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HYBRID ACTIONS IN ELECTORAL POLITICAL PROCESSES

Abstract: Hybrid actions in electoral political processes are an increasingly prevalent phenomenon in the modern structure of political relations and today's electoral engineering. Regardless of the present controversy regarding the personification of hybrid action, the scope and effects of such activities do not necessarily have to be destructive. This stems from the fact that, thanks to hybrid actions, political changes have been achieved in some countries that have brought with them to these societies' prosperity and wealth. Although this is difficult to assess nowadays, given the enormous intertwining of different vectors of domestic and foreign policies, and beyond that interests, which is especially evident in the era in which we live, in the era of deforestation of public international law and the modern world order. The paper analyzes all the most important aspects of hybrid actions within the electoral political processes, but with efforts to, through a careful and balanced research approach, theoretically shed light on the true essence and background of hybrid action on the gender process of government - on political elections.

Key words: Hybrid actions, political elections, government, political parties, special services, media.

INTRODUCTION

Political elections¹ are a gender process of government and in modern democratic societies political changes or continuities of political power, are being realized exclusively through a clearly defined form of political organization of transparent articulation of the wishes of the citizens, more precisely the majority (here one should not fall into the trap of misinterpreting the direct voting process, which is secret in all modern democracies). This majority is sometimes convincingly larger, but more often it is

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1 Election and end electoral systems are an integral part of policy and political process. They are the widest appearance direct political action and the most massive participation population - citizens one countries, community, which one have right to vote. In the political process, election themselves can scientifically identify like separate political whole, but also like a part of total political process. Election and electoral process themselves are taking place in the assembly general model of a political process of a specific countries, community, existing and ongoing regulations and number of politically most influential positions of number of political subjects. Election are one of the methods and forms of political process and political actions which themselves win or retain existing political power. An important characteristic of elections and electoral process is existence of more phase, where is themselves differ pre-election, election and posts-election phase (Ševo 2008: 1240).

close to the minority, which additionally burdens a society or state, but also strengthens its democratic potential and character.

However, despite the above, in modern democratic societies, regardless of the developed level of political tolerance and rich democratic tradition, political tensions in electoral processes always exist. They are greater if the ratio of opposing political forces is approximate, which is why this small difference, as a percentage viewed through voter support, can represent a serious field of political instability. The fundamentals of this instability are also manifested when there is a significant imbalance of the basic policy provisions.²

Nowadays, even the most developed and stable countries can be introduced into the field of instability in just a few months, where the conditions for this are extremely favorable electoral political processes. These are periods when ways and means are not often chosen to defeat political opponents, when we initiate or fabricate a number of our affairs, when subversive operations of different character are performed, in a word, when an entire arsenal of hybrid actions is activated to achieve victory. So, for example, if one analyzes the last few elections in the United States, it is not difficult to conclude that a country that is pleading to present itself in the world community as a „bastion of democracy“, it is not difficult to conclude that the question can be raised about the validity of the electoral process and whether the official results represent the real will of the citizens.

Also, a dangerous precedent for redrawing the electoral will of citizens is the phenomenon in which the government in one country is formed not by political parties that have won the majority of votes, but by those parties that are at the liking of certain centers of power.³ In recent years, there have been increasing examples of prime

2 There is an indispensable question of important policy provisions here, which is why it is important to emphasize that „important provisions policy mostly include activity countries, relationship countries and society, manage state, general interest. Regardless many definitions of politics ... politics is a social occurrence and its determination is conditional by defining the arm of society, social relations and activity“ (Tančić 2006: 8).

3 Contemporaries can never be fully aware of the historical significance of the time in which they live. And it's better is so. Especially if they are destined to live in transitional periods, in periods of great changes and changing of entire eras. Because man faces the signs of epochal change every day, on the go, and he overcomes them in life, and mentally accepts them, gradually getting used to the opportunities and relationships that come his way were unthinkable until quite recently. Only on a distant day, in the future, some not yet born historians will evaluate the time he went through and which he created to some extent as a turning point in the past humanity. And yet, it is possible for contemporaries, moreover, it is their human duty to try in time, even in advance, to understand the nature of events and the meaning of the process, to penetrate into the directions of the flows that carry them, and which the personnel are only extremely limited to manage, to understand the spirit of the times and to understand the world in turmoil which surrounds them and does not leave them alone. A man or a people who come to terms with the limitations of their own knowledge and active powers, and this limitation is, by the way, quite real, and he passively allows himself to be carried by the current, it will experience being managed by others, those who have tried to separate the boundaries as much as possible limitations and have an impact on the course of events and changes. Appreciating the spirit of the times and the changing of the balance of power in the world, with the clarity of which ideas and goals to be pursued, it is possible to enter into such a dialogue with the epoch that to a lesser or greater degree of protection overriding and permanent own interests and from the object of history at least

