on the other, as a corrective to the elitist tendencies of modern representative democracies – it is important to also take into account the state of development of representative democracy, its institutions, political culture, and political practice.

While in the countries with a long tradition of democratic political culture, developed state and social institutions, populism may, in principle, have a warning, corrective role which might amend the misbalance between liberal and democratic elements of representative democracy, in the countries of illiberal, unconsolidated democracy, populism cannot have such a role, since the institutions, democratic political culture, and established democratic practice are still underdeveloped. Quite the reverse, in such circumstances populism turns out to be a major obstacle to establishing and consolidating the key elements of representative liberal democracy. The example of Serbia confirms it.

The gap between democratic ideals and real functioning in such societies is too wide and deep to expect populism to have any corrective role. If you add to the equation economic and political crisis which is not an incident or transitional occurrence in development, but rather a permanent state of affairs, then the social and economic context in such political communities is an additional cause for the appearance of populism and all the accompanying elements. In such a context, there is no major tension between liberal and democratic elements of the political order, since the liberal are still in development, while the democratic are interpreted and practiced simplistically, as the absolute right of the majority to exercise their will in the name of the people, without taking into account the rights and attitudes of the political minority.

The context of undeveloped institutions, undemocratic political culture, and constant political and economic crises, creates an extensive space for the appearance of populist leaders, allegedly full of understanding for the needs of the people ready to challenge the corrupted elites and dangerous others. With the help of the media who are ready to give them space, primarily due to the attractiveness of such leaders, and subsequently due to their political influence that they do not wish to oppose due to the financial benefits and privileges they receive – populists receive strong backing which they use for their own, rather than for the general good.

In such circumstances, populists supress pluralism and critical thinking, restrict media freedom, perceive institutions as their own service, rather than general good. In this way, they do not contribute to the correction of the defects in the political system, but rather conversely, they prevent their amendment. All in all, neither the populism of the 1990s nor the populism of today have contributed to the democratisation of the political community, or modernisation of the society and economy, but are in fact a millstone around the society's neck. The heritage and practice of populism not only failed to contribute to the favourable balance of liberal and democratic values, but also remained below the level and mainstream of Serbian cultural and political history "which inclined to the harmony between the freedom of citizens and freedom of the state" (Popov, 1993: 58). By becoming the dominant phenomenon, Serbian populism has marginalised the modernisation tendencies which had existed earlier in the history of the Serbian people (Popov, 1993), but it had to pay attention to the fact that a great number of citizens still supported Europeanisation and modernisation of the society.

So, populism is a general phenomenon occurring in all societies and social orders, and thus also in transitional societies. Interpreted as a thin-centred ideology, populism was also tested through public polls, analyses and syntheses of the political actors and phenomena in Serbia. It turned out that in Serbia too, in different eras, an eclectic mix of elements of different ideologies had functioned, being often contradictory, yet with their main characteristics being constant: glorification of the people, antagonism with elites and "others" who jeopardise the state and/or the nation. In both illiberal and liberal democracies, populism may be a thin-centred ideology, quasi-ideology, or merely a technique, a ruling style without ideological foundation. Social and political context defines the margins and essentially determines the nature and scope of populism, and, accordingly, also its consequences.

STABILITOCRACY

Populism in Stabilitocracies: The Case of Serbia

Term and definition of stabilitocracy – Balkan stabilitocracies – Stabilitocracy and democracy – The essence of stabilitocracy: External stability based on autocratic populism – Liberal and populist democracy: Internal tension and the gap between the theoretical concept and actual functioning – The initial phase of democratic consolidation in Serbia

Term and Definition of Stabilitocracy

Defects in democratic elements and deficiencies in liberal elements, as well as unstable political, economic and security environment – these are all circumstances in which so-called stabilitocracies are created. Stabilitocracies may be described as the orders formally based on the principles of liberal democracy, yet in practice their formal shell is filled with undemocratic and illiberal contents, and they receive external and internal support for it. The internal support is not entirely legal and legitimate, since the support received by the regimes in stabilitocracies is based on privileges and usurpations in the political, media, and economic spheres. Such usurpation directly influences:

1. Usurpation of state and social institutions
2. Rejection of meritorious principles
3. Breaching the rules of the election process
4. Media control

Stabilitocrats are authoritarians supported by international community because they have power and authority concentrated in their hands. They "simplify" international communication by avoiding international procedures in their own country.

The term Stabilitocracy is derived from the Latin word *stabilis* meaning firm and Greek word *kratia* – to rule. Stability is usually associated with the systems which maintain or achieve the state of balance after the cessation of the influence of the causes which previously disturbed such balance. Here we primarily refer to stability in (foreign) political context. When the term of stabilitocracy is analysed in terms of the words composing it, then such a compound word should indicate the rule of stability. However, the

essential meaning of the term stabilitocracy in the public discourse has to do with the fact that the stability on which it relies is based on autocratic and illiberal foundations, on restricting pluralism and subjugation of institutions.

So, stability before liberal democracy is the foundation on which stabilitocracy is based. Internal and external dangers are weapons in the hands of autocrats who receive the support of the "allies" and "friends" from abroad. What such allies and friends believe to be bad for themselves – they deem necessary for stabilitocracies, as they put stability before democratic and liberal principles.

Stability is nurtured as a supreme value among domestic autocrats, as well as their supporters in the international community. Steadiness, certainty and predictability are above the fundamental values nurtured in the countries of developed democracy. And while autocrats are ready to act in the thus defined framework – they are acceptable. However, once they fail to meet such expectations, they become an impediment and lose their support, or at least the autocracy they practice in their own countries is no longer tolerated. Slobodan Milošević was a "guarantee of peace and stability," while one of his party's slogans was "With us, there is no uncertainty," and it all lasted until the point where he "endangered regional stability," i.e. failed to fulfil the role intended for him. A similar situation was with Nikola Gruevski in Macedonia.

So, stabilitocracy is designed to preserve peace, even at the expense of liberal democracy's fundamental values. On the other hand, everything that disturbs or may disturb geostrategic interests of the powerful actors is perceived as unstable.

Europeanisation versus Stabilitocracy

Balkan stabilitocracies incline towards autocracy, which undermines the fundaments of an orderly society and state. By accepting European values in principle rather than in practice, they essentially do not guarantee stability in the long run, but rather conversely, they prevent it. It is therefore more

appropriate to call them **labilocracies**. In the long run, the so-called stabilitocracies obstruct real, sustainable stability based on the values, liberal principles, and democratic institutions and procedures.

Even though the main purpose of supporting stabilitocracies is maintaining peace and stability in the region, this aim is not achieved as authoritarian systems are created, which are founded on quasi-democratic and anti-liberal bases. Pragmatism of this kind is not beneficial in the end, nor is it sustainable, so it can be said that stabilitocracy is the wrong means in achieving an allegedly good aim. Regional relations have not become better due to this type of support to Balkan authoritarians. On the contrary, they became worse, since authoritarian endeavours of the rulers are tolerated, including nationalism and intolerance for neighbours, using harsh rhetoric in maintaining a stable rule…

Europeanisation instead of stabilitocracy is the formula for building stable societies based on democratic and liberal principles, which are the holders of sustainable peace and stability in the true sense. Such states which build common markets and mutual cultural and political connections may attain sustainable peace and stability, unlike stabilitocracies.

Europeanisation (Radaelli and Exadaktlyos 2012; Ladrech 2010; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Olsen 2002) would imply the process of adopting the fundamental values, institutional, legal and administrative framework and strategic political goals proclaimed by the EU. Apart from Europeanisation of the candidate countries, within the EU there is a process of internal Europeanisation of the members thereof, the process of integration by means of political culture, common values and development of democratic institutions, a gradual process of "reorienting the direction and shape of politics" towards the European Union as a political community (Ladrech 1994: 69).

In short: the values being institutionalised and institutions becoming values of the first order, separation of powers which implies independent judiciary, functional parliament and responsible executive government, and in recent times, civil society institutions – these are all values per se, since they contribute to the functioning of the rule of law and civil rights and freedoms.

Autocrats, on the other hand, reach for the measures that are not common in the countries of developed democracy, such as an endless series of snap elections simultaneously invoking democracy, i.e. "checking people's will." Actually, snap elections are used as a tool of constant mobilisation and utilisation of public resources and the usurped institutions for continuation of "legitimacy" (2012 Parliament would expire in 2016, yet by means of snap elections in 2014 and 2016, Vučić secured himself and his allies until 2018, i.e. 2020). In this way, the ruling clique utilised public resources once in two years to solidify their support. In the stabilitocracy that is Serbia, elections are not scheduled when the law prescribes, but serve the ruling clique to prolong their power in the conditions of utter inequality. Snap elections are not used to affirm the principle of the substitutability of government, but quite the reverse. From cycle to cycle, elections are held in irregular conditions, with the idea of not offering a chance to the opposition to consolidate. What is happening is actually the very thing that Serbian Constitution intends to prevent from happening: the usurpation of power. Namely, the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia envisages in its article 5, paragraph 4, that: "political parties may not exercise power directly or submit it to their control," and this is the very thing that is present in all the phases and segments of the rule.

Stabilitocrats perceive and treat their opponents as enemies, so they are essentially anti-pluralists. They perceive the institutions of representative democracy as obstacles in their direct communication with the people, as they see themselves as exclusive people's representatives, and they produce external "dangerous others" when needed. So, one may say that stabilitocrats and stabilitocracy are a kind of populists and populism supported from within, as well as externally, with the purpose of *stabilising autocracy*, rather than liberal democracy.

In stabilitocracy, it is impossible to have a relevant social dialogue concerning important political and social topics, because critical thinking is labelled as a treason, opposition as enemies, journalists are treated as a government's service, or they are labelled foreign hirelings. In the political system,

opposition is perceived as a foreign body... Façade institutional structure and servile political culture are a haven for autocracy. The inexistence of independent judiciary, i.e. strong political influence on the judiciary, multiply all institutional and extra-institutional advantages enjoyed by the ruling clique. A relevant social dialogue would assume for all this to be changed entirely and at once. This change would have to be the basis for initiating the conversation concerning a thorough social transformation. However, this is not a priority of either Brussels or Washington, as is evidenced in practice. They prioritise maintenance of peace and stability, and management of the processes in Western Balkans with as little effort as possible. Stabilitocracy enables them to have just that: to shorten the procedures by concentrating power in the hands of cooperative autocrats.

However, the consequences are, in the long run, detrimental to the societies of stabilitocracies, in terms of the development of democratic institutions, procedures and political culture, as well as when it comes to economic development and social stratification. If stabilitocracies are acceptable for international political actors, for the capital these are economically unstable communities since the business conditions are not guaranteed by sustainable stability of institutions and the political system, but by the strength and stability of the autocrat who guarantees such stability. In such communities, the economic flow is managed by clientelism, rather than by the market and competition. The corruption is systemic, being largely supported instead of being opposed by the state. Consequences to the society of such a state are detrimental.

Support to international stability by autocratic regimes makes such countries politically closer to the EU, yet in terms of their values and the quality of their democracy they get progressively more distant. One of the consequences of such a relationship towards stabilitocracies is that their citizens get increasingly more alienated from the politics, as they tend to vote for their own, tangible benefits, or out of fear, completely neglecting public good and even their own ideological or programmatic affinities. By supporting this practice, the countries of the developed West generate animosity towards themselves even

in those that had affinity towards them, so in the end, it turns out that the support to stabilitocracy is a political investment in instability and uncertainty.

So, the term of stabilitocracy, which has been introduced in the political glossary of the region in recent years, designates sacrificing human rights and functional democracy for real, or imagined national or regional stability, being a kind of a tacit, or sometimes actually quite vocal support to autocrats. Essential in all this is the question of the nature of stability in autocratic societies.

When talking about stabilitocracy in Serbia, one should understand that this refers to the autocratic rule of Aleksandar Vučić, who exerts control over all the levers of power in the state and society, while playing the role of a reformer, statesman, and protector of public interest in his multimedia reality realm. In communication with the developed countries of the West, Vučić presents himself as someone who delivers on his promises and resolutely leads Serbia towards the EU, he behaves predictably and guarantees stability. Simultaneously, he commends himself to Russia as a warrant of their influence in the Balkan, and in China as an important economic intermediary at the gates of Europe.