ministers of certain countries coming from parties that won from 3% to 4% of the total number of votes in elections, but through subsequent post-election engineering, they took into their own hands most of the political power in the executive, and through it in other forms of government in one state. Here a real question arises, which is not always in accordance with theoretical approaches, whether the three branches of government, legislative, judicial and executive are truly independent of each other, or whether in the galimatias of the bureaucracy of state administration, and often of different interests, these three branches intertwine and lucratively influence each other.

It is not uncommon in political life that the measure of political success does not come down to which political option or individual won, but to one who has lost. Citizens often know that they vote not so much for, but against one candidate or party, which often brings into the philosophical question whether one political option won the elections, or whether it is actually a more realistic picture that the other lost. This is a direct consequence of great social and political dissatisfaction in one society or state, when voters choose to vote not according to the criteria for whom, it's who they're against.

On the other hand, political elections often do not serve only to win mandates, someone demonstrates through the number of seats won how much influence the owner of those mandates will have. It is expected that everyone who is seriously engaged in politics aims to win as many mandates in democratic elections as they need for the realization of desired plans and to achieve influence, which can also be seen as the realization of power to protect the interests of the people and the state or the people who are in diaspora. Also, along with this, one almost always strives to strengthen one's own political position and the satisfaction of one's own needs. Therefore, under normal political circumstances, the goal is always to be stronger, not weaker, to be the one without whom decisions cannot be made for everyone, especially for those who have placed their trust in this political option. By the way, the strength of each political option, we can say, and the strength of each electoral list depends on many circumstances. In „tired“ societies marked by decades of rule by one political option or one man, the exhausted majority are eager for change, changes that will lead society forward and into a better tomorrow. Such an environment is particularly conducive to the „grey areas“ of political action, which levitates between authoritarianism and democracy.⁴ Therefore, in political outplay, new political options and new political figures fare better than the older ones, unless the more experienced surprise with their distant and arriving or, for example, the will of reconciliation. In this case, the very change of such orders implies three stages. The first, implies democratic changes of power, through political elections. The second phase is the phase of the transitory period, some will also call it the transition period. The third refers to the construction of a new social order, which is why political forces that have an adequate plan for the future, most often have a chance to dominate the political scene of that society with a new political order.

to some extent becomes one of its subjects, while respecting the well-founded reasons of all other participants in that great, incessant game (Tanasković 2010: 5).

4 About these „gray areas“ see more: Morgenbesser Lee, „Elections in Hybrid Regimes: Conceptual Stretching Revived“, *Political Studies*, Vol 62, London, 2014: 31.

All of the above creates a suitable environment for hybrid actions, whose, if not at full capacity, at least outlines, are present today in almost all electoral processes in the world community, including those at the lowest political level of the organization of modern society.

HYBRID FACTS

Hybrid actions are an extremely complex phenomenon that has surpassed the conventional forms of warfare in terms of its importance and importance, but also in its intensity and presence. Of course, conventional forms of warfare will never completely disappear from the world political stage, but today there is an increasing surge of hybrid actions, i.e. hybrid war.

Hybrid warfare has grown over time from a tactical military approach in solving complex demands on a concrete battlefield, to an overall political concept implemented at a strategic level. In hybrid warfare, the role of non-military means of a subversive nature is emphasized, while military force, if used at all, is used covertly or limitedly. Subversive action, often referred to as revolutionary, is a complex form of institutional violence aimed at changing the situation within the country towards which it is being acted upon (Mirković 2021: 63).

In addition to hybrid warfare, as an inseparable part, we have implemented hybrid actions, which together makes a single and complete whole. There are numerous hybrid activities that cannot be characterized as war, but can be qualified as hybrid action. Hybrid war fare and hybrid action in general is very dangerous. There is not a single country in the world that is not exposed to some form of hybrid action, but there are certainly those that are under extremely strong action of this extremely complex and offensive phenomenon. At today's level of development of overall social relations, ways Hybrid warfare is almost unlimited. They can be articulated in almost any segment of social action, and are limited by the imagination and creativity of the destruction of the structures that use them. The targets of hybrid attacks are not only political, military, security or some other related structures, but they are hit by a much wider range. For example, a number of religious and cultural issues may be on a hybrid agenda aimed at causing spiritual and religious divisions, all as a prelude to more complex national or civil conflicts. Hybrid attacks can be extremely severe, with devastating consequences, with ways of countering them very complex and almost always fraught with numerous difficulties and problems. *Previous practice has found that hybrid attacks are most effectively countered by retaliatory performance of hybrid actions.* We are aware that such an approach will inevitably cause a critical review of a part of researchers, but modern practice has confirmed the effectiveness of this approach. Responding to existing hybrid strikes, without any forms of „preventive retaliation“, is a process that inevitably puts the state – the target of attacks in a defensive and subordinate position. Trotting for events, constant race against time and waiting for the next move of the opponents are qualities that represent an impossible mission to protect each state and its constitutional order. In performing, conditionally speaking, defensive hybrid actions (the term defensive should be used with caution and reserve, since these actions are offensive

and aggressive in nature, and can be qualified as extremely violent in character) one of the most important principles is continuous work. Of course, this work can be of varying scale and intensity, but it should not be interrupted. The interruptions open up space for the opposing side for new and deeper breakthroughs, allow consolidation and regrouping of forces used for hybrid action and, of course, make it difficult to restart distracting and responsive hybrid activities. For each country it is very bad and very difficult to find itself under offensive hybrid actions. This weight is mostly felt by the structures that are in charge of defending the country and protecting its constitutional order. In connection with the above, there is an increasing need, for a systemic approach to modeling a potential efficient and effective state system and its subsystems by applying science, prognostic scientific methods and experience from practice in accordance with contemporary security challenges, risks and threats (Parezanović 2022: 69-71).

As for the content of hybrid warfare, there are several points of view, with them coinciding to a lesser or greater extent. However, the key is the division into three categories:

1. nonviolent subversive methods involving propaganda, cyberattacks and other nonviolent subversive methods such as economic sanctions, political pressures and threats, the activities of civil society organizations and the like;

2. special, covert and violent actions that support previously declared secession, commit terrorist acts or incite citizens to civil disobedience and rebellion;⁵

3. aggression by conventional forces that is presented as a humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping mission or protection of civilians.⁶

Unlike content, the principles of hybrid warfare are also important, so, according to Professor Stajić, they can be classified as:

1. proportionality and economy of use of forces: types of activities are conditioned by the specific situation, and the scope, intensity and manner of implementation are determined by the resistance of the opponent. In this sense, hybrid warfare has no pre-determined content, and the scope and intensity of activity depend on the said resistance, and thus the components that will be involved in overcoming resistance. How the resistance will be overcome and by what means depends on a case-by-case basis. The principle of economy dictates that the goals are achieved by proportional strain, that is, by sufficient force. Greater resistance also means greater force, which can include everything from civil unrest to open intervention;⁷

5 It is important to emphasize that extremism and terrorism are often equated in practice. Admittedly, one could say that all terrorists are extremists, but it must also be borne in mind that not all extremists are terrorists (Simeunović 2009: 11-30).

6 Andrew Radin, *Hybrid Warfare in the Baltics*, Rand, 2017, Taken from: Ljubomir Stajić, *The basics of the security system*, Novi Sad: Faculty of Law, 2021: 152.

7 „Military intervention represents a complex form of institutionalized violence that includes various forms of interference by the armed forces of one or more countries, or an international organization, in internal affairs of another country in order to achieve specific political, economic and military strategic goals interest. In a narrower sense, military intervention refers to the direct use of armed force as open and direct interference in the internal affairs of a country, while military intervention in a broader sense it also includes indirect forms of interference such as demonstrations of force and threats of force that are not followed by the direct use of armed force“ (Simeunović, 1989: 166).