A special problem are stabilitocracies – countries such as Serbia, that still lack consolidated democracy and internal critical mass of those who could consolidate it. Instead, they rest on undemocratic, authoritarian, populist mechanisms of power, which formally have majority support of the citizens and external support of the EU, which favours the stability of the country and the region more than the establishment of consolidated liberal democracy.

When a system relies on a powerful individual, then it has the identical duration as the person in power, which is confirmed by the SFRY and many other examples.

In some of the candidate countries, including Serbia, democratically elected leaders used their mandates to accumulate and enlarge their power outside the scope of legislation and constitution. This also happens with leaders in developed democratic countries. The difference is that institutions in such

countries, political culture and democratic practice restrain such ambitions of the leaders, while there are no such obstacles in stabilitocracies.

In the countries of stabilitocracy autocrats do not pay much attention to the rule of law, they do not accept limitations of power and they use electoral legitimacy to unlawfully expand their power and influence. At the same time, the elections in which they gained their formal legitimacy are but a shadow of what they need to be in liberal democracies. They control and suppress media freedom, prevent their political opponents from expressing their opinions both in the parliament (obstruction by the minority is the latest invention of the ruling majority which prevents the opposition from speaking by proposing meaningless amendments to their own draft legislations) and outside of it, they disqualify their opponents by labelling them "traitors," "enemies," "thieves," which undermines the essence of democracy and the role of opposition within it. Institutions are subjugated to the interests of the ruling clique, rather than to public interests. Authoritarianism is presented as a natural condition legitimised in the unfair and unjust elections, where their opponents did not even have the chance to present themselves accordingly to the voters.

In order for this kind of situation to be maintained on the national political scene, a full media control is necessary, and it is attained accordingly, with the exception of a negligible number of low-circulation and poor accessibility media outlets, as such politics requires propaganda rather than media freedom.

Populism and Defects of Democracy

The populism of the 1990s was the populism of the leader of the SPS (Socialist Party of Serbia), an ex-communist, Slobodan Milošević, who on the wave of nationalism and his clashes with the Right, as well as through his intermittent cooperation with radically rightist SRS (Serbian Radical Party), dominated the political scene of the time (Popov, 1993). Restyled, with actors who had occupied important positions

throughout the 1990s, populism triumphantly returned with the establishment of the SNS-SPS (Serbian Progressive Party – Socialist Party of Serbia) parliamentary majority and formation of Dačić's Government (SPS) in 2012. This time around, the socialists were the weaker partner, though the Prime Minister was the former PR of Slobodan Milošević. In that government, the First Deputy Prime Minister was Aleksandar Vučić, the leader of the SNS and a former member of the Serbian Radical Party, who was the de facto leader and used the first opportunity to formalise his dominance at a snap election.

The SNS-SPS coalition heralded the beginning of the rule of the two populisms, quasi-rightist and quasi-leftist, which lasts to this very day (2019). This is also the era of the rule of one man, Aleksandar Vučić, an autocrat who embodies everything that populism is, or is thought to be: from the demagogical rhetoric, his political style of building the personality cult, right down to the government in the name of the people, which is legitimised through confronting the "corrupted elite" of the former regime and struggle for people's interests by protecting them from the "dangerous others" embodied in the international community, neighbours, and internal enemies.

In 2012-2019 Serbia, democratic institutions formally did exist, however, in practice, the holders of power had a privileged position. By usurping public resources, they secure themselves advantage in political confrontations, putting others in a disadvantageous position, thus negating the democratic principle of equal participation in the election race. Elections are held regularly, yet the opposition is disadvantaged due to their restricted access to financial resources, the dominant influence of the regime on the media and inexistence of independent judiciary. All this provides the ruling elite with a huge advantage, making this system a kind of a hybrid which naturally tends to suppress the liberal elements of democracy, especially where institutions are weak and critical public opinion is underdeveloped, as is the case in Serbia. Therefore, based on the democratic defects that it manifests, Serbia could be classified as a country of competitive authoritarianism, or illiberal, populist democracy (Lutovac 2016: 219-239).

In the political practice, there is no real separation of powers, opposition is constantly assaulted by privately-owned media which receive state support and occupy a privileged position based on the political influence, while state-run media act as a partisan service of the strongest party in power and a bulletin of the most powerful man in the country. The rule of law is overshadowed by the ruling party and its leader, who derives his legitimacy from personal popularity, transposing it to decision-making within and outside the scope of his authority. He positions himself as the supreme social arbiter, a *pater familias* who acts patronisingly towards other institutions and bases his politics on the "direct communication with the citizens." Authoritarian populism in full bloom.

On the other hand, the democratic political community of the rule of law, i.e. stabilised democracy, is a community in which human rights and democratic procedures are respected, where each branch of the government is effectively limited so that it could not exceed its respective authority. Formal advocacy of these principles and values is required, but is not sufficient. It is necessary to effectively implement in practice the democratic principles and promote the proclaimed values. On this path of many an obstacle, Serbia is still far away from the finish line (Lutovac 2016: 235-236), and populism is not helpful here, as it does not aid mending the defects in building liberal democracy. Quite the reverse, in the name of democracy, these defects are concealed, modified, or even nurtured at the expense of building a democratic society which strives to strike the balance of democratic and liberal values.

Manipulation of emotions, fears, apprehension and tension on the one hand, and national pride, sport success, historical achievements on the other, are used as a political fuel, powered by the media. Bread and circuses. A well-tested propaganda mould applied in its crudest form. The coalition of the quasi-right and quasi-left populism has changed the nature of patriotism: nationalism has been restyled, proclaimed self-sufficiency has gave way to Europeanism, the ranking of *dangerous others* has also changed, yet the model of political behaviour remained the same.

In the atmosphere of this emotional manipulation, the principle and importance of majority is made absolute by the overwhelming parliamentary majority, neglecting the role and importance of minority and more, much hostility against diverse thinking and criticism is demonstrated. *Dangerous others* are ranked in line with the current needs – these are sometimes Americans, sometimes Croats, Albanians, or Bosniaks. Instead of being perceived as competition on the political scene, the political elites of the former regime are treated as dangerous others, in addition to all those ready to criticise and resist the politics of the single man who controls not only the coalition in power, but also almost all state and independent institutions and crucial state media and tabloids. Therefore, it can be said that the politics of anti-pluralism has been an important characteristic of the populism in Serbia since 2012.

Stabilitocracy and Democracy

Every year on 15 September, the International Day of Democracy is marked. In 2007, the General Assembly of the UN invited all the members, governmental and non-governmental organisations to mark that day as the day of struggle for achieving democratic ideals. The rights of participation in political and social life go hand in hand with civil freedoms – freedom of speech and argument, together with the freedom of forming political groups, or associations, and freedom to join them. An important element in achieving democratic ideals is the process of stabilising the institutions which secure the rule of law and political processes that enable fair political fight, preservation and widening the domain of freedom and human rights.

In the majority of states, however, the Democracy Day celebrations are more of an ideal than achievement. This is certainly true of Serbia. In today's Serbia, the term democracy denotes an institutional system of government in which individuals close to the autocrat, by means of irregular voting, gain formal legitimacy and factual power to decide on everything.

Serbia is among the countries which are yet to be transformed from the autocratic system, where the regime is not responsible nor liable to effective control, to a system with the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights, of a developed civil society and independent institutions. Thus, the marking of the Democracy Day is highly important, since it reminds us where we are and where we are heading to: underdeveloped political culture, unestablished rule of law, low level of the freedom of speech and media freedoms, underdeveloped and feeble institutions, concentration of power in the hands of one man, established partocracy, widespread corruption – these are all systemic problems of the state and society in general.

Serbia is far from a stable democratic state. However, Serbia is called a "stabilitocracy," which creates confusion *as it indicates stability. However, this is not the stability of democratic institutions, but of the political and security circumstances.* Stabilitocracy is the name of the order in which democratic and liberal values are pragmatically suppressed in order to achieve such stability. This is the sacrifice of the citizens of a transitional country that "major international actors" accept with great ease.

As a matter of fact, as it has already been said, this system should more accurately be called labilocracy: an order of underdeveloped freedoms and the rule of law, with the façade democracy deprived of real contents. It is an order of unstable foundations, since it depends on the rating, good will of the authoritarian and support received by the great powers, rather than on independent institutions and the balance of liberal and democratic principles and practices. It is the order which is founded on the phenomenon of "captured state," where laws are tailored to the needs of powerful individuals and against the interests of the citizens and the state. The state is captured by political and economic elite, extensively connected to powerful individuals. Public policies are in the service of private actors who obtain legalised privileges by means of corruption. Kleptocratic elites try to control civil society as a corrective of political processes, they found their own NGOs, finance them out of the state budget or EU funds, suppressing real and responsible

NGOs and thus rendering this important segment of democratic society meaningless.

Corruption as an autoimmune disease of every society also exists in developed societies, but unlike captured states with labilocratic orders, these countries have independent judiciary, which largely addresses such social deviations, as a separate branch of power. The road of attaining democratic ideals is long and hard, but clearly traced. To speak metaphorically, one can move on from the pre-political macadam to the road of democracy only when elementary conditions for the functioning of a normal democratic state are secured: the rule of law, free media, and free citizens that may choose according to their own will at free elections, and the independent judiciary exists to guarantee all that. Only after this has been achieved can we think about a highway leading to the democratic community, a corridor towards free and democratic society.

The first step in attaining democratic ideals is a self-critical confrontation with the reality. The next step is action. Responsibility lies with political elites, but also on the people, citizens who decide on who shall represent them. Clashing people and elites is the fuel of populism, just as self-aware and engaged citizens, together with the political elite, are the foundations of a democratic society.

The Essence of Stabilitocracy: External Stability Based on Autocratic Populism
Summary

If the essence of stabilitocracy is to be summarised in a single sentence then it could be said that it is a peaceful coexistence of stability and authoritarianism which secures short-term peace, while on the other hand, in the long run, it prevents the peace from being built on proper foundations and thus become sustainable.

(Para)political stability, i.e. stabilitocracy actually means something entirely different than what the name itself apparently implies. The Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group

– BiEPAG in one of its reports indicates that the regional stabilitocracies are in fact weak democracies with autocratic leaders who rule these captured states through extra-institutional levers of power and control of the media, presenting themselves as pro-Western keepers of stability in the region. On the other hand, by supporting "useful autocrats," the West creates aversion for itself in pro-western citizens.

It almost has become a commonplace that when it comes to Serbia, the West cares more for the stability, than for democratic politics and practice.18

The term of stabilitocracy with populist content is used with increasing frequency in everyday speech, while political scientists and sociologists interpret it as orders with authoritarian characteristics and a dominant party and leader, and unfinished liberal democracy.

President of the Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, Ranko Krivokapić: "Montenegro in some segments has the best election regulation, but also 'the best developed system of stealing elections.'" So, in his words, Montenegro essentially relies on kleptocracy. Stabilitocracy is, in fact, synonymous with a specific form of autocracy-democratorship. It is by no means a warrant of democracy. On the contrary, it is a warrant of the absence of democracy, as democratic and liberal principles, practices, and institutions are sacrificed in the name of stability.

Façade democracy and essential autocracy are the main characteristics of stabilitocracy and they make it unsustainable and unacceptable in the long run. The problem is that from the outside, stabilitocracy may perhaps be seen as a necessary transitional phase, yet stabilitocrats do not perceive it as such, but rather as an order which should maintain their rule for as long as possible.

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18 What is the axiom of stabilitocracy? In the name of stability and more or less regulated relations in the region, official Belgrade would make various concessions in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and so on, and in return, they won't be bothered much about the way in which Serbia is governed and what it does, or doesn't have to do with elementary democratic standards. (Teofil Pančić https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/pancic-Vučić-ji/28825713.html)

In the presidential election campaign of 2018 in Montene-gro, the key slogan was Stability and *Progress*. In Serbia, the most powerful party of the ruling coalition is called Serbian Progressive Party, while stability is among the key words in every campaign.