2. comprehensiveness: depending on the resistance that needs to be overcome in the most efficient way, oppositions can occur in the sphere of culture, art, language, history, propaganda and other areas that directly erode the resilient power of the opponent, until armed aggression as the most drastic way of overcoming resistance;

3. flexibility: the means used are easy to replace in the event that tactical success is achieved, that is, if the method used is ineffective;

4. a state of constant warfare: the application of hybrid warfare means that the boundaries between war and peace are difficult to determine due to the fact that constant and in all areas of society, oppositions can occur that become visible when a reason or cause for armed intervention arises. In this sense, armed conflicts are only a visible escalation of the conflict that lasts for a long time;

5. use of legal and illegal means: causing civil unrest in another State, infiltrating terrorist or other groups tasked with causing violence and chaos, up to armed aggression are activities prohibited by international law and on which there are convictions of international courts. On the other hand, propaganda and the spread of disinformation are not prohibited activities;

6. orientation towards citizens, i.e. society: most of the activities undertaken are directed against the social basis in order to weaken the will and morale of the opponent, which is why the priority entities through which the activities are undertaken become the media, political parties, civil society organizations, international organizations, transnational corporations and others;

7. hybrid warfare applicability at all organizational levels: Hybrid warfare can be present at all levels, ranging from national to international levels, i.e. tactical, operational, coordinating and strategic levels;

8. the orientation of activities against the enemy, but also towards its own citizens: Hybrid warfare as a complex and complex activity with the weakening of the opponent stipulates the strengthening of one's own power through propaganda and disinformation on the basis of which decisions are legitimized domestically and internationally and achieve internal political homogeneity (Stajić 2021: 153).

Defining hybrid warfare also requires the extraction of key characteristics. Five key features of hybrid warfare can be singled out:

- synchronized activity,
- centralization of leadership at the strategic level,
- multidimensionality of forms of action,
- adaptability in accordance with the situation on the ground,
- denial of existence and leadership.

Synchronization of activities refers to the compliance and coordination of the application of various forms of action, in order to obtain a synergistic effect. Economic pressures, media propaganda often go hand in hand with diplomatic pressures, demands, etc.⁸ Military or terrorist activities in the field are mainly accompanied by information and

8 On the mechanisms of economic pressures, see in more detail: Časlav Očić, *Ka obali plovi – strategic considerations*, Society for Economic History, Belgrade, 2015, as well as in Časlav Očić, *Introduction to Regionomik*, Znamen, Belgrade, 2003.

psychological operations. *The centralization of leadership* is a characteristic that can be indirectly inferred from the synchronization of activities. The coordination of various forms of threat by different carriers (intelligence measures, diplomatic initiatives, media propaganda, actions of military units), which are aimed at the same opponent, with the same goal, in the same period of time, indicate that they are conducted from one center. *The multidimensionality of the form of action* is derived from the aforementioned methods and areas in which hybrid warfare is manifested, which we have already talked about. The state or a particular community, organization, have their own structure, relationships, material and other values. In hybrid war, one does not choose the means to attack this structure, relations and values, primarily those without the use of weapons, which can enable the achievement of the goals and achievement of the interests of the aggressor.⁹ *Adaptiveness in accordance with the situation on the ground* is widely used in describing the actions of non-state actors against the armed forces of the United States and Israel, as well as other examples of hybrid warfare. It indicates that in hybrid warfare measures and methods are adapted to the opponent, they are not all defined and predetermined, but innovated depending on the weak points of the opponent, applied dosed depending on the assessment of whether the goals of aggression are being achieved or not, they strengthen new measures or increase the intensity applied up to that time. *The denial of the existence and conduct of hybrid warfare* is derived from the fact that most of the methods applied by the aggressor are largely unrecognizable by the general public as a form of war. The boundaries of war and peace in the case of hybrid war are hazy, most often because the struggle is fought for the minds of people, on the psychological-value plane. A good part of the methods are disguised, subversive, primarily led by the intelligence services. Therefore, some cyber-attacks, civil protests, armed rebellions are not indirectly recognized as an act organized by another state or power, but have their own rationale for public use, which serves to conceal hybrid warfare. And those measures that are public and visible, such as economic sanctions or political demands, are not portrayed as elements of hybrid warfare but as legitimate demands (Cvetković, Kovač, Joksimović 2019: 339).

The particular danger of hybrid actions is contained in the fact that they are one of, conditionally speaking, the most economical forms of aggressor action. To wage hybrid warfare requires incomparably smaller funds and material resources than the expenditures necessary to wage any other form of conventional warfare. In today's era of galloping technical and technological development, hybrid effects can be performed using a simple smartphone, forming a fake account on a social network or, say, establishing an Internet portal through which misinformation will be systematically and deliberately spread. It is important to emphasize that hybrid action does not always imply partial covertness and complete secrecy. It can also be carried out publicly, quite transparently.