If foreign politics is somewhat archaically defined as a re-flection of the domestic politics outside the borders of a coun-try, then it may be expected that autocracies must, at one po-int, show their real face on international scale. The values of foreign and national politics cannot be divided in such a way, except for the purposes of analytics and diplomacy. A con-sequence of tolerating domestic autocracies for the benefit of regional stability is lowering of the criteria in European integra-tions, or losing a realistic perspective due to departure from the EU standards.19

The Balkan countries in question are not stabilitocracies, but rather labilocracies with international support. It is an unsteady, shaky system of rule, i.e. the opposite of stable, steady, and secure.

For a number of years already, those who attempt to ju-stify their title of "objective analysts" with meticulously measu-red balance of praises and criticism, have used the axiom that "domestic politics of Aleksandar Vučić is problematic, but his foreign politics is on the other hand praiseworthy." This mecha-nistic and rather artificial division of a single politics into two politics that can allegedly act independently, without mutually clashing, is now perhaps the most strongly contested, if for no other reason, then for the fact that it becomes increasingly cle-ar that Vučić's unintentional parody of a Titoist figure has run its course, reached its limits and has been left without manoe-uvring space.

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[19] "I wouldn't want to see wars again in the Balkans," said Juncker in the European Parliament. If we take away European perspective from the states in this highly complex, and I would say tragic region, we will relive what we already had in the 1990s, warned Juncker, as is reported by the AP. The next summit of the leaders of the European Union and Western Balkans will be held in May in Bulgaria, yet for now, not a single state in the region is close to becoming a member of the EU ("Junker: Bez EU Balkanu preti rat (Juncker: Without EU Wars Threaten the Balkans)", Danas-Fonet, Belgrade https://www.danas.rs/politika/junker-bez-eu-balkanu-preti-rat/ accessed on 17 April 2018)

Liberal and Illiberal Democracy
– Internal tension and gap between the theoretical concept and practical functioning -

The term democracy is usually used as a synonym for liberal democracy created by joining democratic and liberal traditions which are based on different values and which, in their mutual contesting and complementarity, fuel political evolution of modern societies (Macpherson 1977). Liberal tradition (political dimension of liberal ideology), simply said, emphasises the importance of individual rights and freedoms, while the democratic favours people's sovereignty and equality of citizens. Democratic tradition is based on the idea that power should rest in the will of the people who, directly or indirectly, via their representatives, decide on important social and state issues. On the other hand, liberal tradition is founded on the idea of protection from arbitrary use of power, even if this power is based on the majority will of the people. Inter alia, under the influence of those ideas, the democratic principle of majority is supplemented with the principle of respecting those who stay in minority, by protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals. The desirable consequences of such interaction are *liberalisation of democracy* and *democratisation of liberalism* (Macpherson, 1977) and striking a balance between the two, the balance which leads to the most desirable political order possible – liberal democracy. However, such balance is not easy to attain, so in practice, unstable democracies are much more frequent and this leaves the space open for the appearance of populism.

The question of balance between the liberal and the democratic is one of the most important issues of political theory and practice, the question to which no generally acceptable answer has been given. Some authors believe that the problem is not in the tension between liberalism and democracy, but in the lack of democracy, the need to improve the democratic process and make it more democratic (Dal 1999). A great number of actors and supporters of the populist perspective on democracy use this as the starting point of their political engagement.

In the countries of the developed West, a theoretical and practical quest for a deepened democracy is currently underway, for "democratising of democracy" at the level of the state, as well as below and above this level, which assumes a simultaneous devolution of power, more transparent political action, ever increasing presence of civil society in the political sphere, and strengthening of civil political culture (Gidens 2005, 92). Some authors tend to perceive this as a positive side of populism, since it did bring up and problematize many of these questions through its criticism and influence.

In this sense, strengthening of the populist parties and movements and radicalisation of the political process should be perceived from the perspective of looking for the answers to the crisis of democracy and the economic model in Europe. Here we primarily refer to the crisis of representation (Mouffe, 2013) and looking for a possibility of a greater influence of voters on post-election processes and lessening the influence of elites who reshape electoral will with their post-electoral negotiations. This is the very thing that populists use to their advantage – the idea of returning the mechanisms of decision-making in important questions into the hands of the people. Populist rhetoric, as well as their political style, tactics and strategy, are in this sense also increasingly used by mainstream political actors.

The authors who identify the cause for instability of liberal democracies in the domination of "the democratic" over liberal call these systems **illiberal democracies**, and these are characterised by the fact that in spite of the existence of free and fair elections, the elected political class is not inclined to respecting constitutional and legislative restrictions of their rule, but is instead ready to undermine the rights and freedoms of the citizens in order to preserve their own particular interests (Zakaria 1997). In other words, liberal constitutionalism is undermined by simplistically interpreted and similarly practiced democracy. Such illiberal democracy is quite a frequent defect of democracy (Merkel, 2011, 26). Some authors reduce it to electoral democracy (Diamond, 1999; 2002) and they essentially interpret it in the same way.

Competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky-Way 2002; 2010) is the term which points to deviations in democratic systems in

which democratic institutions do exist, but in which political proce-
sses are such that they put holders of power in an advantageous
position. By manipulating public resources and institutions, they
secure advantage for themselves in political confrontations, simul-
taneously putting others at a disadvantage, thus annulling the
principle of equal participation in electoral competition. Elections
are held regularly, yet the position of opposition is subjugated due
to their unequal access to financial resources, influence or control
of the media by the regime and absence of independent judiciary.
All this puts political elites at an enormous advantage, so such a
competitive system is in fact a hybrid one which naturally tends to
suppress the liberal elements of democracy, especially where insti-
tutions are weak and critical public opinion is underdeveloped. In
case such defects are highly pronounced and they have a thorou-
gh impact on democratic processes of such "democracy," these
systems should not be perceived as democratic communities at all,
but rather authoritarian political communities with elements of
democracy.

Defective democracies also include ***populist democracies***
(Rainer Knopff 1998; Šalaj 2012; 2013), which wish to avoid or
abolish the limitations established in the democratic process in-
tended to protect fundamental rights and freedoms. In such
communities, "the will of the people" is the measure and excu-
se for everything and any attempt to restrict that will is proclai-
med an assault on democracy. The protection of people's will is
in practice reduced to inclination to unlimited power, marginali-
sation of political minorities, and neutralisation of all those
advocating for limitation of power.

The Initial Phase of Democratic
Consolidation in Serbia

Based on its political practice, providing the democratic
defects that it manifests, Serbia could be classified as competi-
tive authoritarianism, or illiberal or populist democracy. In ot-
her words, it is a political community which could not be unre-
servedly called democratic. It is not sufficient to proclaim that

you are pro-democratic, or just have institutions that are for-
mally democratic. In order for the real democracy to exist, it is
necessary to have the rule of law, separation of powers, demo-
cratic political culture, respected procedures and democratic
practice. In short, a system based on respecting human rights
and legislation.

If political liberalisation is designated as the first phase
of democratisation, i.e. visible weakening of repression and
strengthening of civil freedoms, then one might say that Serbia
has achieved some visible results, but it could hardly be confir-
med that it has entirely finished with democratic transition and
started democratic consolidation. It could at best be said that it
is only in the initial phase of democratic consolidation, since it
faces the process of amending constitutional inconsistencies as
well as inappropriate behaviour of political elites, which certain
authors call negative consolidation (Pridham 2002, 955). The
next level of consolidation, the so-called positive consolidation,
includes effective institutionalisation, the establishment of ru-
les and procedures, as well as promotion and spreading of de-
mocratic values and strengthening of democratic political cultu-
re through more active involvement of civil society.

Consolidated democratic systems cannot be attained in
hybrid democracies where, apart from some democratic institu-
tions, there are informal centres of power outside of the con-
trol and reach of state institutions, civil society, media and criti-
cal public: "In order for a democracy to become consolidated, it
must first become democracy" (Linc and Stepan 1996).

If one starts from the criterion that at least three conditi-
ons need to be fulfilled to even think about democratic consoli-
dation – meaning, in addition to finished democratic transition,
also the establishment of statehood on the entire territory and
the government which rules democratically (Linz i Stepan,
1996) – than for Serbia it could be said that it is yet to enter the
phase of democratic consolidation.

Elements of Populism in the Public Opinion in Serbia

Perception of politics – Attitudes of the citizens towards the people and political elite – Attitude of the citizens towards representative democracy – Attitude of the citizens towards the leader – Attitude of the citizens towards "dangerous others"

The research named "Citizens of Serbia and Populism" by the Centre for Politicological Research and Public Opinion of the Institute of Social Sciences was realised between 15 June and 16 July 2017, when 1,500 adult citizens from 100 electoral units were interviewed (proportional to size sampling), taking account of the suggestions made by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems – CSES, Module 5 and specific characteristics of Serbia.

This was the first systematic research on dissemination of populist attitudes among the citizens of Serbia (Lutovac, 2017a).20 The aim of this research was to determine how widespread populist attitudes and populist potentials are in the public opinion of Serbia, by using attitudes concerning political elite and the people, democracy and its institutions, the leader and perception of "dangerous others." By using these attitudes, the researchers tried to establish to what extent the citizens of Serbia accept or support elements of populist ideology. Furthermore, the assessments of economic and political situation were researched, party identification of the citizens, their attitude towards certain social values, elements of collective identity and the media – in order to establish the attitude of the citizens towards social, economic, and political circumstances which define the framework for the appearance and development of populism.

Perception of Politics

The research shows that as much as 57% of the citizens of Serbia is not interested in politics, and **the lack of interest in politics** can be perceived as a favourable circumstance for the

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[20] The research was realised as a poll with adult population, using a representative sample and the method of face to face interview.

appearance and development of populism. As much as 58% of the respondents pay little or no attention to political information, which is not a favourable condition for the development of a social base which would support liberal and democratic values, just like the fact that 44% of them believe that they understand the most important political problems in Serbia. This withdrawn majority of the citizens, disinterested in politics and burdened exclusively by existential personal problems is a far cry from an engaged citizen dedicated to public good and interested in any kind of social engagement. This largely narrows down the manoeuvre space for the established political parties and becomes a potential social base for the populists of different colours and political affinities, who "respect their disinterest and approach them differently, in unconventional and 'non-political'" ways.

In support of the favourable social atmosphere for the survival and development of populism is the research finding that a **relative majority of the citizens** (43%) **perceives politics as a "combat between good and evil."** A large portion of them (41%) are undecided in relation to this question, while only 16% of the citizens disagree with this view on politics. For the relative majority, thus, politics is not a public activity aimed at public good, but an everlasting fight between good and evil, patriots and enemies, "us and them"… Accordingly, **almost half of them** (48%) believe that a **compromise in politics is actually a betrayal of one's principles** (39% is undecided, while 13% disagree). So, compromise which should be the foundation of the politics of harmonising different interests is mainly perceived as a weakness and the relative majority ascribes a negative connotation to it. In line with this, 39% of the respondents believe that **the will of the majority should always prevail**, even over the legitimate rights of minority groups (34% disagree, while 27% are undecided).

Such perception of politics and (dis)interest in it influence the creation of a social atmosphere which is much more susceptible to the development of a populist social structure than building a democratic plural political community, a community in which the will of the majority is respected, but the status of the minority and their opinions are also considered.

Citizens' Attitude towards
the People and Political Elite

The research of the citizens' attitude towards the people and political elite has shown that in this segment, there is a great capacity for populism to manifest, be nurtured and further developed. The majority of the citizens perceive **the people as the main political subject and value more their homogeneity than pluralism**: 52% of the respondents believe that the people, rather than politicians, should take the most important political decisions; 56% believe that minority groups should adapt to the customs and traditions of Serbia.

Even though Serbia is a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, the ethno-centric perception of the people is prevalent among the citizens: 60% of the citizens believe that the survival of one's own nation is the goal of every individual; members of the people are not determined by the citizenship, or place of birth, but primarily by ethnic background; 82% believe that it is important for a member of the nation to observe ethnic customs, 76% that their ancestors are members of the ethnic community, while 47% of the respondents believe that it is important for them to be born in Serbia. So, these results indicate that among the citizens **the traditional perception of the people as a community of "blood and soil" is still prevalent, rather than that of the community of citizens** (Lutovac, 2017b: 14-16).