9 Here it is interesting to emphasize that, for example, when engaging terrorist groups or private individuals of military companies to solve military-political problems, it is based on the fact that these structures are not directly related to international conventions and do not have binding acts in this regard international public or humanitarian law, whereby extremely negative and goals (torture, seduction of terror and reign of terror, politically motivated murders, use weapons of mass destruction, etc.), see more: Andrei Vladimirovich Demidov, *Gibridnye vojny kak manifestation of interstate conflicts in modern conditions*, National safety, Economic strategies, No 2/2016, Moscow 2016: 55.

A picturesque example is when a person with an appropriate social position or status, for example, through his Twitter account expresses certain attitudes that have the characteristics of hybrid action. Also, hybrid action can be carried out by using the mentioned portal as a springboard for the placement of fake news. This is most often done by fake news from the „hybrid portal“ is taken over by relevant portals that have a huge number of visitors and views. In this way, disinformation begins to take up a manifold wider internet and media space, often transcending national frameworks. It is inevitable to clarify that for this mechanism of spreading fake news, performers of hybrid strike almost always use the technique of networking „hybrid portals“ with the official and relevant ones, by putting the latter into operation of the carrier. When disinformation is placed and transmitted on several different platforms, then the focus of public interest is more its content than its originality, i.e. where it was initially placed. Such „hunting in the murky“ is especially dangerous when the hybrid technique is used intensively, in some cases several times a day, since one misinformation coincides with a new one, and then again, a new one, so that complete confusion is created. The state and its institutions that are the subject of such hybrid strikes cannot react and adequately deny these false allegations, which is why citizens are gradually creating feelings of insecurity, suspicion and reservations towards the governing structures, which can certainly represent a suitable environment for creating a climate of „creeping upheaval“ in a society or state. As a rule, all actors who participate in the organization and execution of hybrid actions will always deny not only their participation, but also that hybrid actions are carried out. No individual, institution or state shall declare that it is conducting hybrid action against another entity, as this directly recognizes the performance of subversive activity (Parezanović 2022: 73-75).

In addition to the above, a picturesque example is the color revolutions, which occupy a very important place in the complex of NATO hybrid warfare mechanisms. It's a kind of controlled chaos technology. According to political scientist Andrei Manojlo, color revolution is „a technology for organizing a political upheaval in conditions of artificially created political instability, when pressure is exerted on power in the form of political blackmail, and the main driving force of the attack on power is a specially organized youth protest movement. It can be added that the warring parties are switching from political blackmail to violent measures, the implementation of which can lead to the outbreak of civil war in the country, using almost all the mechanisms of hybrid warfare.“ The hybrid threat complex is formed according to a predetermined strategic plan and affects a wide range of military and civilian targets of the enemy, including the population of the targeted country. The ultimate goal is to undermine the combined power of the state, position and influence of authorities within the country and in the international arena. Thus, unlike other types of threats, the hybrid threat complex focuses strictly on the chosen object of influence (a specific country), has a clearly defined format and a predetermined end goal, and is the core of the strategic plan of the operation. The successful implementation of a complex of threats depends on the availability of a source capable of providing the necessary strengths and resources, as well as the ability to access them. This synergistic effect of the use of hybrid threats determines their particular danger to the entire national security system of the country. By the way, there is a very interesting direct link between the technologies of hybrid wars and color

revolutions, which complement each other. As a rule, the color revolution represents the initial stage of hybrid warfare, since in the future events develop within the framework of the algorithm of adaptive use of force. Then there is the phenomenon that peaceful demonstrations of the opposition gradually turn into a difficult confrontation with the authorities, until its overthrow and even the outbreak of civil war. In this way, at each stage of hybrid warfare, a set of corresponding hybrid threats is activated.¹⁰ On the other hand, one part of the Western authors of the Russian special operation in Crimea in 2014, also characterized as a product of hybrid actions.¹¹

HYBRID ACTIONS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

When it comes to hybrid actions during electoral political processes, interference in elections usually has different characteristics. This hybrid interference is primarily aimed at harming the state that is the target of a hybrid attack, among other things by downplaying and conducting a coherent politic. This allows the aggressor side to gain an advantage through erosional political institutions, which can promote anti-democratic and, extremist and or populist and political candidates and, with the aim of undermining the political system one state, among other things, by inciting dissatisfaction and dividing (Davies 2021: 25).