Political elites leave a decidedly negative impression on the citizens of Serbia, and they see them as primarily corrupted and alienated: 87% believe that corruption is widespread among politicians (**only 1% think that corruption does not exist among politicians**); 75% believe that most politicians do not care about the people (10% do not share their opinion); 70% that most politicians care only for the wealthy and powerful, while 65% citizens believe that politicians cannot be trusted (Lutovac, 2017b: 17-19).

In accordance with such an attitude towards the political elite, the absolute majority of the citizens **believe that the people, rather than politicians, should take the most important**

decisions – a foundation of populism for the populist politicians, as well as the citizens who support such perception of politics. On the other hand, a relative majority of the citizens, regardless of the extremely negative attitude towards the political elite, do not think that they are the greatest problem in society, which is understandable providing the grave socio-economic circumstances and problems of the state's status: 77% of the citizens have grave concerns pertaining to unemployment and being fired from their job; 76% are worried because of the low living standard and poverty; 67% are worried because of young professionals' emigration, while 65% due to crime and corruption. Concerns about the political situation are less prevalent. Kosovo makes 47% of citizens seriously worried, for 38% of citizens worries are caused by the political situation, 29% of citizens are concerned due to the relations with neighbouring countries, 24% because of Sanjak (Ristić - Boturović, 2017: 78-88).

Citizen's Attitude towards Representative Democracy

The citizens' attitude towards democracy is yet another indicator of the social environment favourable for the development of populism. The majority of the citizens **accept democracy in principle as the best type of rule, yet they negatively assess its functioning** in Serbia and they have an ambivalent attitude towards its potential to solve social problems: over 60% of the respondents are not satisfied with the functioning of democracy in Serbia, while the absolute majority believe that in democracy there is generally too much talking instead of efficient implementation of decisions (54%), which is a potential foundation for authoritarian tendencies.

Even though the will of the majority as a democratic principle is made absolute in the political discourse of the ruling majority in Serbia, attitudes of the citizens show that this is not universally approved. It may be said that the citizens are under the strong influence of that attitude, but that a significant

number refuses to accept such perception: 39% believe that the will of the majority should always prevail, even when it is at the expense of the rights of minority groups, while 34% disagree (Lutovac, 2017b: 28).

The crisis of trust in democracy in general, institutions, and democratic procedures is obviously rooted in **distrust in political parties**: as little as 14% of the citizens trust political parties, which is less than even the total number of party members in Serbia, while they are not only the holders of political processes (which is constitutionally stipulated), but also usurpers of political and social life (which is constitutionally prohibited). Such situation leaves an open space to those who favour "the people" over political elites, direct implementation of "the people's will" over representative democracy, and the leader who understands "the people" over institutions (Lutovac, 2017b: 29).

Distrust in state institutions is highly pronounced at just below 50%, and what is particularly worrying is that the most important institution of representative democracy (People's Assembly) and the pillar of the rule of law (judiciary) are trusted by only one in three respondents. The only state institution trusted by more than a half of the citizens is army (61%). Trust in **civil society institutions**: media, NGOs, workers' unions is quite low, which also promotes the development of populism, just like the fact that among non-state institutions, with the exception of schools and faculties, the most trusted institution is the Serbian Orthodox Church (46%).

Such results of the research indicate the need for extensive work on the development of the rule of law and respectable institutions. The citizens' attitude towards them indicates a wide space for the populist mobilisation and action. Based on this research, one may conclude that in the segments in which the presence or potential for the development of populism were measured – including citizens' attitudes towards the people, the political elite, and their dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy and distrust in institutions – there is a great capacity for populism to be manifested, nurtured, and even further developed (Lutovac, 2017b: 38).

Citizen's Attitude towards the Leader

In principle, the citizens of Serbia are not inclined to authoritarian solutions, i.e. they do not support authoritarian leadership openly. One fourth believe that an authoritarian rule, with a strong leader, would be a good solution for Serbia, 27% of the citizens think that it would be better if a strong leader ruled instead of the parliament and political parties (42% disagree, 31% are undecided), 27% believe that having a strong leader is good for Serbia, even if that leader does not respect the rules while performing his task (43% disagree, 30% are undecided). However, in practice, at the elections, things do not seem that way. On the contrary, at the elections which could not be called free and fair, support to the authoritarian leader is stronger than what the public opinion research may indicate.

In principle, the **relative majority (42%) of the citizens are against the idea of** *a strong leader ruling instead of the parliament and political parties*, **which is yet another finding which points to the civic potential for resisting an open usurpation of power by strong and popular leaders**. However, the high percentage of the citizens who do not express their opinion explicitly (one third) indicates the possibility of either them siding with the resistance against autocrats once they drastically transgress the limitations of their authorities, or siding with autocrats when they demonstrate enough skill in justifying their transgressing the scope of their authorities.

The relative majority of the citizens (43%) disagree that *having a strong leader is good for Serbia, even if that leader does not respect the rules while performing his job* – the statement met the agreement of 27% of the respondents. This result may also indicate the potential for resistance to the absolutism of a strong leader.

Citizen's Attitude towards "Dangerous Others"

In addition to attitudes towards the people, the political elite, institutions, and representative democracy in general, the attitude towards "dangerous others" represents yet another

segment of the research which reflects the presence of, or potential for populism. The public opinion survey has confirmed the assumption that there is a strong correlation between the "dangerous others" that political elites define as such and the negative evaluation of these groups by the citizens (Lutovac⬜ Marković, 2017: 98).

The citizens perceive "dangerous others" as different domestic and external actors that do **not belong to either elite or the people** and that significantly (much, or very much) put the people and/or the state at risk – some states, members of other nations, or national minorities. Due to the influence of media campaigns by the political elite, a considerable number of the respondents include certain journalists in "dangerous others": 44% of the citizens think that the regime is right when qualifying certain media and journalists as hirelings and traitors (24% disagree).

As much as 71% of the citizens believe that Serbia is considerably jeopardized by the NATO, while 61% believe that the threat comes from America (USA). 56% of them believe that Serbia is threatened by foreign banks and companies, while 41% feel threatened by the EU, and as little as 11% of the respondents believe that Serbia is threatened by Russia. When it comes to national minorities, "dangerous others" are mostly seen among Albanians (61% believe that Serbia is considerably threatened by Albanians), which is not much of a surprise bearing in mind the lasting and highly pronounced ethnic distance which manifested even during the times of "brotherhood and unity" of the SFRY, when negative attitude towards other nationalities was perceived as an assault against the foundations of the state. The percentage of those perceiving Croats as "dangerous others" is much lower than it was during the armed conflicts of the 1990s, yet it is still quite high, considering that 38% of the respondents believe that Croats are a threat to Serbia.

New "dangerous others" have appeared with the big refugee wave and the migrant crisis of 2015-2016, when potential (transiting) and real immigrants began to be perceived not merely as part of a humanitarian problem and a large group of people transiting on their way to the EU, but their longer or even

permanent stay in Serbia started to be considered. The research has shown that as much as 51% of the citizens of Serbia believe that the immigrants have increased Serbian crime rate, while 45% believe that they have damaged Serbian culture, which for the citizens of Serbia classifies them as very "dangerous others." All in all, based on this research it may be concluded that the segment of attitude towards "dangerous others" carries a great potential for the development of xenophobic populism (Lutovac–Bašić, 2017: 64).

<div align="center">***</div>

The results of the empirical research show that the most important elements of populism are present in the absolute, or at least relative majority of Serbian public – which is indicated by the citizens' attitude towards the political elite, the role of the people, the leader, democracy and its institutions, as well as "dangerous others." However, there is a considerable political polarisation in the society when it comes to some of these elements, while the inclination to accept open authoritarianism enjoys support of a small minority of the citizens. Additionally, according to the results of the research, it may be concluded that the majority of Serbia consists of passive citizens withdrawn from public life, not interested in politics and burdened by economic and social problems, which is not encouraging in the context of the struggle for the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and behavioural patterns.

Examples of undemocratic political practice and attitude towards such political practice among the citizens of Serbia confirm that in the countries of unconsolidated democracy, populism cannot have a corrective role, since there are still no developed institutions and democratic political culture to allow that. In such circumstances, populism turns out to be a major obstacle in the establishment and consolidation of the key elements of representative liberal democracy. The gap between democratic ideals and real functioning in such societies is too wide and deep for the corrective role of populism to be expected. If you add to the equation economic and political crisis which is not an incident or transitional

occurrence in development, but rather a permanent state of affairs, then the social and economic context in such political communities is an additional cause for the appearance of populism and all the accompanying elements. In such socio-economic circumstances democracy is interpreted and practiced simplistically, as the absolute right of the majority to exercise their will in the name of the people, without taking into account the rights and attitudes of the political minority.

The context of undeveloped institutions, undemocratic political culture, and constant political and economic crises creates an extensive space for the appearance of populist parties, movements, and leaders, allegedly full of understanding for the needs of the people, ready to challenge the corrupted elites and dangerous others. Due to the attractiveness of such actors, the media are ready to give them space. Furthermore, the media do not wish to resist the political influence of the populists, who in return receive strong backing which they use for their own, rather than for the general good.

The example of Serbia indicates that the attractiveness of populism is based on:

1. Calls for direct implementation of people's will and simple folk speech
2. Messages of the unification of the people or homogenisation around some important topics,
3. Anti-elitist attitudes,
4. Distrust in state and civil institutions, and
5. Firm attitudes towards "dangerous others."

In such circumstances, populists tend to additionally suppress pluralism, by stifling critical thinking, limiting media freedoms and perceiving institutions as their own service rather than the general good – not contributing thus to correcting the defects of the political system, but quite the reverse – to the prevention of their correction.

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What are the effects of suppressing pluralism in multi-plural societies? Social rifts in such societies are thus deepened. When in multinational societies populist homogenise the people, they usually homogenise the national group that they belong to, while others are excluded at the least, or even more frequently treated as "dangerous others." Due to their diverse nature, multicultural societies become fields of political confrontations concerning identity issues. Instead of making diversity management a political priority, identity differences are instrumentalised in political clashes. In this political context, populism has advantage over multiculturalism if there are no rules involving democratic political culture, the rule of law, effective separation of powers, and strong institutions protecting public interest.

Anti-pluralism is manifested through seductive theses on the superiority of the nation and its cultural heritage. Hegemonism is presented as a natural order which establishes peace and stability.

On the other hand, in multicultural societies, the fight for pluralism is the fight for the harmony of diversity, while multiculturalism is the manner of diversity management which leads to the harmonisation of the political community and society.

MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturality and multiculturalism – "Authentic" representation of national minorities – Dominance instead of integration, ethnification instead of civilification – The Status and prospects of multiculturalism between proclamations, norms and action– Multiculturalism, civic identity and civic values
- Multiculturality, Europeanisation and multiculturalism – Europeanisation and national identity – Influence of the EU as a community of values to Europeanisation of the national identity
- Constitution, multiculturalism and Europeanisation of the national identity – Multiculturalism and the EU as a union of values – Multiculturalism and the effect of the EU aims and values on member and candidate states– Democratisation vs stabilitocratisation

When researching multiculturalism and the process of Europeanisation in Serbia and countries of the region, one must first examine the status of multiculturality and multiculturalism, from the normative framework to states' policies which decidedly determine the nature and functioning of a political community. Starting from the fact that the context, nature and structure of a political community determines the essence of rights and freedoms stipulated by the constitution and laws, as well as that a synergy of good laws and sound policies enables an effective policy of multiculturality, integration and interlacing of cultures of diverse national communities in a society, I studied the proclaimed multiculturalism, with a view to ascertain whether such constitutional and legislative framework and policies exist, and if they did, whether there was concerted action between them. The key finding was that the states of the region support a civil state in principle, that they are exclusively or predominantly nationally legitimised by the highest legislative acts and that the factual state is marked by various national cultural identities that are not integrated into the model of plural citizenship. It is here shown that there is a lack of political will to transform the declared support for a pluralistic civil state into public policies affirming the values of multiculturalism, as well as that there is a lack of strong institutions to support such policy.

The political and theoretical notion of multiculturalism emerged as a response to the failed assimilation approach to the integration of different national and ethno-cultural communities in some countries, initially becoming visible, but then gaining a strong presence throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Benhabib, 2002; Inglis, 1995). In time, it became one of the terms used so frequently and unselectively that its meaning became diluted. Thus, in everyday use, but also often in academic

circles, the notion of multiculturalism has been used interchangeably with the notion of multiculturality. In this paper, the two terms will be differentiated in the generally accepted manner, whereby *multiculturality* denotes the existence of different ethno-cultural communities in a society, while *multiculturalism* refers to the political and institutional treatment of such cultural and ethnic plurality. Multiculturality is therefore of normative and descriptive character, while multiculturalism entails the creation, implementation and evaluation of a multicultural policy (Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1995; 2001; Barry, 1997; 2001; Parekh, 2000; Kelly, 2002; Miller, 2002; Song, 2014).

Multiculturalism policy should, on the one hand, be aimed at strengthening social homogeneity by contributing to strengthening the common values of the entire community and all its national and ethnic groups, while promoting differences and respect for pluralism on the other. All this would ultimately lead to increased social justice and affirming the principle of equality in a society, and higher involvement of all ethnic and national groups in the life of a political community.

However, as a result of the practice that was inconsistent with the proclaimed values and aims of multiculturalism, which led to greater divisions and closing off of some social groups rather than strengthen social cohesion, as well as the frequent, often incorrect everyday use of the term of multiculturalism, the notion itself gained a negative connotation in political and everyday life, and therefore, in response, a new term and a new model of managing cultural diversity were introduced – *interculturality* or *intercultural dialogue*. This notion is used in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe and many authors regard it is a *corrected and enhanced notion of multiculturalism – a clearer and more consistent application of the concept of multiculturalism*. Intercultural dialogue21 can be

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[21] The White Paper refers to intercultural dialogue as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It is present at all levels – within societies, between the societies and between Europe and the wider world. White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living Together as Equals in Dig-

defined as an open exchange of ideas between individuals and groups of different national, ethnic, religious or linguistic backgrounds based on the principles of mutual respect, with the aim of affirming tolerance, understanding, conflict prevention and strengthening social cohesion. The aims of interculturalism, that is, improved multiculturalism, are to solve the problems of *economic inequality, political representation and stronger inclusion* of different ethno-cultural groups into society and political community.

Interlacing of differences, rather than their conservation is one of the key aims of this policy. The preservation of specificities and inclusion,22 based on universal human rights and the rule of law are the foundations of interculturalism understood as such, i.e. as improved multiculturalism. The White Paper has set five political guidelines for promoting interculturalism:

1. democratic governance of cultural diversity,
2. active participation of citizens in the cultural, social and economic life,
3. learning intercultural competences,
4. open space for dialogue and
5. affirming intercultural dialogue in international relations.

This is the context in which multiculturalism and interculturalism (intercultural dialogue) will be understood in this paper.

The facts corroborating the existence of multiculturality in a society and testifying to its diversity are important for understanding the nature of pluralism in that society, just as it is important to understand the political community where it

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nity", Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2008.
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Pub_White_Paper/White-Paper_ID_SerbianVersion.pdf

[22] The White Paper refers to inclusion (social integration) as a two-sided process and the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as the ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life. Inclusion encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies and requires the protection of the weak, as well as the right to differ, to create and innovate.

exists, from the normativist and institutional aspects. However, for a comprehensive understanding of any society, one must also understand the situation and perspectives of multiculturalism, and the creation, implementation and evaluation of its multicultural policy.

Multiculturality and Multiculturalism

In their daily and political lives, contemporary societies in the countries of the region can be characterised as multicultural societies.23 Their multiculturality is primarily based on the fact of "cultural diversity" of specific types – national, religious and cultural diversity. What makes this multiculturality particularly prominent is the fact that all these *differences are politically relevant* and even dominant in the political sense. Members of majority nations view integration as a solution to the existing or potential political problems, while members of national minorities see integration as key political demands: proportional representation and as wide a range of self-governing rights as possible, from cultural to political.

Although multiculturalism is often declared as part of political platforms or sets of public policies as parts of "identity politics", in practice, such proclamations are reduced to a wide spectrum of national identity politics. In everyday and political discourse, in particular, multiculturalism is treated as a socially generally accepted notion. It is a notion that apparently

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23 The term Western Balkans has been used by the EU since the beginning of the 21st century, denoting non-EU member states in the Balkans (with the exception of Turkey): Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Although the Croatian public has often objected to being considered a part of this group despite the fact that Croatia joined the EU in the meantime, this paper will consider it a country in the region, i.e. a member of the group of countries considered the Western Balkans. Besides the fact that the understanding and phenomenon of multiculturalism is in a strong connection with neighbouring countries, there is an important fact that in addition to the process of Europeanisation of candidate states, there is also a process of the so-called internal Europeanisation of the member states within the EU, which justifies this definition of the region in terms of methodology.

confirms commitment to building a civil society, one that equally respects national, religious and cultural differences. In practice, however, the proclaimed multiculturalism is reduced to the politics of covert or open dominance of the political elites of majority nations.

Multiculturalism and the Legitimating Foundations of the Former Yugoslav States

Although *brotherhood and unity* was one of the ideological foundations of the SFRY, it failed to mitigate the consequences of the dissolution of the joint state. Quite the contrary, the conflicts between the nations were one of the chief instruments of separation and disagreement between the former members of the Federation. Accordingly, the years spent in one country were not the foundation for the creation of civil states, but rather the opposite, nation-centric state creations. The constitutions and practice in the republics that were separating from the former Yugoslav state had ethno-national characteristics, while the "dangerous others" were citizens of other ethnicities (Lutovac, 2017: 92-94).

The 1990 Constitution of Serbia specified that Serbia was a "state of all citizens living in it". In real life, however, it was different. Serbia was a state in the hands of radical populists and a strong leader, in which minority members and political opposition were treated as the "dangerous others", as potential or real enemies of the state. The preamble of the Croatian Constitution of 1990 defined Croatia as a "national state of the Croatian people and the state of members of autochthonous national minorities", whereby the Serbs, who had been a constituent people (Article 1 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia) became a national minority. Despite the fact that Article 3, para 1 of the Croatian Constitution set forth the principle of national equality as one of the core values of the Constitutional system, it was quite different in practice. Instead of the Serbo-Croatian, Croatian became the official language (Article 12), and in political life, Serbs or anyone else who opposed radical

nationalism were treated as a threat to the newly established independent state. Radical populism based on nationalism was a dominant phenomenon in both states and thus any mention of multiculturalism, if present at all, would serve propaganda and political purposes, rather than its true meaning.

Following the end of the war in 1995, the multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina ("a scaled-down model of Yugoslavia") was constituted as a type of ethnic (con)federation where the constitutional order, political and everyday life was predominantly determined by national quotas, principles and rules. Macedonians regarded Macedonia as a unitary state, but Albanians saw it as a two-member Macedonian-Albanian federations. Albania, which unlike Yugoslavia had a non-liberal national policy in which members of national minorities were not even allowed to name their children as they wished, not to mention any collective minority rights, was competing with Priština to become the Piedmont of the all-Albanian unification in the Balkans. In the political vocabulary of the Balkans, multiculturalism was reduced to the term used only in communication with neighbouring countries and only when seeking rights for compatriots.

This discrepancy between the declarative and the real is best illustrated by the example of the constitutional-legal order of Montenegro, which declaratively rests upon the civilian concept of political order,24 deemed one of the "essential cornerstones of the constitutional character of Montenegro" (Šuković, 2009:181). Academician Šuković elaborates this concept by defining the citizen as the holder of sovereignty and the equality of citizens› rights and freedoms regardless of their group specificities, identities and membership and, finally, by guaranteeing special rights for members of national minorities, which they may also exercise in unison with others, to ensure equal conditions for the exercise of rights. As those who adopted the Constitution, the text mentions "free and equal citizens, members of the peoples and national minorities living in Montenegro:

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[24] "Montenegro is a civil, democratic, ecological and the state of social justice, based on the rule of law" Article 1, para 2 of the Constitution of Montenegro. *Constitution of Montenegro of 2007*, Official Gazette of Montenegro, no. 1/2007 of 25 October 2001.

Montenegrins, Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians, Muslims, Croats and others, committed to a democratic and civic Montenegro." In practice, however, the actual holders of sovereignty are the ruling political elites, and the exercise of rights and freedoms is primarily influenced by declared support to political parties and secondly by membership in certain identities. The civilian concept regarded as loyalty to the political community in Montenegro is facing a host of systemic obstacles. Besides the fact that the highest legal document was not a product of a social agreement and a wide consensus, the fact that one national community, i.e. its part which supports the ruling coalition's views on identity, has a privileged status and that this is considered natural – is a serious obstacle in the development of the concept of the civil state (Lutovac, 2015).

The nature and structure of a political community determines the essence of rights and freedoms stipulated by the constitution and laws, including affirmative action measures, which are guaranteed for members of minority communities. Although these rights and affirmative action measures have a wide scope and are based on the highest international standards, it is difficult to harmonise the aim of creating a universal civil political community with political requirements based on the national principle. No magical formula has been discovered to bring these requirements in mutual harmony, one of the key reasons being the fact that rather than a basic social consensus, the principle of implementing the will of the majority has become absolute.

Without appropriate public policies and genuine determination of political stakeholders, constitutional proclamations and programmes focused on creating a civil state cannot create a true civic identity and civil society nor, accordingly, a civil political community. As much as a treatment of national minorities may look as if affirming multiculturalism on the basis of analysing the constitutional order and affirmative action measures, in practice it results in strengthening their (self)isolation rather than integration into the society.25 In their requests for

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25 For instance, in Article 79, the Constitution of Montenegro specifically

representation and self-governance, political representatives of minorities are moving towards creating ethnic exclusivity, introduction of criteria for belonging to a national group as an eliminatory criterion for representation or advocacy.

"Authentic" Representation of National Minorities

The political *requests for authentic political representation* through "authentic mandates" is a political project focused on excluding civic-oriented political parties from the race for minority mandates. Unless they are ethnic (national) or have dominantly national (nationalist) platforms and policies, political parties are automatically excluded as possible authentic representatives of minorities, regardless of the fact that through their platforms and policies they may potentially contribute more to the well-being of a national minority community than the "authentic" (nationalist) representative of that minority. In practice, this would mean that a democratically elected representative of a national minority community is not its authentic representative if elected from the electoral list of a national minority party rather than from the list of a party advocating civic values and the equality of this community within them. Seen from another angle, the negative experiences from the dissolution of the SFRY lead to national homogenisation and fears that

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deals with members of "minority peoples and other national minority communities". However, it is not clear whom this refers to because the Constitution does not specify who exactly is a member of the majority people and who is a member of minority peoples. If the criterion is the number of members of a community, then everybody in Montenegro is a member of a national minority community because according to the population census, there is no community with an absolute majority. If the criterion is practice – those with the privileged status in the society are Montenegrins who are embracing the new elements of the Montenegrin identity, compared to the Montenegrins who stick to the Serbian elements of their identity. If the principle of self-determination is taken into consideration, in addition to the historical criterion, then the Montenegrins of Serbian identity and Serbs are not members of national minority communities, although they are treated as such in practice. In the relative majority sense, those with the heritage of Serbian identity in Montenegro (primarily, the language) could be considered the most numerous identity group that is practically treated as a minority group (Lutovac, 2015).

minority votes would be manipulated by majority peoples. This is the reason for the demand for authenticity and ethnification of the political life and of minority rights protection.

Based on the above, we can say that mere participation of national minorities and its wide presence and depth is not in itself proof of the existence of a multicultural democratic community, nor is it proof of a multicultural public policy. On the contrary, it can only reflect the depth and the wide presence of mutual mistrust and resentment.