Hybrid actions in the electoral process are also directed towards creating conditions for providing support to one or more political parties, movements or individuals depending on the form of the electoral process. This support is provided through several directions of action, the basic of which are:

- directly favoring and positively promoting one political option over the other participants in the election race;
- compromising and grossly reducing the popularity of a political option that is opposed to that option that is favored;
- anesthetizing political activism within a political option that is opposed to the option that is the favorite of the structure that performs hybrid action.

When it comes to *direct favoring and positive promotion of one political option over the other participants in the election race*, it is important to emphasize that this is a relatively simple modality of hybrid action, in which all available capacities for providing support are engaged, which include public and of course conspiratorial modalities of action. By providing open support, it is sought to send voters a clear message about the prospects of voting or non-voting for a particular political option or candidate. Often these public messages and concrete actions can have a repressive undertone, if the state in which the electoral process is held is a member of a multinational organization, military-political alliance and the like. For example, if one is an EU member state, it is

10 Bartosz Alexander, „Hybrid War in Strategy U.S. and NATO“, *Military review*, Moscow, 12. 10. 2014, <https://topwar.ru/60101-gibridnye-voyny-v-strategii-ssha-i-nato.html?ysclid=l66kxc7gwb159798025>.

11 For this special operation, see more: Marko Parezanović, „Russian Special Operation in Crimea in 2014“, *The Policy of National Security*, Year XIII, Vol. 23, No. 2/2022, Belgrade, 2022: 49-65.

expected that the Union will provide support in these elections to a pro-European candidate or party, which are proven partners or for which there are firm guarantees that they will fully follow the EU policy in all directions. In such a case, it can happen that in the electoral process the spears of several different pro-European candidates or parties cross, when elements of the factional struggle within the EU come to the fore, i.e. the influence of the current that is at that moment the strongest and most dominant.

On the other hand, *compromising and grossly reducing the popularity of the political option, which is opposed to the option that is favored*, represents a much more complex process of hybrid action compared to the previous one, because it requires more skill and actions. This is not only about mere negative propaganda, but also a preconceived workflow of action, because negative propaganda itself, if not used in combination with other methods, it can produce counter-effects for the side that generates it.

The presentation of compromising material about individuals or political parties is massively carried out in the arenas of today's political struggles, but when a multi-layered analysis is carried out, it is not difficult to conclude that there is little of the real essence, that there is a little compromise. In such cases, sometimes instead of the term compromise, it would be far more appropriate to smear political opponents, precisely because of the lack of real compromising material. It is important to emphasize that certain materials do not always have to be seen as compromising, which is conditioned by culture, tradition, the degree of development of a society or some other factors. For example, a traditional voter in the Balkans does not view a candidate of homosexual orientation in the same way as a voter in Scandinavia. Therefore, any presentation of such secretly recorded content can represent either compromise in one, or cause additional empathy, and often popularity in other countries.

The third basic direction of hybrid actions in the electoral process aimed at creating conditions for supporting one or more political pariahs, movements or individuals, refers to *the anesthesia of political activism within the political option that is opposed to the option that is the favorite of the structure that performs hybrid action*. Anesthesia of political activism is carried out in several ways, the most dominant of which is they refer to the weakening or total collapse of morality within a political organization, the exertion of pressure and blackmail through force, coercion, threat or some other material, and it is often done by bribing and corrupting an individual (political candidate) or several political officials within one political party or movement. In such cases, money is obtained not for political action, but for actions of political inaction. This is not about open support for the opposing political option, but it is also a perfidious sabotage action within a political organization, during which there is not open support for the rival side, but the weakening of its own political potential in the electoral process.

MECHANISMS OF HYBRID ACTIONS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

In the electoral process, various mechanisms are used to perform hybrid actions, and almost always an important role is played by special services, media and social networks, interested political structures from abroad, carriers of big capital, and often

actors from the so-called gray area and organized crime. It is not uncommon that, under certain social circumstances, certain peculiarities of hybrid action can also be manifested through religious communities.

Nowadays, there is almost no country that has not detected and established foreign interference within the electoral process within its own country. This side of interference can also be extremely dangerous, if performed in a perfidious and covert manner, and sometimes they can contribute to the strengthening of patriotic spirit and contribute to the victory of a nationally oriented candidate or party.