Unlike the exclusionary approach to public policies and building a political community, an integrative, inclusive model, imposes itself as a *win-win* way to break out of the vicious circle of civil and national (nationalist) contradictions and controversies. Building a democratic political culture and a wide basic consensus on the need for this is the basis for creating inclusive public policies which take into account specificities and strengthen unity.

Almost as a rule, in the countries of the region, political representatives of national minorities are treated within the policy of respecting classic minority rights, for narrow, party-centred reasons, rather than as a result of the wish to implement an effective inclusion policy. Under the cloak of protection and preservation of multiculturality, invoking affirmative action measures, the implemented policy enabled a privileged status for some members of national minorities, i.e. their political representatives: e.g. in Montenegro, for Albanians, by introducing separate electoral units, or for Croatians, by lowering the electoral threshold for getting into the parliament; in Serbia, Bosnian and Hungarian ethnic parties became coalition partners of all groups in power, often regardless of whether the cooperation with them was necessary for forming the parliamentary majority; in Macedonia, Albanians are a part of the parliamentary majority as a rule. At the same time, representatives of minority political parties, but also a significant number of majority peoples' parties, fully ethnified their platforms and activities, which had an impact on the overall political scene as well as on supressing civic values.

Thus, *rather than being an alternative to nationalism, multiculturalism often became its support, consciously or unconsciously.*

Even in the everyday political rhetoric and, moreover, in constitutions, multiculturalism is mixed with the liberal concept of a state, which entails cultural and ethnic neutrality based on individual rights. *In the reality of the countries of the region, the prevailing concept in building the political community was nation-based, although an analysis of constitutional definitions of these communities shows predominantly civil proclamations.*

Dominance Instead of Integration, Ethnification Instead of Civilification

As much as an ethnified politics may call upon civil principles and values, by its very nature, it does not lead to strengthening the civic identity of a state or society, or reinforcing the legitimacy of a community. Quite the contrary, it strengthens separate national identities, while the treatment of a community is measured against the narrow "national interests" of ethnic groups. Rather than viewing democracy as a process of seeking integrative elements for building a political community, politicians in the region often regard democracy as a game in which "the winner takes all". Under such political context and values, and the absence of a democratic political tradition, multiculturality, as a fact of the existence of various ethnic, religious and cultural groups, becomes a pivotal political issue.

National minorities' political parties support the development of the civil political community in their countries, but at the same time their political programmes are extremely ethnic. Besides the contradiction of their determination to support a civil state, minority parties' political programmes are absolutely ethnocentric. Together with the contradicting stances from the constitutions of the countries in the region, this provides a basis for the politics which cannot be called integrative multiculturalism.

Regardless of the nature of constitutional definitions and key political stakeholders' programmes declaring commitment to building multicultural or liberal societies, *rather than as states with the rule of law, the states of the region function as very ethnified political communities, dominantly party-centred, where*

*the status of a citizen predominantly depends on their political af-
filiation and their ethnicity is either a strength or an obstacle, de-
pending on the will of political elites and the distribution of politi-
cal power.*

Due to all of the above, reducing the study of multicultu-
rality to the normative framework for the protection of minori-
ty rights is methodologically deficient. In addition, the status of
a national community in a country is much more defined by the
practical state policy than norms, which – without proper and
effective policies – remain only on paper. A synergy of good
laws and sound policies enables an effective policy of intercul-
turality, integration and interlacing of cultures of various natio-
nal communities in a society and therefore, in the study of mul-
ticulturalism, it is important to ascertain whether such laws and
policies exist and if they do, whether there is concerted action
between them and what the effects are of such institutional
framework and political action.

The Status and Prospects of Multiculturalism between Proclamations, Norms and Action

Respect for national, religious, linguistic and cultural di-
fferences in a broader sense is a prerequisite for a stable and
successful multicultural society and strengthening the ele-
ments of a common political identity. However, politicising di-
fferences, i.e. political instrumentalisation of differences may
lead to the "paradox of multiculturalism", which turns protecti-
on and respect of differences into a policy of national or ethnic
labelling (Ericsen, 2004: 243-247).

Interculturality is a theoretic and practical-political con-
cept that describes a comprehensive interlacing of cultures ba-
sed on the principle of mutual respect and acknowledgement
and sets these principles as pillars of creating a harmonious po-
litical community. *Discrepancy between the normatised and what
is going on in practice is almost a rule in the countries of the regi-
on*, both in those already in the EU and those in the process of
joining. Minorities are protected relatively well by norms,

minority party political representatives are often present in political life above proportion, but this has a rather weak or almost no influence on the true inclusion of members of minorities in all pores of the political community.26

In a civil state, all the rights that belong to the majority people would have to be available to all citizens who are self-determined, regardless of how they define their identity. Two complementary principles characterise a stable multicultural society: *cultivating and strengthening what is common*, on the one hand, and *respecting the differences at individual and collective levels*, on the other; in other words: mutual engagement instead of exclusion, getting to know and respecting the differences – from constitutional and legal principles, through laws and public policies, to a general social principle which becomes the foundation of the political culture in the community. Hence, knowledge of specificities and differences and a high degree of tolerance are the necessary elements for the stability of overall political identity (Nye, 2007: 109-123).

The countries of the region are between the commitment to a civil state in principle and the factual situation of strongly prominent national cultural identities that are not integrated into a model of a pluralistic civil community. Also necessary, besides the commitment in principle, is primarily the political will transformed into public policies affirming these values, as well as cultural pluralism and strong institutions supporting such policy. A special role in this should be that of an appropriate education system and support by the media.

From the aspect of contemporary concepts of citizenship, which insist that a citizen must have a chance to participate

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26 The practice in Montenegro, for example, does not respect the principle of proportional representation for national minorities (Article 79, para 10 of the Constitution). This principle is not respected with regard to the people who did not declare themselves a national minority (Serbs, Montenegrins of Serbian identity) either. The latter are treated as a disturbing factor in the process of separating the formerly interlaced identity. In real life, they are the target of assimilationist identity pressures, focused on unification and creation of a homogenous identity; they are, actually, the main target group of the policy of identity essentialization (Lutovac, 2014b).

in joint decision-making in all important issues in society, i.e. their active participation (republican profile of a citizen) and in the protection of rights and freedoms from the influence of those with political power, as well as the possibility of the opposite, where citizens initiate the field of influence towards the people in power (liberal profile of a citizen, Bellamy, 2008: 43), we can say that these concepts have not been fully and seriously understood and accepted in the states and societies of the Western Balkans.

In the practice of these societies, elements of the multiculturalist approach to citizenship (Kymlicka, 2004), which seeks balance between individual and collective rights, are lost in two ways: through *ethnification* of politics and rights, which renders the essence of the civil principle meaningless, and through attempts at *unification* of identities of those who define their identity differently.

The contemporary multicultural democracy is based on traditional and new civic values, as well as on institutionalised innovations stemming from demands for wider self-governance and a more even distribution of power within heterogenous political communities (Marshal, 1950; ten Napel/Theissen 2009; Kymlicka/Norman, 2000; Lijphart, 2003).

The more recent political history has been marked by a group of specific demands by minority communities. Among those that have been established in many countries are *representation* in institutions in power or *self-governance* in culture, education and information. In other countries, these demands are dismissed as inappropriate because they disturb the liberal concept of a civil society. The area between these two approaches is actually the political space which could contribute to the establishment of a new set of collective rights both theoretically and in practice. One of the first tasks in this process is to prevent the disintegrating potential which could undermine the foundations of a liberal state and the basic achievements of the classic concept of citizenship.

In their analyses of multicultural citizenship, Kymlicka and other theoreticians of multiculturalism have focused their research on the ***relation between the liberal concept of citizenship***

and multicultural demands for specific rights, reaching conclusions that multiculturalism and the liberal model of citizenship are **compatible** and that entitlement to some collective rights to participation in a political community is possible without threatening to disintegrate it, but also expressing many reserves regarding demands for self-governance (Kymlicka, 2004: 264-271). All strengths and weaknesses of separate rights for national and cultural communities were vividly demonstrated by the example of the former SFRY. This, however, is only one side of the same coin – the other side is a completely opposite process, one that brings additional complexity into political situations: imposing a common identity, *unitarisation* on the one hand, or *insisting on differences beyond any rational degree* and striving to institutionalise these differences on the other. When these two processes are viewed integratively, it becomes clearer as to what difficulties may arise in developing theoretical concepts and their implementation in real life.

One of the answers offered for such situations is *constitutional patriotism*, but it is not possible unless founded on the basic social consensus and a differentiated citizenship which does not disintegrate the political community. For civic identity to be institutionally based on the principles of constitutional patriotism, it has to rest upon a civic identity based on the *feeling of belonging* to the political community in which everyone has equal rights and status. And this is exactly where the fundamental problem of citizenship lies in the countries of the region.

If as the model of citizenship we take the one that entails active participation of members of a political community in shaping the core foundations and key directions for the development of a society (Miller, 1995: 443), where citizenship includes, besides the system of moral ideas, norms and values, a set of rights and the political status of members of this political community and their feeling of belonging to the political community, we would have grounds to say that a citizenship model of political community still remains an aim to be reached in every segment of its essence. Civil *state*, civic value*s* and civic identity are only emerging in the countries of the region, still at the stage of constitutional programme orientation and as set aims.

Multiculturalism, Civic Identity and Civic Values

The classic concept of citizenship means that belonging to a political community is above the separate group memberships within the community, but also that such membership is not exclusive regarding other identities. Still, separate identities, insisting on differences rather than what connects them, which were awakened and deepened in the 1990s are still prevailing.

The feeling of belonging to a political community, by the very nature of things, cannot be developed in people who are excluded from this community, and it is the very feeling of belonging and pride that Taylor (1994: 25-75) and Kymlicka (2004: 277-278) have emphasised as necessary for creating cohesion within a multicultural society, in addition to respect for liberal and democratic values and agreement regarding procedural and formal rules. In other words, a *universal civic identity cannot be built in opposition to individual identities*, particularly when their presence is so pronounced. Rather, quite the opposite, it should be built on diversity, respect for differences, however pronounced they may be.

Civic values, which were developed historically and verified by the Treaty of Lisbon as European values (Lutovac, 2015b: 272-275), also became programme aims in countries in the process of transforming from real-socialism into liberal-democratic political communities. The problems faced by countries in transition included their non-democratic political heritage, façade-like constitutional and legal framework and a dominant "subservient-participatory political culture" (Komar, 2010: 167-169). If we add the propensity to subject institutions to political will and respect selectively, i.e. that the rule of law is instrumentalised for political purposes and relativised, the challenges before countries in transition on the road to establishing civic values which are inclusive in relation to "the others" – towards the rule of law, cultivating and protecting human rights and consolidating a democratic order are evident.

If multiculturality is taken as a basis for civic identity "the feeling of belonging to a unified identity" (as Kymlicka and Taylor have stressed) may be based exclusively on the capacity of this

identity to integrate and improve individual cultural profiles within its framework. Here, however, it is not sufficient to insist on a society that merely tolerates different cultures, but rather on a society that integrates and promotes different ways of good living, offered in individual cultures and not threatening their specificities. Civic identity depends, inter alia, on the level of acceptance and respect for cultural plurality. This approach, if systematic and systemic, is implemented through the constitutional and legal order, the education system and public policies. However, the reality in the countries of the region is different. Instead of focusing the entire education system on civil education, rather than one school subject under that name, the entire education, from language and literature, through history and all other forms of communication is focused on national values. Creating civil awareness, strengthening civic values and virtues are not priorities for state institutions or media controlled by governments. Rather, their priority is to strengthen national identities.

Hence, based on the above, we can affirm that civil *states*, civic value*s* and civil *identities* are only at initial stages, i.e. that they are still, only occasionally, at the level of general programme orientation and set aims. The necessary ingredient for their firm establishment is a consolidated democracy and acceptance of universal values of developed democracies, such as the rule of law and protection of human rights and freedoms.

Multiculturality, Europeanisation and Multiculturalism

Constitutional, legal, economic and other social reforms focused on European integration gain their full meaning if they are focusing primarily on values, principles and general aims such as the rule of law, protection and cultivation of human rights and consolidating a democratic order. If understood and implemented in practice as such, European integrations can gain stronger support from citizens and the process of Europeanisation of the national identity can be widely and deeply accepted.

Europeanisation and National Identity

Europeanisation is the process of adopting the core values, institutional, legal and administrative order and strategic political aims proclaimed in the EU (Radaelli and Exadaktlyos *2012;* Ladrech 2010; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Olsen 2002). In addition to the Europeanisation of candidate states, there is a process of the so-called internal Europeanisation in the EU of its member states, a process of integration through political culture, common values and developing democratic institutions. This is an incremental process "reorienting the direction and shape of national policies" in the direction determined by the European Union as a political community (Ladrech, 1994: 69). The absence of a common origin is replaced by values institutionalised into institutions which are gaining highest respect. Division of power, which entails an independent judiciary, an effective parliament and a responsible executive authority, and, more recently, civil society institutions – all are acknowledged as values in themselves because they contribute to the functioning of the rule of law and civil rights and freedoms.

In the Lisbon Treaty, the notion of national identity is linked with the fundamental political and constitutional structures and is thus separated from the cultural, historical and linguistic aspects of identity: "The biggest textual difference between the identity clause in the Lisbon Treaty and its predecessor in the treaties of Amsterdam and Maastricht (Art. 6(3) TEU (Amsterdam), Art. F(1) TEU (Maastricht)) is the link between national identity and the *fundamental political and constitutional structures*" (Bogdandy and Stephan, 2011: 11). The EU treaties that preceded the Lisbon Treaty did not define the concept of national identity, so its interpretations were wider and included culture, religion and language (Puttler and Kahl, 2011: 60).

In this paper, national identity is regarded in the context of the Lisbon Treaty. The topics studied are primarily the elements of political identity, which would have to be, from the perspective of the EU, a part of the national identity of an EU member state: *freedom, democracy, rule of law, respect and promotion of human rights*, including *respect of human dignity and*

minority rights. The values codified in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) are not only the values upon which the EU is founded, but are also the values upon which all member states should be founded. They are also the same values upon which multiculturalism is based.

European integrations are one of the key mechanisms of the Europeanisation of national identity. The process is, however, rather often simplified and presented as a technical job of adopting the legislative heritage of the European Union. In contrast, European integrations should be understood as an integral process of political, legislative, economic and social inclusion in the EU as a supranational and all-national community of values and programme aims.

The Influence of the EU as a Community of Values on the Europeanisation of National Identity
- *Universalisation and pluralism -*

Starting from the fact that the notion of Europe is not a replacement for historical nations, but rather complementary to the notion of a contemporary nation, a two-fold process is developing: universalisation, i.e. linking *through universality*, on the one hand, and linking *through pluralism and diversity*, linking of states through full respect of national specificities, on the other. This process is simultaneous, but has an uneven intensity, strength and scope.

In addition to statehood and sovereignty, which are elements of constitutional identity, member states independently determine what principles and values have the quality of fundamental political and constitutional structures. Article 4, para 2 of the Treaty on EU protects "the constitutional structures idiosyncratic to a member state", but the EU law also contains guidelines in Article 2 on values that should be a part of the fundamental political and constitutional structure of a member state. "Harmonisation of national and EU orders, that is, simultaneous preservation of a state's *singularity* and the functioning of the EU is based on two interlinked principles: the EU's commitment

to respect the national identities of member states and the member states' commitment to *loyal cooperation*, requiring that they take all appropriate general and special measures to meet their responsibilities stipulated in the Treaty or EU organs' regulations" (Đorđević 2014, 94).

Hence, the influence that integration processes in the EU have on the organisation of a state member or a candidate state is limited by the principle of preservation of member states' constitutional identity. This principle entails that certain values and postulates fundamental to the constitutional order of a member (candidate) state cannot be violated by the state's EU integration. In other words, the essence of the constitutional and political identity of a member (candidate) state is a specificity of a kind in the process of integration, and EU membership entails a state's commitment to the values that cannot be forgone, by invoking the specificity of constitutional identity.

Such is the nature of multiculturalism too, in that, on the one hand, it enables adhering to the principle of respect for individual states' specificities by harmonising differences within it and, on the other, it enables adhering to universal principles and values which cannot be subjected to creative interpretation or ignored under the pretext of preserving specificity, because it is based on these very values.

Constitution, Multiculturalism and Europeanisation of National Identity

One of the indicators for measuring the impact of multiculturalism on national minorities is the constitutional and parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism. In a broader sense, the constitution defines a social community in legal, political, value-related and ideological terms. Hence, the constitution is not only a *supreme law*, as often referred to one-sidedly, but also a *social agreement*, a *political act* regulating the rules of political processes and an *act on values*, sublimating the past, the present and the future (Dimitrijević, 2007: 113-114).

In the context of EU member or candidate states, constitutional identity gains another, supranational dimension at

several levels, primarily those concerning values and homogeni-
sation. Among all the roles of the constitution in a society, ho-
mogenisation is of particular importance – citizens identify
themselves with the political community and the society as a
whole through the constitution. As a positive legal act, the con-
stitution regulates the present, but in terms of values, it also
refers to the past and the future, through its programme princi-
ples and aims. In transitional political communities, the value di-
mension is of particular importance because it steers the so-
ciety towards the aims transforming the political community in
the desired direction.

The value dimension is very important for the legitimacy
of the constitution because it strengthens social support and
facilitates the constitution's implementation in practice. The
lack of a generally-accepted value dimension may reduce the
constitution to a document which creates divisions in the so-
ciety, rather than homogenise it (Lutovac, 2015b: 37-40). The
constitution itself is an expression of the common will to esta-
blish a political community. There are numerous examples of
constitutions failing to exert real influence even in situations
when disagreements on values are insignificant, when there are
no real intentions to limit the authorities and impose the gene-
ral rules of political life. The power of the constitution to shape
the political community as a community of values and to set the
generally-applicable rules of the game, stems from the will of
the citizens, the holders of sovereignty, to establish one such
political community.

Multiculturalism and the EU as a Union of Values

The European Union, as a supranational political move-
ment rests upon, inter alia, common values. Codification of the
EU's core values is an important part of the process of political
integration within the EU and the process of integration of new
states into the EU. Just as the constitutions of individual states
and their core values are important for the homogenisation of
their internal political communities, the core values of the EU as

a supranational state are important for creating its members' attachment. As the process of integration within the EU advanced, its values gained more importance in this process: from the preamble of the Maastricht Treaty, through the partial normatising in the former Article 6, para 1 of the Amsterdam Treaty, to the Treaty of Lisbon, which "further strengthened the value dimension of the EU and established the EU as a union of values in Article 2" (Đorđević, 2014: 23).

Although relying on the earlier Article 6, para 1 of the TEU, Article 2 of the TEU introduces a novelty in terms of symbolism and content: the term "values" (Germ. Werte) is used for the first time instead of the earlier term "principles" (Germ. Grundsätze) and then, the list of values upheld by the EU is expanded by adding those that concern respect for human dignity, equality and respect for national minorities. Thus, along with freedom, democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights, the newly identified values represent the core of EU values and that of each and every member state and the states en route to joining the EU. Initially in the preamble, then through principles and, finally, values, the increasingly more demanding political determination has been formulated for homogenisation of the constitutional and legal principles of the EU with the constitutions of its member and candidate states. This homogeneity is to have several functions: it should facilitate integration of member states, strengthen the basis of legitimation for the EU, build the European identity and strengthen the functionality of the EU (Callies, 2011: 31-32).

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union raises the standards of a society of tolerance, justice and solidarity, characterised by, inter alia, pluralism, non-discrimination and equality between women and men, and opens a debate on whether these characteristics refer to the societies of member states or to the "European society" in the making (Callies, 2011: 40). Regardless of the fact that there is no universal agreement on this matter, it is an important fact that this has become the topic of an open debate and that the space for values continues to expand, both in the domain of public debate and in the sphere of constituting the EU, including its members, and the states that are yet to become its members.

All in all, Article 2 of the Treaty on EU sets forth the values that are the core elements of modern constitutionality; rather than being mere proclamations, they are directly linked to EU membership and are key for admittance into the European Union. Article 49, para 1 of the Treaty of the European Union specifies that any European state which respects the values proclaimed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and which is committed to promoting them may apply for membership in the European Union, thus expanding the effect of Article 2 of the Treaty on EU to non-member states: "The values referred to in Article 2 of the TEU do not only apply to EU organs and member states, but also include the states which aspire to join the EU" (Đorđević, 2014: 24).

Multiculturalism and the Effect of the EU Aims and Values on Member and Candidate States

The aims of the European Union are directly linked with its defined values. Its general aims, in addition to promoting the Union's values, are to promote peace and well-being of its peoples (Article 3, para 1 of the TEU), and the more specific aims include, inter alia, creating areas of freedom, security and justice (Article 2, para 2) and "a whole set of aims which could be categorised as a type of a social dimension of the EU" (Article 3, para 3) (Đorđević, 2014: 25). In a symbiosis with the values under Article 2 of the TEU, these aims represent a unified corpus of values.

Respecting human dignity, freedom, democracy, unity and the rule of law and respect for human rights, including national minority rights – all are the values stipulated in Article 2 of the TEU, representing the Union's second general aim. However, Article 3, para 1 does not grant special powers to the EU, it rather "strengthens the resolve to implement and promote the values stipulated in Article 2 of the TEU" (Đorđević, 2014: 26). The implementation and promotion of values refers to the EU and its member states, as well as to its relations with non-member states. The foreign policy aspect of implementing and

promoting EU values is implemented through its policy towards third countries. Progress in the accession process, trade facilitation, financial aid, etc., are conditioned upon, inter alia, the standards defined as values in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

Finally, the third general aim of the EU, referring to the promotion of well-being, has a value-based dimension and should not be interpreted strictly through the economic prism, but rather, through the very important social and value-based dimension. Namely, this is emphasised by the specific aims defined in Article 3, para 3 of the Treaty on European Union – from solidarity and social justice, social development and full employment, to protecting and improving the environment. Commitment to social solidarity and the welfare state concept is often characterised as one of the key or even central characteristics of the European identity, differentiating the EU from other global actors, including the USA. However, there is no consensus in the European Union concerning the welfare state, particularly following the world economic crisis at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, when the differences with regard to the Union's role in market economy became more prominent (Weiler and Horowitz, 2004: 47).

All in all, the proclaimed values and aims of the EU can be considered the foundations of multiculturalism policy. This particularly refers to respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights, including national minority rights – the values under Article 2 of the TOU, also representing the second general aim of the EU.

Democratisation vs. Stabilitocratisation

Transformation of an autocratic order (where power is usurped by a group or individuals who are not accountable to the citizens and are not subject to effective control) into a democratic order – that of the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights, effective division of power, developed civilised society and independent institutions – can be called the

process of democratisation. It is a process that never ends, not only because there are so few "pure" democracies or autocracies but because with time, new areas of democracy are mastered and new ones open. Most of states that can be formally classified as democratic also have some elements of authoritarian states and vice versa. One of the many definitions and perceptions of democracy and post-democracy (Dal, 1999; Lijphart, 1992; Linc and Stepan, 1998; Crouch, 2007) is that of Giddens, who says that the rights to participate in a democracy go together with civil freedoms – freedom of speech and debate, along with the freedom to form political groups or associations and freedom to join them (2005: 92). Democracy indeed is, in a way, a process of stabilising institutions which enable the rule of law and political processes providing for a fair political struggle and preservation and broadening the space for freedoms and human rights. In that sense, democratisation is the fundamental postulate for the development of an integrative multicultural society.

As mentioned above, the EU respects the identity of its member states and the specificities of their systems, but only under the key prerequisite that they have a democratic order. This, inter alia, includes the EU core system of values and certain principles and rules for constituting the authorities as well as their behaviour, such as peoples' sovereignty (citizens' sovereignty), free multiparty elections, equality of citizens and political actors in political activities, the principle of majority, limited by minority rights, separation of political parties from the state and public institutions (de-partisation)… In other words, for a state to become an EU member, it would have to meet certain political criteria, including, in addition to the abovementioned principles, stable democratic institutions as the foundation of a democratic order.