The most appropriate mechanism through which foreign interference in an electoral process within an independent and sovereign country is the mechanism of *special services*. Special services by their structure and organization represent specialized state institutions with a wide range of capabilities and mechanisms for concrete action, including actions related to the conduct of special intelligence operations in the field of politics and political processes. Regardless of the fact that no special service or state leadership that manages this service will ever declare it declaratively or confirm it, subversion is one of the basic directions in the intelligence component of these specialized state institutions. Through this subversive and covert action, conditions are created for direct interference in the electoral process within another state, thus through the modalities listed in the preceding work is directly influenced by not redrawing the electoral will of the citizens. Then the political circumstances in that country are adjusted to the interests of the state which, through its special services, pursues these interests or seeks to achieve them to a lesser or greater extent.

Special services usually act coordinated, i.e. it would be more accurate to say that they direct hybrid action through the media and social networks. Most often their aggressive actions are carried out through two basic directions. The first implies the maximum positive promotion of the appropriate candidate or party that is supported, while the second involves directly attacking a non-tailor-made political option by carrying out offensive hybrid strikes. Most often, these two basic directions are applied in synchrony and combined. However, the once open media support and support of social networks from one country can be counterproductive to a certain, conditionally speaking, covert favorite, which is why open media support towards this political option is exercised very carefully and limited. However, most often, in such cases, one resorts to conducting a negative and destructive hybrid campaign towards the oppositional political option, with the intention of creating an extremely negative odium in the general public, to create an environment of confusion, hopelessness and hopelessness.

In this sense, both violent and non-violent unconstitutional activities in a particular country are often designed, financially, organizationally and personnel-assisted, coordinated, but also media-supported by one or more special services of other countries and a wide range of their exponents in different social structures (Parezanović, Željki 2019: 420).

Media and social networks have become an indispensable mechanism in all electoral processes. Of course, we have not concluded anything new and unknown with this, but when the media and social networks are brought into the context of electoral processes, this primarily refers to them as a mechanism of hybrid action. So, within this research,

the role and importance of the media and social networks in terms of objective public information will not be treated. In this sense, at today's level of technical and technological development, the possibilities of media and social networks for hybrid action in the electoral process are practically unlimited. They range from total support to total destruction, depending on the choice of the side to be supported, i.e. the attack.

Political structures from abroad are almost always less or more interested in the course and outcome of electoral political processes in other countries, especially if there are expressed interests between these countries. The more pronounced and pronounced these interests, the higher the degree of interest. Political structures can act in a number of different ways and have all the characteristics of hybrid action. Starting with direct public support, through public or secret training of political acts vista from another state, through various modalities of propaganda and subversive activities, covert financing, participation in the creation and placement of affairs, all the way to provoking radical political scenarios, such as civil riots and riots, mass demonstrations and the introduction of another country into some form of state of emergency. Certainly, the listed modalities of destruction of the political structure from abroad cannot be carried out independently, but will use the mechanisms of its special services, the media and other state and parastatal resources for this purpose.

One of the main peculiarities of big *capital* carriers is that they realize their interests simultaneously in several different countries, which is why big capital is always less or more interested in electoral political processes in different stateside different political levels. This interest is a direct consequence of efforts to keep things under control, primarily in terms of the functionality of highly profitable business arrangements. So, essentially, everything revolves around money. With the help of money, it affects the overall business climate in one country, large investment projects of capital importance, takes control and ownership of economic entities of strategic importance, including critical infrastructure facilities, laws are created tailored to the oligarchy, so that their activities are not treated as plundering of national resources, but as lawful and skillfully conducted business operations and the like. For these reasons, hybrid actions through big capital carriers are very dangerous for any country, because the destructive effects of this form of action are extremely powerful and multi-layered.

Actors from *the so-called grey area and the sphere of organized crime* are often indirect or direct participants in electoral processes in almost all countries of the modern world.¹² It is superfluous to explain their interests in more detail, it is almost always profit with minimal presence or complete absence of patriotism, ethics and morality. However, the importance of these structures comes to the fore in poorly developed democratic societies, or societies in which the relationship of political forces between the government and the opposition is minimal. Then social conditions are created in which the winner of the electoral process will be decided on the street. These are very difficult and dangerous conditions, which can befall even the most developed and unregulated states.

12 „Organized crime is one of the most serious contemporary non-military threats to the national and international security. When it comes to endangering national security, they are evidently destructive effects on all spheres of social and state life“ (Mijalković 2009: 119).

Such situations often fall into the realm of color revolutions, in which one of their main peculiarities is that both the election result, the will of the citizens, and social stability are less important in relation to the primary goal, which is to win power at any cost, regardless of all potential harmful consequences. These processes almost always begin with nonviolent forms of political struggle, and almost always end in violence and bloodshed. Therefore, in such social circumstances, these forces come to the fore from the so-called gray area, which later always collect their participation in changing the history of a society, in whose bringing they contributed on and off the street, almost always with high interest, where bills of exchange and human lives themselves are often charged.