In practice, however, this general principle changes for the sake of stability and security: authoritarian practices and policies are tolerated and democracy is postponed until "better times", thus postponing the development of integrative multiculturalism.

One of the instruments the EU uses to influence countries that want to become its members is the *policy of conditioning*. Many people, including Euro sceptics, believe that this

external factor of democratisation can be very productive and useful for these countries, regardless of the end result of Euro integrations. Likewise, experience shows that once a country joins the EU, the process of democratisation has not ended. It is a continual process and if neglected, it has negative consequences on the society as a whole, weakening the effects of what was achieved and creating obstacles to stabilisation and expanding democracy. The term "democratisation of democracy" coined by Giddens is self-explanatory in describing this process. *However, in practice, the conditioning policy is focused on achieving stability at the expense of democratic consolidation in the countries of the region.*

There is a general impression in the democratic communities of the countries in Western Balkans which have not yet joined the EU that for Brussels, especially for some of its influential members, it is more important to achieve the desirable diplomatic and political responses in the region than to strengthen its internal democratic processes. On the one hand, the protagonists of the formerly problematic politics in the region have changed their rhetoric in foreign relations, particularly in their communication with high representatives of the EU, USA and neighbouring countries and, on the other, their internal politics very much resembles the 1990s. The opposition is treated as an enemy and any criticism as an attack on the state and reforms.

At its core, the politics of the countries in the region is not an instrument used by the ruling majority to achieve the genuine Europeanisation of the national identity in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, but rather an efficient tool of undemocratic politics used to strengthen the privileged political status and monopoly in the country.

The citizens in these countries still regard Europeanisation rather one-sidedly, through the eyes of their political elites – as an administrative and technical process of adapting to the legal and market system of the EU, which should directly enable a better life – rather than as a process of instituting and implementing the rule of law and other core values proclaimed by the Lisbon Treaty.

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A universally accepted model of inclusion of diverse eth-
nic and national minorities is non-existent in the EU or beyond,
in the developed Western countries. Multiculturalism was an
attempt to step away from the assimilation approach, metapho-
rically called "a melting pot" and often characterised as unjust
and immoral, towards the approach that would respect ethnic,
national, religious or cultural differences in a broader sense, of-
ten symbolically called the "salad bowl model". Interculturality
attempts to overcome the weaknesses of both of these models,
by respecting the difference and also seeking an adequate mo-
del for the inclusion of these differences into a homogenous
political community.

This is a big challenge not only for immigrant countries
but also for countries with autochthonous population of diver-
se ethnic, national, religious and cultural identities. Political
parties in general, and especially those established on ethnic or
national principles, have a significant role and responsibility in
seeking the adequate approach to this problem. However, they
are inherently prone to absolutising this role in their efforts to
institutionalise the monopoly in representing and advocating
the interests of communities on behalf of which they operate.

To a greater or lesser extent, undeveloped political culture
and political practice that does not contribute to its establish-
ment, still underdeveloped rule of law, low levels of freedom of
speech and free media, underdeveloped and weak institutions,
concentration of power in the hands of strong leaders, inefficient
division of power, partocracy in the establishment and a wi-
de-spread corruption generated by it – all are the systemic pro-
blems of countries and societies in the Western Balkans. Overco-
ming these weaknesses, as the main causes of weak states and
societies, should be a priority in the process of consolidating a de-
mocratic community (its Europeanisation), and this would greatly
facilitate the process of European integrations itself.

In the countries of the region, Europeanisation is predo-
minantly perceived and presented as a technical job of taking
over the Union's heritage, rather than being treated as an

integral process of political and legal adapting and, subsequently, accession to the EU as a supranational and all-national community of values and programme aims. The general social reforms aimed at Europeanisation will only gain full meaning if they primarily focus on the values, principles and general aims, such as the rule of law, protection and fostering of human rights and consolidating a democratic order, and building a national, depoliticised public administration and a system of sustainable economic development.

Countries of the Western Balkans can be characterised as multicultural societies without multiculturalism, as societies with cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, yet without an integrative policy to manage this diversity. In principle and to a great extent, they are committed to a civil state, but factually, they are still national states where nationalism is fostered as state ideology, supported and promoted as the highest form of patriotism. A logical consequence of this orientation is failure to build a civic identity, failure based on the approach of imposing one identity as general, rather than introducing inclusion policies to strengthen different identities through socialisation, education, institutions and public policies. The demands for preserving and strengthening diversity are not met with adequate inclusive policies.

This principled and verbal commitment to multiculturalism has not been translated into public policies. Rather the contrary, in some countries this policy was assimilatory towards some citizens, as the policy of imposing identity, while almost as a rule, national minorities were encouraged to emphasise their differences, but adequate inclusive measures were missing. One of the principled commitments is to building a participatory political culture, but in practice, the prevailing and encouraged practice is that of subservient political culture, which is not conducive to a civil democratic society.

Without appropriate public policies and genuine commitment by political actors, the political proclamations and sporadic programme stipulations in the constitutions and legislation of states in the region focused on building a civil state, cannot create a real civic identity or civic society or, accordingly, a civic

political community. Contradictions between the principled commitment to a civil state and policies of strengthening and/or redefining national identity, on the one hand, and the demands for preserving and empowering other separate national identities, on the other, do not lead to improved social cohesion based on the so-called civic identity, rather, as it transpired, to strengthening political demands focused on affirming separate national identities. However, no magic formula has been discovered to reconcile these demands.

An integrative, inclusive model, rather than the exclusive approach in the domains of public policy management and building a political community, imposes itself as a win-win way of breaking out of the vicious circle of civil and national (nationalist) contradictions and controversies. Building a democratic political culture and a wide basic consensus on this need are the basis for defining inclusive public policies which respect specificities and strengthen the unity of a political community.

The prospects of integrative multiculturalism (interculturalism) will depend to a great extent on accepting and promoting a multicultural dialogue, primarily starting from democratic management of cultural diversity, the management that rests upon human rights and basic freedoms and promotes appreciation of diversity as an element of political culture and strives to act in accordance with the maxim "from equal opportunity for all, to equal enjoyment of rights". It is essential to create space for an intercultural dialogue and to adopt and pass on intercultural values and knowledge to support greater and more meaningful participation of citizens in social and political life. With such an approach, the principled commitment to multiculturalism, followed by institutions and the normative framework supporting it, can gain full meaning.

Concluding Remarks

The three social phenomena of populism, stabilitocracy, and multiculturalism are interwoven on several different levels and have here been considered primarily as politological phenomena, with all the consequences they have for society as a whole. It transpires that they are of considerable importance to political culture, the establishment and functioning of state and social institutions, as well as to shaping political and everyday life. A better understanding of populism and stabilitocracy allows for coping more easily with the defects they multiply in society, in the same way that a better understanding of multiculturality, multiculturalism, and interculturality enables us to seek for modalities for integrative processes in society.

To better understand the nature of these social phenomena and processes, it is necessary to penetrate more deeply into their structure, their reasons and favourable circumstances, so that we could find a proper way to cope with the causes that generate them and the consequences they entail.

In its various dimensions and manifestations, as well as different social and political circumstances, but primarily as thin-centred ideology, populism has been contextually observed on an international level and in Serbia. The chameleonic and symbiotic nature of populism has been pointed out, and so have the causes and consequences it entails, as well as the lessons that can be learnt from it. In Serbia, stabilitocracy and multiculturality form the political and social context for its appearance and manifestations, and the true means of neutralising its manifestations could be found in liberal democracy and multiculturalism, that is, interculturalism as its more advanced

version. However, as this monograph has shown, these are still merely a desirable outcome which might lead towards an ordered state of the rule of law and free society.

The weaknesses of representative democracy open a space for the rise of populism, and this space is far wider in the states undergoing transformation towards liberal democracy, which has in this monograph been shown using the example of Serbia. However, democracy and populism are mutually permeated throughout the world, including the most developed and ordered democratic states, which is why the correlation between the two is extremely important for understanding the global contemporary processes that are reflected on individual states.

Misbalance between democratic and liberal values in contemporary democracies is favourable to the development of populism and all the negative consequences it has for society, but it can also indicate the need for the strengthening of democratic values. In other words, populists and their activities can incite a balancing of democratic and liberal values once a considerable misbalance has been created. In stabilitocracies, it is difficult even to speak of establishing balance between democratic and liberal values as both values are underdeveloped to the extent that their underdevelopment becomes the key problem, rather than any misbalance thereof.

What this monograph has confirmed is that the deepened rift between the political elites and the people is certainly one of the most important causes of the appearance and expansion of populism in societies of different democratic shapes and development levels. In Serbia, populism is primarily manifested through praising the people, anti-elitism, and anti-pluralism, and it reflects negatively on both the institutional system and political life in general, preventing the development of democratic political culture and the establishment of liberal democracy. The findings of the empirical research on the understanding of politics, citizens' attitude towards the people and political elites, and citizens' stances on representative democracy, the leader, and "dangerous others" show that the social ground is favourable to maintaining populism.

Based on the empirical research, it can be concluded that the majority in Serbia is composed of passive citizens who have retreated from public life and are not interested in politics but instead burdened with economic and social problems, which is not encouraging in the context of the struggle to establish and consolidate democratic institutions and build a democratic political culture.

In cases such as this, populism appears to be a serious obstacle to establishing or consolidating key elements of representative liberal democracy. The rift separating democratic ideals and the actual functioning in such societies is too deep and wide to expect the corrective role from populism. Adding to this, the almost constant economic and political crisis makes such a socio-economic context an additional cause of the negative consequences of populism. In such circumstances, a vast space opens for the appearance of populist parties, movements, and leaders, who are allegedly full of understanding when it comes to the people's needs and ready to deal with "the corrupted elite" and "dangerous others." In this way, populists additionally suppress pluralism, repress critical thought, limit the freedom of the media, and instrumentalise state and social institutions to suit their own needs. In this way, they do not remove any defects of the political system; on the contrary: they pose an obstacle to their removal.

The effects of suppressing pluralism in multiply plural societies contribute to the deepening of social schisms. When populists homogenise the people in multinational societies, they most commonly homogenise the national group they belong to, that is, those within the group who politically support the populists, whereas all the others are marginalised, excluded, or treated as "dangerous others." In such cases, multicultural societies, which are essentially plural, become platforms for political conflicts focusing on identity-related issues. Instead of making diversity management a political priority, identity differences are instrumentalised for political purposes. In this political competition, populism has an advantage over multiculturalism, which results in the suppression of pluralism and strengthening of differences, in divisions instead of

integrations. Narratives of the superiority of the nation and its cultural heritage compete in political discourse, and Hegemonism is represented as the order of stability. In multicultural societies, the struggle for pluralism is the struggle for the respect of diversity, and multiculturalism is a way of diversity management which leads towards the harmonisation between the political community and society.

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Populism, stabilitocracy and multiculturalism are three social phenomena which have recently been in the spotlight of political science professionals, while simultaneously also capturing the attention of a wider public. Studying these phenomena is important not only in order for us to better understand their nature, but also to be able to confront the consequences they produce. Stabilitocracy and multiculturality comprise political and social habitus of populism in Serbia, while liberal democracy and multiculturalism constitute political goals which lead to a well-regulated state and free society.

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Populism in Serbia, i.e. manifestations of Serbian populism primarily through glorification of the people, anti-elitism and anti-pluralism comprise the central part of this book, in addition to considerations of the institutional and political framework in which this populism is manifested – stabilitocracy. In order to better understand populism in Serbia, the study includes the results of an empirical research concerning the perception of politics, the attitudes of citizens towards the people and political elite, and their attitudes towards representative democracy, leader and "dangerous others".

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When in multinational societies populists homogenize the people, they usually homogenize their own national group, while the rest of the people are at the very least excluded, or even more frequently treated as "dangerous others". A consequence of the populist homogenization of the people is anti-pluralism which erodes liberal values in political communities, since in multicultural societies, the fight for pluralism is the fight for the harmony of diversity, while multiculturalism is the manner of diversity management which leads to harmonisation of the political community and society.

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