When it comes to *religious communities* and their position in terms of hybrid actions, it is important to emphasize that religious issues are a strong cohesion factor of broader social classes, especially when it comes to dominant religious communities in one country. Religious issues and religious topics have always been a sensitive field in any society, regardless of the level of its secularism. Citizens of any society do not like sudden and sudden changes in the sphere of religious issues, and are particularly sensitive to restrictions on freedom of religion. Therefore, religious communities in any society and state can be a powerful generator of direct interference in the electoral process, and under certain social circumstances can also be a decisive factor in the further development of the political situation and political relations in one country.

CONCLUSION

Hybrid actions in electoral political processes are a set of different mechanisms, measures, actions and actions that are used in the direction of achieving the goals of the entity performing them. Although such actions, in the context of the topic analyzed, relate to electoral political processes, the results, achievements and effects of hybrid actions do not produce implications only for the stated political category, but are inevitably reflected in others of the modern society. For example, hybrid actions in electoral political processes may be unsuccessful from the point of view of the one who generates and performs them, however, they can produce destruction in a wider social context, and a society or state can also introduce a serious political crisis.

Hybrid actions in electoral political processes inevitably lead to an increase in tensions in bilateral and multilateral relations of states, which under certain conditions can also be a vestibule of wider social conflicts. It is not uncommon that military aggression against a country began by interfering in its internal political processes, including political elections. Mechanisms of hybrid actions such as cyber-attacks, disinformation of the population or diversionary attacks do not only affect the electoral process in one country, but can also represent a prelude to classical military aggression. Modern models of warfare, imply that classical military intervention is almost always preceded by hybrid actions, which are later combined with the use of armed means, which actually loses the boundary in the use of civilian and military mechanisms in carrying out attacks, creating a coherent and aggressor and potential.

Essentially, hybrid actions in electoral processes directly undermine and redraw the will of citizens, voters who vote in elections. This creates a negative, unfavorable

and unrealistic environment, which channels and directs social processes in one state in a direction that is different, that is, the opposite of that which is the desire of the democratic majority.

Bearing in mind that in the background of the most complex and successful hybrid influences there are always powerful and efficient special services, whose activities are usually shrouded in secrecy, the question of the possibility of realistic perception and evaluation, in the historical level, of many electoral processes that have determined the fate and future of numerous states and societies in the long term, even crucially, is justified. Namely, processes of this kind will in foreseeable perspective become the subject of scientific research and historical textbooks, in which the understanding of the past reality will be shaped solely on the basis of the ideas that exist about them in public. In this sense, a complex of important facts, often of fateful importance for a country, will remain in the deep shadow of the dark corridors of political turmoil and reduction of political power on different meridians, within the most closely guarded documentation funds of the special services that at the strategic level participated in the design and on the operational-tactical level carried out the concrete realization of such, complex in structure and devastating in effects, hybrid operations.

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Марко М. ПАРЕЗАНОВИЋ

ХИБРИДНА ДЕЈСТВА У ИЗБОРНИМ ПОЛИТИЧКИМ ПРОЦЕСИМА

РЕЗИМЕ

Хибридна дејства у изборним политичким процесима су све присутнија појава у савременом устројству политичких односа и данашњих изборних инжењеринга. Без обзира на присутне контроверзе по питању персонификације хибридног деловања, донети и ефекти оваквих активности не морају увек нужно бити деструктивни. То произилази из чињенице да су захваљујући хибридним дејствима у појединим државама издејствоване политичке промене које су тим друштвима донеле са собом бољитак и просперитет. Мада је у данашње време и то тешко оценити, с обзиром на огромну испреплетеност различитих вектора унутрашњих и спољних политика, а преко тога и интереса, што посебно долази до изражаја у ери у којој живимо, у ери сурвавања међународног јавног права и савременог светског поретка. У раду се посебно анализирају сви најзначајнији аспекти хибридних дејстава у оквиру изборних политичких процеса, али са настојањима да се кроз један обзрив и избалансиран истраживачки приступ, теоријски осветли права суштина и позадина хибридног деловања на родни процес власти - на политичке изборе.

Кључне речи: хибридна дејства, политички избори, власт, политичке партије, специјалне службе, медији.

